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In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

Sleepy-head![1]

'Awake thou that sleepest.'—Eph 5^{14}.

Some of you fellows are fairly sleepy of a morning, I'll be bound. They waken you, and you grunt and turn over; they try again just when you are getting comfy, and you growl out, 'All right, just getting up.' And you really mean it, yet over you go once more. It is not easy getting started. It's like when a man runs round to the front of his motor, and begins to turn the handle, and nothing happens; and he tries again, but still there is no result; and he gets red in the face and begins saying things to himself, but tries once more, and this time it starts purring and is ready. It's difficult to get our engine started sometimes too. But for real power of sleep there are not many things to beat a frog! In summer he is an active little chap; though even then he is not a restless fidget like you, can sit long enough thinking deeply about who knows what, as solemn as a judge. Yet if you could jump, oh, if only you could jump like him you would win the prizes everywhere, even at the Olympic Games: and all over the streets there would be nothing on the bills except *Aberdeen Boy of Seven wins World Championship*, and when you turned it up there it would be, a long account, telling that you won easily although a little out of form for you, seeing that you only cleared twenty-one feet at the high jump, and managed fifty-four feet three inches at the long. That's what you could do if you jumped like a frog! But in winter, when the cold comes, he won't have it; creeps away into a hole or a crack in the rocks, and sleeps for days and weeks and months, and then in spring when we are all tashed and tired and cross with one another after the long winter's work, out he comes as spry as you like. 'Tired,' he says, 'who is tired?' And hops eleven times his own length. 'I'm not tired; you ought to go in for a rest cure like me.' And you should. He's right. That is why you sleep at night. Your body is worn out with tumbling about so much all the day long. You were quite certain that you could wait up for Daddy, and yet long before he came your head was nodding and your eyes would not stay open, and they carried you up and put you to bed and you never knew. But next day you were as lively as ever. The sleep did it. And that's why you get Saturdays and Sundays off. Your brain is getting wearied, jumbled up with parsing and sums and Latin verbs. 'Time to knock off,' they say; 'you'll be all right again by Monday, better rest your brain a bit.' And if you say, 'Well, but you ministers work on Sundays, what about you?' the only answer I can think of for that is that it looks as if we were thought to have no brains, and so of course we needn't rest them! And that's why you get holidays. See that you take a real one. Away with your school books, out with your cycle and your rod and your clubs and your most exciting stories; these are the things that you want then, to rest you. Oh, the frog is a clever little chap; he knows; and he is right.

Only sometimes he overdoes it, that's the bother. There are lots of tales of frogs being found in the heart of rocks; and there, folk say, they have been sitting all hunched up for millions of years since the rocks were made. That isn't true. What happens is that a frog goes into a hole and sleeps, and while he is doing so something falls and blocks up the entrance, and there he is caught fast where, if there is any air, he can live for a year or so, but not longer, and there he sits and sleeps on till he dies. And when you take a rest you must take care to keep the way out open. It's fine to have a holiday, but when the session comes remember to work then: it doesn't matter very very much if you are a bit careless when you are wee, but now you are getting big. Can you get out? Can you wake up? Can you stop that habit of yours of being lazy, or are you shut into it for ever more? You can still get out, if you try at once; only remember things are slipping, slipping, slipping down and blocking up the entrance more and more. The busiest man I ever saw is a minister I know. He makes me giddy the way he flies round and round and never rests at all; he gobbles up work as you do sweets, and keeps asking for more; I can't think how he packs it all into the day. I remember at a meeting hearing man after man get up and say that it must be stopped, that he was doing three or four people's work, that nobody could stand it. And I sat there with my eyes bulging out of my head, for at school that

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

fellow used to fall asleep in the Latin class pretty regularly; and I once saw him get the licking of his life because he snored and we couldn't waken him in time. You can get out yet if you wish. He did. But hadn't you better do it now? To fall asleep in the Latin class is pretty bad, you know, but there is worse. For we are always in God's class, and He is the kindest Teacher ever there could be, is never cross and always very very patient. And always He keeps teaching us how to be brave and not snivel, and how to play the game and not whine, and how to take knocks and not cry about it. But are you learning, are you even listening? Why, you are fast asleep, are snoring! Well, if you are very wee I don't think He minds. I know I don't if you fall asleep in the long sermon. And I think that God when He comes says, 'There were a lot of kindly people there, some of them worshipping earnestly, some of them listening hard, but I think the nicest of them all was a little lassie with a tousley head snuggled up against her mother fast asleep.' But if you are getting big you should listen in God's class when He is teaching us all the day long. Shake yourself. Oh, far harder! Be firm: be like Mother. She's very soft the first time, and the second time; but at last she says this won't do, and off go the clothes. And that does it. Off with the clothes, and wide awake with you. It's more than time, you sleepy-head!

For His Name's Sake.[1]

'I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.'—1 Jn 2^{12}.

