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connexion with the other demands was to make men conceive that they had fulfilled all the claims of their faith when they had observed its ceremonial. And the concluding verses were calculated to deepen this impression. For these promise that, if Israel would walk in Yahweh's ways, He should subdue its enemies under it and, in two phrases (v.¹⁷) which again recur in Deuteronomy (32^{13, 14}), send it abundant prosperity.

The wholesome effect of such a liturgy depended on how its hearers construed vv.¹²⁻¹⁴, and what elements in their faith they believed to be primary for men who gathered to the worship of the God of their fathers. Were the ways in which He required them to walk above all the ways of moral uprightness, or those of a careful ceremonial obedience? And from which of these could they conclude that He should come to their deliverance?

The Psalm gives the situation in North Israel to which Amos spoke, when he appeared at Bethel. He found men observing with extreme care all the outward forms of their religion. They were sacrificing after the ancestral fashion and were offering tithes with extreme care. And good men among them were expecting and sighing for the day of the Lord which was to crown and reward their faithfulness. Surely now Yahweh should turn His hand against their adversaries and satisfy them with all good. What Amos did was to lay a new emphasis on the meaning of the ways of Yahweh. They were the ways of moral uprightness, since Yahweh Himself was righteousness. What made Yahweh to Amos distinct from all other gods was, not that He had delivered Israel

from Egypt by mere power, but that He had delivered Israel to serve His ends and fulfil His will. The two, God and people, could only walk together, if they were of one mind. And, since Israel had chosen to follow its own counsels, the two must part company and Yahweh must go in anger. Therefore the day of the Lord, for which good men sighed, must be darkness and not light.

For a long period after the conquest priest and prophet could work together, because they had a common task. Both needed to insist that the religion of their people was distinct from that of all the other nations. Yahweh must have the supreme place in His people's worship and a solitary allegiance. He must have His own altars and His own ritual, lest the people be led astray to worship Baal. But, when this was driven into the minds of Israel, the people and their priests were inclined to call a halt and be content. To the prophets like Amos there could be no halt. Why was Yahweh different? Why did He demand this distinction in His worship? What was His purpose, when He called Israel out of Egypt and made it His own?

He was different, not in name, but in character, for He was the righteous God. Therefore he could not be indifferent to the way in which He was worshipped, for righteousness can never be indifferent. And His purpose in calling Israel was to create a nation like Himself, capable of entering into His mind and willing to serve His ends. But Amos was not creating a new religion: he was demanding a moral revival. For he claimed to restore the ideals of Moses.

In the Study.

Virgínius Puerisque.

Are you playing the Game? ¹

¹ Kept back part of the price.—Ac 5².

RUN your finger round the edge of a sixpence or a shilling, and you'll feel it isn't smooth like a penny's, but all rough with any number of little ridges, as if tiny horses had been drawing a tiny plough and making tiny furrows up and down and down and up a tiny fairy field. Why is it all ridged like that? Long ago people were very poor, and some of them took to stealing. They didn't break into houses;

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

but, whenever they got a gold or a silver coin, they took a sharp cutting thing and pared off a thin strip all round it as you peel an apple, or rather as father does, for he can do it much thinner than you. And the gold and silver they peeled off they kept until it grew into a little heap, and then they sold it. But meanwhile they were cheating the shop people. For when they bought anything, they paid for it with a coin that was supposed to be worth five shillings, or two shillings and sixpence. And yet it wasn't really, for they had kept back a part of it. And at last things got so bad that these rough edges had to be put on the coins so that, if anybody

tampered with them, we could know at once, and say, 'This isn't a good coin any more.' It was horrid of these people long ago to thief and cheat like that. And yet don't we all do it even yet; don't we clip round the edges of what we say that we are giving?

Take practising. Mother told you to be sure to practise. And you promised her you would. And when she came in she said after a bit, 'Did you remember your practising?' And you said 'Yes'; and that was right. 'The whole time?' asked Mother. And you said, 'Yes; I went up at half-past three, and I stopped at a quarter-past four.' And in a way that was quite true. But didn't you clip a good bit off the coin? Are you at subtraction? Well, if you subtracted the time you wasted, would there be anything like three-quarters of an hour left really there? Nothing like it. For there was a new photo on a table. 'Who's that?' you said, and stopped to have a long look at it. Or a book was lying there you hadn't seen before. And you spent quite a while having a skim through it. That was six minutes gone before you got begun. And when you did start, you were doing beautifully when something passed along with a dreadful rattling, and you had to go to see whatever it could be. And then your eyes lighted upon your friend Sophie walking past. 'Now, what is Sophie doing here?' you said, drumming with your fingers on the window; and you had to think that out. 'Oh yes, of course, she's going to her Grannie's; she lives up that street!' 'But who's that girl with her? Oh, that will be the new girl in her class.' And then a dog came into your garden and had a look round. And, of course, you had to watch that.

Well, all that took time, took whole eleven minutes. And you kept that back. Three-quarters of an hour? No, nothing like it really.

Or, what about your prayers? I know you're sometimes dreadfully sleepy and just can't keep awake. And God knows it too. And I wonder if He likes any prayers as well as those of a wee tousley-headed soul who can't keep his eyes open, but keeps falling over. But you're not wee. You're getting big and old. And what about your prayers? How much of the time you're saying them do you really give to God; and how much do you keep back, using it, not to talk to God at all, but to think about the football match next Saturday, or about—oh, heaps of things—so many that you give very little of the time to God but keep it nearly all from Him?

