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must be the quality of His death that assures to us the fact of His resurrection, rather than the miracle of His resurrection that assures the godlikeness of His death. The spiritual rather validates the content of the appearances than depends on them for its validity. Indeed, it seems that the nature of the appearances can be understood only if His spirit had already triumphed in the hearts of His disciples. For He did not appear to them in the sorrow of soul in which He had left them. Whence the change? Death had released Him from bodily pain, but what had changed His sorrow to peace? If His sorrow was caused by the world's sin, the world of Israel and the Twelve and the Gentiles, had that cause been removed or diminished? If there had already been a change in the hearts of the Eleven, then there was the beginning and promise of victory, not otherwise. The appearance itself could not effect that change, for it could not have been of the sort it was until that change was effected. And any change effected by the miraculous nature of an appearance cannot be deeply spiritual: if they really needed a miracle to assure them that Jesus in His suffering

was nearer to God than Caiaphas in his success, then their misunderstanding of Him would only be confirmed by such a miracle. Considered in this way, we may regard the appearance of Jesus to His disciples in vision as the result of the working of His spirit in their hearts, winning them to His truth and fashioning for Himself from the psychic elements of their inward conflict the vision that should lift His triumph into the centre of their conscious life and give them the inward wholeness that is peace and power.

In this way we may see the triumph of His death achieved in the very conditions of actual life that gave human worth to the triumph of His personality. He reigns in the inevitable and surrounding facts of life. He reigns in and by means of what is the essential and characteristic and formative urge of personality—the urge to an ordered and inclusive unity. His triumph in us comes in that which it gives—the inward unity that is peace and power—our triumph over self-division in self-devotion to One who evokes our glad loyalty and entire worship. So upon the experience of His resurrection follows Pentecost.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

Why People come to Church.

BY PROFESSOR A. J. GOSSIP, M.A., GLASGOW.

'Go to the ant, consider her ways, and be wise.'—
Pr 6^e.

WHY do people come to church? I don't know, you say. I wish they didn't. The singing is all right; and the prayers are not too bad; but the sermon never ends at all! I know, poor little tousley-head, with the fidgety hands, and the legs that can't keep still, and the wee voice that keeps whispering to Mother, 'Is he nearly done now!' There was a picture about that in *Punch* the other month that showed us a fed-up little soul so very anxious to get home, asking its mother hopefully, as if one chance was still left and it might come true, 'Mother! Mother! if the church went on fire, would he stop then?'

Yet, you know, people like to come to church. Whatever for? you ask. Because they are looking for something that they want, that they must have, and they think they can find it here.

And that brings me to the ants. You know what

they are, don't you? No! no! Not Aunt Jessie nor Aunt Any-body-at-all, but the creepy, crawly, little things that go running to and fro so busily upon the ground. They are a clever little folk the ants. They grow crops like the farmers! Did you know that? And they have games, just like your school, with huge crowds looking on. And they march out to battle in battalions under officers. Perhaps that isn't really clever; for war is a stupid thing. Yet it's strange, isn't it, that these tiny heads of theirs have brains wise enough to think out things like that. But the cleverest thing of all, surely, is this.

South Africa is, in places, a hot country, sometimes dreadfully hot. For months and months and months there is never a drop of rain, and the sun blazes down day after day, and the grass withers, and the trees shrivel up, and the sheep die, and all the streams are bare and dry, no longer streams at all, but just hot stones, too hot by far to touch. And yet, even there, the great heaps in which the ants live are moist and wet and full of the damp, steamy heat they love. And people couldn't understand it. Quite close the ground was hard and cracked and gaping; and clouds of

dust were blowing past, and all living things were parched and yellowed and dead. Yet here was the great ant-heap moist as ever!

And it was only a few months ago that they found out how it is done. Working very, very carefully about and around and under a huge ant-heap, they came upon a passage just like the shaft of a mine that runs down and down and down into the earth. And this shaft, too, was beautifully made, and led down and down for sixty-five feet, down and down to a stream, so far underground that the sun can't touch it and so it is not dried up in drought, but runs there full and cool and fresh as ever. And the ants kept hurrying there and hurrying back with water, in their mouths I suppose; and they watered their little fields of fungus-crops, and spilt it all about, to keep things nice and wet and steamy; and so back for more and more. It took them a long time to go and come, about half an hour, I think. How could those watching know? Oh, easily enough! They might mark them with little dots of different colours, and watch, and by and by, 'Look, there's Mr. Red-dot back again; he took half an hour. And here's the yellow fellow. He was slower, and was away thirty-five minutes!' Anyway, they keep at it, down and up, and back and fro, the whole day long.

