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In the Study.

Virginitus Puerisque.

Make Haste.

BY THE REVEREND J. H. MORRISON, M.A.,
ABERDEEN.

'Salute no man by the way.'—Lk 10⁴.

WHAT a strange thing for Jesus to say, and how rude! We all salute our friends, don't we? Some of you are in the Boys' Brigade or the Scouts and can salute in style, but we all do it in our own way. We would never think of passing our friends on the road without a smile and a nod or a cheery wave of the hand. And, if we did, they would take it that we were offended and did not want to be friends any more. What can Jesus have meant?

Well, to understand His meaning you must remember that every country has its own customs. Take China, for instance. The old-fashioned Chinese are the most polite people in the world. One of their rules of politeness is that if you meet a friend on the road and you are riding while he is on foot, you must on no account return his salute without first coming down off your horse or out of your carriage and standing on the ground beside him. Now this rule is very awkward if you are in a hurry, or if a farmer comes into the town in his cart on a market-day and is meeting friends every few yards. So the Chinese get round the difficulty by this other rule, that if you see your friend coming along riding, you turn your head away and don't salute him as you pass and so hinder him.

Now all people are not so wise and considerate as the Chinese. In Palestine, as throughout the East, people were in no hurry and went about everything in the most leisurely way. If you met a man on the road, ten to one he would stop and ask you, 'What is your name? and where have you come from? and where are you going? and what are you going to do there?' In fact, he would keep you all day with his questions if you did not determinedly break away from him and get on. Do you remember the old story of Elisha and the boy who had died? The prophet said to his servant Gehazi, 'Take my staff and run: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not.' He was to run right on, stopping for nobody, because his errand was so important. This was exactly what Jesus had in mind when He sent out His disciples and said to them, 'Salute no man by the way.'

Now this teaches us two things. First, that when we have anything important to do we must go right on with it, and not turn aside for anybody. I am sure your mother has often said to you just what Jesus said to His disciples. When she sent you on an errand she said, 'Now run, and don't speak to anybody on the road.' Because she knows that if you meet your chums and begin to talk, you'll soon join in the game and your message will be quite forgotten. It is the same with your lessons. You know how your eyes *will* wander off the book to watch a fly crawling up the window or a rain-drop running down, and you have to drag them back to the dreary page. Oh what a tempting world this is, with all sorts of curious things to see and all sorts of bypath meadows to roam in! Wouldn't we be happy if we could just wander aimlessly around? No, for there is something bigger and nobler to be done, and we must brace ourselves to it. We have all been sent into the world on some great errand, and we must get on with it. Let nothing turn us aside.

And the second lesson is, that the most important thing in the world is to tell people about Jesus and carry His gospel to all nations. When Jesus sent His first disciples on that errand He said, 'Make haste, and stay the work for nobody.' The Africans have a story about the lizard and the chameleon. These two little creatures are very like each other, but the lizard is alert and swift, the chameleon creeps by fractions of an inch. Well, the story goes that in the beginning of the world God sent a message of life to men and commissioned the chameleon to carry it. Afterwards He sent a message of death to men by the swift running lizard. The lizard far outran the crawling chameleon, whose message of life, when at last it arrived, was simply laughed at. And so, say the Africans, that is why death is in the world. When I heard them tell that story out in Central Africa, I said, 'No wonder they say such things to our shame, for nineteen hundred years have passed since God's message of life was given in Jesus Christ and it has not reached many of these poor Africans even yet.' We print on our church and missionary papers the emblem of the flying dove to show how we should fly abroad with the gospel message. I wonder sometimes if it would not be better to change that, and put on the emblem of the crawling chameleon.

Who among you will try to wipe away this reproach? Some of you could perhaps go yourselves

as the messengers of Jesus to far-off lands, and some, who cannot go themselves, could help to send others.

A Washed-out Flag.

BY THE REVEREND J. HOWARD STOOKE, BRISTOL.

'We know that thou art true.'—Mk 12¹¹.

People said that of Jesus. Was it just a mere empty compliment, or did they really mean it? They might well have meant it, for He was the Truth.

Some months ago I was in the suburbs of a city and was waiting for a 'bus. As I looked down the long road for it, I noticed a flag flying from a staff in some one's garden. As I happen to be interested in flags, and as this seemed to be a strange one, I went up the road to have a look at it, although this meant missing the 'bus. When I got near, I found that I had wasted my time, for it wasn't a proper flag at all; at one time it had been a Union Jack, but it was one no longer.

Shall I explain?

We all know that our Union Jack is made up of three crosses. There is the red cross of St. George for England, and the white cross (saltire they call it) of St. Andrew for Scotland, and the red saltire of St. Patrick for Ireland. The old English flag was just the cross of St. George, then in 1707 the cross of St. Andrew was added, and in 1800 the cross of St. Patrick made a third—and that is our Union Jack.