Or, you know that it was God who gave you your

life. Now, I want you, He said, to use this for Me; want you to be a happy little soul and make others happy, to be brave and never sulk but help others to be brave; to spend this life I'm giving you not on yourself, but for those round about you.

And yet aren't we keeping a terrible lot of it back for ourselves; and aren't we just dreadfully greedy and selfish and cross; aren't we clipping off a whole heap of it, and giving others such a teeny-weeny little bit of it? But that won't do at all. 'Show me a penny,' said Christ. 'Whose face and name are these upon it? Cæsar's? Well, give Cæsar what is his own. And now show me your life! Ah! this, I see, has got God's name and God's image stamped on it. You must give this to Him! And yet we're keeping back nearly the whole of it for ourselves! Stevenson—you know, the *Child's Garden of Verses* man, and *Treasure Island*, and *Kidnapped*—Stevenson once landed on an island in the South Seas; and the native girls all crowded round him; and he felt one of them picking his pockets and stealing his box of matches. So he asked her for a match. And she took out his own box of matches, and, with an air of being very generous indeed, gave him just one of his own matches, and put all the rest away. God has given us our life to use for Him and others round about us. And it won't do to keep it nearly all back for ourselves. That's stealing, isn't it? That isn't fair. That's lying. And we can't do that.

Consider the Lilies.¹

'To this day, we know, the entire creation sighs and throbs with pain.'—Ro 8²² (Moffatt).

Perhaps some of you boys and girls have been reading in the papers of the wonderful experiments which have recently been made upon plants by a great Indian scientist, Sir Jagadis Chundra Bose. Of course, there are many wonderful things about them which we know already. We know that they breathe through their leaves; we know that they can tell the difference between heat and cold, and that they can distinguish between a sunny day and a cloudy day; we know that they have wonderful ways of digesting their food; and we know that there is at least one point in which they are far superior to ourselves and any of the other animals—while men and women, and cats and dogs and lions and tigers and fishes and insects have all got to hunt for their food, or, at least, move around looking for it, the plants and trees just sit still and gather it all in from the air and earth. You have never

¹ By the Reverend J. E. Stewart, M.A., Edinburgh.

seen a daisy hunting around the lawn for its breakfast ; and yet it eats just as does the blackbird who pulls worms out of their holes by the tail, and the mavis who smashes the snail's shell on a stone. The daisy does not move an inch from where she has been all her life—but she enjoys her breakfast all the same.

Now all these things we know already. But this Hindu gentleman can tell us far more. He can tell us that plants have nerves—they can feel ; he can tell us that sometimes they feel well, and sometimes they feel ill ; he can tell us that they go to sleep, and waken again ; and he can tell us that in the end, when they die, their death is so like our own that we can scarcely think of it without crying. Listen to some of the stories he has to tell. Some of them are—

Strange. He tells of a plant in India called the 'Praying Palm.' This is a palm which bows down when the temple bells are ringing in the evening and calling the people to prayer ; it seems to be praying too. Sir Jagadis Bose explains it all by telling us that the plant is affected by the sound waves coming from the bells—it hears them ; and although he would not ask us for a second to believe that it understands what the bells mean, still the effect of the sound upon that palm is the same as if it did really understand ; it actually bows down, it droops, because the bells are ringing.

And then some of his stories are—

Funny. While almost all plants, like good little boys and girls, go to bed early, and sleep soundly at least until sunrise, there is one plant, the Mimosa, which keeps most disgraceful hours ; it must be the black sheep of all the vegetable kingdom. He tells us—and it is horrible to think of—that very often it is two in the morning before a Mimosa is really sound asleep, and when the other plants waken at dawn it is still snoring away. It is never awake before eight, and sometimes it's nine o'clock, ten o'clock, or even midday, before it really has its eyes open !

But some of his stories are *very sad*. He describes the death of a plant. He tells us how it droops and droops, all the time getting weaker and weaker. Then suddenly there comes one awful moment when it all contracts for a second, and a kind of electric shock passes through its little body—and it's gone. The life's away, and will never come back. And that's just the way a human being dies ; there is the same shock and quiver, and then the end.

The Professor was lecturing some time ago at Oxford to a very learned company. By means of a clever arrangement of microscopes and lanterns he

was able to show upon a screen the actual death of a wallflower. He had poisoned the water it was in, and the audience saw the little flower struggling bravely against the poison, but all the time getting weaker and weaker. And then, just when it was at the very point of death, Sir Jagadis called out, 'Shall I let it die ?' and the whole audience called back, 'No ! No !' Then, amidst great excitement, he put a heart stimulant into the water which counteracted the poison, and the wallflower raised its head again, and was feeling as well as ever in a few minutes.

Is not all that a wonderful story ? How much it lets us see that we never saw before ; our marvellous world becomes more marvellous still after we have learned all that. But such a story should make us think too. If plants can feel like that—have we always been as kind to them as we should ? We have in this country a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ; but we will need to form another one for the Prevention of Cruelty to Plants. And that is the one I am going to ask you to join now. What are the rules for members of this society ? I think I could propose one or two.

