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A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

The one, who was making a distinction between two constituents of Israel's religion, needed to choose his terms with care. The other, who was thinking of his faith in its unity, could afford to be more lax in his language.

But all this implies that the chapter, like its predecessor, is later than the Code with the fundamental principles of which it deals. Further, it also derives from North Israel. Not only are the principles which it applies to the Code those of the two prophets of the North. But even the annotator who added in vv.^{16f.} the reference to Massah used for the purpose the version of E in Ex 17^{2,7} as contrasted with J's account. It is more difficult, however, to determine what may have been the original connexion to which the passage belonged. It certainly forms no part of the surroundings among which it has been placed. Thus v.² cannot be read as a continuation of v.¹. Not only is there the sudden, unaccountable change over from 2nd plur. to 2nd sing. But v.¹ speaks of a commandment, consisting of statutes and judgments: v.² speaks of statutes and commandments, and in mentioning statutes makes it feminine, while v.¹

makes it masculine. It is impossible to believe that the same person wrote those two verses in a continuous sentence. But that leaves v.² hanging in the air, a half-sentence, since it begins with 'in order that.' Either it has once been connected with some other passage, or it has been inserted where it stands in order to create a tolerable connexion with what precedes. It were rash, on the basis of these two chapters, to decide where chapter 6 originally appeared. Only it should be added that it has very much the appearance of never having been intended for an introduction to the Code. Its more appropriate place would be at the close of the law, since it does not give the impression of leading up to anything. Or, if it leads up to anything, it is rather to the institution of a system of education, than to a statement of the law. One could conceive of the chapter, even more readily than of chap. 5, having been a piece of religious literature which gathered round the Code, and which proved how that Code had appealed to the religious thought of the prophets, and how these in turn had developed and deepened its teaching.

In the Study.

Virginitus Puerisque.

Under New Management.

BY THE REVEREND PHILIP E. PEGG, SCARBOROUGH.

'By their fruits ye shall know them.'—Mt 7²⁰.

THE other day while I was walking along the street I caught sight of a large notice outside a shop. It said: 'This business is now under entirely new management.' I expect you have seen a notice like that pasted on the windows of a good many shops; sometimes a sweet-shop, sometimes a toy-shop, sometimes a boot-shop, sometimes a grocer's shop. I suppose that almost every kind of shop there is, at some time or other, somewhere, has had that notice: 'Under new management.'

I wonder why the people had put that notice outside the shop. Well, it was the best way of letting people know that a different person was in charge of the business. It wouldn't have been much use, would it? if the owner of the shop

stood outside and, as the people passed, went up to them and said, 'Excuse me—this shop is now under entirely new management.' If he had done that he would soon have had a policeman come and tell him that he was obstructing the traffic—which is the policeman's way of saying 'getting in the way.' But the owner of the shop wasn't as foolish as that. He put the large notice outside and then everybody could see for themselves.

Now I wonder why he wanted the people to know that the shop had a new manager. I suppose it was because the man who had had it before wasn't a very good man. Perhaps his goods hadn't been the right sort—the right quality, grown-up people would say. Or, perhaps, he charged too much. We think that is true of most shops, don't we? At any rate I expect the business hadn't gone very well before—there hadn't been very many customers. People had come perhaps and not been treated very nicely and had gone away and not come any more. The new man wanted them to

know that that would not happen now, and if they came they would be treated nicely and be able to buy the things they wanted at the prices they could afford to pay. So to attract new customers and get back old ones he put out the notice: 'This business is now under entirely new management.'

But supposing things weren't very different after all; it wouldn't matter how many notices he put outside, the people would soon find out that things were just as bad as they were before and they would start going again to other shops for the things they wanted. The only way to prove that the shop really was under entirely new and better management would be to give the people good value for their money. It reminds us of what Jesus once said, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.'

That brings us to Jesus. Now what has the shop under new management got to do with you and me and Jesus? Quite a lot. You see when we say that we are going to love and follow Jesus it means that we are going to be under entirely new and better management. There are lots of people who do that and tell other people about it. But people soon find out whether it is real or not. It is only as we do the things that Jesus would have us do—not lose our temper, or be selfish, or say or do unkind things—that people will know that it is really true that Jesus is our Master and Saviour and that we are under His management.

