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(1921), Makower and Lang for England, Doerries on Calvin and Lefèvre (*Z.K.G.*, 1925), K. Müller ('Calvin and the French Libertines,' *ib.* 1921).

In conclusion, I plead guilty to the omission, for the same reason, of many worthy contributions to the History of both the Ancient and the Reformation periods and apologize to the many scholars who have enriched the history of these periods by their

researches. As a fellow-worker in this field who knows the exacting laboriousness of genuine historic research, and has derived much edification from the research of these scholars, I would add the expression of my appreciation of this unflagging labour, which reflects high honour on German scholarship and affords convincing proof of its distinguished ability and industry.

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## In the Study.

### *Virginibus Puerisque.*

#### A Village Vow.

BY MRS. A. THRELFALL VICKERY, PRESTWICH,  
MANCHESTER.

'Pay thy vows unto the Most High.'—Ps 50<sup>14</sup>.

SOME three hundred years ago there was vowed in a tiny village a solemn vow. It came through illness, and has been kept ever since. There had been war in Europe for a generation—the Thirty Years' War, your books of history call it—and after the war, in 1633, came pestilence, or plague, like our influenza, only worse. It spread like wildfire over Bavaria. But there was one village which escaped in a marvellous way; Oberammergau was its name. The villagers had kept most careful guard from the beginning; they let no outsiders come into their village, neither would they let their villagers go into other villages. But, at last, one man evaded the quarantine. He was a labourer of Oberammergau, working in a neighbouring village. He climbed the mountain passes, crept stealthily through the tracks, and, all unsuspected, came back to his own home. Poor Caspar Schuchler! He was desperately home-sick and longed to see his wife and children; he was terribly anxious about them, and wanted to make sure that they were not in need. Alas! he had come from a plague-stricken village, and he had plague upon him; in two days he was dead, and in thirty-three days threescore-and-ten people of his own village had died too!

The few who were left were filled with dread for the future. In their distress they prayed earnestly to God; they repented of their past sins, and they made a great vow—just as Jacob did, at Bethel.

Wasn't the vow a strange one? They promised that if God would remove that plague from them

they would for ever afterwards hold a religious play, showing God's love to men, and that this Play should be shown every ten years. What happened? The plague ceased immediately, so the villagers, showing their sincerity, prepared to keep their vow, and they have kept it practically ever since.

The pastor of the village was a gifted man; he took the story of Christ's crucifixion, added a few scenes from the Old Testament, and then he set the villagers to work to perform this new Play. The custom was common in those days of performing Religious Plays, Miracle Plays, Nativity Plays, Passion Plays, much as we have Missionary Plays, Hospital Plays, Pageants, etc., nowadays, so the people were quite accustomed to that sort of thing. The pastor kept before them their vow. He made them feel that, in taking their parts, they were pleasing God, and he led them to put in their very best work, as an offering to God.

At first the Play was given in the churchyard, but that soon became too small to hold the crowds who wanted to see it. So a great theatre was built, with an open-air stage, and, as you watch the Play, the birds fly in and out, and you can see the mountains in the distance, and can hear the noise of tinkling cattle-bells and goat-bells in the street outside.

Who are the players? They are Oberammergau villagers, and are chosen by a committee of about twenty members. One takes the part of Christ; another of Mary, His mother; another Mary Magdalene; or Annas, Judas, or Peter. There are the crowds, too, the traders in the Temple, the crowd who shouted 'Hosanna!' and the crowd on the Crucifixion Day. Then there are the tableaux. These are Old Testament pictures, brought in to show how the Old Testament is linked to the New Testament. For instance, just before the scene where Judas sells Jesus for thirty pieces of silver,

there is the tableau of Joseph being sold by his brethren. Sometimes there are more than a hundred people on the stage at the same time, and some of them are such tiny little children, only four or five years old. They must be perfectly still for two minutes, in the tableaux, not wriggling or laughing in the slightest! But even the tiniest children are taught that it is a great honour to be in the Passion Play, and they try to please God by their acting.

The actors do not use wigs or grease-paint or such stage aids. Men let their hair grow long, so that they may be like the pictures of Jesus and His disciples. If you were in Oberammergau, when the Play was not being held, you might see Simon or Mary going about the village, doing the usual work in the shop or the house. One might be the village sculptor, another the mother of some children, and you would know that they had been training for months past to carry out their parts perfectly. These actors are simple village people, but they take their work very seriously, and prepare for months ahead. It is splendid to think that they are observing the vow which their forefathers made, and are offering to God their skill and their art as a perpetual reminder of the deliverance from plague granted nearly three hundred years ago. In these days people sometimes grow careless about keeping promises. Let the Oberammergau Passion Players be an example to us!

#### A Noble Record-Breaker.

BY THE REVEREND R. OSWALD DAVIES, LEICESTER.

'They all won their record.'—He 11<sup>9</sup> (Moffatt).

We all regret the tragic, yet triumphant, death of Sir Henry Segrave. This gallant young man, at the early age of thirty-four, gave his life in the service of progress.

There are certain things about his achievements and character which we shall not easily forget. Let me mention a few of them.

1. First, *he lived a life that was not in vain*. When Sir Henry met his death on Lake Windermere in his attempt to beat the world's record in motor-boat racing, some people asked, 'Was it worth while?' They also said, 'What a foolish thing to do!'

The same things were said when he made his attempt to beat the world's record in motor-racing with the *Golden Arrow* at Daytona Beach, in Florida.