Now this flag that attracted my attention had once been a Union Jack, but not of good quality. I fancy it was just a printed flag and its owner had left it out in all winds and weathers so that *the blue had been washed out*. When I saw it, it was just a pale mixture of red and white, no wonder I did not recognize it.

Why am I telling you this? In all the great flags of the world the colours stand for something. The people didn't just say, 'These colours will look pretty, let us have them.' Oh no! In the old days the colours had a meaning—RED always stood for Sacrifice, the colour of blood; WHITE always stood for Purity, the colour of driven snow; BLUE always stood for Truth, Honour, and Loyalty. So what the Union Jack means is that the British Empire is based on Sacrifice, Purity, and Truth.

Now think for a moment—a flag with the blue washed out speaks of a life with no truth in it. That can't be yours, can it?

Mother says, 'Did you do that, Jack?' You

say, 'No, Mother.' But you did do it. A friend says to you, 'Will you promise to do it?' You say that you will, but you do not mean to do it, and you don't do it. Are you a boy whose word cannot be taken, a girl who cannot be trusted? Then you are very much like the flag with the blue washed out, and you will be of little use to any one until that is altered.

They came to Jesus, and said, 'We know that thou art true.' They could say that of Him, for He never said a false word and never broke a promise. He was true, always true. Should you not like to be like Him? Pray every day that God will make you true, as Jesus was true, so that you can be of use to God in the world.

The Christian Year.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Light of Life.

'He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.'—Jn 8¹².

It is perhaps sometimes conceived by us as a disadvantage that we must think. Life would certainly be simpler if there were no question-mark in our minds. As it is, we perceive that every question has its other side. And, as regards the greater things, we may be inclined to acknowledge, almost bitterly, that it is by faith that a man must walk; for it is certainly not by sight.

At the same time we have lives to live. And we shall not live well if we live in darkness. *Some* light must be cast upon our faith, if we are to see; ahead of us the gleam must beckon, if we are to walk and not faint. Wherefore, let us look at this great word of His, 'He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.'

It is a word which has two points in it. A condition is laid down—'he that followeth me'; and a result is promised in curious phraseology—'shall have the light of life.'

1. The condition is that we are to follow Christ. Now, we cannot in any sense be said to be following Christ, unless we have an anxiety for God, that is at once humble and reverent.

Is it not true that with some of our sense of the perplexity of life a certain amount of self-complacency is mingled?—that there is an awareness of our own mental development implied in our emphasis upon our uncertainties; as if we implicitly said, 'We may leave our sister and our parents and all past generations, their early heaven,

their happy views. We would not, for the world, with shadowing doubt confuse them. But as for us, God made us clever; and, ah me! the mysteries close down upon us.¹

Again, that an irreverent mind is not likely to find a solution to perplexities is a statement that needs no support. Life is too grave, and God is too holy and too secret, death is too real, and love makes living too splendid and too sad, for the light-minded to win the seeing that Christ gives.

But especially, we have to display humility and reverence *in anxiety for God*. There is the one attitude, 'It is a matter of small concern; I will leave it.' There is another, 'I will wrestle on towards Him, desiring Him; and if darkness overwhelm me, it is not because I have not striven to find.'

But when Jesus calls us to follow Him, it is not so much, of course, to imitate His attitude towards the unseen—for He never doubted God, with whom it was His supreme consciousness to be at one—as to follow Him in His practical attitude towards living. What He says is, 'Live after my pattern, and ye shall have the light of life.'

We have many a time discussed the problems of living, and with a sigh, perhaps a half-assumed sigh, have envied the full assurance of a Stephen or a Paul. Have we never in the recesses of our own souls felt a discomfort, queer and undefinable, but there for all that? For we stand in a Garden of Perplexity, with a secret to unravel. Round us there are many paths, along which the solving of the secret may be found. There is the path of proof. We may have tried it. But the sum will not work out. We have not the capacity; and if we had the fullest ever given to man, the sum will not work out. There is the path of emotional uplift. At a season, we thought that we had found what we wanted there. But the chill wind came; and we have not our solving yet. So back we are in the Garden of Perplexity, and neglecting a path that remains—the path of self-sacrifice; and knowing that the secret is there. But the way of it is set with sharp stones, and our feet are bare; and the thorns of it will tear our hands, and our hands are tender.

Christianity offers two difficulties. One is to the intellect; the other is to the will. A little more emphasis upon the latter might help us in regard to the former. Let us try living! In common duty, amidst weariness, in common truth, in common charity, in having a mind for our brother and our

sister and their burdens; in all things following the Lord, let us see if His promise holds good.