The Get-Away Gecko.

BY THE REVEREND H. L. PICKEN, WOLVERHAMPTON.

'Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee.'—Mt 18°.

I wonder if any of you know what a Gecko is? You don't? Well then, let me introduce you. He is a funny little chap, but very useful too. He belongs to a very big family. His cousin, whether second or fortieth I'm not sure, is the Crocodile, and another cousin of his is the Chameleon, the little fellow who alters the colour of his suit to the colour of whatever place he happens to find himself in. And then the little Gecko's great-great-grandfather was a most fearsome monster of gigantic size, with a name nearly as long as himself—the PROTEROSAURUS. But the little Gecko is the humblest member of this great family—the LIZARD family.

Let me tell you some of the things that he does. He lives in the tropics. He is to be found in almost every house in a country like India. He lives on

the walls and is to be found lurking behind the pictures, from which every now and again he will suddenly dart after a fly or tiny insect. He has wonderful little padded feet with which he can run up and down the walls or upside down on the ceiling. He has a long tongue which he shoots out, like a cowboy's lasso, only much quicker, and flicks in a fly in a wink.

This is why every one welcomes the little Gecko to their home. He helps to get rid of the mosquitoes and flies.

There is another clever thing that he can do. You would never guess what it is. If any one tries to catch him, should they succeed in getting hold of his tail—why, he let's his tail go and runs off to grow another one. That is why I have called him the Get-away Gecko. He loses his tail, yes, but he saves his life!

Does that remind you of anything? Does it remind you of some words that Jesus once spake? Do you remember He said, 'If thy hand or thy foot causeth thee to stumble, cut it off?'

Perhaps you think that a strange thing for Jesus to say. Surely He did not mean that if our hand or our foot was likely to cause us to do something wrong or to come to harm that we were actually to cut it off?

No, I do not think so, but it was just a very striking way of saying that if our hand or our foot, or for that matter any member of our body, eyes, ear, or mouth were likely to cause us to do wrong or to come into harm, IT WERE BEST THAT WE SHOULD ACT AS THOUGH THEY WERE ACTUALLY CUT OFF.

That is to say, we should behave as if we hadn't a hand to do the wrong, or a foot to carry us into harm, or an eye to see, or an ear to hear evil things, or a mouth to speak wrong.

So next time something wrong comes lurking round to catch you—something we call Temptation, remember our little friend the Get-away Gecko who loses his tail to save his life, and act as if you hadn't a hand, or foot, an eye or an ear, or a mouth to be caught by.

The Christian Year.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Real and Unreal Religion.

'And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to-day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it

may save us out of the hand of our enemies.'—
1 S 4^o.

'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.'—
Mt 6³³.

It was a very dark hour for the people of Israel. The trouble was that they had fallen away from a real religion. They did not know what was wrong with them, though they knew that something was badly wrong. The one hopeful moment was when they began to ask the reason, and to probe down to the roots of their weakness. 'Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to-day before our enemies?' There is hope for a nation even in its blackest hour, if it begin to ask questions like these, and to examine whether or not it has fallen out of the grace of God.

The thoughts of the Israelites turned to the ark of the covenant, the symbol of God's presence in their midst. The ark served a very useful purpose—the same purpose as the presence of a church in a busy street. It reminded them of God, their true leader, and that they could never get anywhere that was worth getting to unless they were in touch with Him. But religion had fallen so low that they identified the ark of God with God's presence and power, as if, somehow, it contained Him; and they felt that, if only they brought it on to the field of battle, this box of wood and gold would save them from defeat. So they brought the ark of God on to the field of battle. But all in vain.

This story stands to teach us something of what religion really means, and what it does not mean.

1. The first mistake they made was in identifying the presence of God with this wooden box. It had become to them a sacred thing, a fetish, an object which they imagined secured to them, just because it was there, the help and favour of God. To-day we have our sacred places; churches, altars, even our sacred officials. There is a tendency, if we do not think clearly, to identify these with the presence of God. The result is a false reverence and a misplaced devotion for some things, while we tend to secularise others and consign them to the sphere of what is common and non-religious. For instance, we call our churches sacred, but the result may be to treat our homes and offices and factories as secular. We may consider our pulpits sacred and feel that truth should be spoken there, while we look on the platform as secular, and are, perhaps, not so particular about our utterances there. And so life may unconsciously be divided up into sacred and secular.

