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and lends itself to the service of preaching. It once more teaches one to wield 'the sword of the spirit,' and gives an account of the faith by which it is filled. It rests on Words, firmly and clearly. Therewith it confronts every reality, every power or authority of the world, the demons, and the devil. Above all, its chief desire is that hearty encouragement may not be wanting to the dis-

tressed, that the treasure of the certainty of salvation and truth may abide with the tempted; in short, that the poor may have the gospel preached to them. The knightliness of a Christian theology would find in this its crowning glory. Gratifying advances in this direction are already in evidence. May they grow to the praise of God in science and in life!

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

The Sky Pilot :

A Whitsunday Address.

BY THE REVEREND S. GREER, M.A., AYR.

'Power from on high.'—Lk 24⁴⁹.

WE are all interested in boats, in making and sailing them. A strange thing was seen not long since in French waters. It was a boat, the size of a motor-launch, which had neither captain, nor engineer, nor crew. Yet it would dart off from the landing-stage, slow down, stop, turn to right or left, with uncanny exactness. And there was nobody on board, and nobody in sight! Yet when presently it turned to land it took the pier easily, and stopped dead. How was it done? There was nothing on land that you could see; but just a tiny speck in the sky six miles away was an aeroplane, and it was the aeroplane that was controlling the boat by means of 'wireless.' For aboard there were controls, and a radio-wave from the plane set a needle swinging, which made contact and released energy, setting the motor going as required. And all this, from a distance of six miles up in the sky!

A strange thing. Yet there is something stranger still! Your mind and nerves are a perfect wireless outfit. What messages and signals go tingling from brain to finger-tips! There you sit in that tiny apartment called your Will, controlling all the movements of mind and muscle. When a boy says that his hands WILL go into his pockets of themselves, or that his feet tripped him up when coming downstairs, or that he CAN'T keep his mind on his lessons—well, you know, it's not true. Or if a girl tells you she CAN'T keep her tongue quiet, or stop dangling her legs, or twiddling her fingers, you know that somebody up in that tiny B.B.C. station of hers ought to be dealt with!

All kinds of undesirable things, too, come scampering or crawling or sneaking into the mind at times, and you can't help them coming. But you can prevent them staying. Act instantaneously! Signal 'Pirates aboard,' and throw them out. You are Captain, and what you say, goes.

There's an even more wonderful kind of control. You boys all love flying kites, watching them soaring and soaring, curvetting and diving. What a lovely feeling that tug at your arm as it strains and pulls. The kind of control I mean is something like that tug. Long ago, strange things began to happen in a little country far overseas. Many people commenced to behave in a most unaccountable way. Their lives had been hard, and they themselves were sad-eyed and depressed. Then something happened. And suddenly these serious-faced people began to be the happiest people to be seen anywhere. They would sing, and talk in a delighted way to one another. And the enthusiasm spread. People who had been timid before grew brave and fearless. Folk who had been going all wrong in their ways were suddenly switching on to the right tack. Old enemies shook hands, saying they had been foolish long enough. People whose word no one had relied on, became the soul of honour. And there was nothing any one could see to account for it all. It was that 'Power from on high' of which every Whitsunday reminds us; the spirit of the Ascended Christ was in their midst.

That Power is still the secret of the most splendid lives in the world. There are lads I know who couldn't do a mean thing—couldn't. One young fellow told me once that if he put out his hand to do something wrong, a Hand grasped his by the wrist—or so it seemed. 'How can I do this great wrong?' he asked. That Power from on high is the most wonderful thing in the world. It has sent people out to live brave unselfish lives. It

has kept them cool and faithful even amid the greatest dangers.

Just in a flash, so swift you couldn't count it, the impulse comes. Only one Person has the secret of these controls. Won't you give the direction of your life into the hands of our great Sky Pilot ?

Speaking with his Feet.

BY THE REVEREND J. PENRY PRYSE, BIRMINGHAM.

'He speaketh with his feet.'—Pr 6¹⁸.

'Well,' you say, 'this is a queer text. How can a man speak with his feet? Surely there must be a mistake somewhere.' And I thought the same thing myself, when I first read the text. But I soon discovered that everything was quite all right.

There are many ways in which we can speak. For instance, we can speak with our eyes. A very long time ago, I went to a birthday party. I don't remember a great deal about it, but I do remember a wonderful cake that was in the centre of the tea-table. I had two pieces, and was just about to have a third, when I caught my mother's eye fixed on me. I left that third piece where it was, for that eye just said, 'Don't you dare!' and I didn't dare either. Do you remember the story of how Peter denied Jesus? Jesus turned and looked on Peter, and that great big man went out into the night and cried like a boy. I often wonder what the eyes of Jesus said to Peter; I sometimes think I know, and that they have said the very same thing to me.

Then there are some people who talk with their fingers. I know two boys who are deaf. I wish you could see them chatting together; they talk about football and cricket, wireless and dogs, and all kinds of wonderful things. Though they only use their fingers, yet they can talk as quickly as you can, and I really think they can shout just as loud.

Yes, and I know a man who talks with his arms. 'Wonderful!' you say. Yes, it is wonderful; and you know the man I mean. He stands right in the centre of our busy city; he is the policeman who controls the traffic. What a lot he has to say during the time he stands there. Never a bus, nor a tram, nor a cycle, nor a car passes him but he has something to say. Some of the traffic he calls on, and some of it he stops. Yet not one word comes out of his mouth; he does all this talking with his arms.

So, you see, there are many ways in which we can speak, and our text tells us that one way is with our feet. Now boys and girls often speak this way, and I want you to listen to what they say.