2. And mark what that promise is. Not that we will have a complete solution of the problems. People have spoken as if a good man could pronounce between Calvin and Zwingli, or solve the problem of the Trinity. That is quite absurd. What is said is, 'Ye shall have light of life.' *That* stands true. Light for living is what comes. A man who follows Christ comes to believe, through experience, in the love that is about him all the days; in the greatness and value of life in Christ; in the possibility of unspeakable achievement for himself; in the complete forgiveness of sins; in God in him, his strength.

And that is enough to be going on with. God does not clear up everything; but He gives us enough by which to live nobly; and at each advance He will give us more knowledge of Himself, though it may be that only death will show to some that all this goodness and wonder and half-known companionship are just Himself.¹

ARMISTICE DAY.

Fellowship and Group-Loyalty.

'The Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.'—Eph 3^{14f}. (R.V.)

Any decent philosophy of the state will find the real ground of society in the social character of personality. Society cannot be rightly regarded as an aggregation of individuals contracting with one another to live together. It is rather to be regarded as the expression of an inner necessity of human life. Man is by nature a social being, and to try to think of man apart from society is to think of something which is not man at all. Man has come to be what he is, and will grow up to what he can become, only in and through a social life. This line of thought is now so familiar as to be almost a platitude. But it is clear now that we cannot stop there. Behind this fact there lies a deeper fact. Just in so far as human personality is the expression of the Divine Spirit—*i.e.* as man is made in the image of God—so far the social nature of personality has its roots in the social nature of God. Man must be always striving for fellowship because God's life is perfect fellowship. Ultimately no psychology and no philosophy of human nature can make sense unless it starts with God. We can only really believe in human nature if our thought is based on faith in God.

¹ J. R. P. Solater, *The Enterprise of Life*, p. 357.

Now here Christianity comes directly into opposition with a certain tendency in the modern world. There is in popular writing nowadays a great deal of very vague thinking about what is loosely called the 'gregarious instinct.' It is taken for granted, that in some mysterious and convenient fashion the spontaneous operation of this instinct widening out into ever larger circles will automatically produce the world-state. 'It has created national patriotism: very soon it will lead to internationalism.' But the facts of history give little warrant for this amiable supposition. The gregarious instinct is no unmixed blessing. Left to itself indeed, and undirected, it rather hinders than advances progress. Its crude operation seems to divide men rather than unite them. Just as, by the strange alchemy of Nature, the anti-social instinct of pugnacity has become one of the strongest forces by which societies are held together; so, as though to balance this anomaly, the unfettered play of the social instinct has served to organize groups of men in intense hostility to one another.

Christian fellowship starts not with the thought of local groups, adding them together into a world-group. It starts with God, whose life is perfect fellowship, manifesting Himself in and through all the relationships of human fellowship. 'That which was from the beginning . . . that eternal life declare we unto you, that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' So the concern of Christianity, as a principle of social organization, is with a universal Life of fellowship expressing itself in various degrees through all the hierarchy of lesser loyalties. The universal Spirit organizes and articulates the whole Body. It is not a question of federating groups into a unity which will contain them all. Rather, we say that a pre-existing unity shows itself in and through a rich variety, so that each social unit is an expression of that Life which is fellowship.

What makes fellowship is man's innate social disposition when it is consciously evoked in response to a conscious recognition of God. All social life, wherever it may be found, is an expression of God, whose life is fellowship. From Him every family derives. But it is arrested and balked of its true development if it stops short of universalism. And this can only come by the recognition of God as the Source of all the will to unity, and by consciously entering into relations with Him. Perhaps we can only give the name of fellowship to the group-life whose centre is God in Christ. Thus natural friendship becomes Christian fellowship

when guided and penetrated by the spirit of Christ. There is genuine fellowship between friends, or in the social life of a given group when they love one another, because of Christ in them.

Christianity does not seek to organize a world-state by detaching men from their local loyalties, which would be psychologically unsound. It rather regards the local ties and loyalties as the creation of the universal Spirit in virtue of which our citizenship is in heaven. It regards the family, the city, and nation as at once the school of the larger loyalty and in themselves manifestations of it. It does not want us to be de-naturalized but super-naturalized in the City of God. Any Christian who has really thought out the full meaning of his inheritance in the universal Church will recognize both that through the life of Christ, mediated to him by the Church, he is a member of a kingdom which transcends all human antagonisms, and that in the immediate duties of the calling wherewith God has called him he will best discharge the obligation of citizenship in the City which is above.

Such a recovered grip on the significance of what is really implied in 'Churchmanship' would not make men in the wrong sense 'other-worldly.' It would rather cancel the bad division between what is popularly called 'church-work' and the duties of our home or our profession. The Church conceived in its eternal idea 'can present no other view than that a Christian's whole life is in the Church, whether he is thinking of his home, his business, his social recreations, or his citizenship.'