But was it for nothing that he took such tre-

mendous risks? Think for a moment. Think of the wonderful motor-vehicles that travel our roads to-day, from baby-cars to the big saloons. How they glide along with perfect ease. But it was not always so. To travel in an old-fashioned 'bus or motor-car was like a veritable nightmare. It was a rickety, noisy affair, and you were always glad to get out of it. While to travel at high speed on water was simply impossible. To-day it is so different. And why? It is due to racing, both on land and water. By racing, men have found out the weaknesses and defects of cars and engines. In this way their high efficiency has been tested and improvements have been made possible. It is because of the gallant attempts of men like Sir Henry Segrave that we are able to travel on land and water with ease and comfort and with less danger of accident.

For this reason he did not live his short life in vain. When some deed that is worth while is being attempted it is often risky.

Men who have performed great deeds have taken great risks, and for this very reason their lives have not been in vain.

2. Again, *he was nobly unselfish*. After beating the world's motor-racing record just over a year ago with his *Golden Arrow* at the magnificent speed of 231 miles per hour, he said: 'In events of this kind, when they are successful, usually the driver gets all the praise. But,' he added, 'I want to say that I was helped tremendously to do what I did. I want to thank Captain Irving especially, who designed and perfected the *Golden Arrow* for me. *But for him I should have been absolutely nowhere.*'

Wasn't that really splendid?

Again, in his final attempt on Lake Windermere he made an unselfish gesture. He took with him in the boat Mr. Halliwell, the chief engineer, although it was not really necessary for Mr. Halliwell to accompany him. It was, however, his desire for his chief engineer to share the credit in his achievement. As some one has said: 'He would have been the first to insist that any honour gained by himself should be shared by Halliwell.' That was typical of him. When success came his way, he was not selfish about it. He didn't keep all the praise to himself. 'Others have helped me,' he would say, 'and I want to acknowledge them.'

Success is a fine thing, but it can be spoiled by selfishness. Whatever success may be your lot, never forget that you are debtors to others—to your fathers and mothers, your teachers, your ministers, and a host of others.

That great man Paul said that he owed everything in his life to Jesus.

3. Finally, *Sir Henry was not satisfied with past achievements*. One might think that having beaten the world's speed-record on land he would have been satisfied. Many a man would have rested on his laurels after such a magnificent achievement as that. On his return home he was graciously received by the King and was given the high honour of knighthood. But Sir Henry did not rest there.

He turned his attention to motor-boat racing—a far more dangerous occupation than even racing on land. He could not rest content while there were other records to be broken in other fields and other laurels to be won.

With *Miss England II*, he made his final attempt. It cost him his life, but he broke the world's record. His last words were: 'Have I broken the record?' Segrave was a noble record-breaker—a pioneer of Progress.

We, too, must not be satisfied with past achievements, however good they may be. We must go forward seeking greater achievements in higher realms. The best is ever before us. 'Be ye, therefore, perfect,' said Jesus, 'as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' We must not rest on our laurels while there are others to be won.

The eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews is a Roll of Honour of some of the heroes of the past, all of whom were record-breakers. They all won their record for Faith, and there can be no nobler record than that.

## The Christian Year.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

### The Fulness of Joy.

'His presence is salvation.'—Ps 42<sup>5</sup> (marg.).

'In thy presence is fulness of joy.'—Ps 16<sup>11</sup>.

To be in any man's presence is to be near him. It is to be in the same room with him. It is to see him and to hear him. And it is that he should see and hear us. But God's presence is not like that. God's presence is not to be sought for in any one time, or in any place, like a man's presence. God Almighty does not dwell within the limits of time and space as He has made man to dwell. 'God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable.' And, if He has a presence-chamber anywhere at all, let Him describe His presence-chamber to us Himself. 'For thus saith the High and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in

the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.' We shall never, to all eternity, fully understand the metaphysical presence of God, but even now and here we shall all enjoy His gracious presence and the light of His countenance, so far as we are of a humble and a contrite heart.

At the same time, absolutely impossible as it is for us at all to comprehend the bottomless mystery of the Divine Omnipresence, we cannot employ our minds better than by dazzling them and staggering them with such thoughts as these: *Deus ubique est; et totus ubique est*; that is to say, God is everywhere, and He is wholly everywhere. Just to take that first principle of the Divine Nature and to dwell upon it and to call it up continually in our minds, and to enter, as far as may be, into it, and to feed our souls upon it, and to take a majestic joy out of it—to what more blessed use can we put our best minds and all that is within us. And again, to take this: that in God all things live and move, and have their being: absolutely all things—from a grain of sand up to a solar system, and from a coral insect up to an archangel.

There is a little finger-length of a book entitled *Brother Lawrence on the Practice of the Presence of God*. Let us proceed to learn one or two lessons in that holiest and most blessed of all practices.

(1) And to begin with, let us 'practise the presence of God' by a firm faith in God, and a firm faith in His presence. God and His presence will come to be almost an object of sense to us, almost a matter of sight and touch to us, if we sufficiently practise it. But for a long time it must be a practice of pure faith. We do not need faith to practise the presence of any of our fellow-creatures. We can see them. But not God. No man with his eyes hath seen God at any time. And thus it is that 'he that cometh to God must believe that he is.' His faith must be, as it were, the 'substance' of his God to him. His faith must be to him the 'evidence' of his God's very existence to him, as the Apostle so nobly and so boldly has it—so much so, that faith, as it were, creates her God and sustains his ideal. God lives, and moves, and has His being, so to say, in His people's faith in Him. He is: He eternally and absolutely is, apart altogether from them and from their faith in Him. But it is their faith in Him that makes Him to be for them. 'Be it unto you,' our Lord was constantly saying, 'according to your faith.' He might have instituted some other principle for His

purpose than faith, but it did not seem good to Him to do so. And thus it is, that from beginning to end of the Christian life, and from centre to circumference, it is faith first, faith last, faith always, faith everywhere. And nowhere more than just here and in the practice of the presence of God. Practise faith, then, upon the presence of God, and that will give God a nearness to you and a reality to you and a power over you that nothing else can do.