1. *Never pick a flower unless you are going to make good use of it.* Flowers are always most beautiful growing ; but I think God meant us to have them in our homes too, and if we treat them well after we have picked them, we have nothing to be ashamed of. But I seem to have seen little boys and girls coming back home from their picnics with bunches of primroses and bluebells, and all those other lovely flowers we get by the roadsides and in the fields, and laying them down as soon as they get into the house, and forgetting all about them ! That's cruelty to plants.

2. *Never walk along a road picking the heads off flowers, or knocking them off with a stick.* That's just murdering them, robbing them of their life, for nothing ! No member of the society must ever do that.

3. *If you have plants in your house, remember to keep them watered.* Even if you have nothing but one aspidistra sitting on a table in the front window, give it the food it needs, and at the proper time ; remember it's not outside, and so is unable to look after itself.

But every society must have a motto ; what will our motto be ? Surely we won't take long to find it, for there is only one worth thinking of at all—the three words Jesus spoke—'Consider the Lilies.' Flowers are most beautiful when we see them growing ; and I am very sure Jesus did not pick one when He said that ; I am very sure, too, that He was

not hitting at them with a stick as He passed. He just pointed to them all waving in the field and said 'Look.' That must be our motto, and a very beautiful one it is; none of us could propose a better.

The Christian Year.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Call from Macedonia.

'And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.'—Ac 16⁹, 10.

Sir William Ramsay says that these two verses form what is in many respects the most remarkable paragraph in the Acts of the Apostles. In the light of all that has happened since, we can see that this is one of the turning-points in history. Both Western civilization and Christianity spring from this hour.

1. There have been various theories about the man of Macedonia who stood and besought Paul's help. But the one that is usually accepted now is that the suppliant was the Evangelist Luke. The clue to Luke's identity is revealed in our text. We are told that when 'he,' that is, the Apostle, had seen the vision, straightway 'we,' that is, Paul and Silas and Timothy and Luke, 'sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them.' The explanation is simple when it is placed before us. Luke was a native of Philippi, a city of Macedonia, and was settled as a physician in Troas. There he met Paul, who led him to Christ. The great missionary, like all who are sensitive to the touch and the voice of God, could not fail to see a meaning in the frustration of his two proposed adventures. He and his comrades were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to speak the Word in Asia. Then, when they turned to Bithynia on the other side, the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not. Where, then, would a great door and effectual be opened to him? While he was brooding over the future, while he was dreaming and scheming about his next campaign, a vision appeared to him in the night. He saw in a flash, in one of those supreme moments of illumination that break upon pioneers and conquerors, the tremendous significance of the alliance with Luke.

Straightway the Apostle concluded that God had

called him and his brethren to preach the gospel to the people of Philippi. To-morrow he would set sail for Europe. The response of Paul to the cry of that soul, athirst for the living God, was prompt and effective. Within twenty-four hours the Apostle with his three comrades in arms had started on their adventurous voyage across the Hellespont.

Some one has said that prudence is the master-stroke of the devil. At any rate the Church has often been retarded and defeated because the counsels of men who had no vision and who were superlatively endowed with caution have prevailed. Happily in this, as in every other momentous crisis in his career, the Apostle conferred not with flesh and blood. Men who prided themselves on their prudence would have stood speechless at the magnificent daring of Paul. As soon as they could recover their voice they could easily expose the folly of such an undertaking: the attempt was doomed to failure from its inception. But pessimists are always false prophets. Paul had seen another heavenly vision to which he would not be disobedient. He had heard the voice of God calling to him through human lips, and he knew by intuition and by experience that victory was assured.

Did Philippi respond to the Apostle's faith and courage? In this very chapter we have the record of three distinctly different conversions, representing three types of nationality—the Asiatic, the Greek, and the Roman—and it would be almost impossible to exaggerate the far-reaching results of this missionary journey. 'There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus.' Lydia was the first convert won in Europe. The Lord opened her heart like a flower caressed and unfolded by sunbeams. Then followed the dramatic conversion of the maid possessed with a spirit of divination. The third illustration of the power of the gospel was startling in its suddenness and its accompaniments. The Roman jailor, who a few hours ago had cast Paul and Silas into the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks, was roused from his sleep by an earthquake, and, trembling with fear, believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Out of these and similar elements emerged the Church at Philippi. None of his converts were nearer and dearer to the Apostle's heart. His letter to them is an almost unbroken *Jubilate Deo*. To him they were a perennial source of gladness and strength. Many a time his heart

must have ached as he brooded over the defections of the Galatians, the heresies of the Colossians, and the sensualities of the Corinthians. But the generosity, the discernment, and the fidelity of the Philippians were always to him like an Elim in the midst of an illimitable wilderness.¹

2. The story of how precisely Paul came to think of entering Europe with the gospel, is full of guidance for any of us who wants to make the best use of our life. There was at the back of everything his religion, and he was a missionary even before he became what he so proudly and humbly called himself, 'an ambassador for Christ.' We have our Lord's own word for it that the Pharisees would compass land and sea to make one proselyte, and Paul was a Pharisee of Pharisees. And more, he was an honest man. Christianity never changed that sound conception of life he had, namely, that we are here, all of us, to advocate and commend and advance some total view of life's meaning which we hold as most assuredly blessing life.