St. Paul himself would seem to be affirming very much what we have suggested here. It cannot be for nothing that the letter, which opens with the magnificent description of the Church eternal in the heavens manifesting to the ages to come the manifold wisdom of God's purposes, should end with common-sense workaday directions about the conduct of daily life and duty. The ordinary relationships of the home, between parents and children, servants, masters, and so on, are to be the expression in daily life of their membership in the Catholic Society, 'because we are members of his Body.' This sort of thing, he says, is implied in practice by belonging to the household of the saints.

St. Paul finds in our Lord's Ascension the supernatural source of fellowship and of the organic life of the Christian body. What the Ascension made possible was the redirection of the wills and desires of men and women. The Risen Christ had ascended far above all heavens. So that His

Church had not to confront the world merely with the statement of a problem: it carried the final answer in its hands. The Master, whose 'way' and whose influence it proclaimed, was enthroned as Sovereign in the Universe. He had taken on Himself man to deliver him. That is, He had redeemed human life. His Ascension and His coming in the Spirit implanted the fruits of this redemption in the hearts of all who accepted Him. He had come, as He promised, to 'abide in' them. Set free now from the limiting conditions of physical life in the days of His flesh, He was nearer to them than He had been before. He became the very life of their lives, so that all their instincts and desires revolved henceforth round a new Centre. Thus the Ascension meant, as St. Paul claims, the irruption into human society of a new and supernatural life, organizing the new fellowship. It is as individuals appropriate the life of the crucified and ascended Christ that genuine fellowship is made possible. 'Christ in you' is the source of fellowship.

As we look back over Christian history at the most signal comings of the Spirit, whether to small groups or to the Church at large, it seems to be true that one of the first effects has normally been a new consciousness of fellowship. But the times when the Church has been most strongly actuated by the impulses of mere group-loyalty have not been those in which the Spirit of Christ has been conspicuously present in her. The Roman Church was gregarious enough when it gave its support to the Inquisition, or the English Church when it extruded Wesley. But such acts are the antithesis of fellowship.

It is clear why the unity of the Church is necessarily a unity in variety. It is because it comes from the Spirit. It is the common supernatural life in which all its members share, but appropriated in different ways in accordance with all the differing conditions of time, temperament, and circumstances. To demand of the Church that, everywhere and always, it should be organized in the same form, and worship in precisely the same fashion, is not merely to ask for something very dull: it is to ask for something which is impossible. For the Spirit always creates fellowship: but equally it creates variety. Variety is ever a sign of life, and uniformity a mark of death. In the story of biological evolution there is one step which has never yet been explained. Certain varieties of species have a survival value and therefore survive. But how do we account for the varieties? We can only say that they are 'spontaneous'—that is to say, that somehow 'life' makes them. It

appears to be true, at least within certain limits, that the most vigorous breeds and stocks tend to run to most spontaneous variations. Where vitality is most intense, there we find the most variety. This is an illuminating analogy. The same law seems to hold in the realm of spirit. Wherever in the history of the Church the Spirit's pressure has been most intense, there the life of the Church has been most varied. It takes the experience of the whole race to explain the full significance of Christ.¹

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Spiritual Poverty.

'Can two walk together, except they be agreed?'
—Am 3³.

1. Wherever there is order, beauty, truth, there is harmony. Its basis is the complete agreement of the component parts which together form a perfect unity, whether in art or in life. You may perceive it in the sunrise or the sunset; in sculpture, poem, or musical symphony; where the celestial bodies revolve through the infinitudes of space; in the smoothly running machinery of an engine shop; in an ordered and disciplined human life. Harmony depends upon the adjustment of distinctive parts to a certain law or principle, and their consequent relation through that principle towards each other. When this relationship is violated, discord comes. Wherever unity is, God is.

And wheresoever, in His rich creation,
Sweet music breathes—in wave, or bird, or soul,
'Tis but the faint and far reverberation
Of that great tune to which the planets roll.

2. The Kingdom of God, which our Lord consistently preached, was an ideal of ordered and harmonious social life which involved then, and unhappily still involves, a drastic revolution in the ordinary man's scale of values. It demanded, not as an academic theory, but as a living reality, the brotherhood of men. The gospel of the Kingdom insisted that each individual owed responsibility to the community, and through the community to mankind. Whether he liked it or not, man was commissioned by the God who made him to be his brother's keeper. On this Jesus Christ was uncompromising.

Our Lord laid His fearless hand upon the outward observances of religion, hallowed even with the antiquity of Moses. Temple, altar, and ritual

¹ F. R. Barry, *St. Paul and Social Psychology*, 85.

He declared only to be effective when they expressed the worship of God in terms of purest spiritual reality. On this basis He founded His Church. It was to be a holy society whose members would, by their moral and spiritual splendour, attract the world to their Master. The Church was to be the outward and visible expression of a family, a household of God, whose children discovered their highest experience of unity with each other and with their Lord in a definitely social act—the Blessed Sacrament of His Body and Blood.