There used to be in Paris, but it was destroyed with a great many other precious things at the Revolution, a great book, in which were written the names of all the towns and villages of France, and opposite their names the taxes they had to pay. Opposite one name there was a strange writing. The name is Domremy, and the writing was, 'Free for ever for The Maid's sake.' What did that mean?

Long ago France was trampled under English feet. English armies marched up and down at their will and did as they pleased. Half of France was England's and the other half was poor, beaten, and cowed. In Domremy lived a maid called Jeanne. She loved her country and sorrowed for its sorrows. She thought much about it, till one day she heard voices calling to her. Her soul was 'listening-in,' and the message that she heard was 'France calling,' calling her to save France.

It seemed impossible, and for a time she did nothing and told nobody; but the voice kept calling in her waking thoughts and through her dreams until she became convinced that it was God's will, and, however impossible it seemed, she must do it. So she left all and went to the king and told her story. Some mocked, some doubted, but some had faith in her and listened. So she gave herself to France, and put a new courage into the soldiers of France. They followed The Maid and her banner, winning back town after town, until at last she saw the king crowned in the great cathedral at Rheims.

The rest of the story is sad enough, for it tells how she was taken prisoner by the English, accused by the Church of being a witch, condemned by the Church of Rome, and handed back to the English to be burned at the stake at Rouen. So she died to save France.

An English soldier said, 'This day we have burned a saint'; and soon France came to see it too. The wicked men who had condemned her died in disgrace and were gladly forgotten; but The Maid's name was restored to honour. The people cherished her memory as a saint; and in the great book at Paris which recorded what each town and village owed in taxes it was written in gratitude to her that her village, Domremy, was to be 'free for ever for The Maid's sake.'

I know another book in which something like this is written. There is an entry in it which concerns you girls and boys who read this, for it says, 'I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.'

What does it mean? It means something like the story of The Maid, only far more wonderful. It means that there was pity in the heart of God and sorrow in heaven for a poor sinful world conquered by sin and ravaged by evil passions even more sorely than France was harried by the English soldiers. The Lord Jesus heard the need of earth calling and He came as a little child and gave Himself to the world at Bethlehem. And all His life on earth He lived to heal and comfort and teach men to know their Father in heaven, and to help them to win the victory over things evil.

Some mocked, some doubted, some listened and had faith in Him. In the end, He was betrayed

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

into the hands of those who were His enemies, and they tried Him with false witnesses and false accusations, and put Him to death at Calvary. So He gave His life for the world because He so loved the world.

And because of that our sins are forgiven. 'He died that we might be forgiven,' and so St. John could write long ago and we can read to-day, 'I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.'

For The Maid's sake Domremy was forgiven its taxes for ever, for the Saviour's sake the world is forgiven its sins; and the one can help you to understand the other.

Now it was shameful of France to suffer The Maid to be left to die, and it was only proper and decent that France should do all in her power to honour her name and show gratitude for the freedom she had won for France, whose saviour she had been. We can all see that; but what about *our* Saviour? Surely we must honour His Name and show our gratitude for all He died to give us. Our freedom is His gift and must be used for His glory. If we sing:

> He died that we might be forgiven,
> He died to make us good—

we also go on to sing:

> O dearly, dearly has He loved,
> And we must love Him too,
> And trust in His redeeming blood,
> And try His works to do.

That is what it all means. To be a Christian means to have a great thankfulness in our hearts to Jesus Christ, because 'we are forgiven for his name's sake'; and a great purpose in our hearts to live henceforth, not for ourselves, but for Christ's sake.

The Christian Year.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Law of the Corner.

'Thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field.'—Lev 19^9.

This commandment runs beyond the bounds of all Judæan tillage, and is a guide for fields where other fruits than yellow grain are reaped.

1. But its primary enforcement, we do well to remember, was in order that there might be provision 'for the poor and for the stranger.' Religion from the earliest times has made provision for these two classes. And still it stands as the supreme test of a living faith—what it does by way of social amelioration, and what by way of foreign missions. The measure of the gulf between the Divine ideal and the economic state into which we have fallen may be gathered from the difference in the common understanding of the expression 'to make a corner,' and the thought in the mind of God when He ordained the making of a corner in all our sowing and reaping for the poor and the stranger. God approves of making a corner in wheat, only not in the acceptation of that term by the pit and the exchange.

2. But beyond the immediate needs of the poor and the stranger there is in this law provision made for the developing of the man himself who owns or works the field. The tendency to hardness, the desire to scrape the fields of life, is not wise. It does not pay to squeeze the orange dry. There is a danger that in reaching for the fruits of industry even the shrewdest gleaner will overreach himself. 'Bargain sales' are not unprofitable even to the seller. God's method of making a corner has much to be said for it even on the most utilitarian grounds.