The whole distinction is false. The truly sacred thing is personality, and what belongs to it. Love and righteousness are sacred; truth is sacred. There is only one sacred kind of action, and that is the right action. There is only one sacred place, and that is the place in which we meet with God, which may be every place. There is only one sacred message, and that is the message of truth, whoever speaks it. A church may help us, through its associations; it may constrain our minds, through its beauty or symbolism, to think about God—but it cannot, of itself, bring us into touch with God, for God dwells in the heart. His Spirit finds abode in our souls; in all true thoughts we think; in the impulses to goodness and right that spring up within us; and in the souls of other people whom we can help and who can help us. It is thus we find God, or we do not find Him at all. Our reverence should be given to the right thing; to the purpose of God for which He bids us live; to the souls which God has given us; to the people whom we can help or love. These are sacred.

The second mistake these people made is one that naturally follows from this misplaced reverence. They imagined that, in bringing the ark upon the field of battle, they were bringing God to their side. They rightly believed that nothing could stand against God, if only they could persuade Him to act, but they imagined that the ark itself would perform the miracle.

What should they have done? They knew that something was wrong; they should have asked themselves what it was. They should have looked into their lives to see if their hearts were set on seeking what God would have them seek. They should have asked if they were living in a spirit of righteousness. They should have fallen on their knees in a great humility, and asked to be shown His will, that they might do it. They should have besought Him to bring them back to such a true sense of His love and care as would compel them to trust in Him and in His strength, and lead them to walk by the guidance of conscience. No doubt, at the moment, all this was beyond them. Their thoughts were steeped in superstition. What they did was, perhaps, the best they could do at their stage; but it was useless, as they discovered, and later on they learnt the better way.

2. The point for us is that real religion consists in getting into right relations with God. And this incident has meaning for us. Whenever we are faced with trouble, whether in business, or in the home, or in any other part of our life, when times are out of joint, we know in our hearts that there

are things which only God can put right. The message of all trouble is that we should open our hearts to Him. Has selfishness been eating into our hearts? Has some sin or wrong way of life been fastening its tentacles, like a poisonous thing, in our spirit, and sucking away our moral stamina? The way back is to be willing to set things right; it is to see His love for us, pouring itself around us like a great flood, and to ask for grace to respond to it—for grace to set right our relations with other people. The way of God's help is the way of His fellowship, and the way of His fellowship is the way of every other kind of fellowship; it is through the harmony of our mind and will with His. 'Grant that we may never seek,' prayed Augustine, 'to bend the straight to the crooked, that is Thy will to ours, but help us to bend the crooked to the straight, that is our will to Thine.' The same thing is true of our national life. There is something unreal in the appointment of days of prayer in national emergencies, unless through that prayer we are seeking to be open to God's light. The only true approach to God is by the sincerity that asks to be shown the right way of life for each of us in our own place in the community, and for the nation as a whole; and if our hearts are open, and all our cards are on the table—to use a common-place metaphor—and all our prejudices in the melting-pot, then we shall find the way of hope, for we shall find God.

It is a question, in point of fact, whether we shall ever get the help we need in any particular trouble, so long as we are mainly concerned with the trouble. For the trouble is often only the symptom that something is wrong, and no wise physician ever thinks he can cure a trouble by tackling the symptoms. There are people, for instance, who seek God's help in a temptation. They pray, and nothing happens. The real reason is that they are seeking the help of God for an ideal of their own self-respect, not for the sake of the kingdom of God. In a way, they are seeking to exploit the grace of God for a purpose of their own. And the only way in which they can find deliverance is by a self-forgetfulness that seeks for the service they can do—a service to which God is calling them. Then they discover that the habit is broken by the expulsive power of a new purpose, a new affection that casts out the obsessing selfishness.