Man cannot approach his Maker, much less can he walk with Him, unless man be agreed with God, and God with man. And if the revelation of Christ as to the nature and character of God be true, it simply means that our hearts, if God we seek to know, must throb in sympathy with the heart of the Divine. The vast machinery of collective human life derives its driving force from the same law of harmony which the pealing anthem owns. Society moves in peace and concord, or in the reverse, according as the lives of men are, or are not, adjusted in a true relation to the mind of God which Christ manifested as passionately desiring the fellowship of His children.

3. This fundamental law of Christian life which conditions its harmony is summed up in that arresting and wistful expression of our Lord's: 'I have called you friends.' He did not say, 'I have called you all to think exactly alike.' Nor did He evidence our modern enthusiasm for hammering individuality down to the level of the mediocre. It is significant that whenever He said, 'Come, follow me!'—as He did to widely divergent human types—people always did so, without apparently questioning the why or the wherefore. He obviously just drew them to Himself by the personal magnetism of His unique inward attractiveness. After His disappearance from the earth it was the same with the apostolic band. They were a heterogeneous mixture with many dangerous opposites. No system of doctrine united them, for they had formulated no creed. The conception of the Church, as now we know it, had not become concrete to hold them all together. But the little society was cemented by the personal attractiveness of its members, the attractiveness of characters sweetened and made beautiful by the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

4. This is the gospel which our squabbling and turbulent age has largely forgotten, and in which alone lies the hope of its regeneration. In education and scientific achievement we may be going from strength to strength, but the drab poverty of

our souls is shamed by the very greatness of our works. The classes and the nations fight and wrangle, and the condition of our own national household, to say nothing of the human family, towards which we have our obligations, is a disgrace to a Christian country. But it is not the differences of opinion and divergences of religious and political thought that create the sordid mess of social injustice, class hatreds, wrongs, and suffering which cast a blight upon our era. It is the suspicion, the greed, the selfishness that blaspheme that friendship to which Christ called His followers.

Our need is not to sink our differences. It is earnestly to distinguish between prejudice and principle, and, loyal to our convictions, to attune them with our neighbour's on the keynote of sympathetic understanding and Christian love; so that our curses may turn to blessings and our bitter rancours into music; so that the barricades will be lowered sufficiently that across them we may look into a brother's eyes, and reach out to clasp a brother's hand.

In logic you are taught that contraries laid together appear the more evident. It follows that from honest controversy what is false will appear more false; what is true, more true. But Christian people ought to know, what some of our mischief-makers do not want to know, that what matters about their opinions is not that they happen to constitute their point of view, but whether their point of view happens to be Christ's point of view. To attack our brethren or invade their sacred rights, to thwart them in their legitimate efforts, to incite them to hatreds, to cherish towards them senseless dislikes because of selfish motives actuated by class, or sectional, or personal covetousness—that is alien to the mind of Christ. We have, indeed, as Christians, no right to support any view, political, social, or religious, unless we have taken scrupulous care thoroughly to convince ourselves that its practical operation would be calculated to further the best interests of mankind. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness' is a policy difficult enough even for the best of us; but it is the obstacles and hardship of the Christian life that constitute an appeal to all that is chivalrous and heroic in human nature. The peacemakers—the most difficult rôle of all—shall be called the children of God.

5. Let us hope that from the strife and tumult of our generation we may learn this wisdom. The Church has to learn that the better ambition is not to become stronger with more authority, but better with more humility. The nations have to learn

that a country finds security and more than transient glory only in proportion to the moral greatness of its people and the extent which they are willing to serve the world. Commerce and industry have to learn that Christianity demands as an elementary principle that a trade's, or an industry's, first function is to perform an act of service to the community, and only when this is honestly fulfilled has it a justification to be a money-making concern. We average individuals have to learn that though we may be entitled to legitimate profits, aspirations, and ambitions, it is not we who count; since 'the ship is more than the crew.'

There are signs that the ears of this groping, disillusioned generation are turning to listen to that cry across the ages: 'I have called you friends.' If Christendom can but be faithful to its trust, a day will come, in God's good time, when the praises which men raise to Him will be not only with their lips but in their lives, and when they will worship in a reality we have never known; when in a Society delivered from the love of luxury and the pursuit of vanity, and in a common life freed from selfish rivalries and mellowed with the love and friendship of Jesus Christ, not alone in these temples where His honour dwelleth, but in every place shall be lifted in truth the hymn of adoration—'All the earth doth worship Thee, the Father everlasting.'¹

SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT.

The Brevity of Human Life.

'For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.' —Ja 4¹⁴.