Sometimes our feet speak of anger. One day I saw something in a house that hurt me very much. In the corner of a room was a little girl of whom I am very fond. I had always thought that she was very pretty, but I didn't think so that day. There she stood—her little hands clenched tight, her face all of a scowl. She was talking, not with her mouth, but with her feet. Stamp, stamp, stamp went her little feet on the floor. Yes, those stamping feet were shouting out for every one to hear that this little girl was overcome by temper. 'Dancing with rage,' is what daddy calls it.

Our feet may speak of cruelty. Have you ever seen a boy kick a dog? I have. I felt sorry for the dog, but I was more sorry for the boy. That boy comes to my Sunday school. The next Sunday I had a good look at him. Judging by his face, you would have thought that he was kind and gentle, just like your big brother. Faces do sometimes deceive us, but feet don't; and this boy's feet told me that this lad would grow up into a cruel man if he did not take care.

Then, again, our feet may speak of bad sportsmanship. I very often go to watch the schoolboys play football. Between you and me, I would much rather watch the boys play than the men, any day of the week. At one match there was a clever forward who beat the opposing back, again and again. Finally, the back, when he thought the referee couldn't see, tripped the forward up. Every one seemed to know what had happened; even the referee did, for he blew his whistle and went and spoke to the lad. Now that boy was a clever player, but he was a poor sportsman, and his feet told me so.

Of course, our feet can speak of good things. We had nearly forgotten this. I once heard of a man who used to live in a cellar. Level with the pavement was the window. All day long people passed by, but all that he could see was their feet. But the feet fascinated him. He would sit there for hours watching them, and in the end he could tell what sort of people they belonged to. The feet used to speak to him of kindness, or love, or sacrifice.

I know an old sailor whose feet are so crushed that he cannot use them one little bit. A long time ago he was a member of the lifeboat crew. One stormy night his boat pulled out to a wrecked and sinking ship. In the rescuing of the crew, his feet were so damaged that he was never able to use them again. Whenever I go home, I always go to see him, and I never look at his feet without seeming to hear them saying, 'Old Jack is a fine

old man, who gave his feet to save others.' Yes, his feet speak of bravery and courage.

We often say of Jesus, 'No man ever spake like this man.' It is true. But we should also remember that the Feet of Jesus speak; they also have a message for the boys and girls. Have you forgotten the story of Thomas who was so slow to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead? Unless he should see the wound prints in the hands and the feet, he wasn't going to believe. And one day Jesus came to Thomas and said, 'Look here, Thomas, here are my feet, and here are the wound-prints.' All Thomas could do was to fall down and worship his Lord and Master. I wonder if Jesus is saying something like that to us this morning; I wonder if His wounded feet are telling us of His love and His sacrifice; I wonder if we can kneel with Thomas at His feet and just say, 'My Lord and my God.'

The Grit in the Oyster.

BY THE REVEREND ALEXANDER SMALL, B.D.,
BOREHAM WOOD.

'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls.'—Mt 13⁴⁶.

You like to travel by train, don't you, and to put your head out of the carriage window. Well, what did you do, when you put your head out once too often, and a piece of cinder from the engine flew into your eye? I know. As soon as you felt the pain, you began rubbing your eye with the back of your hand; then you took out your handkerchief; and then you pulled one lid over the other, but the grit remained and the pain became worse. Then what did you do? Well, if you were wise, you just sat still and closed your eye until it filled with water (not with real tears of grief, of course, because you were too brave to cry) and washed the cinder out.

Well, I wonder if you know what some oysters do when they get a piece of grit between their shell and the skin which is just inside it. The oyster can't rub the grit out because it hasn't any hands. Even if it tried to get rid of the grit it couldn't; but it does something much better. Round and round the tiny speck of grit it winds layer after layer of some curious stuff, until a beautiful pearl is formed. What a wonderful way of dealing with something that hurts, isn't it, to make it into a beautiful pearl?

That is just the way that God wants us to deal with the things that hurt us in life: He wants us to make them into beautiful pearls. Perhaps you

lose a match at cricket or football. It makes your heart very sore. You can sulk and be miserable. You can say the other side didn't play the game, or the umpire or referee wasn't fair; but that will only make you feel worse. Of course, it is a great disappointment; you wanted very much to win. Yet you can't alter it; but you can do something better. You can say, 'Well, we failed this time; the other side was the better team, they deserved to win; but we'll try to beat them next time.' And you can go about with a cheerful face, and with a high courage; and so you will be turning that disappointment into a pearl.

Or somebody calls you a horrid name. It hurts you. You feel like calling him a very horrid name back again, or perhaps in a worse way having your own back on him. There is one thing you can't do, you can't get rid of that name; it has been spoken, and has sunk into your heart and mind. What will you do? Jesus tells us that when any one does that to us we are to pray for him, and to treat him kindly. That's a very hard thing to do; but it is a very beautiful thing to do; and every prayer we offer for the one who calls us horrid names is just like covering the wound of the heart with a layer of mother-of-pearl, and turning the hurt into a beautiful gem.

Dr. Whyte tells of a famous Greek named Pericles. He had been speaking one day in the market-place, and while he was talking, a man in the crowd interrupted him, and called him all the unkind names he could think of. Even when Pericles had finished speaking and was walking home, this man followed him, and called after him, using the most vile language. But Pericles went quietly on until he reached his house. Then what do you think he did? Call for a policeman to have the man locked up? Not at all; he called his servant, told him to get a lantern and light it, for the night was very dark, and then to go after the man and lighten his path home so that he might not stumble. I think Pericles made a wonderful pearl that day; don't you?