3. God's help is in His fellowship, shaping us into the kind of people He wants us to be, and into the use He is able to make of us through His guiding and our obedience. The trouble with many

people is that they are more concerned about God's help than they are about His fellowship; they are more intent on their own advantages, or their own deliverance, than they are on His will. That is where an unreal religion has its roots. We are more anxious that God should be on our side than that we should be on His. It may be that if these Israelites had taken the right way, and had asked for God's guiding, seeking to know His will—it may be that they would have found a new strength to overcome their enemies; for a clean heart and a right spirit are the real springs of intellectual and physical vitality.

But, again, it may not so happen. The trouble may not be escaped. The Israelites might have been defeated just the same. But here is the point—they would have been able to face their defeat; they would have had the right attitude to it; they would have found God in it, and so in defeat would have been victorious; even as Jesus was victorious on the Cross, although He died on it. Through their defeat they would have found the larger victory.

There is no necessary connexion between an untroubled life and a quiet conscience, a fact which the people of the Old Testament never could understand, but which the Cross made plain. When James Smetham, the artist, poet, and essayist, who spent most of his life in poverty, was asked why he went to church on Sunday he replied, 'To get a blessing.' 'And what is a blessing?' his friend asked. Whereupon Smetham replied, 'Removal of the temptation to rage, and scorn, and indignation; a sweetness; a satisfaction with my lot; a content with God's dealings. I went to chapel to-day, fretted with plenty of dark and vexing suggestions. I came away calm, sweet, fresh, all my cares gone, rejoicing in the God of my salvation, and I think no one is more happy than I. That is a blessing, and yet I know no more than I did at 7 p.m. who is going to buy my pictures, my poems, or my essays.'

There is only one true worship: it is the offering of our hearts to be God's temple. There is only one really sacred service: it is to do His will in daily life and serve His children. There is only one sacred place: it is in His world, where we may find His voice everywhere, and so find it hallowed with love and beauty. There is only one true prayer: it is the prayer that begins, whatever it contains, and ends with this petition, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.'¹

¹ J. Reid, *In Touch with Christ*, 148.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Cross and the Lesson of Sin.

'Herein is love . . . that he sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'—1 Jn 4¹⁰.

1. At the foot of the Cross, let us consider the character of sin. According to the often quoted words of Sir Oliver Lodge, 'The higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins at all, still less about their punishment.' Perhaps the words not unfairly describe the attitude of the average man. The average, well-intentioned, moral man is not troubling about sin. He prides himself on cultivating a 'religion of healthy-mindedness.' The self-examining, the self-despising, the self-loathing of the saints he thinks foolish and old-fashioned.

To the average man with his cheerful and shallow persuasions—so attractive at first sight, so inadequate when examined—let us venture to repeat the solemn warning of St. Anselm, 'Thou has not considered what weight sin hath.'

What, then, is the revelation of the Cross concerning sin? Well, in the first place, looking at sin as the occasion of the Cross, as the cause which brought it about and made it necessary, we learn that sin is something which emphatically ought not to be. It cannot be, therefore, a part of us which belongs to our God-given nature. It must be an intrusion into us, a violation of that nature. 'Two things,' writes Lancelot Andrewes—'two things I acknowledge in myself, O Lord: nature which Thou hast made, sin which I have added.' Yes, nature and sin are two things and not one. And if this indeed be so—if sin be thus not natural, not in the line of our appointed tendency—then it follows that sin cannot be an element that is needed for our development.

What is this something which ought not to be? 'Sin,' says Martin Luther, 'is essentially a departure from God.' The sinner says No to God's love and God's purpose for his life. And while he says No to God, he says Yes to the meretricious world that antagonizes God. 'My sin was just this,' writes St. Augustine in his *Confessions*, 'that I sought for pleasures, grandeurs, realities, not in Him but in His creatures, myself, and others.'

Precisely inasmuch as sin is alienation from God, it is also a mortal injury to our own life and being. For man was made for fellowship with God, was meant to find his life, his moral self, his personality in Him. Hence sin, which severs the bond between the soul and God, destroys the connexion between the soul and life. It diverts from the soul the

necessary stream of health. It deprives it of its nourishment. It cuts it off from the one thing in the universe that can make it strong and free. 'Death itself,' says a Father of the Church, 'is not to love God.'