He must often have thought of Europe, but we have warrant for supposing that he never worried about it. A good man will do well to believe that if he holds himself ready each day to do what God wants him to do, he shall have done before he dies what God intended he should do. But we do read that, just about this time, the voice of God, as Paul would say, began to indicate Europe more precisely. And this happened in his case as it often happens with ourselves, the only difference between him and us being that we are apt not to make much of certain things that touch our souls firmly enough, but delicately. And we are too apt to say of some juncture of events which holds us up or embarrasses us that it was only accident, or it was nothing, when Paul would have said, and did say here, 'It is God.' So things began to point in a certain direction. He and his party thought of turning to the one side and going into Asia, and something seemed to hold them up. Then they decided to turn towards the other side, but there also they were forbidden, as if God had met them bodily on the highway and turned them back. They were like Foch at the first battle of the Marne, who reported to Joffre, 'My right flank is weakening, and my left flank is being turned, therefore I will'—retreat? No! therefore I will—'advance my centre with my whole force.'

That is what Paul did, and it brought him right up against the sea! Now it is not to be wondered at that, when Paul fell asleep that night to the swish of the sea, the figure of a man from the other side

should appear to him, saying in effect, 'It was for my sake and for the sake of the Europe which is my home that your pathway was blocked. God has brought you to the margin of the sea, not here and now to a standstill, but to the edge and moment of a new venture.'

May it not be that, by the very embarrassments of our life, and of our best life in all directions just now in these old countries, we are being directed, and indeed compelled, by God to take our eyes as much as may be away from ourselves, and to take up, as we have never yet taken up, the task of unifying the whole world with the mind of Jesus Christ concerning God and man and duty? We know that, had Paul refused to launch out, there is a fair chance that the Christian movement might have turned back upon itself, and might for ages have been lost in orientalism and futility.

We do know that, by setting out, St. Paul brought the saving salt to Europe; and in saving Europe, saved Christianity, for he liberated its genius.

If we were all of us only quiet enough and believing enough, feeling as we ought to feel how hot and angry and difficult life in its fairer forms is becoming amongst ourselves; and on the other hand, as we look abroad, if we could see the strange silences, the sinister groupings of the nations, the mounting possibilities which, unless God hinder them from maturing, might even now overwhelm the world—if we considered these things soberly and bravely, seeking guidance, we should awake with a new light in our eye, and something fresh in our voice; for something would have come to us, which, in its deep and permanent principles, was the very thing which came to Paul at Troas, a voice calling to him from lands beyond the sea.²

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Eternity in the Heart.

'He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world [eternity] in their heart.'—Ec 3¹¹ (R.V. marg.).

The Book of Ecclesiastes is curiously mixed. Here is cynicism as of a man who has seen many dreams turn to vanity. There, again, is gratitude as of a man who has known the goodness of Providence. Once more, we discover an element of shrewd and tried wisdom which well knows the virtues that are likely to endure through all entanglement. But the greatest thing in the book is not its

¹ W. Wakinshaw, *The Headsprings of Life*, 164.

² J. A. Hutton, *The Victory over Victory*, 187.

cynicism, its thankfulness, its joy, or its wisdom. Rather is it the appalling riddle which it leaves over the scroll like a huge note of interrogation—What is the chief good? What is the core of life's meaning? And nowhere does he write the question more boldly than here. 'He hath made every thing beautiful in its time: also he hath set "eternity" (not "the world") in their heart.' There you have it. Life and its prodigality of gifts, its glorious landscapes and shining seas, its ordered seasons and ceaseless flow, its rich capacities and Divine hopes, its temptations and its pleasures; and at the heart of all the unfathomed deep, not an accident or an illusion, not a phase of feeling which a less credulous age may outlive, not a cloud of mystery which the years may blow away, but a quality, an element set there in the midst of life by the hand of God. 'Thou hast set eternity in its heart.'

A wide range may be given to this central fact of existence, and we may assert that it dominates Nature, the life of the race, and the individual soul.

1. Is there not a sense in which the eternal lies at the heart of Nature? Recall the vision of the perfect glory of a summer day—the cloudless sky, the fair landscape, the bloom of flowers, the song of birds, and in the distance a glimpse of the cool gleaming sea. A vision of perfect beauty; but is it also a vision of perfect content? Does not its perfectness lie in this, that it is never captured? There is something that eludes us, that something of which Wordsworth was the triumphant modern interpreter. The shimmer of beauty over a great sea, the round of the seasons, with their unending process of resurrection, death, and resurrection once more, hint at great things lying very near to the heart of Nature. We do not really understand Nature until we surmise the presence of something eternal, of which Nature is but a fleeting symbol.

2. God has dowered the races, we say, each with its own peculiar genius. To Greece He gave the genius of philosophy and art. Greece became a supreme type of the 'brooding East.' To Rome was given the genius of empire and of law. To the Teutonic peoples came the gifts of the practical and pragmatic mind. But there was another race, materially of small account, which God set among the nations, a race distinguished above all others by its instinct for religion, its passion for moral righteousness, its sense of the eternal. The Hebrew people of all nations bore most clearly the signature of the eternal. It is said of Greece, by way of contrast with Judea, that 'it made earth a home, ordered and well equipped for the race; it supplied

the lacking elements—art, science, secular poetry, philosophy, political life, social intercourse.' All that we may admit with endless gratitude, yet we must maintain that the supreme good—the heart amid all this diversity of gifts—came along the track of Hebrew religion, which Christ carried to its summit and transfigured in His own Person. God set the eternal among the nations, that they might be swayed from one centre and swept on to a common destiny. So the poet is not far wrong when he sings:

Thus the sharp contrasts of the Sculptor's Plan
Showed the two primal paths our race has trod,
Hellas the nurse of man complete as man,
Judea pregnant with the living God.