(2) It is a very noble and ennobling practice that some men have of connecting God's presence with all His work in Nature and in providence as well as in grace. We like our work to be recognized and appreciated; and in this God has made us in His own image. It was one of His bitterest charges against Israel in Isaiah's day that they did not 'consider' Him. On the other hand, 'He maketh his sun to shine,' said our Lord, as often as He looked up into the summer sky. And within—William Law used to take his stand at his eastern window till the sun began to climb up into the morning sky, when he saluted his fellow-servant in these and like terms: 'Glorious creature,' he exclaimed, 'of the glorious Creator, come and let us serve and obey Him for another day, according to His ordinances.'

And then from Nature and from God's presence in Nature we will rise to practise His presence in His ever-loving and never-sleeping providence; in past history and in everyday history, in His daily newspapers as well as His inspired Word; and from that onwards and inwards to His daily and homely momentary providence of all kinds in our own life.

(3) The prophets and the psalmists of Israel made such splendid practice of this presence of the pure and absolute Godhead in their day, that, what they would have attained to, had they lived in our New Testament day, it is difficult to imagine. For how easy, and how pleasant, and how attractive, and how heart-winning it is to practise the presence of God in Christ. Are we practising the presence of God in act? Let us begin to do it in this simple and sincere way. Practise our presence back beside His presence. Practise our presence all up and down the four Gospels. Our presence at His baptism, at His temptation in the wilderness, at this sermon of His and that, also this miracle of His and that, when He is healing a leper, practising His part, and possess ourselves of the experience of that unclean creature. When He is forgiving sins, practise being the forgiven sinner. Practise, in that way, every time we open the four Gospels;

and we will open them more than all other books in the world, taken together, and with good reason. And then from that, go on to practise His presence in it risen and glorified, understanding all the time that no small part of His glorification stands in His power and His will to be with us by His Divine presence and by His human sympathy, in ways and to results past all our understanding, but only the more sure to our experience. Let us practise His risen presence in our personal life, in our hours at home, in our secret heart. Let us see Him standing over us and inclining His ear towards us in our most secret hour of prayer. See Him sitting over against us when we sit down to do our work. Practise a fast faith in Him in all our trials and in all our crooked crosses.

Let us lay down this law to ourselves—that nothing comes to us of any kind without His permission, and we will soon be the men of the most serene and most self-possessed hearts. So, let us practise His presence, both in Scripture, and still more in our own hearts and lives, till if He were to come into our house to-night and in the body, we would feel at once at home with Him and He with us.

And now, just one quotation, by way of acknowledgment to Brother Lawrence for his inspiration. 'He had found such an advantage in living in this presence of God that it was natural for him to recommend it earnestly to others. But his example was a stronger inducement than any argument he could propose. His very countenance was edifying; such a sweet and calm devotion appearing in it as could not but affect the beholder. And it was observed, that in the greatest hurry of business in his kitchen (for he was cook to the society), he still preserved his recollection and his heavenly-mindedness. He was never hasty, nor loitering, but did each thing in its season, with an even, uninterrupted composure and tranquillity of mind. "The time of business," said he, "does not with me differ from the time of prayer, and in the noise and clatter of the kitchen I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were upon my knees before the Blessed Sacrament."'<sup>1</sup>

#### ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

##### Immortality and Common Sense.

'This mortal must put on immortality.'—1 Co 15<sup>53</sup>.

Were St. Paul alive to-day would he still put it like that, or would he not rather put it: Immor-

<sup>1</sup> A. Whyte, *The Nature of Angels*, 199.

tality must put off this mortal? The real truth about us is not that we grow into immortality, but that we grow out of mortality. We find ourselves always coming back to this subject; and justly, because Jesus defines Himself in terms of it: 'I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly.' Supremely, in His own terms, He is the life-giver, or more exactly, perhaps, the life-revealer; for 'life and immortality are *brought to light* in the gospel.' He is Saviour because sin is the chief obstacle in the way of life. If we were not immortal it would not have been worth Christ's while to die for us. What is the good of saving dust from judgment? Really to believe in Christ is to believe that Christ's death for man implies man's immortality.

Our present body is not what it is merely intrinsically. It cannot be considered except in conjunction with this particular earth on which we live. It takes its qualities from this world in which we live, as much as from ourselves. There was an article in a scientific magazine the other day about one of the heavenly bodies—to be precise, the satellite of Sirius—which is of such an extraordinary density (ten thousand times the density of the earth), that if we lived there instead of on this planet, each of us would weigh about a thousand tons. In other words, the whole condition and constitution of life would be entirely changed for us by a mere change of the density of the globe on which we lived.

What does this mean? Surely that life is always adjusted to environment, or that environment is always adjusted to life. And that is the key to the survival of death, and the next world. Our trouble about it is precisely that it is going to upset all our values: we don't really want it because we imagine, we fear, that we are going to be entirely different persons there. These eyes that see sunsets and hail the dawn; these lungs that delight in the breath of the sweet air; these hands that grasp things that are real; these hearts that love other living hearts,—how are they going to fare under totally different conditions? Shadows and phantoms have no attraction for us: the whole thing is clothed in unreality.

But the 'real' for us is a mere matter of adjustment to our conditions. The heavenly life is just as real—as tangible—as this. It is a condition of all life. The birds of to-day's air evolved from the fishes whose element was the sea, millions of years ago. Precisely the same principle of life persists, but the new organism has adjusted itself perfectly to the new environment.

So when we get to the next world, so completely will we be adjusted to our new conditions that it will all seem just as real and as natural and inevitable as this world; and we will no more regret this world than the lark or the eagle regrets the sea, in which its remote ancestors lived. It is precisely this delusion about unreality that makes many people indifferent to—even half afraid of—the next world.