Life will yield us in the end a richer increase if we are careful to observe the law of the corner. Many an author who has made a considerable name for himself has succumbed to the temptation to collect for publication his immature and less worthy writings, the fallen fruit of his vineyard, and has damaged thereby his reputation. And, on the other hand, have not really great men enriched the thought and the lives of others by their unconsidered, uncollected *obiter dicta*? Lavishly they gave themselves to their friends in conversation or in advice. They did not always claim a fee for the advice which was freely sought and as freely given. They were glad that others who were not so well endowed as they with brains, or faculties, or any of the precious fruits of life, should glean what they needed in the corners of their large experience.

But the law runs deeper and wider still. It goes through the fields of experience where men are sowing habits and reaping characters. There are some people who always impress you with a sense of reserve power. You feel, as Chesterton has said of Robert Louis Stevenson, that what he gave us 'were only the two or three of his soul's adven-

tures that he happened to tell. But he died with a thousand stories in his heart.' You feel that there are many rich, unreaped corners in the fields of those men. And on the other hand, there are those who make a great to-do bringing in their harvest wain; they are anxious to impress you with the wealth of their golden sheaves. But all the time you are conscious that they have hand-picked every grain there was—that there will be no aftermath.

The secret of so many of the intellectual and moral failures in life is just this, that there has been neglect of the law of the unreaped corner. People anxious for too quick a return on their investment of heart or brain have crowded all their goods into the shop-window, hoping to make an impression on the passers-by, or upon one particular passer-by.

In all true love and in married life there should be a certain reserve. The zest of life and love comes from their being an endless exploration and discovery. The tragedy of many a home and many a friendship is that one therein has greedily thrust in a savage sickle among the fruits of friendship, until the field has been left bare and unproductive, and the soul is starved of love. To respect the personality of others is one aspect of the law of the unreaped corner.

It is the fact of the unreaped corners, too, that keeps the edge upon the appetite for knowledge. Thank God for ignorance, for the virgin corners and bypaths of knowledge which ever provide that lure in learning which is needed to keep our hands from hanging down in idleness. One remembers what fun Lewis Carroll makes of the White Knight who had tried to arm himself against every contingency which might possibly arise. To this end he had loaded down his horse with all sorts of utensils, even adding a mouse-trap and a beehive in case they might come in useful. He had left no corners unreaped, seemingly; and yet, what a pathetic, laughable figure he cuts. The whole joy of the adventure in life is that we should meet contingencies as they emerge, alike with a stout heart and a scheming brain, rising to each occasion as it comes.

The loss and tragedy of the life which has nothing upon which it can fall back have been expressed in Browning's poem, 'Shop.' The poet tells how thrilled he was to find a striking display in a shop-window of many objects of virtu and not a few of worth and interest. What, he thought to himself, must be the wealth of the man who can put all this on view? Great was his disappointment when he went within and found nothing to correspond to all this promise.

> So, friend, your shop was all your house!
> Its front, astonishing the street,
> Invited view from man and mouse
> To what diversity of treat
> Behind its glass—the single sheet!

Did he find great reserve stocks of undisplayed goods?

> Nowise! At back of all that spread
> Of merchandize, woe's me, I find
> A hole i' the wall where, heels by head,
> The owner couched, his ware behind,
> —In cupboard suited to his mind.

And, if life will yield us in the end a richer increase, if we are careful to observe the law of the corner in commerce and in character, we shall find the working of this law most beneficent of all if we let it run into the fields of faith. The unreaped corner, the element of mystery, are vital to religion. There was a moment when the disciples of Jesus were just aching to thrust in their sickle-question, 'and none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou?' 'When ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleaning of thy harvest.' Is it a hard law? God in Christ obeyed that law Himself. 'Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?' And He said nothing: He just went straight on in faith.

That is why one is chary of creeds and all cut-and-dried expressions of the faith by which we live—just because they are cut and dried. We have thrust in the inquisitive sickle and maybe reaped the corner where we should have held our clumsy hand. We have made faith less attractive to others, without feeding the hunger of the soul. So long as the corner is unreaped the poor and the stranger may come by and find God's plenty to rub in their own hands in their own particular way.

The more faithfully we are working and developing the high places of the field, the less do we fret over the corners God bids us leave unhusbanded. It is not well with an age that wants to know too much, that is unwilling to respect the Divine ordinance about unreaped corners and ungathered grapes. Is it not enough that we have the revelation of the wine in the cup, without greedily snatching

at the grapes that are withheld? We all love secrets: don't you think God does too? We all enjoy the pleasure of giving surprises: why rob our Father of this pleasure? 'Eye hath not seen nor ear heard'—no, thank God! The reaping of the last dark corners of life will be part of the joy of the Harvest Home.[1]

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Little Drama of the Great Event.

'Jesus, knowing . . . that he was come from God, and went to God; he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet.'—Jn 13^{3-5}.

What does the Lord's Supper mean? men were beginning to ask. This is what it means, at the heart of it, the writer of this Gospel seems to say: it means the condescension of the Highest, the cleansing of the unworthy, the service of the humble by the humble, and of all by each. If we may read it so, we are supplied with a freshening commentary upon symbols and actions which may be almost too familiar.