3. Nature and history lead us to man. This is the final truth. He hath set the eternal in the human heart. What a miraculous thing is this nature of ours! And how splendid were it not for the invasion and entanglement and ruin of sin! What a galaxy of powers, what a republic of forces in the least conspicuous of us! The mind itself is a world of wonder in its most ordinary processes, in its simplest thought. That majestic faculty we call conscience—judge, prophet, and king in one—'had it might as it has right, it would absolutely govern the world.' The love that suffers for love's sake, that can pass through fire and flood and be unquenchable in death, the imagination which banishes distance and defies the dark, and gathers light like sheaves from distant worlds—these are Divine things. Yet there is something more. 'Take the charm "for ever" from them and they crumble into dust.' This is the something more. 'He hath set the eternal in our heart.' Here is the tremendous significance of our life, its unimaginable peril no less than its glory and security. We are part not of a world of shadows, but of a world of everlasting fact. The touch of God's hand, the witness of our origin, lies deep in our being. It is futile to attempt to read human life, its sin or its virtue, its obloquy or glory, without this clue.

If this is so, then it seems to yield us three clear morals:

(1) The utter folly of ordering human life along purely secular lines. *Vanitas vanitatum*—it is the inevitable comment on the limited material view. Gibbon speaks of a Saracen commander to whom had come wealth and pleasure, power and splendour, who yet confessed that out of fifty years he could count but fourteen days of genuine happiness. Had the standard been higher, even the fourteen might have been wiped out. The soul that has the touch

of the eternal on it must remain unsatisfied till the Eternal God comes in.

(2) The pitiful mistake of sin. Sin never, in this life or in any other, can satisfy. It corrodes and debases and exhausts. It leaves only more terrible the unfathomable void. Sin is all negation and defect, incalculable defect, whereas goodness is all gain, incalculable gain.

(3) The extraordinary and complete mercy of God, as shown to us in the perfect fitness of Jesus to be the Saviour of our strange complex life. If God hath set the eternal in the heart of all that He has made, then the eternal itself has an innermost heart. And that heart is Christ. He makes the seen and the unseen one. He bridges the gulf between a world that is passing and a world of abiding reality. The infinite would be a yawning blackness if when we encountered it Christ did not fill it with His glory. Even the dream of immortality might become a torment if there were no Christ. But Christ abideth, bone of our bone, kind, forgiving, eternal. With His eyes we see the glad sunshine, not of this world alone, for He it is who has brought us near to God and enabled us to see that He who has made everything beautiful in its time is Himself Eternal Beauty, Eternal Goodness, and Eternal Life.¹

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Friendship of Christ.

'I have called you friends.'—Jn 15¹⁸.

1. *What the Friendship of Christ means.*—The tragedy of personality is its loneliness; the more personality is developed, the more this essential loneliness is felt. Deep down that is the cause of man's unrest, his intolerable loneliness, which nowhere can he get relieved. It is as if the soul of man were only half a personality, or twin born, and its twin lost or dead.

And the tragedy is often only intensified in the search for its mate. Some temperaments find their refuge in a crowd of acquaintances in whose collective presence one seems at last to be alive; but all such crowds must disperse, and there follows the inevitable reaction. It is the modern substitute for religious fellowship to spend a great deal of time in conferences with kindred spirits; and in these conferences great spiritual impulses are born and high vision vouchsafed; but their general effect is debilitating; for, when the conference separates, it is often found that there is a reaction

¹ A. Connell, *The Endless Quest*, 227.

of depression to be faced. Other temperaments seek for satisfaction in the worship of the crowd. This is the lure of politics, and often, it is to be feared, the false ambition of preaching. Others seek completion in a few choice friends or in some one beloved soul. But for the few that find the one real friend there are many who come out of the search not only disappointed but disillusioned.

For the truth is that human personality is impermeable to its own kind, and its secrets remain incommunicable to any other. What is wanted is some more spiritual personality; some vision which sees everything at a flash, so that there is no uncomfortable progression of painful self-revelation to go through; and yet a personality of such peculiar moral construction that while it will not approve anything that is evil and bad, yet neither will it be repelled nor its friendship destroyed by what it sees. In the presence of such a friend one could find rest because one could be oneself, since it would be no use being anything else. One could talk or be silent at choice. This is a demand for God, and for a friendly God.

It is precisely to fulfil this need of friendship that the Incarnation took place.

We want the Divine if we are going to have perfect vision, perfect penetration of soul; but, if we are going to have perfect confidence and joy upon our side, we want the human too. But bare combination of God and man, as historical Person and eternal Spirit, would provide neither the warmth nor attractiveness that we need. Now the life of Jesus is simply a living out in unmistakable plainness of the great friendship of God for us. There is first His own craving for friendship. It would be nothing to us if our Divine friend simply gave all to us and seemed not to need us in return. With all the resources of His own character and His unbroken communion with His Father, Jesus obviously craved human friendship. And when He gathers round Him a bodyguard, to whom He commits the preaching of the gospel and the building up of the Church, His last great name for them is neither disciples nor apostles, but friends. Let it never be forgotten that the foundation of the Catholic and Apostolic Church is a Society of Friends, the company of Jesus.