Now, that's why people come to church. They are hot and dusty and tired. They want water to cool and to cleanse and to refresh them. And Jesus Christ can give it them. I, said He, have living water, always running, always cool, and always there for any one that wants it. And one of the shafts that leads down to it starts here. Listen! Can't you hear it running and laughing and leaping. Well, the folk round you have come for that, so that their hearts mayn't get all dry and hard and cross and selfish and grumpy, but may be green and happy and full of lovely things. That's why they are here.

But there is another thing. All the ants have to go down for the water, not just one or two, or a few of them picked for the job, but all of them. During the night those called in from other work are set to this, and the whole crowd of them keep hurrying up and hastening down, over and over and over again.

And if we are to get this water you must do your part and help to bring it. 'I! Oh! I can't do anything! That is the minister's job.' No! no! the whole of us must work at it. Yes, and you too. 'But what could I do?' you say. More than you think. There's a woman coming in; how tired she looks! Couldn't you ask, 'Oh,

please God, let her get some of the water. Please God, do!' And there's a man; how old he is! No games for him, just a dull, grown-up life, and dreadfully old at that. Couldn't you ask God to give him something to make up to him a little for being so slow and stupid, with his old stiff legs and old tired feet that can't run any longer? And couldn't you say to God, 'Father dear, here is a foolish little rowdy boy, who is always doing the wrong thing, and always somehow getting into trouble. Help me to be less cross and selfish, and more thoughtful and brave and kind.' And that will come.

Yes: all of us must do our part. You too!

The Soul's Wardrobe.

BY THE REVEREND STUART ROBERTSON, M.A.,
GLASGOW.

'Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; . . . and above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.'—Col 3¹²⁻¹⁴.

What a task dressing oneself is! At first, and for a long time, we can't do it. It is done for us. It is done *to* us. Mothers and nurses enjoy doing it, but we don't enjoy having it done. We object. We protest loudly and kick violently, but it's no good. Dressed we have got to be, and dressed we are, and everybody gets some satisfaction out of it, except us.

Then a great day comes: we dress ourselves! We can do it now. How grown-up we feel! But our troubles are far from being over. They are only changed. We are continually being 'dropped on' because we are not properly dressed. 'Johnny, go and change that collar at once; it's not fit to be seen.' 'Elsie, go and put on another frock. You can't possibly go out in that one.' So it goes on.

When we get past these hurdles, we have only a short time of peace, for the task then becomes a problem, the problem of 'what to put on.' It's a problem for girls sooner than for boys, but soon it becomes a very serious matter for boys as well. The choice of ties and socks demands anxious thought! One must wear what the other fellows wear. It's a ghastly business to go to school in slacks when plus-fours are 'the thing.' A boy would rather go to instant execution than be odd in his clothes. Girls, of course, never have 'anything to put on,' 'not a stitch fit to wear.' This really means that they have a wardrobe full of

'stitches,' but they can't make up their minds which to put on.

I wonder if we ever give half as much thought to what our souls shall put on? We ought to: it matters far more. The clothes of our souls are our habits; and, as if we knew that, we borrow the word to describe certain sorts of clothes and talk, for instance, about a riding 'habit.' Other clothes we buy, but these we make ourselves, weaving them thread by thread, by thoughts and words and actions, until a 'habit' is formed; and it is very difficult to put off once it has been put on. We make them as a shellfish makes his shell. If it lives in clean water and sunlight, the shell is lovely with fair colours; if it lives in mud and dirty water, and away from the light, the shell is dark and ugly. And we, too, will have our souls clothed with beauty or ugliness, just as we live and move and think amid the things that are clean and full of light, or among things that are muddy and unclean.

Now the Bible has a good deal to say about what we should 'put on.' It tells us what our soul's wardrobe should be if we are to be well dressed. Listen! 'Put on, therefore, as God's chosen ones, consecrated and dear to Him, compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, good temper.'