The trouble about immortality in the past has been that while it has been a postulate of faith, it has often failed to clarify and vindicate itself to reason. Reason has failed to see—or theology (especially in its revolt from the dogma of the resurrection of the flesh) has failed to make it clear to reason that

Eternal form shall still divide  
Eternal soul from all beside.

Many people are less afraid of death as extinction, than they are afraid of death as the portal of the unknown and the unreal. They are afraid of life under unknown conditions. They might welcome 'sleep,' but they are afraid it won't be sleep: they are afraid of waking up—themselves—in conditions of fantastic unreality, in which they can no longer be themselves. And so we have the strong persuasion that if Jesus Himself had been writing these words of St. Paul's, He would have put them the other way round. He would have said that when we die it is not the mortal putting on immortality, but 'immortality putting off the mortal'—the essential 'I' adjusting itself to conditions as entirely real and natural to our new progress as those we have left behind.

Immortality is not fundamentally a matter of figures and calculations, even of history or faith. It is fundamentally a problem of ourselves. Anything and everything we *may* be is founded on *what we are*. That is why Christ never proved it, and said very little about the Beyond, and spent almost all His time and energy on the present; on getting people to understand themselves, and to believe *in Him*. Not in theories about Him, but in Him—what He was. For you will never really want to be anything Beyond, until you are very sure what you are now. That is the problem. 'The relationship,' says Dr. Fosdick, in an article in *Harper's Magazine*, 'between those nine billion brain cells with which we do our thinking on the one side, and on the other our personalities, our thoughts, ideals, purposes, loves, and all the expanding possibilities of our characters, is the most baffling problem in the universe. The merely

*physical* explanation of ourselves becomes the more difficult the farther one goes into it. For suppose some instrument so ingenious that looking through it one could see the brain cells of a man at work. Then suppose that some mirror could make the instrument introspective, so that a man could watch his own brain cells at work. It would be a curious experience. *For who would be doing the watching?* Unless you are prepared to assume that the brain cells are watching themselves, the materialist position becomes impossible. 'Some modern chemists,' Dr. Fosdick goes on to tell us, 'have been analysing the average man and have put into picturesque terms what he is made of: enough fat to make seven bars of soap; enough iron to make one nail of medium size; enough sugar to fill a shaker; enough lime to whitewash a chicken-coop; enough phosphorus to make twenty-two hundred match-tips; enough magnesium for one good dose of magnesia; enough potassium to explode a toy cannon; and a pinch of sulphur. And they say that the market value of these chemicals is about four shillings.'

The first question is not what this may become, but what it is now. 'Does any one honestly think,' Dr. Fosdick goes on, 'that a few chemical elements, worth about two shillings and sixpence a hundredweight, cleverly organised by Nature, ignorant of what she was doing, has resulted in our Isaiahs and Platos, our Galileos and Darwins, and—forgive the irreverence—in Jesus Christ Himself?' If we don't believe it we must be prepared to accept the alternative: and there is only one alternative. And that is that matter does not explain spirit, and that spirit is independent of matter. Or, in other words, that the immortal *can* put off mortality.

There can be no worse hell for some men than knowing what they have become in the light of what they really are: the seeing—when these mortal eyes have ceased to veil reality—of what they have done with their immortality. The picture of Christ the terrible judge of mediæval theology has never seemed to be clothed with any persuasive reality. His sorrow is more to be dreaded than His rebuke. His 'depart from me' more to be feared than the sentence of hell. As Newman has it in the *Dream of Gerontius*:

And these two pains, so counter and so keen,  
The longing for Him, when thou seest Him not;  
The shame of self at thought of seeing Him,  
Will be thy veriest, sharpest purgatory.

God's laws do not break down in that other

world; the great principles which govern life here, govern life everywhere; and the larger immortal life there will be a perfect and wholly natural and inevitable mutual adjustment of environment and life. But a man cannot neglect his immortality now and not pay the price then. The 'outer darkness' of one of His parables—cleansed of its mediæval accretions—rendered simply as the darkness which is outside God, the darkness of separation from God—is a very real and terrible thing.

Of 'sins' Christ spoke often, but always in terms that suggested that He could deal with them summarily and authoritatively. 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' But He only spoke of 'sin' in one definite and decisive connexion: 'If I had not come, they had not known *sin*; but now they have no excuse for their sin.' And what is sin? 'Of sin because they believe not on me.' And who is He? 'In him was life.' 'Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life'—their own life. We may be scarred, tempest-tossed, beaten, and fallen, but if we never let go of Life, of Him who is the Life, He will never let us go; and He will hold us, cleanse us, save us though as by fire.<sup>1</sup>

#### TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

##### The Unpurchasable Things of Life.

'And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.'—1 K 21<sup>9</sup>.

To give Ahab his due, he never intended to go the length he did when first he cast envious and longing eyes upon Naboth's little vineyard. He wished Naboth no harm; indeed, in other circumstances he might have been glad to advance the worthy man's interests. But unfortunately those interests happened to clash with the schemes for expansion which the powerful monarch had under contemplation. That little bit of land bordered upon his own wide demesne, and was the most convenient outlet for the plans he was evolving; and to invade it at all costs he was determined.

It was no mere sentiment which dictated Naboth's determined refusal of the tyrant's request. And this Ahab knew, or should have known. Canaan was to every Israelite in a peculiar manner God's land. They considered themselves His tenants; and this was one of the conditions of their leases, that they should not alienate any

<sup>1</sup> H. F. Brierley, *Life Indeed*, 52.

part of that which fell to their lot, unless in case of extreme necessity.

Somehow or other Ahab must circumvent the other's squeamish conscience. He has evidently no thought of violating by force the other's ground ; but he will buy him out if he can. What will Naboth take to let the imperious monarch pursue unchecked his schemes of aggrandizement ? Will he take the full value in cash of the invaded land, or will he accept a better vineyard in exchange ? Bribes, entreaties, threats—all are unavailing. Ahab did not know his man.