Could there be any more convincing revelation that, for whosoever needs it, God in Christ is set forth as furnished with every capacity for being man's Friend? And to crown all with evidence written in blood, in accordance with words which have their perfect application to Himself alone: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay

down his life for his friends.' And both by character and deed, by strange overmastering attractiveness and still stranger sense of affinity, Jesus Christ has vindicated Himself across the spaces of history and beyond the differences of race and culture to have infinite capacity for befriending the sons of men. Like all friendship, it has something mysterious about it; it springs up suddenly or grows through years of mere acquaintance into intimate love; at first repelled, and only won after a long fight with oneself, and with many struggles with the competing friendship of the world it at last overpowers. With others it is just love at first sight and love for ever.

2. *Why do so few advance to real Friendship with Jesus?*—Some do not because they are not ripe for it.

There are some who have never sought the friendship of Jesus because they have not yet come to that stage where they are conscious of the need of friendship. In matters of the soul some are still back in the completely socialized stage; for such persons, with differing temperament, the crowd, patriotism, or the Church is respectively sufficient. For even in religion one can go a long way in Christianity and yet fall short of the stage where Jesus is known after this intimate fashion. There are souls who are willing to obey Christ, who rejoice in the fact of the Incarnation, who live within the circle of the Church, which is, after all, kept wide open by the spirit of friendship which Jesus inspired, and who yet have never known Him thus closely as a personal friend.

But there are some who seem ready and yet seem to miss it.

The teaching of the passage from which our text is taken probably throws some light upon this more difficult problem. Jesus does distinctly state that the position of friendship is one that supervenes upon others: 'Ye are my friends if ye do the things which I command you.' There must be a willingness for ethical obedience. Sometimes in human friendship we observe something like real friendship between characters who are morally opposed. No such friendship is possible with Jesus. The Lord declares that the call to friendship succeeds to a relationship which is more accurately described as that of servant. He seems to assume that that has a rightful place, that there is a novitiate for friendship, in which one is first nothing but servant.

But even when, so far as we can tell, all conditions have been fulfilled, there often remains a lack of realization. Jesus is not to some souls what He is to others, and what He is assuredly

willing to be to all. There is a lack of any sense that He is as available as an ordinary friend. Or He does not relieve, as one might expect, some particular experience of frustrated love or isolated life. Yet there is sufficient evidence in great souls, who had to pass lonely through life and yet found Jesus give all that human friendship could give, to convince us that it is due to no lack in Him and to no circumstances, however hard and bitter, that life can create. Think of Paul, whose experience here has been so finely characterized by F. W. H. Myers:

Lone on the land and homeless on the water

Yet not in solitude if Christ anear me.

Think of Livingstone, lost in the vast forests of Central Africa, keeping on his lonely way, murmuring, 'Jesu dulcis memoria.' Think of Newman's over-sensitive and unbefriended soul, cut off from the companions and co-workers of his earlier days, yet finding in Jesus his friend. Then what do some of these awakened but unsatisfied souls miss? Perhaps it is that they are unable to believe that a friendship which is shared can be enough. They want a lover all to themselves; they cannot be content with the Lover of men who has to distribute His affection over the vast numbers of the souls He died to save. This incorporates a selfishness into the demand of love which prohibits its satisfaction. Perhaps it is that they are trying to keep friends with the world; they have lost their hearts to pleasure, fame, riches, or power. No such divided heart can ever know what the friendship of Christ really means.

What may ease and release them all is to set forth what the friendship of Christ means.

It means an ever-present friendship. One does not always feel that He is near, or always remember. He is not one of those friends who soon tire us out by continually thrusting themselves upon us. But when we want Him He is always there. It is not a friendship which can exist only so long as there is conversation going. Sometimes the heart burns and overflows with love and devotion; but if one wants to be quiet, He will consent to remain with us and walk by our side there; and that is enough. That is particularly the sort of presence that the Sacrament seems to bestow. One does not need to pray, but just to rest and be still in the calm serenity of His nearness. But there is a welcome sign of His being ever present in that the presence is never withdrawn when true friendship has once been established. He is not easily put off by the

humours which cloud our devotion, nor does He leave it all to us to make up again when we have done something that would have offended an ordinary friend. He comes to seek us out. He begins the re-establishment of friendship, as He did with Peter after His great denial. One has the rest of knowing that if we prove faithless He remains faithful.

It means a fruitful friendship. There are some friends with whom intercourse proves at length wearisome because they really contribute nothing ; some friendships which we grow out of, because we have grown while our friends remain the same. But the friendship of Jesus offers us the constant stimulus of His stirring and cheering mind. When one lives in the gospel story one finds that one is in contact with a mind which is ever new, and with a character which has the effect of continually bracing and elevating our own.

It means a very tender friendship. No words can reveal to another the intimate secrets of the friendship Jesus brings. 'The love of Jesus what it is, none but His loved ones know.' But what constitutes that tenderness and what brings out all the devotion and loyalty, the gratitude and endless romance of it, is the fact that He laid down His life for His friends. And so whenever we think of Him there He stands, and there comes to our eyes a light, and to our faces a smile, and to our lips a song. And what joy to be able to introduce Him to others, 'This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend.'¹

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Death or Life ?