Our Lord Jesus turned all the hurts of His heart into pearls. Jesus had been ever so kind to Peter, but when He was taken by the Roman soldiers, Peter was so afraid he might get into trouble himself that he said he did not even know Jesus. How unkind! It hurt Jesus; but He turned the wound into a pearl, for after He rose from the dead He sent a special message of love to Peter.

And Jesus did something more wonderful still. When men took Jesus, and struck Him with their hands, and at last pierced His hands and His feet

and nailed Him to the Cross, He spoke no angry word, He had no angry thoughts, He just made of those wounds in His heart the most wonderful of all pearls by praying for His murderers, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'

The Christian Year.

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION.

The Supreme Quest.

'Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called.'—I Ti 6¹².

It is impossible to apprehend the true bearing of this exhortation without reading in connexion with it the whole chapter of which it forms part. The recipient of this apostolic letter, a young man who has been placed in a position of some spiritual authority, is being bidden to avoid all worldly seductions and concentrate his desires upon the one great thing which constitutes his vocation.

Then follows a solemn adjuration to be faithful to his commission until the second coming of Christ, whenever that might be.

It has been conjectured that the fine ringing succession of appellations—Blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords, the sole possessor of immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable, whom mortal eye has never beheld—formed part of an early Christian hymn, sung in the regular assemblies of the Church for worship. As a description of the Supreme Being it may have been derived from contemporary Greek sources; Platonists could and did use this kind of language; it was common enough among the Gnostics. Does it here refer to God the Father only, or to God as revealed in Christ? There is good reason to believe that it includes both. It is God in Christ who is the supreme object of the soul's quest, but remains ever hidden and remote except as self-communicated to the heart that seeks Him in humility, faith, and love.

There is therefore an intentional importance in what is here so earnestly urged upon a youthful servant of Christ. He is to maintain a warfare for his faith, to lay firm hold upon eternal life and let all lesser things go, to put away from himself everything that would hinder him from attaining to the one all-inclusive good that man can know in this or any other world.

We do no violence to the meaning of the counsel so impressively given in these terms if we say that the appearing or manifestation of Christ, here alluded to as the Christian's dearest hope, can be

mystically as well as historically construed. There is plentiful justification for this statement, not only in the Pauline letters, but in the Johannine writings. That the primitive Church lived in the intense expectation of the visible return of Christ in glory is, of course, obvious to any reader of the New Testament; but it is equally true that that consummation was felt to be anticipated in the experience of those who had laid hold on eternal life. There is a revelation of Christ in the sanctified soul, a parousia, an unveiling of the Divine majesty in the inmost shrine of our being, which is in itself salvation, or rather the realization thereof, and is the most precious possession that any of us can either know or desire as long as we dwell in this our earthly tabernacle. The message of the text, then, is just this. The one fundamental reality behind all that we know about ourselves and the world in which we live is the being of God. If we could uncover, if only for a moment, that underlying, all-pervading, all-comprehending Divine life without which nothing is or could be, we should be utterly at rest about the problem of living in all its vast and various modes and meanings.

This is what sanctified souls, the adepts of the spiritual life, have always told us with united voice. But there are those among the voices of to-day, as in every previous age, who tell us something very different about the ultimate mystery of existence; and if they be right, it were surely better that we should know the truth, however unwelcome. We are all standing, as it were, before a drawn curtain—the curtain that veils from us the great secret, the knowledge of which would explain everything, including ourselves. What is on the other side of that curtain?—not on the other side of death, but on the other side, the inner side, of all the knowledge we at present possess of what we are and whence we came.

There are those, of course, and they are not few, who do not want to know what is on the other side. These are what we may rightly call materialists—not in theory, but in practice. Materialism as a theory is dead; no one really holds it now; but materialism in practice is very much alive. Perhaps there never was a time in the history of our civilization when men were so absorbed in the contemplation of the things of sense or so satisfied therewith, to the virtual exclusion of all interest in the things of the spirit.

On the other hand, there are some serious minds which insist that there is nothing on the other side of the curtain. Bertrand Russell is a very able thinker, though a pessimistic one, and he and

all his school declare emphatically that the quest in which we are here and now engaged is sheer waste of time, that religion is merely a pathetic delusion, a soporific, a drug wherewith we try to give ourselves pleasant dreams.

This is a charge frequently brought against adherents of the Christian faith, but it is quite untrue. No ordinary mind can rest for long in what it suspects to be a lie; we are under compulsion to face the truth, however dark it be. Russell, and those who think with him, would not admit that they were materialists—nor are they in the strict sense of the term; they do not blink facts nor affect an optimism for which they see no justification in the constitution of things. But there are other teachers, such as H. G. Wells, who try to delude themselves and us by a continual whooping about the greatness and the glory, the wonder and the triumph, the splendour and success that still await humanity on this planet. This is a creed that accords well with the mechanization of the globe that is so rapidly going on. The achievements of science are indeed stupendous and we do well to admire them; but if we seek to make of them a substitute for the fulfilment of our spiritual cravings, we are woefully self-deceived. In the last resort the individual matters more than society, paradoxical though it sound to say so; and the individual has little to gain from all this speeding up of life which is going on. Leave God out of the reckoning, and the future of the individual is but little brighter than it ever was. Here is a power which all men know, an inner urge which all men feel, compelling them on occasion to superhuman effort in obedience to high spiritual vision, but a power that knows nothing of their toils and sorrows, cares nothing for their moral grandeurs, and leaves them to perish hopelessly at the last. Do not let us hoodwink ourselves: this is a gospel of despair.