What lovely soft stuffs! How delightful to the touch! Nothing stiff and starchy about them; nothing rough and humpy; nothing glaring. Their colours are soft and pleasing to the eye. In what graceful folds they fall. They suit every one whose 'habits' they are. To 'put on' these is to have your soul well dressed. 'And over all these,' it goes on, 'put on Love. It is the belt that completes it all.'

That is how our Lord would have His children dressed. So the Bible says, 'Awake! awake! put on your beautiful garments.' You can't buy them like other clothes, nor can you fling them on in a hurry. They must be made, and put on gradually. Every act of kindness, every thought of compassion, every time temper and conceit are controlled and put to silence, a stitch is added to the beautiful garments of your soul, until, like Christ's seamless robe, they are knit into one gracious and seemly harmony.

Get busy, then, with the wardrobe of your soul. Remember this, too, that if your soul is not dressed in these beautiful garments, it doesn't really matter much what clothes you put on your body. The best of them wear out, and go out of fashion; but these things never wear out, never go out of fashion, and are always lovely.

The Christian Year.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Citizenship of Heaven.

'For our citizenship is in heaven.'—Ph 3²⁰ (R.V.).

This text in other times might have been called a pulpit commonplace; now it sounds almost like a challenge. Among all the changes which have come over religious and theological teaching within living memory none seems so momentous as the acute secularizing of Christianity, as shown by the practical disappearance of the other world from the sermons and the writings of those who are most in touch with the thoughts and aspirations of our contemporaries. The modern clergyman need not be afraid of being nicknamed a 'sky pilot.' The New Jerusalem which fills his thoughts is a revolutionized London. As for the appeals to hopes and fears beyond the grave, the scheme of government by rewards and punishments, on which Bishop Butler dilates, they are gone. Our generation will not listen to them. Give us something to help us here and now is the cry. Tell us how to remedy social evils, and especially how to reduce the amount of physical suffering.

Now, whether we sympathize with this change or not, we must admit that it is a very great one. The gospel has never been so preached before. From the time of the first martyrs to our own day the Christian has always felt that this world is not his home; his eyes have been fixed upon the curtain which hangs between us and the beyond through which, as he believed, streamed forth broken gleams of a purer light than ever poured from the sun. In all the changes and chances of this mortal life he has looked for 'the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' However pictured, the eternal world has been hitherto for Christians the real world. The only reality which belongs to this present life lies in the mysterious fact that temporal acts have eternal issues, that the purposes of God and the irrevocable destinies of men and women are being worked out in this shifting stage. Are we so modern that this seems unreal to us?

What was the message of Jesus Christ to mankind? How did He judge human life, and what was His estimate of the value of social and economic arrangements? We have been told to distinguish between judgments of fact and judgments of value. The two cannot indeed be held apart, for a fact which has no value is not even a fact but an unrelated and meaningless accident, if such a thing

were possible. And, assuredly, that which has no existence has also no value. But the distinction is sometimes useful, and we may employ it here by saying that the revelation of Jesus Christ was a revelation of human life based upon certain great truths. The essence of Christianity is a transvaluation of all values in the light of our Divine sonship and heavenly citizenship. The first Christians were accused of turning the world upside down. This is just what the teaching of Christ does if the average man sees the world right side up. The things that are seen are temporal, fugitive, relatively unreal. The things that are not seen are eternal; real in their changeless activity and inexhaustible fulness of meaning. Jesus Christ Himself lived in the presence of these timeless realities. He was in heaven, as St. John seems to say, even if He came down to earth. Every joy was for Him a thanksgiving, every wish a prayer. And in so living He knew that the only thing that matters in this world is the life, or the soul, which is here on its trial, passing through its earthly pilgrimage towards weal or woe. Earthly interests He views and judges without harshness, but with an unmistakable aloofness, often expressed with kindly pity and a sort of delicate irony. 'What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' 'Is not the life more than meat and the body than raiment?' The pomps and vanities of this world seem to Him childish. A wild flower is a much more beautiful object than a king or queen dressed up for a state function. How absurd, too, to hoard valuables which will probably be spoilt or stolen, and which in any case divert our attention from heavenly things. He almost laughs at the man who brings Him a burning family grievance to settle.