'For the wages of sin is death ; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.'—Ro 6²³.

Paul condenses his high argument on the interaction of the wrath and the grace of God into this brief sentence. It holds three affirmations. The first is that the enmity and mutiny of sin receive the penalty of death as justly and deservedly as a labourer receives his wage for the work he has done. The second is that the pulsing spiritual energy of eternal life is the gift of God in and through Jesus Christ. The third is that every man must face these two alternatives.

1. '*The wages of sin is death.*'—What is death ? Like life it remains, in the last analysis, a mystery, but the proofs and evidences of it are clear and definite. The signs of physical death have a certain similarity to those of spiritual death, although the

one is a swifter, subtler, and more awful experience than the other. Physical death is recognized by the failure of the organism to fulfil its functions. The brain becomes torpid : the heart stops. The second evidence is the insensibility which can make no response to any stimulus from the outer world. Then there is the final and unmistakable proof—corruption. So in spiritual death this failure of the functions of the soul, this absence of response to the appeal of a spiritual world, and at last a moral corruption make up its sure signs. These are the wages of death.

Let us mark the history of this penalty. Consider, to begin with, the instancy of death. Death passes upon the soul in the very act of sin. God does pay wages in the hour in which they are earned. We all know how instantly the sentence of death passes in the moment when the passion is sated. It is, as our poet says :

A bliss in proof, . . . and proved, a very woe.

In the moment of sin death passes upon the innocence and heart's-ease of the soul. The pure and wistful thought is stricken, and even the honest look in the eyes has gone. In the Old Testament story, with its inspired insight, we are told that in the moment when the forbidden fruit was eaten 'the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.' So, always, death passes upon the virgin purity, and stifles the holy desires of the soul. Like a touch of frost on the flowers of the garden, the tender and living simplicities of the soul are dead. A little child spends an hour in a picture palace where deeds of vicious purpose are disclosed, a youth looks into a forbidden scene of revelry, a man yields, for the first time, to a haunting temptation—in the instant death shoots through the soul.

Mark, again, the sequences in death. This first touch of death, in which innocence and shame and pure feeling have been withered, is followed by a more penetrating deadliness over a widening area. The first sin is like the first speck of rottenness in the peach. It spreads. For death goes on to assail all the sweet relationships of life. You can never be the same son, the same brother, the same husband or wife, the same father or mother after you have sinned against these loyalties. The bloom of the heart has been despoiled. The romance of life is gone. Something has come between you and all life's sweetest intimacies, and that something is a withered faculty touched by death.

This sequence of death continues its course. It

¹ W. E. Orchard, *The Safest Mind Cure*, 20.

assails all Nature, but there is one sphere where sin's penalty is sadly evident. That is in the body. The loathsome sore that will not heal, the manifest corruption in the blood, the shattered nerve are all part of the wages of death. These are not the scars which honest toil and self-sacrificing strain have marked upon a man's features and frame. No, these are the tokens of the conquests of death. The people in the wilderness loathed the manna and craved for flesh to eat. They murmured in a wilful rebellion. God gave them their request. The quails fell in abundance round the camp, and the people gorged themselves with their flesh. Then the plague arose and the camp became an arena of death. The name of the place was called Kibroth Hataavah—the graves of lust. Wherever there is a lust there is a grave.

The penalty of death has issues and consequences beyond the sinner himself. It passes out to others, often to his dearest. A little child's faith and reverence have been slain by the self-indulgence, the foul jest, the angry temper of those who were its guides. The home that should have been a sanctuary is a place where all aspiration dies at its birth. There are graves which men dare not visit, for the dead who lie in them yet speak in condemnation of the self-will and passion of those who can never forget their green mounds. And, if you will but think of it, you will see that this penalty of death passed out from sinful humanity until at last it smote Him who knew no sin and nailed Him to His cross.

Then mark the final issue of death. That is its dominion in the soul. 'Sin,' writes James, 'when it is finished bringeth forth death.' He is thinking of sin as though it were born a feeble and undeveloped child coming to its maturity and then giving birth to death—the death of the soul. For what is the last issue of death but to lose the power to hope in God and to have the old relentings and repentings of younger years? The man who once longed to be holy, who knew that righteousness and peace and joy were the supreme felicities of life, who had been on the brink of a complete surrender may close his life in a spiritual torpor. And here we see the decisive proof of death. It is not the failure of the functions of the soul. It is not the lack of response to the call of Christ. It is corruption. When, then, the soul has become so corrupt that it can plunge into moral slime without a qualm, and can play the glutton with evil, and wipe its lips and say, 'I have done no harm,' the full wages of sin has been paid. Shakespeare draws his corrupt soul in Iago, whom neither

innocence, nor honour, nor trust, nor love will move :

When devils will the blackest sins put on,
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
As I do now ;

So will I turn her virtue into pitch,
And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all.

Then the soul dwells in silence, and there is no silence like that of death.