Human life is painfully brief. The pathway which leads from the dawn of birth to that western horizon whereon 'the dusk is waiting for the night' is passed over with disquieting rapidity. The fact of life's brevity is one of those inescapable truths which has ever haunted the mind and heart of man. St. James, having raised this most searching question, 'What is your life?' proceeds to answer it from the standpoint of its utter brevity.

Literature is filled with rare figures and emblems denoting the swift passage of the years. What is your life? It is as a weaver's shuttle, a postman's knock, the falling leaf, the dissolving cloud, a broken sleep, the guest of a day, a passing ship, the flight of an arrow, the fading flower, the night-watch of a sentinel, or a tale that is told around a winter's fire.

1. The initial truth which flowers forth in every

¹ C. L. Warr, in *British Preachers*, iii. 19.

faithful heart is the fact that we are Christians and our trust is in a Christ-like God. In spite of life's brevity, therefore, we shall not permit ourselves to become victimized by any pagan despair. And this means, first of all, that we shall not become fretful simply because it is not given us to see the full fruitage of our life's endeavours. We shall hold our hearts from all disquietude by recognizing the fact that our lives are keyed to a career which is very short, while with the world's Creator 'a thousand years are but as one day.'

2. The second truth which, because we believe in Christ and Christ's God, lifts us above the despair of paganism is this: we are immortal and, therefore, our soul's existence is in no fatal manner related to time. Our faith is centred upon the Risen Lord. From the doorway of the conquered tomb comes the certain assurance of an angelic voice which says, 'He is not here, he is risen.'

Christianity, says Professor Harnack, is essentially and uniquely the religion of eternal life. We know that it was upon the power of the Risen Christ that the Apostles took their stand, wrote their letters, made their converts, and, with no weapon save that of the Spirit, withstood their persecutors; and this has been the secret of the Church's most glorious victories ever since.

And it is only as we are able to experience eternal life here and now, a present reality quite as well as a future hope, that we will be enabled to do our best work for men and for God. With true spiritual insight Dostoevsky asserted that there are but two classes of people in the world, those who know eternal life and those who do not. With the great Russian we are led to believe that the fate of civilization is in the keeping of those who know themselves to be the citizens of eternity. Dr. Joseph Fort Newton has said: 'Life everywhere grows in dignity, meaning, and worth when it is lived in the fellowship of eternal things. Under the expansive pressure of eternal values we become aware of what life is, what it means, and what it prophesies, eager only to do the will of God, whether to-morrow finds us toiling here, or out yonder with the dwellers of the City on the Hill.'

3. Though the years are both few and short, yet it is our moral duty to accept them and to do our best with them. The fact that we are not the creatures of time but the children of the resurrection does not imply that we have no imperative duties to perform in the world. On the contrary, we have, each of us, a work to do which none other, not even the Infinite Father, can well do in our stead.

In one of his classic utterances, Burke has defined civilization as 'a contract between the noble dead, the living, and the unborn.' We do well to eulogize the good and great of other days, to recall the names of a Washington, or a Lincoln, and to erect monuments to their memory. Yet how infinitely better it would be for us to emulate their spirit instead of merely reverencing their names!

4. But a final implication of the fact of life's brevity must be stated. If we are to contribute most to life and, at the same time, to receive the most from life, we must learn to put first things first. There is no art known to man which is comparable with the art of Christian living. The beauty of a Gothic cathedral or of an ocean sunrise is far inferior to the beauty of a Christ-possessed and Christ-possessing man or woman. Such a one is the chief glory of God's cosmic enterprise. Ruskin informs us that a really great painter may be known by the things which he leaves out of his pictures. Likewise, the art of Christian living is fundamentally the art of choosing the best from a great number of relative values. This matter of putting the most into life and, therefore, of getting the most out of life through our choice of the best of many relative values is almost boundless in its implications. It will always be found, however, that the real issues of life are not resident in outward circumstances, but in our inner dispositions. Says Dr. John Henry Jowett: 'The big thing is not luxury, but contentment; not accumulated art treasure, but a fine artistic appreciation; not a big library, but a serene studiousness; not a big estate, but a large vision.'

In one of the most beautiful and yet most searching passages of the sixth book of his *Confessions*, Rousseau relates how he asked himself in what manner he might make the most of the brief interval which stood between the present and the day of his death. And it was Victor Hugo who said that every man and woman is under sentence of death with 'a sort of indefinite reprieve.' Well, death may not matter—does not matter—but the way in which we use the reprieve and the choices which we must inevitably make during the reprieve—these matter tremendously!

Therefore, let us fulfil our contract with 'the noble dead, the living, and the unborn'—be earnest, but not fretful: be diligent, but also patient, 'seek first the kingdom,' learn to put first things first, live and love as though prepared to die, and then die prepared to live!¹

¹ H. D. M'Keehan, *The Patrimony of Life*, 53.

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

The Problem of Doubt.