1. It means, says the Evangelist, being more eager to reach the meaning than to describe external facts already well known—it means *the condescension of the Highest.* Strangely deliberate and majestic is that sentence—'Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God.' One would think that the writer was preparing the way for his supreme assertion of Christ's divinity, but instead, he is preparing the way for his supreme illustration of that spirit of service which ruled in the Master's life and death. The Church of the early generations was very sure who and what Christ was. In those days it was on the whole easier to believe in His true divinity than in His true humanity—so overwhelming was the impression made upon those who knew Him first and best. Clement of Alexandria, for instance, writing about a century later than this Gospel, cannot get away from the astonishment of this passage. 'The Lord ate from a cheap bowl, and He washed His disciples' feet with a towel about Him—the lowly-minded God and Lord of the universe. He did not bring a silver foot-bath from heaven to carry about with Him.' Certainly we are not in the region of silver foot-baths and tinsel dignities here. The Highest is the humblest.

[1] H. L. Simpson, *Put Forth by the Moon*, 53.

That is written all over the Feast of which the Apostle here is thinking, though he does not actually describe it. It is written all over the Cross, which, like the Feast, tells of One who was so great, who came from God and went to God, and who yet showed His greatness by lowliness and His divinity by service.

> My starry wings
> I do forsake,
> Love's highway of humility to take.

2. Another part of the meaning of the Feast is *the cleansing of the unworthy.* When the Master said to Peter, 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me,' the Apostle's mind only played upon the surface of the words. The full revelation of Peter's need came a few hours later when he had fallen and cast himself out into the darkness—when Peter, revealed to himself as a false and cowardly sinner, felt at last in every fibre of his being how his only portion and hope lay in Christ the Saviour. And the full understanding of the manner and cost of his cleansing came perhaps only gradually, under the gentle, patient teaching of the Divine Spirit, and was written down long after; 'Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain manner of living received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.' So the secret which was hidden from pride and boasting was revealed to him in utter necessity.

This too is always a part of the meaning of the Feast, and of the Cross behind the Feast. As His people still seek His holy place they bring with them not the dust of Jerusalem streets but the stains of a world's highway—stains that have been doubled and deepened by their own waywardness. It would serve their need but poorly, were He once again with them in visible form, to gird Himself with a towel and wash them with water. He comes to do them a great service—to wash them in the deepest places of their being from their guilt, their sin, their foul tempers, their false motives, all stain of fault and failure and transgression. Never perhaps is the glowing and glorious reality of this transaction so vividly felt as in the act and attitude of communion.

3. The Feast means one thing more—as also does the Cross behind the Feast—it means *the service of all by each.* The Master would not allow

His disciples to escape that lesson. 'Know ye what I have done to you? If I then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.' They needed the counsel and the example. Some of the other Evangelists are frank enough as to the quarrelsome and ambitious temper in which these men sat down, disputing which of them should be the greatest.

That temper was hard to exorcise, even by those who were supposed to take their spirit from the Upper Room and their pattern from Calvary. Paul had to deal with it again and again in the churches of his founding, beseeching them that nothing might be done through strife or vainglory. And so in the Church of later days. Men talk of socialism—there is no fellowship of equality like that of the Lord's Supper, where all are on a level because all are redeemed; and of brotherhood, but there is no brotherhood so old, so catholic, so permanent as that which was formed round the foot of the Cross, nor is there any so real if men would only live out its meaning. And, according to St. John, its meaning is service. In this atmosphere the worldly motive and the selfish spirit might well droop and die. And those who truly partake are knights of the Grail, who go from the Feast to bear one another's burdens and to heal the wounds of humanity.

Such vision and practice are greatly needed for the health of the Church and the well-being of the world. We see individual greed biting into the body politic, and the egotist often succeeds in persuading his neighbours, for a time at least, to take him at his own valuation. The central inspiration of social life seems to have departed, or to be lost in a mere scramble for place and power. It is the task of Christian folk, and it is not an easy task, to see things from a different angle and to live their lives in a different way. Their motive must not be greed but love, their spirit not egotism but service.[1]

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

'But whom say ye?'

'But whom say ye that I am?'—Mk 8^{29}.

It is not possible to hold fellowship with any one without reaching some convictions about him. And the longer and closer the fellowship, the clearer and more certain the convictions. In accordance with this law, the Christian, holding fellowship with Christ, reached and reaches certain conclusions about Christ.

1. *He is Man.* The New Testament believer first of all held that Jesus Christ was everything that man ought to be. It is probably better at this point to write 'man' than 'a man,' for the conviction included the idea that Jesus Christ is the ideal for every man. He did not appear just to be 'the ideal carpenter,' or 'the ideal Rabbi,' or 'the ideal Jew,' but 'the ideal man.' He was in the realm of history what the Platonic 'ideal man' was in the realm of thought. The believer found Jesus to be 'the ideal man.' Here is another of the places where the interdependence of the 'historic Jesus' and 'the risen Christ' is clear. For the early believer could not so have thought of the unseen Christ, with whom he had fellowship day by day, unless the 'historic Jesus' had lived the life of which the Gospels tell.