The sequel is interesting, and withal strangely familiar. Ahab's evil genius at his side prompts him to throw honour and all moral and religious considerations to the winds, and work his will. 'What is the use of having might if you do not exercise it ?' she whispered. 'Dost thou now govern Israel ?' And down the tyrant goes and takes possession by the power of the sword. The deed is shameful and barefaced enough in itself, but the accompanying circumstances of its committal make it worse. For in the process there is a travesty of law, a mockery of religion, and a revolting show of regard for justice and righteousness.

In one of the most dramatic scenes in the Old Testament, Elijah, the man of God, encounters Ahab at the very height of his seeming triumph. And Ahab's face grew pale, and the spirit shrivelled within him, like a tendril of one of the stolen vines at the scorching breath of the desert wind.

Naboth paid the price of honour and loyalty and religious conviction in full, as it has been paid in the same ruddy coin many a time since then. The stand that he made was not for himself alone, but for posterity. And his action stands for all time as testimony to the truth that there are some things in life that are unpurchasable. It is not its rental in broad acres that makes a man willing to shed the last drop of his blood in defence of his country. No doubt the market price of it might be weighed to the seller, or some fairer corner of the earth be had in exchange for it. It is because it is the 'inheritance of his fathers' that makes it without price in his sight. 'I will give thee another vineyard for it'—the very suggestion is insulting. Other soil may be more fertile, but none is so sacred. The isles of Greece may be small ; but a blind old man wandered among them telling his deathless stories, and so they live. Scottish soil may be hard to turn ; but there was a ploughman who drew one furrow whence an unending harvest of inspiration is reaped, and he that bindeth

sheaves filleth his bosom. 'I will give thee the worth of it in money.' No, Ahab simply did not know what he was saying when he made his insulting proposal to Naboth.

Not one of the gifts of God may be purchased with money—not honour, not love, not peace of conscience, not even the respect of our fellow-men. 'If a man would give all the substance of his house for love it would utterly be contemned.' You buy a book, but there is something in the book that you cannot buy. You may handle in pride of possession the material form and substance of your purchase, but not the book of the poet or the thinker. There is something here which you may never be able to call your own, and that is the priceless thing about the book. So of the salvation of God in Christ, so of high thoughts and sympathy, and happiness and peace, and the visions of faith and hope ; they all are gifts—unspeakable and unpurchasable gifts.

What made Naboth so stout in the defence of his little vineyard, so brave in his defiance of the thieving tyrant ? Had he ever sold something of value, and learned only after he had parted with it what its true worth was ? And had he vowed that not even gold from the royal treasury should ever tempt him to part with that which remained ? At any rate, he had come to see that not even life itself was worth the keeping if he parted with the little vineyard.

In one of its most devilishly cynical phrases the world roundly declares and believes that 'Every man has his price.' It may be so ; but there have been those who have made theirs prohibitive—to the glory of God and the confounding of Ahab. There are always the two points of view, that of Ahab and that of Naboth. The one cannot understand the other's jealous guardianship of that which seems so small and insignificant. Why not part with honour, or with innocence, or with that ideal ? 'I will give thee the worth of it in money.' Why make that pig-headed stand for the religious and moral standards of the fathers ?

Oh, Ahab is a specious pleader as well as a powerful monarch. Do not think that Naboth did not feel the force of the temptation. Most powerfully *He* felt it, *He* our Naboth, who defended for us the vineyard of our inheritance, the wine of the unpurchasable sacrament. For a mightier than Ahab showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time : 'All these will I give thee if——' But *He* would not. And they brought against Him also men, sons of Belial ; and Him, too, they carried forth out of the city, and with a mockery of justice they brought Him in the end to

death. But the Prince of Darkness did not get the vineyard.

Don't sell it to him now. You have parted with much, perhaps, much whose unpurchasable worth you realized too late. Keep the wine of the priceless vintage to the last. There is no man who does not feel the force of that seductive voice, 'Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house.' As if that were any excuse! Because sin is specious and access easy for the devil, that therefore we should surrender at will!

It is just part of the arrogant blindness of Ahab that he can never see the value of that with which he would have us part so lightly. It was not for nothing that the fathers defended and handed down the little quiet spaces where the spirit walks with God. Those things that we refuse to sell—the little vineyards upon which the world deems that so ready a price may be put, we defend them not for the memory of the fathers alone, nor yet for the slaking of our own souls' thirst, but because we have a duty and a high responsibility to the generations yet unborn.<sup>1</sup>

#### THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

##### I know in Part.

'Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.'—1 Co 13<sup>12</sup>.

St. Paul did not profess to know everything. In regard to many things of vast import he had honestly to admit that he did not know.

There was a time in the life of St. Paul when he knew much more than he did when he wrote this Hymn of Love; a time when he knew more and loved less. Like some of the rest of us, he had been trained in a system of theology in which little was left unknown. His teachers knew the nature of God, the names and number of the angels, and the end of all things. As often happens, his knowledge made him narrow, bigoted, and intolerant, as if it were not sure of itself.

Much depends upon the tone of voice and heart in which we say that we do not know. It may be said in a tone of sad finality, if not dogmatic denial, implying that there is nothing to know. Such an attitude was alien to the mind of St. Paul, who was neither negative nor neutral, as so many are to-day. The issues involved were too profound, too far-reaching. One cannot think of St. Paul singing the plaintive minor music of our time, half query and half protest. Never! His music was akin to that

high, heroic, lonely voice echoing across the ages, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' flinging out his faith in the teeth of tragedy. As he himself said elsewhere, 'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have deposited with him.' In other words, he thought expectantly, as one who knew that there is always truth ahead, more truth to be known, truth more wonderful than we have yet imagined. Such should be our attitude to-day, in the midst of the extraordinary advance of knowledge.