'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.'—Jn 7¹⁷.

It is a significant fact that an age of comparative spiritual stagnation synchronizes with a faltering grasp upon the essential beliefs of our Christian faith. It is well, then, for us to go back to the method of Jesus. An examination of the gospel narratives reveals in clear and striking outline His solution of the problem of doubt. It amounts to this: That He refused to acquiesce in the demand for intellectual certitude. He resolutely withheld the demonstrable 'sign' which was to compel belief and to dazzle the mind of man into a willing acceptance of His claims and His revelation. He indicates another way to the desired goal. 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself.' The appeal, then, is not primarily to the intellect, but to the will.

Now this is of immense significance to-day in view of the revolution in thought which is going on in our midst and the new 'world view' opening out before us as the result of the new concept of creative evolution. The dogmatism of nineteenth-century scientific 'results' is bankrupt. The claims of science to certitude are gone—the 'facts' of to-day are the 'fictions' of to-morrow. The thoroughgoing determinism—the so-called laws of Nature—the idea of an inevitable evolutionary progress is now discredited. From the camp of science and philosophy a new doctrine is being preached. Creative evolution is to be the all-powerful concept of the years to come. We are now assured that 'novelty' is a real thing occurring in the universe, and a place must be found for it in our philosophies. That which was regarded as unthinkable and impossible is now acknowledged to be fact. Hence, in spite of the hatred of scientists and philosophers for 'novelty,' we are now assured that the old Christian idea of 'creation out of nothing' is truer to the facts than the common-sense and apparently self-evident maxim—out of nothing comes nothing. What was mere philosophical foolishness—the old Genesis story ridiculed out of the arena of intellectual thought and dismissed in favour of the conception of creation out of pre-existing material—is now acceptable in the light of our new concept of creative evolution. In this doctrine of creation out of nothing, a philosopher tells us now, the Christian Church was

right and philosophy was wrong. 'A world that generates novelty *is* creating itself out of nothing. It must be pronounced capable of arising out of nothing; only we must add that the creative process is still continuing.'

What, then, is the significance of this new concept of creative evolution for our purposes? We may avoid the extremes to which its advocates are rushing whilst we seize upon the truth it contains. If there is a tireless, unceasing creative activity of God, the Creator, at work in the universe, and we can get some inkling of what His purpose is, then we can *by an act of will* become fellow-labourers with Him in the work of making a new world.

God's revelation through Christ is a revelation in word and in deed. Read the life of Jesus Christ again in this connexion and let us ask ourselves this question: Can we conceive of any better thing happening in our midst to-day than that the principles and ideals He advocated and worked for should be practised amongst men? Could a better good descend upon us than the establishment on a large scale of the Kingdom of God upon earth? If we can conceive of some better plan, let us bend our wills to its achievement. But, if we cannot think of anything better, His call to all men of goodwill to-day is this: 'The world in which you live is not what I want it to be. It lies in your power to make it a better world if you really want to. If you will work and labour and sacrifice for this end, *it can be changed*, and lo, I am with you all the days! I am here in your midst, unseen but ever-active, working with you and pouring out My life in sacrifice in you, for you, through you, for one object—that the earth may be filled with the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.' This is the appeal of Jesus Christ to-day.

Now suppose we have men in our midst who are still hesitating—still held back by intellectual doubts and moral cowardice from joining up and doing their bit for the Kingdom. What message have we for them? Simply this: So long as you are content to tarry with the Jerusalem scribes and lawyers, asking hard questions which cannot be answered and demanding proofs which will not be supplied, the work suffers from your abstinence, the enemy makes headway because of your cowardice, the Kingdom tarries because of your inaction. Come to a decision. Do something. In the *Purgatorio*, next to the slackers and the slothful, and far removed from the light, the great Italian seer, Dante, placed the doubters and the sceptics.

If men *do* His will, what follows? They make the great discovery. They find that the Unseen Power behind, and in, and through the whole world and human life is not passive, inactive, indifferent, but active, dynamic, warm, and full of life—a love which responds to our advance and, far from waiting and holding back, rushes to meet us and overwhelm us. In prayer and communion, to which we are driven in the very work in which we find ourselves engaged, we discover the Presence of our Master whom we are serving and who gives us grace up to the measure of our need. Thus, doing His will we come to know Him and gain an assurance otherwise unattainable of the truth of the doctrine He taught.

And surely this has always been God's witness of Himself to men, a witness in Creative *Deed*. The test of Christ's Divinity and the claim of His Judgeship lies in this direction. Some day we must give an account of the deeds done in the body, and the nature of the judgment is to depend upon our organic relationship to Him, which again is tested by our organic relationship one to another in Him. If we are discovered to have touched any of the vast masses of men at a sensitive point in active, loving service, at that point where we have touched any of them, we have touched Him. He claims to stand in an all-inclusive relationship to men, so that He cannot be numbered as merely one of them, but is ideally all in all. 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these least, ye did it unto me.'