A distinguished soldier, a man of fine religious nature, as is true of so many of the world's best fighters, put forth a book of confessions years ago, wherein he told how his own thoughts were brought to a focus on this point. Walking along a country road he was run down by an automobile and seriously injured. For months he lay in hospital, enduring the most terrible pain while slowly struggling back to life, and here is what he says about it: 'I have described my sufferings at length and in detail, not because there was anything unusual in them, but because they are so very common, because there is so much worse suffering in the world, and because, reflecting on all this suffering, I could not help asking myself

whether the usual view of things could possibly be correct—that we were under the care and guardianship of a kind and almighty Being who was ever watching over us to protect us from all evil.' What is there, he asked, behind the veil of mystery that shadows all mortal existence? The answer to this challenge is the text, which is in itself a challenge, as this noble-minded soldier ultimately realized. There is an indefeasible experience which all men may have, but at a price. As Dean Inge says, God never intended to make faith easy; the highest values in life have to be fought for and won.

Dr. Rufus Jones reminds us that we all have to live by two sets of values, primary and secondary—those which are rightly termed eternal, and those which are temporal. The latter include all the ordinary, everyday ends of our activity—the winning of food and shelter, the maintenance of health and home, the service of those we love and of the community to which we belong. But in all these and apart from them there is a greater and more abiding good to be sought, a good which will still be ours in undiminished fullness—nay, in greater and more glorious measure—when all things earthly have passed away.

But there can be no compromise. It will mean that we are being made over again, as it were, in the likeness of our Lord. It will mean, for instance, as old Thomas à Kempis puts it, that we shall strive as earnestly to escape being honoured and praised and admired by men as others do the opposite. It will mean that we centre our thoughts and aims as intensely on spiritual reality as others do on secular success. And then by and by the miracle will happen. The curtain will lift. We shall become as sure of God and of the fire of His love that burns up all the corruption of our nature as other men are sure of money or pleasure or gratified ambition. And we shall never want to exchange the one for the other. When the love of God lays hold of us, when we become conformed to the likeness of Christ, we are at the very heart of the mystery of existence.¹

WHITSUNDAY.

A Call to the Indifferent.

'This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built.'—Hag 1².

A temple in ruins is a mournful spectacle at any time, but when the pile of ruins is a symbol of

¹ R. J. Campbell, in *If I had only One Sermon to preach*, 89.

departed glory the gloom is deepened. That was the feeling of the Jews when they looked upon their desolate sanctuary in Jerusalem. Depression, poverty, and worldliness combined to produce in them a spirit of religious indifference. But the prophet Haggai, a man who knew their weaknesses, their difficulties and their possibilities, comes on the scene with a great challenge, an invigorating charge and a welcome promise of change.

1. *The challenge.*—Nineteen years had elapsed since Cyrus had issued an edict permitting the Jews to return to their native country. The Temple was still in ruins and the people shied at the onerous task of building until Haggai hurled a challenge at them. He analysed their reasons for their continued inactivity, and the truth which they would not own to themselves, at last, got home, and stirred them into activity. They caught sight of their duty and—looked for their tools.

Psychologists tell us that the reasons which people assign for their actions are sometimes nothing but camouflage; that the real reasons are repressed. What they term 'censor' causes the real reason for certain courses of action to be veiled, so that even the actor himself is deluded. But an expert in mental science is able to reveal the hidden motive to the man himself, and it will often come home to him with the force and conviction of a revelation. He is unmasked; his motive-life is revealed. In this way the psychologist becomes the interpreter of the drama of man's conscious and unconscious life, and he may be staggered at the meanness and duplicity of his under-life, but the revelation of it is frequently the starting-point of a new and nobler life.

The Book of Haggai begins abruptly, and the prophet's reference to his people betrays a note of impatience and disapproval. Listen: 'This people say'—they have said it right along; they still say it, 'the time has not yet come to build the temple of the Eternal.' But Haggai declared it was selfishness, worldliness, and absorption in their own personal affairs that accounted for their neglect of the larger issues which ought to interest all the members of the community. Not only had they neglected to build the temple, but they had resisted and resented every former appeal in favour of rebuilding it.

We cannot brush this aside with the remark that it is ancient Jewish history; it is modern history. 'The time has not yet come.' Think of the great reforms that are being held up by people who think that way. The Genevan Conference considers the reduction of armaments. Some are agreed on armies, some on submarines, some on air force,

and others on dreadnoughts, but for national reasons there is no common agreement, and thus the proceedings are held up by the people who protest that 'the time has not yet come.' The temple of the Eternal is unbuilt because nations fail to rise to an adventurous realization of ideals that are larger, deeper, and diviner than their own personal or national interests.

2. *The charge.*—The prophet calls upon these people to reflect upon their ways. Some of them had been praying for years to be restored to their own country, but the reasons for repatriation were political and social rather than religious. They sought to establish themselves in comfort and security, but neglected to rebuild the Temple which represented the spiritual interests of the community. They had a livelier concern for their own personal comforts than for the claims of God. That might be said of thousands of people to-day. 'Consider your ways,' cried the prophet; 'reflect on your way of living, lest the feverish attention you give to your personal and temporal affairs push God into the background, if not out of life altogether.' There was something else in ruins in Jerusalem besides the Temple—the noblest ideals of the nation, and the aspirations of the soul. It was not so much a temple in ruins that caused the greatest distress of soul to Haggai, as the self-centred life which the ruined Temple symbolized. The whole bent of social and national life was away from the sanctuary. And that means more than inattention to the externals of religion, it generally implies a departure from its spirit and essence; for the form and essence of religion are closely related. We all need the larger inspiration of corporate worship. No soul is so perfect, and so self-contained that it can afford to cut itself off from corporate spiritual fellowship. Therefore, 'Consider your ways.'