2. Let us turn next to the problem of the deliverance from sin. What may we learn about this from the Master who teaches us as He dies upon the Cross?

Now at the present time, among those who are deeply conscious of the gravity of sin, and who have meditated deeply on the question of deliverance, but who yet for some reason hold back from the redemption of the Cross, there appear to be two parties. The first is the party of optimism. They tell us: There is a deliverance, and you can win it for yourselves. Cultivate admiration for what is beautiful and excellent. Exercise your will and burst your hateful fetters. Will this theory work? Let us think of St. Augustine's ineffectual struggles before his great conversion. Or of Luther in the monastery, and the exceeding bitter cry, 'My sin, my sin, my sin!' Let us consult our own experience. Has our disharmony ever brought forth harmony? Have we ever been able by mere exercise of will to achieve, not merely self-control in outward deeds, but a radical alteration of the principles of our nature?

There is another party—the party of pessimism. The doctrine of this school is that there is no deliverance either from sin or from its consequences. That is the teaching of much of our finest literature. We find it, for example, in George Eliot's *Adam Bede*, with its melancholy conclusion that 'there's a sort of wrong that can never be made up for.'

Let us turn once again to the Cross, and ask what solution this offers of the problem of deliverance.

A doctrine of the Atonement is neither precisely formulated in Holy Scripture nor defined with exactness by the universal Church. Christ's death, it has been felt, involves a mystery—something which goes beyond all illustrations and analogies, and of which all human explanations must of necessity be inadequate. Thus it is spoken of elusively, in figures and in metaphors. It is the Good Shepherd giving His life for the sheep. It is the Friend dying for His friends. It is the Son of Man offering Himself a ransom for you and me. This much, however, in the various representations, seems to stand out clear. Christ died in order to deliver us from sin—not merely to free us from the punishment of sin, not merely to avert the natural consequences of sin, but to abolish sin

itself, to annul the estrangement between ourselves and God, and with it the spiritual death which is its issue and result. Yes, somewhere in the Cross there is a marvellous saving efficacy; a real overcoming of evil, a real uprooting of wrong, a real relief, a real deliverance, a real restoration to freedom and life and righteousness and God.

So we are taught. But does this teaching tally with the facts of our experience? We come to the Cross, and at the Cross we see revealed, as is nowhere else revealed, what God's love for us must be. Robert Browning once remarked in a private conversation, 'The evidence of Divine power is everywhere about us; not so the evidence of Divine love.' And the saying, perhaps, is true. We may not discern love's handiwork in the arrangements of the universe. Yet we cannot be mistaken as to the meaning of the Cross. Here, I repeat, we see what God's love is. We see what its reality is. We see what its capacity is. We see what it will do for us, what it has done in our case. 'Herein is love,' says St. John . . . 'that he sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' In one of the churches of Italy there is a very remarkable representation of the Crucifixion. Behind the Christ on the Cross there is sketched the dim figure of the eternal Father; the Father's hands are behind the hands of the Son, and the nails which pierce the Son are piercing the Father also. No doubt the design is crude, but the artist's idea is the right one—that God was in Christ, suffering and travailing to reconcile us to Himself. In the visible sacrifice that was offered up on Calvary there was wonderfully working the Divine consummate love—not the mere royal clemency that issues from afar a pardon that costs nothing, not the immoral affection that smiles upon the sinner without troubling to ensure that his break with sin be certain, but the love which stoops down to us and suffers for our sakes, the love which endures the agony on our behalf, the love which does all to win us, which sinks to the deepest depth, which goes to the furthest limit, which makes the most awful sacrifice, out of the horrors of crucifixion pleading with us for acceptance, crying to each, Come back to me, my child; 'My son, give me thine heart.' And it is just the assurance of this almost incredible love that becomes in our experience a real energy of salvation. It breaks the spell of sin. We cannot bear any more to be estranged from such a God, or to be identified with a world which opposes such a God. There is a great recoil from evil; a sudden awakening from the night of our corruption. We feel

the cleansing, purifying, regenerating power of a higher affection—and we can say with St. Augustine, 'Thou didst cast out my sins by coming in Thyself, Thou greater Sweetness.'¹

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Necessity of Desire.