1. Here we are in an amazing universe, alive, active, thinking, dreaming, loving, seeking to know the meaning of the world and our place and duty in it. Manifestly, then, if there is any key to the riddle it must be found in something within ourselves, since we cannot leap outside ourselves to discover it. Nor do we need to do so, because we are within Nature, not opposed to it, but a part of it; and this means that in values, as in consciousness, we are on the inside, and have, in our own nature, a clue to its meaning. Nay, more; we are agents, actors, participants in the actual life of the universe, not mere spectators of reality, but part of it.

By the same token, if there is a spiritual element in man, which no one denies, it must have come from the universe itself, if not from physical nature, then from some Power behind and within physical nature, else it would not be in man. Also, the spiritual quality, so to name it, must be greater in the universe than in man, since its development in man is still so incomplete. Here, truly, is a firm basis of faith, built into the very structure of our being, and *the first fact upon which we build is the moral sense in man*. Here it is, rooted in the very bottom of our being, interpret it as we like—an impulse, an insight, an inner censor, an awful whisper of command—as much a part of the universe as pig-iron or potash; something which has never accepted utter identification with outer force or brute fact. At the core of consciousness is conscience, a sense of right and wrong, an inexorable demand for obedience to an inner law. Like everything else, it may vary with race, custom, depth of insight, and degree of development, but it is a fact of Nature and life.

The two overwhelming mysteries, as Kant said, are the still depth of a starlit sky and the silent whisper of the moral law in the soul of man; and one is as real as the other. Explain the moral life of man how we will, describe it as an infantile inhibition of humanity, as the fashion now is, declare it to be only an echo within us of an old

<sup>1</sup> H. L. Simpson, *Put Forth by the Moon*, 144.

ancestral memory, or the shadow of an ancient fear—that is only to push the mystery farther back and deeper down. The origin of the moral life, the initial bias toward righteousness remain to be accounted for. It is here within us, unaccountably. We did not create it. Whether we can destroy it or not, we do not know. When we obey it, we are happy; when we disobey it, we are thwarting our own nature and defying the law of our very being. To explain it away is not to send it away.

Upon this fact, then, we may build, as Robertson did when, as a young man, sorely troubled about his faith and the meaning of his life, he went to the Alps to fight it out. The only thing which the analysis could not dissolve and destroy was the moral law within, and so, 'clinging obstinately to moral good,' in spite of himself, he built upon that firm basis the edifice of his faith.

2. The second thing that we know is no less sure; it is *that we have the power to choose what is right and to refuse what is wrong*, or, contrariwise, to choose the wrong and refuse the right. Having done both, we know that it is true. At once we are faced by a vague fatalistic philosophy now in vogue, albeit hoary with age, which tells us that we are no more responsible for what we do than we are for the shape of our heads and the colour of our eyes. No doubt it is plausible and many facts may be arrayed in its behalf; but every man knows that it is false. When Dr. Johnson had heard all the facts in favour of fatalism, he brought his old cane down with a thump, and said, 'I know I am free, and that is the end of it.'

Fate is a fact, and so is freedom. Much of our life is ordered for us by fate, and runs in grooves which it must follow; most of it is fixed before we arrive. Still, limitation has its limits, and it is the fate of man to be free. Hedged about, restricted, enmeshed in a network of laws, his liberty is none the less real because it is limited, as it must be of necessity by the fact that he is finite, as well as by the nature and purpose of his life.

Just the same, as Tennyson said, 'If we are birds in a cage, we decide whether we are to sit on the upper perch or the lower.' If Fate is supreme, then there must be a Higher Fatalism which includes moral law and the quest of truth, obedience to which sets us free. Or perhaps we may say that the will of man is free in that it is not *compelled*, but limited in the sense that it is *impelled* by the law of its own being, as well as by the pervasive and ultimately persuasive influence of the good which is stronger than evil.

3. Even the moral life, with its awful law and its

perilous liberty, is not all that we find within these 'little infinite human souls.' There is something else; something elusive, ineluctable, irresistible, unconscious oft, unsatisfied ever; something free and flaming—a *motion and a passion that run beyond duty, beyond righteousness, in quest of goodness.*

No one can define religion; it breaks through all language and escapes. At once a mystery and a madness, no one can tell what it will do or become next, except that it will do some impossible thing and talk about it in parables. One day it gives us a militarist like Cromwell, the next a pacifist like Tolstoy or Ghandi. It turns Fra Angelico to art, and the Puritans against art. In one age it created the drama, and in the next prohibited it. It fashions a stately Roman procession and a quaint Quaker bonnet; the Gothic glory of a cathedral—its tower a nesting-place of dreams—and the drabness of a country meeting-house.

4. There is another thing that we know: both our *moral sense and our religious nature*—shy, lonely, wistful, adventurous—*find fulfilment and satisfaction in the life, personality, and character of Jesus*, as nowhere else. Some one asked Bertrand Russell two questions: 'Do you fully understand the Einstein theory of relativity? and do you go with him all the way?' Quick as a flash the great mathematician replied: 'I answer the first question in the negative, and the second in the affirmative.' That is exactly our attitude toward Jesus. He baffles our mind, but He searches our heart and sways it as no one else can do. His tragic Figure of heroic moral loveliness subdues us, chastens us, challenges us, redeems us. To us Jesus is a dream come true, a vision verified, the lost, ineffable Word made flesh, and then spirit again; the Life that interprets life, revealing a tender love hidden in a terrible mystery.

5. One other thing we know, too, beyond the shadow of doubt or cavil: *soon or late we must obey the vision of moral power and spiritual beauty we have seen in Jesus—we can never be happy until we do.* But, if we needs must follow the highest when we see it, we must have help for the adventure, and we can get it. This, too, we know with an assurance made doubly sure by the testing of time and trial. The Church, in spite of its faults and failings, is a profound help. The Church is 'a society for the promotion of goodness in the world,' as Arnold said, and to unite in an historic fellowship of men seeking goodness is both an inspiration and a consecration. It is like climbers of the Alps, who tie themselves together, so that if one slip all hold him up.