Haggai charged the people to reflect; he also charged them to act. They found abundance of stones for the new temple round about them, from the ruins of the old temple, and the walls of the city, but they had to go into the forest on the hillside for timber. They had to do some climbing for the materials. It wasn't all about their feet; they had to climb, to strive. And so, indeed, must we climb if we are to get suitable materials for character-building. We climb when we pray, when we aspire, when we mediate, when we perform an unpleasant duty, and when we trample upon our lower nature in the endeavour to attain something noble and of transcendent worth.

3. *The change.*—It is no small task to stir up the lethargic, and it is no easy task to keep them going

when started, and such was the experience of Haggai the prophet ; for as soon as the Jews began to build the new temple they encountered difficulties and discouragements. The first of these, no doubt, was the conscious lack of materials. They realized their poverty when they needed so much money to procure the wherewithal, and to hire labour. The prophet met this depressing feeling with an assurance of the inexhaustible resources of God : ' The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.' And the message of Haggai was not unfounded, for Tattenai, the governor of the satrapy west of the Euphrates, was instructed by the Persian king to give the revenues of his satrapy to help the Jews to rebuild their temple ; and again, in the fourth year of the reign of Darius, additional contributions were made out of the Persian exchequer.

The second cause of discouragement was the consciousness that the new temple was inferior to the former one. No great soul likes to be engaged upon a task that does not promise the best results. We want our best to issue in excellence. The prophet sought to banish this mood of inferiority with a heartening reply : ' Be strong, and work : my Spirit remaineth among you,' said the Lord. The idea which the prophet had in his mind was that God would not wait until the temple was completed before He would come to them ; He was with them already, present to help them in the work of rebuilding. This is a truth which we ourselves might well take to heart, that God is not going to wait until we are complete and perfect in character before He takes up His abode with us. He is with us *while* we build. Every good intention, every unselfish act, every prayer we offer for a holier life, finds God present with us ; indeed, the very existence of these holy longings and gestures towards goodness is a proof that God is already with us, and working within us. Are they not the outcome of the operation of His Holy Spirit upon our souls ?

The third cause of discouragement was the apparent lack of Divine approval. The ills which had befallen the nation when the Temple was in ruins were attributed to the neglect of the House of God. It was the Jew's conception of the relation of goodness to temporal prosperity. The prophet points out to them that God had not yet had a chance to show His approval in richer harvests. He assured them, however, that from the day they began to build the temple, God had said : ' From this day will I bless you.'

Let this message ring in our souls all the days of our life. From the very moment we undertake any good work, we may rest assured that God's

blessing is resting upon us. These people saw no immediate change in their circumstances, but the temple was going up, and that was a blessing, both to themselves and to the nation—the greatest blessing of all. In every good work we do, God still says, ' My Spirit remaineth with you ' ; and from the very day we try to make our ideals real, God says, ' From this day will I bless you.'¹

TRINITY SUNDAY.

The Doctrine of the Trinity.

' They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.'—Rev 4^o.

Surely once a year at least, on this day which has been set apart by the Church for the contemplation of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, we shall do well to give it a little earnest thought. It is very needful to get help for our daily life. But very often the things which are really practical and helpful seem at first sight quite remote from the purpose. How, for instance, does the mariner learn to steer his way through stormy oceans ? By studying the laws of the heavenly bodies. And how does the astronomer learn those laws ? By studying the abstract principles of mathematics. Both of these sciences seem far enough removed from the practical work of seamanship, but without them safe navigation is hardly possible.

Now practical religion is just a kind of spiritual navigation. We are launched on the great ocean of time, and it is very important that we should know how to steer our little boat so that we may bring it at last to the haven of Eternal peace. We must not be ignorant of principles which rule the Eternal heavens. To know God is the most needful and practical of all knowledge.

Men don't die for a metaphysical abstraction unless they believe it embodies a truth on the faith of which they can dare to die. It is not a freak of fancy that has sent the doctrine of the Holy Trinity down the ages and keeps it living still. It is because the truth which that Threefold Name expresses entered into the hearts of men and revealed the fullness of a Divine hope. The Trinity is, in fact, a practical truth, or it is nothing. It contains all we know or can know about God.

In the Westminster Catechism we have a definition of the Trinity which has never been surpassed for brevity and accuracy. ' There are Three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one God, the

¹ G. Rees, *How to handle Life*, 43.

same in substance, equal in power and glory.' The controversies and decisions of centuries are wrapt up in that sentence. But more than these, the memories of personal struggle, fear, hope, and final triumph. 'The Trinity is the point in which all Christian ideas and interests unite; at once the beginning and the end of all insight into Christianity.' It presents to us the full object of worship. 'And the Catholic Faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance.'

It is an unfortunate word, that word 'Person,' but there is no better, and we must remember it is used here not in its English but in its Latin sense. It is intended to express the threefold distinction in the Divine Being. It is, in fact, a description thrown out in default of a better. A clever writer has recently called it 'a blundering mistranslation of the original version of the Creed.' That is hardly fair. Of course, if we take the word in its ordinary sense, the creed is a contradiction, and if we go back to its original sense the creed is simply foolish. But if we take it as an attempt to express the manifold riches of the Being of God, as it has been revealed to us, and the fact that the Unity of God is not merely a unity of number but a unity of living personal consciousness, then it may be inadequate, but it conveys a real meaning: 'The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet are they not three Gods but one God.'