2. '*The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*'—Life is always a gift. The seed which was cast into the ground will burst, and its green blade will appear. How, its sower knows not. The life is a gift. A little child was born this morning. His mother heard his infant cry with a catch in her heart. She marked his soft breathing and found it music. Whence came that pulsing, breathing life? Life is a gift. A man was born again to-day. He had been drifting into ways of rebellion. He had ceased to feel the goad in his conscience. He had forgotten how to pray. Then a word, a child's voice, a woman's appeal, a bereavement awoke him. He was touched to the quick, and moved to penitence and trust. How? He cannot tell. Eternal life is the gift of God. 'Through Jesus Christ our Lord'—that is the indispensable condition. Shall we say that there was no spiritual life before Christ came, and that men who sought after God did not find Him? Surely there was life, but it was not 'life in Christ' with its experiences and its potencies. The certainty and fact of eternal life in Christ can be realized in this way. We cannot say that the men who knew the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob had not received the gift of life. We cannot say that millions, of whom Abraham was ignorant, have not been quickened by this gift. But it is a great gift of God to live after our Lord. Life in Christ is a visitation such as the old Hebrew times never knew. Had Abraham, ascending his green hill, Moriah, found the cross uplifted on its summit; or had Moses, on the mountain-top, looked into the transfigured face of the Son of God; or had David lifted his eyes of shame, not to Nathan, with his rebuke, but to Christ, with His look, what a gate of new life would have been opened before them all! Abraham would have made no sacrifice. Moses would have summed up his commandments in one great call to love. David would have fallen down to kiss Christ's feet and wet them with his tears. A new light would have

shone within their minds, a new peace been given to their consciences, and an uprush of crucified desires would have found expression in their lives.

3. Now every man is either in the way of death, or the way of life. St. Paul sets these two truths down as alternatives, and there are only two. Every man is passing on either through the sequences of death or the sequences of life. Tender and sensitive minds have shrunk from accepting this stern truth, but we cannot accept, even to escape our saddening thoughts, the teaching that the immortality of the soul is an illusion. Rather, with Martineau, it is true 'nothing human ever dies.' What Paul says is not that men have life, but that they have eternal life in Christ. Immortal existence that cannot be quenched is not eternal life. Life without Christ is possible here. Life without Christ is possible hereafter. Eternal life in this world and

in every other world must be the gift of God. There are, therefore, the two alternatives—death or life. If a man will pass on in his own self-willed, headstrong way, if he will refuse to yield up his soul and his life to God, if he will disdain to accept that new principle and transforming energy which Christ alone can give, he will, in the moment of his refusal, enter the shadow of death, and he will find it deepening its darkness until the light is gone.

There is a season on the earth when the year is at the spring, and life comes down upon it out of heaven from God. There is also a season in the experience of the soul. That season is at hand when a man is discovered to himself by the power of the Holy Spirit; and a new craving for fellowship with God, and a new desire to walk with Christ in the strength of truth and purity, awaken within the soul.¹

¹ W. M. Clow, *The Evangel of the Strait Gate*, 69.

Contributions and Comments.

Ἐπιστρέφω (Lukē xlii. 32).

YOUR readers will be grateful to Mr. Lee (February issue of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES) for the ingenious rendering that he suggests of καὶ σύ ποτε ἐπιστρέψας, στήρυξον τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς σου—'and you, when you have converted your brothers, strengthen them.' But one fears that it is more ingenious than accurate. For, is not ἐπιστρέφω to be taken as intransitive—as in Mt 13¹⁵, καὶ ἐπιστρέψωσι; Mk 4¹², μὴ ποτε ἐπιστρέψωσι; Ac 13¹⁹, μετανήσατε οὖν καὶ ἐπιστρέψατε; Ac 28²¹, καὶ ἐπιστρέψωσι—which clauses respectively Moffatt renders thus: 'and turn again'; 'lest they turn'; 'repent, then, and turn'; 'and turn again'? On what authority Moffatt forsakes his 'turn' rendering in what seems to be a parallel text (Lk 22³²)—taking ἐπιστρέψας in a mere adverbial sense—one would like to know.

The view that ἐπιστρέφω is intransitive in the text before us is further strengthened by reference to Ac 3¹⁹ 9³⁵ 11²¹ 14¹⁵ 15¹⁹ 26²⁰, 2 P 2²¹.

Taking all this into account, and reflecting that the immediate context, 'I have prayed that your faith may not fail,' implies that what follows is to be taken in an ethical or moral sense, I humbly suggest for the clause under review the rendering,

'And you, when once you actually reform, be a strength to your brothers.'

P. THOMSON.

Dunning.

'A Scorpion for an Egg' (Lukē xi. 12).

THE point of our Lord's illustration is that it is an unnatural and unusual thing for fathers to deceive their children. No decent father would offer his child a harmful thing—a serpent—if he asked a fish; or a useless thing—a stone—if he asked a loaf. A child might easily be thus deceived. For there is a resemblance between fish and serpents, and stones rounded by the action of water might be mistaken for loaves of a certain make. But is there any remote resemblance between eggs and scorpions? Thomson's suggestion, in *The Land and the Book*, namely, that a white scorpion with its tail tucked in might look like a small egg, is rejected by Hastings' *D.C.G.* as 'unsatisfactory.'

I have more than once seen the following trick played by an Indian conjurer, which may possibly offer a clue. The conjurer takes from amongst his properties some small article (it might easily be an egg) and closes his hand upon it. He then offers