Now this is a very different attitude from that of the Old Testament prophets who really did throw themselves into social and political agitation. They plunged into the stormy sea of politics. Our Lord walked over it dry shod, as He walked over the Lake of Galilee. The naïve exclamation, 'Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God,' evoked a parable which showed how far such thoughts were from our Lord's mind. The kingdom of God, as St. Paul saw truly, is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Christ's kingdom was not of this world; and yet this is the Divine paradox of Christianity: we cannot be saved by resolving to know nothing but God and our own souls. The introspective isolated life is emphatically not the Christian life. Our Lord's detachment from external

things was combined with intense interest in the personalities of men and women.

These two sides of His teaching never fly apart in the gospel itself, but all through the history of the Church they have done so continually. The contemplative hermit and the busy humanitarian are both half-Christians, and yet much less than half, because each side is spoiled by its one-sidedness. And the two sides are held together by the teaching and the example of Christ. The proclamation of this gospel was the good news, because it makes the Christian more self-sufficing than the Stoic, without his hardness; more content with simple natural pleasures than the Epicurean, without his propensity to shirk social duties; more of an idealist than Plato, although the better country of the Christian is not allowed to suck the importance and the meaning from the present life; a stricter moralist than the Jew, although the Second Table of the Law is briefly comprehended in this saying, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' Love for the brethren and indifference to the troublesome accessories of life, both alike based on that new estimate of values which in its turn is based on our Divine sonship and heavenly citizenship; what could it not accomplish? And so Jesus left His message to the care of the few simple folk to whom He gave it; left it unwritten; left it undeveloped. All a matter of principles with no rules.

Jesus Christ's standard of values in the light of our Divine sonship and heavenly citizenship is the standard for all Christians. We have been born into a period full of danger and difficulty, a period of transition in many ways, a period which demands men and heroes. It is not a time when any one has a right to lead a life of frivolity, immersed in such childish interests as games and horse-racing. Let us give ourselves time to think, to pray. Let us ask God to show us what things are really valuable and worth striving for, and what things are not. Let us try hard and earnestly to make the eternal world real, and it never will be real unless we try hard to see it. The spiritual eye needs training and exercise as much as the bodily organ. Creatures who live in the dark end by losing their eyes. And do not let us live softly. Let us learn to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ; whatever our political or economic theories it must be wise and patriotic to lead a simple life, and it is a very great help to the knowledge of God. And lastly, remember that our Master came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Mr. Bernard Shaw's definition of a gentleman is one who puts in the common stock more than he takes out. And it

is the way of the Cross ; and Christianity without the Cross is a miserable counterfeit.

Let us, then, sum up by repeating the text, 'Our citizenship is in heaven,' but heaven is nearer to our souls than this earth is to our bodies.¹

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Things that are Not.

'And things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.'—1 Co 1²⁸.

The subject of this passage—one of the central and supreme passages in the Pauline Epistles—is the Cross of Jesus Christ. To the Jew that Cross was a stumbling-block, for the Jew asked for signs. These signs must be the evidence of power—Divine power, and the sphere in which they must appear was political, national, military—a mighty field-marshal, who by his prowess and skill would break the foreign yoke, and drive the usurper back to his own land. But instead of a world-conqueror the Jew is offered a humble Carpenter ; instead of a throne he is offered a Cross.

The Cross was the symbol of utter defeat, of humiliation, of public shame. The Jew, moreover, was a literalist in the interpretation of Scripture, and to him the Cross was the sign of the anathema of God—'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.' To the Greek the Cross was foolishness, for the Greek sought after wisdom, and the sphere in which that wisdom must show itself was philosophy—a philosophy of existence and of human life. Instead of a philosophy the Greek was offered a fact—a fact, moreover, that to his mind was meaningless, a fact that to his culture and taste was repelling if not repulsive—a humble Jew dying on a cross. What bearing could that have on the world or on human life ? As a key to the problems of existence the Cross to him was sheer unmitigated folly. 'But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks,' said the Apostle, 'Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.'

Step by step the argument rises to its climax, and the climax is found in the words of our text. At first sight it seems as if the Apostle in the ardour of his argument had fallen into the rhetorical lapse of an anticlimax, for, if an object does not exist, how can God choose it, and, if it be chosen, but non-existent, how can it bring an existing thing to nought ?

There are three senses, each of them natural and unforced, in which these words may be understood :

¹ W. R. Inge in *Anglo-American Preaching*, 3.