2. *He is 'Son of Man.'* The first believers drew a second conclusion from their fellowship with Christ—that He holds a unique relation to the whole human race. One of the New Testament writers expressed this on one occasion by calling Christ 'the second Adam'; another named Him 'Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek'; while the earliest narrators of His life on earth told that He used to call Himself 'the Son of Man.' The first believers knew that Jesus Christ was not merely the Saviour of a series of individual men, but the head of a new human society, and of a new society that ought to include, and must continually seek to include, all mankind. There were the beginnings of this society in the Church. It was to reach its perfection in the Kingdom of God. However imperfectly or even vaguely the early Christian conceived what is now called the 'solidarity of mankind,' he had such a concept, and he found himself bringing Christ into a given relation to it.

3. *Who knows Him knows God.* By fellowship with Christ the disciple learnt a third truth, this time about both Christ and God. The 'man of religion' always and everywhere is a man who knows something about God, and wants to know more. He has, and has had, many teachers, who teach both by what they say and by what they are.

[1] J. M. E. Ross, *The Tree of Healing*, 132.

But he exhausts them all in turn, except One. The most devout Buddhist looks for another and better Buddha; the fanatical Muhammadan expects a Mahdi who will surpass the earlier Prophet; even the Jew looks for a Messiah who will 'fulfil' the Old Testament, and, fulfilling, pass beyond it. But the Christian, from the first, has always believed that in Jesus Christ there is the final and sufficient revelation of God. This does not mean that Christ leaves no unsolved mysteries in the concept of the Divine nature, but it does mean that He has told men all that they need to know about God in order that they may live and live 'abundantly.' Again, while it does not mean that the Christian has no more to learn about God, it does mean that what he has still to learn will be learnt through Christ, and not through any other. In one way this conviction is impossible of proof, and it is true that in it the element of faith is peculiarly obvious. Yet the Christian has the same kind of ground for his belief about Christ in the future that other men have for other beliefs about the future. To return, he believes that what Christ is, teaches finally what God is. There is here again small need to gather evidence from the New Testament. It has often been collected. A few phrases that sum up the belief may be quoted. Two of the more 'philosophical' New Testament writers use metaphors. John, recalling that persons mirror their characters in their speech, calls Jesus 'the Word' of God; the writer to the Hebrews says that He is to God as the ray to the sun or the stamp to the die. Paul's characteristic phrase is here simpler: 'The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' The Synoptic writers are content with the name 'The Son of God.' The implications of such phrases need not be discussed just here. It is clear that the men who used them believed that, knowing what Christ was, they knew what God was, and knew this in an unequalled and unsurpassable way.

4. *He is God.* Yet this is not all. It is conceivable that men might, through fellowship with Christ, enter into fellowship with God. At least at first, this is what Jesus' disciples felt they were doing. He 'knew the Father,' and therefore He was the one to 'teach (them) to pray,' and prayer is fellowship with God. But gradually the disciple came to see that his experience meant more than this. He found that his fellowship with Christ was itself none other than fellowship with God. It was not enough to say—to borrow again the phraseology of the book that best sums the findings of the first believers—that Christ is 'the way' to the 'Father'; it was true that 'he that has seen (Christ) has seen the Father'; that '(Christ) and the Father are one.' Even if the discourses of the Fourth Gospel do not belong word for word to the Master Himself, at least they reflect the thought of a thinker in the early Church, and of a thinker whose account of Christ was accepted as accurate by his fellow-Christians. The first believers found that to know Christ was to know God.

It is not wonderful that the Christian Jew, in particular, with his staunch monotheism, only gradually reached the assertion, for it is still impossible fully to solve the 'mystery' that it raises for the monotheist. Slowly, however, the first believers found themselves creeping towards it, urged on by a necessity that they could not control.

'The Word was God.' How satisfactory this explanation proved, even to rigid monotheists, appears from the nature of the first heresy, Docetism. This arose so soon that its beginnings may be traced in the New Testament itself. It was a first attempt to solve the problem how a single person can be both God and man. And it proceeded, not by mitigating the claim that Christ was Divine, but by suggesting that He was not really man! His human life was not more distant than the life of Wellington is to-day, yet the Christian found it easier to deny His humanity than His divinity. The latter seemed the more certain to the believer because of his living experience of the living Christ.

The four assertions—that Christ is Man, Son of Man, Son of God, God—ensue from the study of New Testament experience. Yet this does not cease here to be 'normal' for later Christians. It would be difficult to enumerate, and impossible to solve, all the problems that arise from the four assertions. But, in spite of all the difficulties—indeed, even when bewildered with the difficulties—the Christian 'witness' has remained the same. Men have gone on knowing Christ. They have entered into His fellowship. As they have done so, they have made the old new discoveries about Him. The Christian to-day still says: He is Man; He is 'Son of Man'; who knows Him knows God; He is God.[1]

[1] C. Ryder Smith, *The Christian Experience*, 126.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Fairness of Trial.