And does He ask us to do what He refuses Himself to undertake? Not so. Test Him in the light of His creative activity in times past. He has wrought wondrously in this universe of time and space and at a certain point in the historical process, after a long preparation and a gradual revelation, *He has intervened with decisive results* in the affairs of men and done a deed which has made the future of the world and of man's destiny other than it would have been or could have been had He not done what He did. The supreme proof of God in action is the Cross. The atoning work of Calvary is something the glory of which is no figment of the imagination, but still in our skies to-day.

An intellectual certitude of His divinity may be wanting, but a moral and spiritual conviction of its truth is the possession of all those who have found Him mighty to save. If He be not God Himself in the act of forgiving, we have still to reckon with the All-Holy God in the matter of our human transgressions, but those who know the gospel to be indeed 'Good News,' know also that their faith in Jesus Christ is faith in the Eternal—

that in Him they find God, and One who is Redeemer and Saviour.

Short of such an experience, so warm, so vital, so deep in its richness, it is not altogether wonderful that men are discovered who can, and do, pour ridicule upon the whole subject, and in self-satisfied pride prefer to regard (with Bernard Shaw) forgiveness as a beggar's refuge, and wish if they can

to pay their debts. But the biggest proof of the present creative activity of the Creator to-day is the transformation He still works in human life, re-creating sinners into saints, lifting up the fallen and degraded, bringing the lost back and making us 'new creatures' in Christ Jesus.¹

¹ H. M. Relton, *The Catholic Conception of the Incarnation*, 48.

Recent Foreign Theology.

THIS is really a long review, containing forty-eight open letters written by O. Ritschl to his friend Rade about Rade's recently published *Dogmatic*.¹ The frankness of the conversation is delightful. Not only so, but the book has great independent value, for Ritschl is as learned and informing a writer on all that concerns Dogmatic as Germany can put forward. Even more suggestive than his comments upon Rade are his *obiter dicta*—sometimes worked out at considerable length—on other theologians of the day. Thus we are told that Herrmann was a preacher more than a dogmatician, which has a measure of truth and yet leaves us pleased that Herrmann was as he was. It is justifiably urged that Herrmann was wrong in rejecting the idea of *system* in theology; for, as Ritschl pointedly remarks, we need a synoptic view of Christianity, and in being systematic we need not in the least be purely deductive in method. Mysticism is religion, but not Christian religion. As against Otto, the point is made (as previously by Professor Kenneth Edward) that 'the feeling of creatureliness' is not a simple but a complex feeling. One of the least convincing pages in the book is that in which the writer reiterates A. Ritschl's mistaken objections to the idea of the Divine anger. Anger, he contends, is a momentary loss of self-control, which we cannot predicate of God. Was it so when Jesus looked round upon the Pharisees with indignation? Granting for the moment that we cannot imagine even a very good man being angry without being also slightly fanatical, we must not make the limits of our imagination binding for our thought of God.

Ritschl with justice repels Holl's view—held long ago by Newman—that God justifies because

¹ *Theologische Briefe an Martin Rade*, by Otto Ritschl (Leopold Klotz Verlag, Gotha, 1928, pp. 132; M. 3.60).

He intends to sanctify; if taken seriously it is indisputably a view that generates self-righteousness.

Some unusually interesting comments are made on the theology of Karl Barth. The Swiss school have hastily developed a one-sided reading of Luther's paradoxes, and their feverish thought is the result of being mere onlookers during the War—for spectators often are more profoundly upset by suffering than the sufferers themselves. Barth's point of departure is the mind of the anxious inquirer rather than fully Christian faith. This is worth thinking over, but does it carry us very far to call Barth one-sided? Of course he is, but then so were Schleiermacher, Hegel, and Albrecht Ritschl himself. Every new movement zigzags at a tangent, and if we are to get the good of Barth we shall have to listen to his powerful voice, allowing for his over-emphasis.

These essays² on Calvin's work, from the pen of the late Professor Paul Lobstein of Strassbourg, have been gathered together and edited by the filial care of his son, M. Edouard Lobstein. They include some which appeared originally in German, and have now been rendered into French. In a day when many are turning afresh to Calvin for inspiring guidance, these scholarly papers, informed by a sympathy which is never excessive, will be received with pleasure. They treat of Calvin as preacher, as theologian and religious philosopher, and as commentator on Scripture; shorter notes also are given on particular episodes in the Reformer's life.

We are shown how Calvin as really as Luther is a preacher to the people, simple and elevated by

² *Études sur la Pensée et l'Œuvre de Calvin*, by Paul Lobstein (éditions de 'La Cause'; Neully, 1927, pp. 185; 9 fr.).