1. An object may be non-existent for one person, because he is ignorant of it ; to another person it exists, and is operative, because its existence is known. An object or a force may be non-existent for man ; it may exist for God. Of the discoveries of recent years, the best known forces are Radium, the Röntgen Rays, Wireless Telegraphy. For millenniums these forces have been wholly unknown to man, unused by him. From the beginning they were known to Him by whom they were created. How many elemental forces still lie concealed in the bosom of Nature known only to God, who shall say ?

To the Jew and to the Greek the Cross of Christ, its truth and its power, were non-existent, because they were unknown. That a humble Nazarene was crucified in the reign of Tiberius under Pontius Pilate they would not trouble to question ; but what was there in that ? For any practical bearing that Calvary had on the meaning of the world or of human life it was non-existent. To the Apostle, and to those who believed as he did, Calvary was the crowning event in the world's history—the event for which every previous century was a preparation, and from which every succeeding century flowed as a consequence.

A few years ago the chief inhabitants of Japan were overwhelmed in a great catastrophe—earthquake, volcano, fire. The first helpers to arrive on the scene were members of the Red Cross. That is typical, symbolic. Wherever the need of the human race is most urgent, wherever suffering is direst, there the Cross hastens to its self-appointed task—the task it loves above all others ; wherever tyrannies of evil rear their heads, there the Cross is at work, not with the violence of the earthquake, but with the breath of God's spring, melting the glaciers of the world's winter till they flow down in refreshing streams, and fill the valleys with fruits and flowers.

2. Some things are non-existent because they have not yet come into being. They will be, but they are not yet. The main content of these words in the mind of the Apostle is, doubtless, that which we have already expounded, but this also may well have been part of it. One of these forces, non-existent now, but coming into being, is future generations—men and women still to be born. Future generations are the reserves of God's army. The Church of Jesus Christ is like a succession of great armies. These armies are successive generations—each army advancing a little, then ageing, wearying, fading away, giving place to another. To our minds the progress of the race is painfully.

pitifully slow. Great sins, national, individual—Drink, Gambling, Covetousness, Impurity—rear their heads as defiantly as ever, and we are tempted to cry, 'How long, O Lord; how long ere the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ?'

In our impatience we forget great truths. To our brief, finite lives a day seems as a thousand years. To the timeless Creator a thousand years are as one day. In our calculations we leave out the Divine essential factor—we leave out God. The Lord God Almighty reigneth. God is righteousness, and the forces of righteousness are omnipotent and eternal. Greater is he that is for us than all they that can be against us. We forget also that God's reserves are not yet in the field—the men and women that are yet unborn.

3. Some things exist potentially but not actually, but the potential may become real.

What potentialities there are in your life and mine! What men and women we might be if every power were fully liberated and energized by the Spirit of God! To believe in Jesus Christ is to believe that the best is yet to be, but the day of life passes quickly, and night approaches, and the question arises—How are the potentialities of life to be realized?

The important thing is vision. 'Where there is no vision, the people perish.' Every life has vision of a kind, but the perspective is too short, too often it is bounded by the horizon of time. Vision in its reality and plenitude is the vision of God; the goal of that vision is the kingdom of God in the world and, first of all, in our own life.

By what means, then, can that vision be caught and kept and become the motive power of our life? By what means does a great artist capture the vision of a perfect landscape he desires to paint? He does not catch it at all. He gazes on the purple hills and the green valleys and the sun setting in golden glory, and the vision captures him and holds him till the skilled hand produces the picture imprinted on the heart. The purest heart cannot capture the vision of God, it can only reflect it, but God captures it. The truest, boldest spirit cannot capture Christ, but Christ captures him and holds him in His sweet thrall. And then things happen. The impossible becomes the possible actual; sin withers up in the vision of holiness. The garments of sin are not rent from us—that is beyond human power—they fall from us. The dry channels of the soul are filled, flooded, thrilled with life—and that life is Jesus Christ.¹

¹ W. Ross, *Till He Come*, 115.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Compensations of God.

'Without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless he that comforteth the lowly, even God, comforted us by the coming of Titus.'—2 Co 7st. (R.V.).

Paul was tossing on a broken sea of troubles at this moment. Not long before he had been driven out of Ephesus by a riot, and obliged to leave the local Christians in a crisis. He was now anxiously waiting in Macedonia for the return of Titus from a mission to the Corinthian Church, where some Christians had been misconducting themselves. 'Without were fightings'—external attacks upon himself and the Churches; 'within were fears'—concern and heaviness about the faith and behaviour of Christians for whom he felt responsible, especially about those in the south. He found the strain of waiting for his envoy almost intolerable. But one day Titus arrived with good news about the Corinthian Church, and the Apostle's depression was instantly changed into relief and cheerfulness.