'There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it.'—1 Co 10^{13} (R.V.).

The word 'temptation' is sometimes used to express the general discipline of life, and, again, it is employed to signify allurement to evil. We now use it in the latter sense, and design to show that such temptations are so regulated as to leave us no reason for complaint. We are apt to assume that we have cause to complain that temptation is often excessive, that it is of such a character and force as to be practically irresistible. On the contrary, we desire to make clear that the tests to which our moral life is submitted are never excessive, never out of proportion to our potential strength, never without the way of escape. 'God is faithful,' and every trial of our faith or principle, our temper or conduct that He permits, is reasonable, and such as we may endure and master. It is never of such character as necessarily to baffle us by its subtlety, to overwhelm by its intensity, to surprise by its novelty, or to exhaust us by its frequency. Let us consider this.

1. The *subtlety* of temptation is often pleaded in extenuation of a fall.

Beccari in his book, 'In Great Forests of Borneo,' describes the fascination of the pitcher plant. 'It cannot be doubted that insects must be attracted towards the pitchers of the *Nepenthes*, considering all the artifices and inducements brought into play—the strange shapes of the pitchers, their bright colours, and, above all, the glands disseminated around, affording all kinds of sweetmeats, to tempt and lure the insects to perdition. Of this kind are the glands which are in the inner part of the lid of the pitcher, where, if a greedy and imprudent insect tries to rest, it is almost certain to be trapped. But where Nature has shown all her refinement of perfidy is in the disposal of those baits within and around the rim of the pitchers. All the ornamental appendages, grooves, enlargements, rings, points, etc., found there, have no other end than the leading the insects toward the lower inverted portion within these appendages, where is a gland secreting nectar, placed in such a position that if an insect reaches it, it almost certainly loses its balance and falls into the well prepared to receive it. Once in there, it cannot escape, and is drowned in the liquid.' The natives call these plants 'Satan's Jugs.' Are we, then, to conclude that the temptations of human life are of a similar infernal complexity, and that we are ensnared by devices of confounding ingenuity? It is not so. For the most part the temptations of men are simple enough, obvious enough.

To the Corinthians St. Paul writes: 'That no advantage may be gained over us by Satan: for we are not ignorant of his devices' (2 Co 2^{11}). This saving knowledge may be ours habitually. The astutest diabolical invention is transparent to the sincere. 'The depths of Satan' are shallows over which the pure in heart pass dryshod. Generally speaking, we walk into the snare with our eyes open.

2. The *intensity* of temptation might be excessive, and justly provoke protest. If objects of extraordinary beauty or greatness, of preciousness or enjoyment, were dangled before our senses until our imagination was kindled, our heart agitated, our passions inflamed, much might be urged on our behalf when we failed in the trying hour. And temptation is often pictured as though it were thus dazzling. Very much indeed of this presentment of evil is overwrought, causing the morals of society to suffer through the debauched imagination. Emerson's verdict on these imaginary spectacles and descriptions is entirely just: 'The order of things consents to virtue. Such scenes as luxurious poets and novelists often paint, where temptation has a quite overcoming force, never, or very rarely, occur in real life.' The temptations which work the ruin of tens of thousands are utterly destitute in themselves of any special grandeur, glory, beauty, or delight. They are usually commonplace, and frequently mean and coarse. There is no need to spread a Belshazzar's feast to excite the appetite; a mess of pottage will suffice.

3. The *novelty* of temptation might furnish an apology for moral failure. Were we ambushed by subtle foes of whose treachery we had no warning, or subjected to solicitations of which we had no previous knowledge, or circumvented by methods without parallel, or shipwrecked on some uncharted rock, we should have something to say for ourselves in the hour of humiliation. But it is not so. As Archer Butler puts it: 'We are the easy prey of every commonplace illusion, vanquished by the novelty of seductions which were old in the days of Peter, and John, and Paul.'

The very fact that the temptations to which we are ordinarily subjected are usually commonplace may in itself constitute a peril. If they were rare, and of an extraordinary character, they would provoke attention and reflection, and so be better understood; but, arising as they do out of the ordinary relations and routine of life, exciting no special attention or emotion, we are in danger of treating them with indifference, contemptuousness, presumption. But for all their familiarity it must be kept in mind that they are not the less malignant.

4. The *frequency* of temptation might wear down the strongest, and so provoke protest. We can bear only so much according to the frailty of our nature, and it would do us manifest injustice to exceed this strain. Yet we may rest assured that no such protest will be called for. Revelation repeatedly assures us that Heaven works by weight and measure, and that when duly tested there shall be laid upon us 'none other burden.' It is true that our whole life is a period of probation, and that our fidelity is being constantly put to the proof; but the severe struggles are rarely repeated.