There are many illustrations which have been given, all of them more or less defective, but all helping to show the reasonableness of this gospel doctrine of God. If for instance we take the mind of man and consider the three powers—intellect, affection, and will—they are separate and distinct, and yet they are one. The whole man is in each. But no illustration can be complete. Here is one of the best. Let us remember that the Trinity is not a description of God, but a description of God so far as He has been made known to us, and a description of God in so far as that knowledge bears upon our salvation. Unless we keep hold of this the Trinity will always remain a riddle. It is God in relation to the sinner, in relation to His fallen child. Well, let us imagine a strong nation which had settled young and vigorous colonies all over the world. One of them has broken into revolt. The Fatherland desires to win them back to loyalty. It sends an Embassy, its choicest son. He is a stranger in the new land. He lives among the people and makes their life his own, and tries to

restore the spirit of loyalty by showing what the Fatherland really is. That is exactly what we are taught to believe God has done. He sends His Son. Could we imagine any better words to express 'Two persons and one substance'? That is God, Father, and Son. One but distinct. No Father unless there be a Son. No Son unless there be a Father. And so Christ comes to the world. Men had ceased to believe that God could dwell in the temple of human life. He became Incarnate. The Son of God took our nature upon Him. And so He taught us that we 'have access to divinity.' The spirit of the Fatherland, slumbering before, awoke to life and rose anew within the breasts of rebels—'So through Christ Jesus we all have access by one spirit unto the Father.' We quote the words of Bishop Brooks: 'First there is the Creative Deity from which the soul sprang, and to which it is struggling to return—the Divine End, God the Father. Then there is the Incarnate Deity which makes that return possible by the exhibition of God's love—the Divine method, God the Son. And then there is this infused Deity, this Divine energy in the Soul itself, taking its capacities and setting them homeward to the Father, the Divine power of salvation, God the Holy Spirit.' To the Father through the Son by the Spirit. If we recur a moment to the figure which we used a while ago—God is the Divine Fatherland of the human soul; Christ is like the Embassy, part and parcel of that Fatherland, which comes out to win it back from its rebellion; and the Holy Spirit is the Fatherland wakened in the rebellious colony's own soul. He is the newly living loyalty. When the colony comes back, the power that brings it is the Fatherland in it seeking its own. So when the soul comes back to God, it is God in the soul that brings it. So we believe in the Divine power, one with the Divine method and the Divine end in God the Spirit, one with the Father and the Son.

Beyond this we cannot go. And beyond this we dare not go, even if we could. But if we have got as far as this, we can understand what the great saints and heroes were fighting for in those early centuries when they seemed to be lost in mere metaphysical quibbles. We can understand what a modern hero no less brave and saintly meant when he said, 'My heart demands the Trinity as much as my reason. I want to be sure that God cares for us, that God is our Father, that God has interfered, stooped, sacrificed Himself for us. I do not want merely to love Christ, a Christ, some creation or emanation of God's, whose

will and character for aught I know may be different from God's. I want to love and honour the abysmal God Himself, and none other will satisfy me. No puzzling texts will rob me of this rest for my heart that Christ is the exact counterpart of Him in whom we live and move and have our being. I say boldly if the doctrine of the Trinity be not in the Bible, it ought to be: for the whole spiritual nature of man cries out for it.'

The Trinity and the Trinity alone can satisfy the whole spiritual nature of man. When we strip it of the husks in which men's little words have enclosed it, we get the golden grain of Eternal truth—truth to live on and truth to die on. We get the Father our unchanging Friend, we get Christ the living Saviour, we get the Spirit, unerring Guide—and God all and in all. Would we find God the true home of our being? Then go out into the world. He is there. Let us range through the history of the ages. He is there. Or come back to our own souls. He is there.

In the glory of the summer sky, in the flowers of the earth, on the mountain summit, in the lonely glen, afar on the ocean or deep in the trackless desert, He is with us still. Turn from the world of Nature to the history of man. What is it there that arrests thought and compels adoration? Not the loftiest height of imperial power, not the clearest vigour of creative intellect, not the amplest beauty of artistic conception. No—but purity and truth and love, the sacrifice of self for higher ends. Wherever through the ages such things have been, men pause and wonder and adore. Let us go back by any track we will along those eighteen centuries. We come at length to a reality beyond which it is impossible to go. This presence blocks every avenue of thought and stands at the fountain-head of every stream of activity which still flows. Miss it, and we drop the threads of time, the ages are meaningless, and history a dream. And what is it? It is the serene Presence of the Man of Sorrows, unique, Divine, the Saviour of the world, the Son of God. God manifest in the flesh—God in Nature, God in Christ, even this is not all. Let a man turn to his own soul and listen to that voice within which comes above all when he thinks of Jesus, when he considers His perfect character and His atoning love. Then He fulfils His great promise and the Trinity becomes a simple fact of experience in the Christian soul. 'If a man love me he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.'¹

¹ A. W. Williamson, *The Glorious Gospel*, 210.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Scene of our Lord's Ministry.

'I have glorified thee on the earth.'—Jn 17^A.
'I am glorified in them.'—Jn 17¹⁰.

Two aspects of our Lord's ministry—the scene of it and the test of its success are complementary. The saying, 'I am glorified in them' balances and completes the earlier saying, 'I have glorified thee on the earth.' Thus we may well try to think of them together, and so gain a wider view of the whole truth which they express.