What enabled him to ride out the storm? Well, he was fast to three anchors.

(1) He seems to have been turning over one of his favourite chapters in the *Old Testament*. The phrase, 'He that comforteth the lowly,' shows incidentally where he had been looking for courage during the period of strain. It is a quotation from the forty-ninth chapter of Isaiah. Several echoes of the chapter are to be heard throughout Paul's letters, and the reference here suggests that the phrases of it clung to his mind during the time of anxiety which had now closed. Probably he valued the chapter on account of its stress upon the freedom of the gospel for the nations. But what further attracted him was the fact that this was a chapter of encouragement for people who were tempted to fear that their work for God had proved a failure.

Here, then, is one means of holding ourselves open to receive God's compensations. When our surroundings are dumb and contrary we can turn to God's Word. It is part of our equipment for the Christian service and experience to know our way to the great, calm passages of the Bible. We should have our favourite chapters or psalms, and we should have them by heart. There are times when we may have little else to fall back upon for the rallying of our faith.

(2) *Unselfishness* is another safeguard. Sympathy with other people may often seem to carry in its train more discomfort than pleasure. Those who are sensitive to the needs and errors of their

fellow-men, and who endeavour to interest themselves in people who have any claim on them, suffer more than if they were content to be self-centred and indifferent. Yet, if they lay themselves open to anxieties and annoyances, they get compensations infinitely richer than the selfish ever dream of. Paul was thrilled by the good news from Corinth. The better resolves of his friends there sent a glow of unselfish pleasure to his heart. It was his keen sense of responsibility for them which had occasioned him these hours of distress, and it was through the same feeling, which knit him to their interests, that the new happiness arrived. There are people who, as far as possible, deliberately avoid interesting themselves in others and forming ties of responsibility, simply because they shrink from the worries and expense which they anticipate will ensue from such associations. It is sometimes feasible to safeguard life by restricting it in this way. But the cultivation of an easy unconcern shuts out also the finer joys which we cannot have apart from the fuller and heavier responsibilities. There are Divine compensations which never visit the self-centred. There is no room for them to enter when the door is shut upon the duties and demands of human sympathy.

(3) *Moral humility* is another qualification for the experience of God's higher compensations. When Paul speaks of the God who comforts the lowly, he means that it is only the unassuming and humble who can receive this gift of God. It is easy to become moody and bitter when people disappoint us and work seems temporarily useless. We may feel we scarcely deserved to be treated in this way, and resentment against our fellow-creatures may slip into a sullen apathy or a nervous fear that God is not looking after us properly. Sensible people sometimes try to overcome this petulance by dwelling grimly on its absurdity. How unreasonable, they argue, to expect much from human nature! How stupid for puny man to protest against the dealings of the Infinite Power which is over all human concerns. But, if this reading of life cleans out our petty pride, it fails to put in any moral comfort. We need a more Christian view of the situation, and Paul defines it by saying that the only secure position is the humble mind which makes no bargains with God, which realizes that we are God's, here for His ends and not for our own, here as His soldiers and servants.

Even under the untoward discipline we get reminders of His thoughtfulness, if we are careful to notice them. Cowper, who knew from experience the black hours of despondency that occasionally

visit life, put the whole secret into the first words of the Olney hymn:

Sometimes a light surprises
The Christian while he sings.

The relief of God generally surprises life along that line. It is the cheerful, not the grumbling and defiant, who receive the compensations of God's comfort. Those who are trying pluckily to make the best of things and refusing to let their faith in God break down, those who will fail, if need be, with a smile and a cheer—it is they who are visited by God's rallying encouragements, as they swing with their three anchors out, a memory of God's word, a temper of unselfishness, and a humble, resolute conscience for their immediate duty.

Take, for example, our friendships. Paul realized at this time what an unspeakable solace it is to have a reliable friend. No doubt it was the good news from Corinth which relieved the Apostle's anxiety, but often it is not anything our friend brings which helps us. It is just himself. When we say good-bye to a friend, after he has been sitting with us, we are sometimes inclined to say to ourselves what Paul said about Titus: 'God comforted me by his coming.' He may have said nothing about religion. Perhaps he was unconscious of our special trouble. But his presence, the sense that he is our friend, his power of taking us out of ourselves and making us feel that, after all, we are not isolated units—all this forms one of God's direct compensations to us. We go back to face our life, heartened and uplifted.