'He hath filled the hungry with good things.'—Lk 1⁵².

There are a great many divergent views as to the nature of the poem from which this phrase is taken. It is, of course, very familiar to us under the traditional name of 'The Magnificat,' and as such has found an intimate place in the Church's worship through the centuries. But it is about the nature of the poem in its original use that different views have been formed. In the Gospel it is represented as coming from the lips of the mother of our Lord, and there are those who are content to regard it as a spontaneous outpouring of the heart of the Virgin. To others it appears as too fixed in its form to be a spontaneous utterance at all. If it be true that it is an early Jewish hymn, there is no difficulty in the way of believing that it came from the lips of Mary herself, for it would be quite natural for her feelings to clothe themselves in familiar words, made sacred as well as familiar by long use.

That the poem goes back to older sources is further evidenced by the ground it covers. It deals with a much wider field than merely personal experience. Its range includes the whole spirit of God's dealings with mankind: 'His mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath shewed strength with his arm. He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.'

It has always been true that God has brought down the mighty from their seats; always true that the proud have been scattered, that His mercy has been on them that fear Him, that the hungry have been filled and the rich sent empty away. These are things which any generation can see happening before its eyes, if it has the insight to understand and interpret the events of the time.

'He hath filled the hungry with good things,' and 'the rich he hath sent empty away,' is but the reverse side of the same truth. As we read it

¹ F. H. Dudden, *Christ and Christ's Religion*, 96.

now, it may sound like a harsh discrimination against a certain class, but it has no such intention as that. It is merely that the rich are often the contented, with no great hunger for the things which God has to give. There is no question of class or economic distinction at all; it is a question of life motive and spirit. The hungry are not necessarily those in stark material need; in fact, when a man is hungry in that elemental sense his thought is inevitably fixed on material things. There is the pathetic materialism of poverty as well as the coarser materialism of wealth and luxury. But the contrast drawn here is between those who are for ever seeking the deeper meaning and resources of life, and those who are blindly contented with their present measure of experience. It is this spiritual law on the widest scale that the sentence brings before us—that before the vessel of the human heart is filled by God there must be hunger, eagerness of desire, passion of seeking, heartfelt prayer.

This is the groundwork of the spiritual life in all ages and lands. There are no instances of any of the great discoveries coming to dulled minds and inert hearts. The measure of human desire is the limit of God's power to bestow. This truth is at the root of the whole philosophy of prayer. 'Why does God wait for prayer before He bestows?' some one asks, and they go on to point out that even on the lower levels of human love we do not wait to give to our children until they ask for the gift. But in the deepest sense of the word we are as powerless to give the greatest things to our child until he hungers for them as God is powerless to give to us.

The greatest joy a father or mother has is to see the stirring in their child's heart of that eagerness, to see the passion for knowledge developing, or the taste for the beautiful. Indeed, is it not true that the secret of training any life committed to our care is to stimulate the appetite for the greatest things. It is the task of the parent, the teacher, and the preacher together. So it is that as the great Father looks down on His earthly children He has to wait for that same hunger to develop before He can give. Without it God is as powerless to bestow as we are powerless to give our child a thing for which he has no desire. Need and desire are the measure of our capacity to receive in every aspect of life. Behind all progress is hunger.

Now if this is a truth attested by the experience of men we must watch ourselves to guard against any flagging of desire. It is a danger which belongs peculiarly to the religious life. The most hopeless

problem we have to deal with is not the mystery of things withheld from our grasp, but the mystery of things desired no longer. Can any one of us feel that the strength of our longings for the highest things is sufficient to bring them to us? Is the hunger there? That is the only decisive question in life. There are, indeed, mysteries about things long sought for but strangely denied, that some souls are dumb with disappointment, but we have never yet found that any one went through life with the passion to get to the heart of things who did not find an answer—not always the answer that was sought for, but sometimes far greater and richer.