Each points to a surpassingly wonderful contrast. First there is the contrast between the perfect life, which has formed the example and standard for every later age and in which the Divine character was most fully set forth among men, and the hard and humble surroundings in which it was passed. Then there is the contrast between Jesus and His companions—between His entire self-devotion, His limitless love, His unflinching faith in God, and their readiness to halt and grow weary even when they had set out upon the upward path. Yet, in spite of all, He identifies Himself with them.

1. *The contrast between the perfect life and its surroundings.*—'I have glorified thee on the earth.' To say that our Lord's life and death took place on the earth which we know, in this solid, everyday, uninspiring world in which our lives are passed, may seem a statement too obvious to make. But can we claim to have realized it in all its meaning and fullness? Do we not often look at the gospel story through a kind of golden haze of unworldly beauty which has gathered round it since we first heard it told far back in childhood? And, if so, do we not in some degree, without being clearly aware of what we do, carry the thought of Jesus' life away from the hard realities of earth to a dimly conceived dream-country of the religious imagination? But we cannot do this without missing a great part of the lesson which we are meant to draw from the records of that life which have come down to us.

Palestine is a real country. As Dr. Rainy once said in pointing out what the Promised Land had meant to the Children of Israel: 'A land was given—an actual land, with hills and valleys, corn and wine—with practical qualities, such as farmers could take account of; but it was a land provided by God—a land in which God should dwell with them, a land in which He should carry on His dealings with them as one who gives His people inheritance.'

Let us remember the years that passed before Jesus entered on His public ministry. In no other life-story is there so startling a contrast between the world-wide—nay, rather, the infinite—significance of the mission and the quietness and obscurity of the long years in which the workman was preparing himself and his tools for his future task.

During our Lord's short ministry, we remember how much of His time and strength was given to the work of healing the sick. If His journeys wearied His bodily frame, His work as a Healer of men must have thrown a heavy strain upon both body and spirit. The older view of our Lord, emphasizing almost exclusively the power of His Divine nature, took little account of this; but our teachers of late years have rightly laid stress on the fact that this power was at all times exercised through the human nature which He shared with us. Consider the surroundings of His ministry. The towns in which 'most of his mighty works were done' were all beside the Sea of Galilee, in that deep valley, hundreds of feet below sea-level, and in a climate hardly less enervating than that of Jericho itself. No European can safely spend the summer there even to-day; and at that time, the crowded lanes of Capernaum—even more breathless and sweltering than those of other Eastern towns—and the pressure of the crowds surging around, might well have exhausted the strength even of one who failed to enter into the sorrows of those around him as Jesus did. But the burden rested heavily upon Jesus just because His sympathy was so swift and so complete. In the Gospels we do not see a divinely commissioned wonder-worker, exercising His miraculous power as if it were some external instrument placed in His hands for the relief of distress. Rather we see One who in healing others gave Himself.

No great man ever finds his hardest trials in the outward, material sphere. Weariness and monotony are grievous things, but how little they weigh in the balance if sympathy, gratitude, and appreciation come to meet them. Let us remember how slowly and imperfectly even His immediate followers responded to His teaching and grasped His idea of His mission; how His family sought to place hindrances in His path, and His fellow-townfolk were the last instead of the first to accept Him; and how the spiritual guides of His people first suspected and then bitterly opposed and persecuted Him—and we shall in some measure come to realize the extent to which our Lord entered into this supreme bitterness of the life of many of earth's greatest men. Yet He went on His way,

unshaken even though alone. The judgment of the centuries is no other than this—that in no other character in history, nor yet in the great works of the imagination, has the ideal for mankind been so clearly shown or the Divine Purpose so completely set forth. As the end drew near, Jesus had the right to say, 'I have glorified thee on the earth.'

2. *The contrast between Jesus and His companions.*—'I am glorified in them' balances and completes the earlier saying, 'I have glorified thee on the earth.' This, too, points to a surpassingly wonderful contrast—the contrast between Jesus and His companions—between His entire self-devotion, His limitless love, His unflinching faith in God, and their readiness to halt and grow weary even when they had set out upon the upward path. Yet, in spite of all, He identifies Himself with them. 'I am glorified in them.' What can these amazing words mean if not this, that He, to whom His disciples owed all that they were and all the brightness of hope that shone around their lives, was content to accept as the reward of His work even a glimmering of light reflected from those who, at the first, had borrowed all from Him?

It is a contrast which cannot be overstated. On the one hand we see the moral majesty and steadfastness of One who is sure alike of His mission and of the Father who sustains Him through it; on the other, the weak and fluctuating faith of those who only catch occasional glimpses of the truths by which their Master lives. Simon Peter, their leader, is the true type of all, in his impetuous bursts of devotion and his swift flashes of insight, followed but too rapidly by relapses into moral cowardice and the commonplace religious thinking of his day. The level of spiritual attainment which these men had reached would seem the very reverse of a vindication of their Master's ministry. Yet He accepts their service and their devotion as honouring both His mission and Himself.

Surely there must be some reason, lying perhaps beneath the surface, strong enough to explain a judgment which seems so strangely, so unaccountably, generous.

First, then, we see in Jesus the insight of the true teacher, whose vision pierces beyond the failures visible to the casual gaze to that promise of high attainment which still remains hidden from the ordinary view.

Again, it is possible, in describing the shortcomings and failures of the Eleven, to forget the reality of the sacrifice which they had made and of the devotion which they had shown. In spite of all the ways in which they had fallen short, it remains

true that they had done a great thing—nay, rather, *the* great thing. They had ‘left all.’ They had ventured all on the truth of Jesus’ claims, in reliance on His character and promise alone. For some, this had involved the break-up of their homes; for all, the forfeiting of a regular livelihood, and the following, through poverty and hardship, of a path whose end they could not see. In many respects they understood imperfectly; but they followed, and they were learning. When we remember this, can we judge them?