The Bible is a help, too, though, alas, it is so little known and used by those who would love it best if they sought its counsel. Also, there is help for all who ask for it in prayer. Whether we call it fellowship with God or adjustment to the universe, it deals directly with reality, wherein, as Dante told us, lies our peace. Of all forms of human effort, prayer is the most profoundly practical, if we add the will to listen and work for its answer. One reads the life of St. Teresa with mingled awe and joy, remembering the eighteen years she devoted to the mastery of this highest of all arts.

These things we know beyond a doubt, and upon them we build a working faith for to-day and a singing hope for the morrow. Moral law and liberty, the sense of the Infinite in the finite, the fascination and challenge of the life of Jesus, and what the Prayer Book calls 'the means of grace'—life cannot be ignoble or worthless when it gives us such guidance in a world where there is truth to seek, love to win, work to do, and beauty to adore.<sup>1</sup>

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#### FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

##### HARVEST SERMON.

##### First-fruits and Last Fruits.<sup>2</sup>

'Thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which thou shalt bring in from thy land . . . and set it down before the altar of the Lord thy God.'—Dt 26<sup>2-4</sup> (R.V.).

The earth yielding her increase is a great mystery. In all ages it has stirred imagination and wonder and joy. Harvest festivals of some sort are as old as man the agriculturist. There is no little interest in getting to know how other peoples have kept harvest. The Jews had their own festivals. For them there was hardly any joy like the joy of harvest.

That interesting old book of laws—Deuteronomy, has preserved some of the old regulations and customs that belonged to harvest. The reaping had neither to be without thought of God, nor without thought of others. The first-fruits had to be given to God. 'Thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which thou shalt bring in from thy land, and set it down before the altar of the Lord thy God.' It was in the nature of a thank offering, and the custom goes much farther back than the Jews. It was an old Semitic custom,

<sup>1</sup> J. F. Newton, *Things I know in Religion*, 7.

<sup>2</sup> By the Rev. F. C. Hoggarth, Great Horton, Bradford.

and until it had been observed, the rest of the crop was not regarded as lawful food.

There were old superstitions about it being *unsafe* to eat of new crops until the gods had received their share. Amongst the Jews the amount to be presented seems to have been left to the discretion of the offerer. It must have been a picturesque thing in later days to see the procession of such offerers coming into Jerusalem, with their wreathed baskets on their shoulders, to present them in the Temple courts, to the accompaniment of music and song.

As they handed gifts over to the priest, they had to repeat, what at first sight seems a curious formula—far removed from the thought of harvest—'A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt and sojourned there.' Then came a reference to the captivity and the deliverance and the ultimate entrance into the land of Promise. The Jew is to remember that things were not always thus with Israel. He is to cast his eyes over the generations until he sees a family of nomads, a wandering clan, who gathered no harvests, but lived from hand to mouth. Behind the harvest, he was to remember a history and a human pilgrimage—in the hope that the remembrance would stir the sense of wonder and gratitude. From gathered wheat and barley, grapes and figs, and olives and honey, the thought leaps to 'old unhappy far-off things, and battles long ago.' The possibility of a harvest was rooted in far-off heroisms. It was because some one had once gone out, not knowing whither he went, to whom Canaan was a land of dreams, that to a later age it had become a homeland.

In the hour of rewarded toil, the Israelite was to remember that he was reaping, not only his own sowing, but the sowings of past ages, in the way of daring faith and sacrifice. We might not have thought of that in connexion with harvest, but those old legislators did. The rule reveals a fine insight into the deeper significance of life. In this old custom we see one of the noblest uses to which history can be put, namely, to stir moods of wonder and gratitude, the sense of obligation to the heroisms of the past, the remembrance that others laboured and we have entered into their labours. The formula may with many have become a form, a remembrance in word rather than in thought. But in so far as the offerers entered into the spirit of that remembrance, they would the more richly and joyously enter into the occasion of the first-fruits. For giving can itself be a joy and an enrichment of the spirit.

Though the amount of the offering was left to the individual, there was an expectation as to quality. There is rather a fine gesture in the idea of first-fruits. A man did not say that anything would do. It was expected he would have a pride in his offering—bringing the first-fruits of the ground and the fattest lamb of the flock. There is not a little help in an expectation of that kind, and the stronger it can be made the better. For there is often a tendency and a temptation to offer to God that in which no pride could be taken. Lest the temptation should be too great, the Hebrew put a barrier against it in his law. But the proper place for such a barrier is in the heart. The days have probably gone by when the support of religion could be made compulsory. Yet freedom should not be an excuse for selfishness. It is thought by some that in the gift of first-fruit is to be found the origin of the tithe. In any case, for the Jew the support of worship and of religion was not a casual charge. As far as the law could, it saw that people's gifts to religion were adequate and regular. Conditions have changed—and voluntary systems are now in vogue. It has been truly said that not the least condemnation of many Christians are the ways to which churches are driven to raise money.

There is no end of Christians who no longer 'give' to the Church—they only pay. The condition of their support is that they get a tea or a concert in return. There is no opening of the hand, no stirring of great emotions, no sense of deep obligations, or of the importance of the Church and all it stands for in the life of the nation.

If the Hebrew gave his first-fruits to God, he gave his last fruits to the poor and needy. In the same book of laws, Deuteronomy, there is a number of ancient harvest regulations, drawn up in a spirit of brotherhood. 'When thou reapest thine harvest and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it.' 'When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again.' 'When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean after it.' The residue in all these cases was to be for the stranger, the fatherless, the widow. The law is not permissive, but imperative. Its terms are 'thou shalt.' Given no spirit of brotherhood, the law doubtless could be evaded, though observed in the letter. If the law forbids you to go over your boughs a second time, and if you do not want those in need to share somewhat with you in the generousities of Nature, obviously one could go over the boughs with double thoroughness the first time.