'And when the devil had completed every temptation, he departed from him for a season. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee.' What was true of the Master is true of the disciple. It is often surprising how far one clear, sharp, signal moral victory goes toward settling the controversy as to our final triumph.

In a day of deep distress, Millet, the French artist, wrote to a friend: 'Let us pray Him who gives us intelligence not to abandon us too much, for we have need of all our strength to accomplish this task.' He will not abandon us too much; He will not abandon us in any sense. But we must never diminish the vigilance with which we need to guard against temptation. Each one has the utmost need of solicitude, seriousness, preparedness; need for all our wit and strength, as Millet discerned. Whilst our temptations are substantially the same as those to which men have been subjected in all generations, they have a novelty of their own as times and circumstances change. We are told that coral reefs are not to be looked upon as simple stationary structures, but as living, moving things, ever changing their form and aspect. Vessels are constantly being lost upon coral reefs in different parts of the world, owing to the inaccuracy of their charts. There is abundant evidence to show that charts of coral reefs made one year are almost valueless twenty years afterwards. Much the same is true of the moral dangers of life. Ancient in character, they constantly emerge in special forms and original disguises, giving no place for presumption, calling for habitual awareness, lest we make shipwreck of faith, conscience, character, and hope.[1]

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Failure of the Brook.

'And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.'—1 K 17^{7-9}.

Where this brook Cherith was, we do not know exactly. It was one of the little tributaries of the Jordan. Somewhere in the uplands of the south it had its rise, and it chattered as it flowed to join the brimming river. It is notable that its name means 'separated.' It was the lonely, separated burn. Here, then, at the beginning of his career, the prophet Elijah was sent apart by God. Like Moses in Midian, and like Jesus in the wilderness, God drew him into isolation for a season. For very rarely does God plunge His servants into the stir and dust of the great battle without a call to a period of quietude when they can take their measurements in silence.

Elijah, then, was sent to the brook Cherith by the express commandment of his God, and it must have been a strange and staggering thing for him when the waters of the brook began to fail. Had he been fugitive from duty, it would have been very different.

What was the meaning of the drying up of the brook?

1. The failure of the waters was meant to deepen the prophet's sense of brotherhood. He was drawn into a new fellowship with Israel in the very hour that Cherith ceased to flow. For it was a time of drought. Everywhere drought and cruel pangs of thirst, and men and women entreating God for water—and all the time, in the little vale of Cherith, the coolness and the murmuring of the stream. It was very comfortable, and it was very happy, but it is not thus that Jehovah makes His prophets. And so, that he might be a brother among brothers,

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *The Fairness of Trial*, 9.

and feel his kinship with his suffering nation, it came to pass after a while that the brook dried.

'Arise, get thee to Zarephath,' said God, 'for I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.' Elijah trusted God's guiding, and went to make his strange request. He is almost ashamed to make the appeal. He brings it in as a kind of afterthought. Yet the woman rises to the appeal of faith and love which somehow Elijah awoke in her, and brought him into a little fellowship in which the problem was solved and the famine was kept at bay. The secret is, that through faith and love they had made a circle through which God could work. And to-day nothing will meet the complexities of our modern world but the deeper qualities of our nature called into play and working in fellowship. That is the message which is ringing through our land to-day, and we are all coming to see it. All sorts of people, disillusioned and baffled by selfishness and brought to a standstill, are demanding a new adventure of goodwill and industry—the spirit which sees beyond the shadow of a man's own narrow life into the lives of others.

2. Again Elijah was taught by this event that in certain matters God makes no exceptions. God has His chosen ones, but whatever they be chosen for, it is not to escape the heritage of tears. By the very grandeur of his office there was a certain distance between the prophet and the ordinary man. And, therefore, it was reasonable to expect that the prophet would have a little special care, and would be guarded, as the favourite of God, from some of the ills that flesh is heir to. But here, by the drying up of the waters of the Cherith, Elijah learnt that, though he was God's messenger, he was not going to escape the common lot. One of the hardest lessons we must learn is that the name and nature of our God is love, yet, for the man who trusts and serves Him best, there is to be no exception from trial. Think of Peter, on whom the Church is built. When we open the door of his cottage there is fever there. Think of Mary, mother of our Lord, and what is that in her heart?—it is a sword. Think of the home at Bethany that Jesus loved—surely no blast of the chill wind will pierce that dwelling?—and it came to pass that their brother Lazarus died.

3. The ceasing of the prophet's brook was the beginning of larger views of God. 'Arise, get thee to Zarephath,' said God. There in Zarephath, as Elijah viewed the superstition, and realized the moral death which followed it, there was burned into his heart the loathing scorn that made him such an antagonist of Baal. But Elijah learned more at Zarephath than that. He learned there was a wideness in God's mercy. He saw that the God of Israel could be gracious to a woman who was born and bred a heathen. And to a Jew like Elijah, trained in the Jewish creed, and, believing that beyond the covenant was darkness, the thought that the mercy of God was for the heathen came with the thrilling of a great surprise.[1]

4. But the ceasing of the prophet's brook was a message, above all, of the need of deeper resources than the surface world can supply, and of the call to trust them.