'God comforted us by the coming of Titus.' The incident of a friend's visit may be part of God's large providence of encouragement. James Smetham closes a letter with thanks to a friend for writing to him when he happened to be depressed: 'Glad to get your friendly letter. It was like the coming of Titus. I think Providence in these days often sends Titus by post.' But whether our friends rally us by personal intercourse or by correspondence, the great point is to recognize in them one of the Divine compensations. What we must do is to recognize gladly that the moving of one heart to another is the work of God. He it is who prompts these instincts of thoughtfulness and affection and loyalty. It is not by accident that you and your friend come together. The mutual interests, the exchange of thought, the moral stimulus, the close intimacy, the confidence which you enjoy in your friend, the affinities that draw men and women together across differences of age and position, are a wonderful providence.

And they seldom seem so wonderful or so Divine as when they help us, in some difficult hour, to compose our minds and keep our footing.

'Without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless'—the compensations of God surprise us on this side and on that. There are good reasons for holding to our faith. Things come together against us, things press on us, we have sleepless nights and anxious days. 'Nevertheless—God!' That is our supreme compensation, God's presence living and moving through it all to rally the dutiful and the devout who are resolved that, come what may, they will on no account surrender. His compensations are abroad and at work on our behalf. Nothing can keep them from us. Nothing in heaven or on earth can hinder their arrival.¹

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Gehazi.

'And Gehazi went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.'—2 K 5²⁷.

One of the subtlest temptations of Satan is to make a man gain out of his religion. Only the pure in heart, only those who serve God or their fellow-men in simplicity, are enlightened by the true wisdom. And when the spirit of evil, who is the master of all craft and subtlety, can prevail upon a man to mingle his own gain with his public service, whether in the Church or in the State, he troubles his vision. And so Elisha turned Naaman's offer of gifts aside.

His servant Gehazi, student in the school of the prophets, saw the rich gifts his master was refusing. 'Was not the prophet mad to refuse such things!' So he hurried after Naaman and told his story of some poor student who had come, and how his master, though he wished nothing for himself, would yet gladly accept a gift for him. The story was plausible enough. But Naaman needed no coaxing. He urged Gehazi to take more and more—more perhaps than he deemed prudent to take.

But was it worth while?—all the inward fever, the trouble of concealment, the loss of peace and dignity, the shame, and then this leprosy! Sin is a brief madness. The heart pores over some secret passion: it dandles it in the hidden places of the imagination until the values of life are distorted. Then come suddenly the opportunity and its temptation; and then the sin. But after the sin comes the awaking, when the man perceives that he has been a fool and has sold himself for a delusion. Well for him who wakes to sanity, and binds the

disgrace of his fall as a memorial unto himself for ever. So he may escape from its bondage.

We see in this story how a good man may destroy himself by a secret vice. When we read it first we may wonder how such a one as Gehazi should be a servant of Elisha. In every company there are to be found weak men with the seeds of disloyalty in them. Men are not cast out of an iron mould; their characters are not fixed and rigid, determined at the start towards good or evil. Our natures are plastic. We are growing, developing souls. Good and evil both have their sources in our hearts. It is a great thing for a man, a blessing beyond estimating, to be of the company of Jesus or Elisha or any great servant of mankind: it is a blessing to have our place set amid the influences of good men and women who are free from any of the passions of our lower nature and live gladly and freely among those pure affections and aims which enrich the soul. A Judas, a Gehazi, have the best chance of being saved from themselves. But there is an inextinguishable core of individual responsibility in each soul, a power of responding to the better or the worse which life throws across their path. And so from out the band of Jesus, where good was present in its loveliest and most persuasive form, the lost soul of Judas comes; and from the service of a high, spiritually minded prophet, a slave of greed like Gehazi.