The intention was that the Jew at harvest-time should not only recognize his ties with the past, but also with the present. He was bound up in one bundle of life with his needy contemporaries—the widow, the stranger, the fatherless—that is, those for whom life's provisions and protections were inadequate, through misfortune or loss, or the accident of birth or circumstance. Such had a claim for consideration, a right to glean in the fields of the prosperous. We see the gleaners at work in that lovely idyll, the Book of Ruth. There were times evidently when it had a romance all its own!

In former days in England, a labourer's children would be kept from school to glean. They rose at 4 a.m., carrying a bag in front of them for the short ears, those without straw. When enough of the longer ones had been gathered, they were tied in bundles and left in the stubble, and the gleaners knew their own.

The year's rent was sometimes made in this way. Gleaning has died out with the advent of the self-binder mowing machines.

In the old days in Israel, every harvest field and vine and olive tree proclaimed the truth of neighbourliness and charity. There was in the law of the land a check against the acquisitive spirit that would have all. 'Business is business,' we say. Here in the midst of the harvest field was a human touch which suggested charity rather than business. That sheaf in the field and those ungathered olives and grapes are symbolic of a far-reaching principle that still needs to be incorporated into life, however different the expression of it may be. Such succour and kindly aid is more than a private matter. For instance, there is the recognition that no one in our midst must starve. More and more has corporate responsibility for the unfortunate and the handicapped been recognized. There are many gracious and beautiful social services carried on under the ægis of a modern city. Canon Barnett of Toynbee Hall, who knew as intimately as any man the needs and problems of the East End of London, said there was need for a new beatitude. 'Blessed are the tax-payers.' It takes the sting out of some of them to know they are acceptable unto God. In this case God loves a cheerful tax-payer. It is a form of giving; and the tax-collector helps some to do good with their money, who might otherwise forget. 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these,' through rates or taxes, 'ye did it unto me.'

That is not an argument for squandering money, especially other people's money. It does not follow

because taxes and rates are high that the right things are necessarily being most effectively or most economically done. What is needed is reappropriation, not increase; less on war, for instance, and more on things like health and education. Safeguards should be taken against abuse. Other humane services depend on voluntary gifts. They are one

of the splendid aspects of our age. Never was there in any age such a variety and multiplicity of service for the handicapped and unfortunate. Their maintenance depends on the development of a high sense of responsibility, remembering the right of the less privileged to glean in the harvest fields of our lives.

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## Recent Foreign Theology.

### *The Kingdom of God and the Church in the New Testament.*

WHEN in the latter part of last century the social problem was forced on the attention of the Christian Church, and some advanced thinkers began to realize the social applications of the Christian gospel, the term, *The Kingdom of God*, so common in the Gospels, and yet so largely neglected in Christian theology, was revived as the standard around which these new interests might be gathered. The ardent champions of this revival did not pause to ask themselves whether their interpretation of the term was the same as the intention of Jesus. Some of the social reformers from Great Britain and America were not a little disconcerted to find that their use of the term was challenged by the German scholars at the Stockholm Conference. To their confident conviction that the Kingdom of God might be advanced and hastened on earth by human endeavour, there was opposed the charge of an optimism and an activism, inconsistent with that humble sense of man's insufficiency and that submissive dependence on God's sole sufficiency which was put forward as the distinctively Christian piety by the Lutheran speakers. For them the Kingdom of God meant a transcendent, catastrophic Divine intervention in human history, and not an evolutionary human moral and religious progress. The eschatological school of critics gave to this exclusive interpretation the authority of Jesus Himself. While mutual intercourse may have done something to modify the opposition, the contrast of conception still remains. It is in the circumstances an interesting and important contribution to the treatment of this question which is offered in the volume before us.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Reich Gottes und Kirche im Neuen Testament*, von Dr. theol. Gerhard Gloege (C. Bertelsmann, Gütersloh, 1929; Mk. 12.50).

For thoroughness of treatment, orderliness of arrangement, clearness of exposition, and, in my judgment, persuasiveness of reasoning, it would not be easy to find a match to this volume; and the author has deserved well for what must have been an immense labour, but evidently a labour of love. As one might have expected, he goes to the very roots of the question.

In the first part he discusses the royal rule (*Königsherrschaft*) of God. In the first section here there is an historical survey of the Old Testament; the second deals with the fundamental character of the New Testament proclamation of the rule; what is emphasized is its dynamic character. God is constantly, supremely active. 'Jesus' deed is God's deed, that means nothing else than that His person is inseparable from His work.' 'Jesus no more *teaches* about the Kingdom, but He *brings* it in His Messianic dealing actually into the present, as well with His doing as with His word, which above all is the creative principle of His total activity.' . . . 'Only one Messianic figure remained open to Him for realization, that of the Servant and the Son of Man Messiah of Deutero-Isaiah, and of Daniel' (pp. 61-62). This conception of the Divine rule gives consistency to the New Testament representations. In the following sections the characteristics of the kingly activity of God are very fully discussed. (a) It is *above time*: linked as it is to Jesus' conception of God, it leads us to set aside evolutionism and synergism. 'The Divine rule,' he maintains, 'is nowhere thought as a developing one, to say nothing of a realm to be reached by human activity, but is always constituted by God's action, which is likewise an *a priori*, that is, an operation carried through outside of all human activity' (pp. 71, 72). This Divine activity is the motive of human repentance and faith. This interpretation the author seeks to justify by a careful exegesis both of the parables and of the letters. (b) It is *opposed to*