So it is with us. As life goes on, the brook dries up. Take our human affections, and the love which makes life rich. People find their happiness in each other's company and set up a home together. They have common interests; the world is good to them; and life goes along smoothly and pleasantly for a while. But the time comes when things are more difficult. They have to meet strain together, or health is not so robust, and tempers become peevish, or the surface attractions fade. The brook dries up. What happens then? They drift apart, and we call it misunderstanding, or a misfit, and the human problem becomes the subject of Royal Commissions, and the theme of the realistic novel or the shallow play. But the real root of the trouble is spiritual. Love and friendship are of God, and they cannot be sustained apart from Him and the faith and unselfishness which are the deeper currents of our being.

The same thing holds true of service and philanthropy. It is easy enough to be kind and charitable when things are going well. There are moods when a kindly spirit seems to be in the air. We become well disposed to other people; social service becomes the fashion. But dull times come. People we try to help grow uninteresting, sometimes disagreeable, and sometimes they are blind to our motive and our goodwill. The very people for whom Christ poured out His heart's blood turned at last to crucify Him. He had a time of popularity when they gathered about Him with cheers and wanted to make Him king. But the brook dried up. Have we ever had that experience? If so, had we resources enough to carry us through?

The same is true of what we usually call the

[1] G. H. Morrison, *The Wings of the Morning*, 108.

Christian life. There are moments when it seems easy enough to follow Christ. We have resources in ourselves for what it seems Christ wants us to do. The example of others or the common decencies of life carry us through the ordinary temptations. When the kindly faces are round us, it is not so difficult to be true. But the brooks dry up. What then? When things go against us, and the kindly faces are gone, or when we go to a strange land or some great city, where we are flung into a maelstrom of unbelief, and things we were taught to hate begin to speak to dim instincts in the blood, and there is a quiet smile for the man who takes religion seriously, what then? Or when we come up against the cruel facts of life and our faith begins to burst into question marks, what then? Then we must strike deeper into the resources of our faith, or perish. We must find a vision of God big enough to meet the big problems or make us willing to accept perplexities. We must face the question whether Christ is a reality we can trust all the way.[1]

[1] J. Reid, *The Victory of God*, 238.

Accent and Emphasis.

By J. Rendel Harris, Litt.D., LL.D., D.D., Birmingham.

When my friend Dr. Mingana was recently travelling in Mesopotamia, he was called upon to explain where he came from, and when he replied that he was from Manchester, his answer provoked no sign of intelligence in those who were questioning him. This was strange, for Manchester and its products are better known in the Far East than London itself. Our fabrics are in the bazaars in Samarcand, and if Keats spoke of 'Silken Samarcand' with the understanding that the products of Chinese industry had come to the West that way, we might equally be entitled to speak of it as 'Cotton Samarcand.' Why, then, did not the Mesopotamians understand? At last it dawned on them: 'Oh! you mean Manchestér!' It was the change in the accent that caused the perplexity, and they would have been equally puzzled if the Doctor had used the original pronunciation and said Manchéster.

Recently talking with a Greek in his own language, and taking every pains to speak with good accent and discretion, I found myself subject to frequent criticism and correction: 'We accent thus and thus, and not as you say, so and so.' It was a theme in which I had tried to be perfect and ended with repeated apologies for imperfection. After that it was easy to understand what would happen in one's own tongue if the stress accents were removed or thrown about in any way and at random. If you were to take a modern Roman missal or service-book you would probably find every word accented visibly: it will not be sufficient to prevent the operator from saying *múmpsimus* where he should have said *súmpsimus*; he must also be secured from saying *sumpsímus* instead of *súmpsimus*. The virtue goes out of the formula when the accent is misplaced.

What *accent* is in the single word, *emphasis* is in the sentence. Misplace it and a different meaning supervenes than what is intended; one has to protect oneself by devices such as a change of type in print, or an underlining in script, or similar tricks. Illustrations, again, are hardly necessary. One can try the misplacing of emphasis on any familiar piece of prose. How should one pronounce, 'It is *I*, be not afraid'; or in the sentence, 'The very hairs of *your* head are all numbered,' where the Greek pronoun is emphatic. In the case of poetry, the emphasis is usually protected by the metre. For example, when we recite the verse,

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds,

the metre throws the unimportant

how—the—of

out of the stress accents, and leaves the important words under metrical emphasis. One must not, however, be too much in bondage to metre; emphasis is lord even of metre: we do not say,

The bóy stood ón the burning deck,

but,

The bóy | stōōd | oň thē burn | ing deck.

So when we recite, 'In a believer's ear,' we have to lengthen the first syllable and say, 'Īn ă bĕlīever's ear,' and then it is clear that the emphasis is on