We may notice these two things:

1. *The Evil of Greed.*—When Dante went on his journey through the circles of hell, where dree their eternal weird all those who have gone astray, he found the avaricious in a lower circle than the sensualists. Now when we think of our great national vices of drunkenness and impurity that judgment may seem strange. Drunkenness and impurity slay their ten thousands in every generation. And in comparison greed seems harmless and innocent. Is it not merely thrift run to excess, and is not thrift a virtue? But that is not what say the masters of man's soul—they who have read wisely in the book of our life and know the results of the passions. They agree with Dante. Turn over the gospel pages and you will find that our Lord said nothing about fleshly sins, but again and again He warned the people against covetousness. And why? because it shuts the ear to the Divine calls. The listener in the crowd who cried to Jesus, 'Speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me,' would be amazed at the Prophet's rebuke. Was not his claim just? Did not his brother owe him half the estate? Why, then, should not God's holy Prophet help him to

¹ J. Moffatt, *Reasons and Reasons*, 179.

justice? But Jesus saw the evil that his brooding over his lost property was doing him. It was shutting his ear to the gospel of salvation.

(1) Greed is an anti-social vice and destroys friendliness and neighbourliness in the community. Its spirit makes a man the rival and foe of his fellow-men: it poisons competition which in itself is a good rather than an evil: it turns work and commerce, which ought to be a mutual benefit, into war; it spreads ultimately through a nation the spirit of class suspicion and distrust which is one of the deadliest poisons in the body politic. What is the greatest danger which threatens our nation to-day, the evil that is undermining our prosperity and may send this great creation of many centuries, the British Empire, crashing in ruins? It is the lack of brotherhood in the nation, the class enmity and suspicion which come from the race after wealth on the one hand, and the absorption in better wages with less work on the other.

(2) Greed sterilizes a man's whole soul; it deprives him of the interests which enrich the personality. What are the powers in us which are vital, those virtues and qualities which nourish all our varied talents and swell the stream of joy within? The poet tells us: they are admiration, trust, and love. It is the generous dispositions which make a man of any spiritual richness and worth. Dante tells us that, on his way through the hell of the avaricious, he tried to recognize some of the lost souls there, but he could not. The greed which in their earthly life had won them the scorn of their fellows

Now makes them dim to keenest searching eyes.

That is not a mere poetic fancy. It is the solemn awful fact of their sin's consequence. Greed preys on a man's personality: it drains his life of those enriching interests which make the child of God: and the shut heart and the shut hand become a

symbol of the spiritual poverty of the man, his lack of any real individuality.

2. *The Swiftness of the Tragedy*.—One little hour: and Gehazi beheld the gleaming robes and the silver, and covetousness glowed like a hot coal in his heart, the plot was laid and his greed fulfilled: one hour and the doom was on him. And yet it was really no sudden temptation. Men are not tempted unless they prepare their own hearts for the temptation. Naaman spread his gauds before the eyes of Elisha, but Elisha did not regard them. His mind was full of other thoughts, the passion for national righteousness and the establishment of the Divine rule in Israel, and rich robes and rolls of silver were nothing to him. But one glance at the wealth Elisha disregarded made the eyes of Gehazi ache; the conduct of his master in refusing it made his heart sick. For greed had been his companion many a day.

We make our own temptations; we make our own opportunities. These may seem to come from without, chance happenings with which we had nothing to do. But it was not so. They were fashioned by ourselves. The secret preparations of the heart had been travailing with them for long. Life goes on its quiet course, the day's routine, the common work and play. But in the secret recesses of the soul, in the silent converse of the spirit with itself, are growing desires and longings and admirations. The hour comes when these declare themselves. To some, as to Gehazi, it is an hour of shame when the hidden evil is revealed. To some it is an hour of glory: they show themselves in sudden brightness like a man inspired, and their friends are surprised at the spirit which is in them, the courage, the loyalty, the endurance, the rich and rare generosity.

Take heed of thy heart, for out of it are the issues of life.¹

¹ R. Glaister, *The Beauty of the Lord*, 109.

Time=Measures of the Pentateuch.

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THE first mention of time-measures in the Pentateuch is Gn 1¹⁴, where it is pointed out that computation of time depends upon the observation of the heavenly bodies. 'God said, Let them be for dates and seasons; days and recurrent-periods.' In other words, the sun and moon mark 'time

when,' and 'time how long.' The two Hebrew words used here are *yom*, which is always translated 'day,' and *shanah*, which is usually rendered in our version by 'year,' when time is the subject. But this latter word is actually almost the same as the Hebrew word for 'two,' and properly denotes