We will not claim that every particular hunger in life is satisfied. It is not. There is the mystery of things withheld, but we are wrong when we seem to hear mocking tones behind the refusal. Does not all the greatest spiritual experience tell us that things may be withheld like that, and yet the greatest things be given? When Jesus prayed in the garden that His cup of bitterness might pass the answer did not come, the cup did not pass. Would you say that He was sent empty away? Might He not have turned in bitterness of heart, as we are so often tempted to do? But we know that the hunger of His spirit was satisfied, though by another path. So every unsatisfied desire of our heart, every frustrated prayer, will receive an answer like that. The letter of the petition may be shattered and broken in seeming failure, but the spirit of the petition will be answered in surprising ways. The hungry are filled with good things.

This truth has also a message for the world's need. The impression is often given that expectations of a better order of life have failed because some of those ideal pictures were impossibly high, and that we must perforce resign ourselves to a lower level of satisfaction. Perhaps that is how most men do regard the lesson of the time. We venture to assert that it is false. The lesson of the age is that some dreams may be idle dreams, but that when the hunger for attainment becomes deep enough and widespread enough dreams turn into realities.

The Church of Christ exists as a fellowship of minds and hearts which express the hunger for the kingdom of God. The only failure we need to fear is the lowering of the ideal and the lessening of the desire. It is only that which holds the kingdom back. Men do not want purity and honesty and comradeship and peace intensely enough; that is the only reason why these things

are so far away from us as they are. It is a world contented with what it calls its riches, a world content to go on in the old ways, satisfied, indifferent, blind, selfish, which seems to be sent empty away. Once the hunger is aroused and men seek and pray and strive, the new days will come with their unimagined blessings. It is a law which covers the whole of life that the things for which men hunger will be given and the things for which they do not hunger must be withheld.¹

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Fearlessness of the Active Heart.

'This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.'
—Lk 15².

The effect of suggestion is so great that we probably never read this story, or hear it read, without what seems to ourselves a very genuine feeling of indignation against the Pharisaic attitude. If we thought for a moment, we should recognize that the attitude which we condemn so summarily in the case of the Pharisees we most heartily approve and endorse in all the ordinary relations of life. Every influential motive of right conduct, every motive inspired by common sense, by the wisdom of ordinary experience, supports and confirms that approval. If we have for ourselves adopted a certain attitude towards life, if we face life with a definite certainty as to what in it is worthy to be sought and what must be sternly and at all risks avoided, then we shall certainly draw into closest association with those who share our attitude. And just as we instinctively seek to confirm our own attitude by this closeness of alliance with those who share it, so we shrink from the danger of making any terms with its enemies, even of seeming to countenance their enmity by meeting it with indifference or neutrality. If we compromise on an association which will relegate to the background the things that are most important for us and that we believe to be most important for all, then we are doubly betraying our trust. We are not only endangering our own faithfulness to it, but are taking the surest way to belittle its importance for those who have not yet accepted it as their own.

It is for some such reasons as these that men form themselves into exclusive groups on the basis of their deepest convictions. And so the probability is that, if we came upon this indignant protest of the Pharisees in any other connexion, we should, instead of condemning, endorse and ap-

plaud it. Yet we venture to state the case of the Pharisee, a perfectly sound case within limits, only to reject it as ultimately unsatisfying even for our ordinary human conduct.

And, first of all, is it only as a result of suggestions created by traditional respect for the Gospels, and especially for our Lord's attitude and actions, that we are ready to condemn so unhesitatingly the exclusive spirit of the Pharisees? Is there not, on the contrary, something in us which condemns not only the attitude of the Pharisee, but the same attitude in ourselves? Is there not something which whispers that the way of a cautious prudence is a denial of all that is best in our humanity, that it is attended by spiritual barrenness both for ourselves and for others, that the surest way of safety for ourselves is in facing the risks of a high enterprise, and that the only effective instrument of influence upon others is a sympathy which transcends, and in transcending may help to annihilate, the most radical differences of opinion and attitude which separate men? Are we not forced into shame of a goodness which thinks only of keeping its own robe unsullied, which shrinks from the miry ways of the common world of service?

To questions like these the heart has but one answer. It recognizes in Him, who fears no taint from closest human neighbourhood with the most erring soul, the Divine leader of men. It learns from Him to find the hopeful warmth in every heart of man, which can be cherished into a pure and purifying flame of enthusiasm for right. It learns from Him to fear only the cold heart which is frozen into helplessness through its own icy virtues, and so freezes every other heart it accidentally touches. The heart that really cares for goodness must inevitably care more for its extension than its possession.

This is the kind of goodness which appeals to us in men. And it is the peculiar glory of contemporary religion that no other seems to us genuine, that no other has any kind of appeal to us. We cannot believe in the goodness which prudently withdraws within its own borders, which is afraid of the risks of active service in a hostile or indifferent world. We are sensible enough to expect strength to prove itself in rescuing weakness, or in spending itself ceaselessly and ungrudgingly in the attempt. Religion has been too often the solitary quest of the fold for ourselves, and the solitary enjoyment of it when we thought we had found it. We have begun to learn that we are never so surely in the fold of God as when we are

¹ S. M. Berry, *Revealing Light*, 180.

carrying His redeeming love into all the waste places of life and wrapping in its warmth the desolate souls who dwell there.

Yet it is true that this is a great venture. The bravest will recoil from a task beset by many and great dangers. The sincerest will question its possession of a power whose sources are an absolute purity of motive and love of right. Who of us is equal to these things? We know all the dangers which lurk in that kinship with our brethren which draws us to them, and through which alone we can hope to serve them. We know all the subtle sympathetic action of soul upon soul, how the weakness of one may infect what another had considered its strength, how the close contact of certain types of character will often release forces which confuse in both the sense of duty and make of each the supreme danger of the other.

We know these things and, knowing them, realize how strong the soul must be that would follow this high call of God. Yet we do not doubt that it is His call, nay that it is the one call which we can recognize in our day as indubitably His. And if it is, ought we not to consider well what is likely to help us in being faithful to it? Now that is just what the religious society can do for us—this is indeed the real function and the pre-eminent value of a church to-day. We want behind us in every venture of the soul a tradition of right which is greater than all that man has ever yet accomplished, and yet has inspired all his various imperfect accomplishment hitherto. We want a tradition which will represent not merely all that

the best souls of men have yet attained, but also, however vaguely, all that the common soul of humanity has ever dreamed of attaining. We want to have our individual consciences rooted in a general conscience which will both rebuke and inspire them.

But we may say, perhaps, 'Where is the religious society that is equal to such a claim upon it? Have not the actual churches of history been refuges for the spiritually cowardly? Have they not been close corporations of the saved hardening themselves in selfishness against a humanity which they dared to declare rejected of God? Has not the taint of the Pharisee been in their blood, in their very constitution? Well, superficially, there is truth in the indictment. And yet if they had never been in fact what they might be and must become, there would indeed be little substance in our hopes for them. But underneath all their own misconception and perversion of their mission, they have always been in fact something more and greater than they knew. They have always witnessed to the love of humanity and inspired it. It is the enthusiasm of a genuine love for man, of a profound faith in man as capable of the best, that has been the fundamental and permanent note of every religious society. And it is the only note by which we shall assess the worth of any Church in the future—the note of Divine fruitfulness. There is the Spirit of God, and only there, where the spirit of man is enlarged to believe in, and to labour to evoke, the Divine possibilities in the worst.'¹

¹ A. L. Lilley, *The Religion of Life*, 107.

The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Mt. xxv. 31-46).

BY THE REVEREND A. T. CADOUX, B.A., D.D., GLASGOW.

DESPITE its wonderful beauty and power, this Parable contains elements that are very hard to understand. In the first place, the principle of judgment differs from other utterances of Jesus. Here men are not judged for their conscious relation to Him, but for their kindness or callousness to the needy. How are we to reconcile this with such a saying as, 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful

generation, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels' (Mk 8³⁸, Mt 16²⁷, Lk 9²⁶, and also Mt 10^{32, 33}, Lk 12^{8, 9})? How, too, could the many whose hospitality Jesus had enjoyed, who had 'ministered to him of their substance,' ask, 'When saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee?'?

Another difficulty lies in the term, 'my brethren.' Who are they? If they are just the needy in the