Yet, when all has been said, we feel that the magnanimity of Christ’s judgment remains unexplained. It shows a generosity beyond the deserving of His disciples in any age. He trusted His work to men and women like these early followers, and like us to-day; but more than this—men judge Him by what they see and know of us. The ordinary man will always judge more readily from the living evidence of his own day, from the people whom he knows and whose worth he can estimate, than from a story written in a book many centuries old; and thus the honour or dishonour in which Jesus Christ is held depends more on the lives of those who profess to follow Him, than even upon the records of His life in the Gospels.

Our last thought must be of the honour done to the disciples by the unspeakable generosity and grace of the Master:

Yet, weak and blinded though we be,
Thou dost our service own:
We bring our varying gifts to Thee,
And Thou rejectest none.¹

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

While ye have the Light.

‘Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.’—Ps 104²⁸.

‘While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.’—Jn 12³⁶.

It was characteristic of Jesus Christ to declare Himself to be the Light for practical ends. Light is glorious in itself: it is its own evidence and needs neither herald nor argument. Christ might have compared Himself to Light in either of these respects. But Light is also practical, calling to life and action, and it is clear from our Lord’s words that this was the sense in which He gave Himself the name. On each of the occasions on which He used it He coupled it with a distinct call to progress or to labour. ‘I am the light of the world; he

that followeth me shall not walk in darkness. The night cometh when no man can work; as long as I am in the world I am the light of the world. Yet a little while is the light with you; walk while ye have the light.’

Like the sun He shines not to be gazed at but to be used. To man He is to be what the sun is for movement and for work. ‘The sun ariseth and the wild beasts get them away and lay them down in their dens. Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour till the evening.’ Light is the dispersion of all that is cruel and unclean. But it is man’s opportunity. Among all that a sunrise reveals nothing is more noticeable to this Psalmist than man going out to his daily work. It is for him—for that common figure, for that daily commonplace start again at the ordinary task—that the universal miracle has taken place.

With this general sense of what Christ meant when He called Himself the Light of the world we come to our second text. Our Lord is still speaking of Himself. The Pharisees expected a Messiah, who should abide for ever; but Christ says He shall soon be taken from them, and He adds, ‘While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may become the children of light.’

1. *While ye have the Light.* When in the beginning God said: ‘Let there be light, and there was light,’ light did not spring into undivided empire, but was ordained to rule alternately with darkness. Day and night abide for ever. What was the reason, so far as man is concerned, for this curbing and restriction of so free an element as light? The readiest reason seems to be—for our relief and rest. But that is not half the reason. Our light is broken up and shortened, not only in order to afford us intervals of rest, but also to bestow upon us intensity; not only to relieve our faculties from the strain of life, but to strain and stimulate them ever the more keenly. According to Christ Himself the ‘night cometh when no man can work,’ not merely that man may hope for release beneath its shelter, but that he may ‘work while it is called to-day.’ Had there been no interval, since first upon the tones of God’s word light rippled across the face of the deep, then indeed one might say there would have been no progress for man. Let our imagination strike night out of the world, and we need not begin to speculate on the iron frames we men should have required to bear the unrelieved strain, for it is tolerably certain that, without the urgency and discipline which a limited day brings upon our life, we should never have been stimulated to enough of toil to make us weary. Night, which

¹ G. F. Barbour, *Addresses in a Highland Chapel*, 79.

has been called the Liberator of the Slave, is far more the taskmistress of the free—a taskmistress who does not scourge nor drive us in panic, but startles our sluggishness, rallies our wandering thoughts, develops our instincts of order, reduces our impulsiveness to methods, incites us to our very best, and only then crowns her beneficence by rewarding our obedience with rest. In short, night, while she is Nature's mercy on our weakness, is Nature's purest discipline for our strength.

But all this about physical light is equally, though not so regularly, true of moral light. The moral heavens have their night for each of us, as much as the physical. Just as the sun is always shining, and yet each part of the world has its determined hours for seeing his face and its seasons for rejoicing in his heat; so our Father in heaven, the Father of Lights, is without variableness or shadow of turning, and yet in our moral experience day and night, summer and winter, are as real facts as in the course of Nature.

That is a truth of which Scripture never ceases reminding us. There is hardly one prophet who does not proclaim how short man's day of work is—how brief and single is the summer granted to each man's character to ripen in. Sometimes it is life as a whole which they look at, and tell us that is our day; if we miss it, there is nothing beyond. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest'; or, again, it is of certain parts of life they speak, as of youth: 'Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth while the evil days come not.' And you remember those frequent phrases which toll through Scripture like the tolling of a bell that marks the passing of a life. 'This is the day of the Lord. For he is our God, to-day if you will hear his voice. Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation.'

Think of the ideals of justice, of honour, and of generosity, which are natural to all in their youth? A man begins his business career with the moral heaven unclouded above him. He will do, he vows to God, every act of his life in its sunshine. He will shape his conduct by all it shows him of duty, by all it puts into him of health. But his patience fails against adversity. Clouds come over his sky—they are only the mist sent up by his own weariness—and men tell him the heaven he believed in is not real. So he turns from his ideals, and ignores them, till, when he is haunted by the memory of them, and conscience wakes, he

tells himself they were a boy's dream. A boy's dream? Nay, the boy's day. An old man's dream, if you like, for to him they are past and irrecoverable. But that light was the boy's day. He could have grown in it, worked in it, found true friends in it, and seen his way clear through the world to God.

2. Now of this day Christ says: Believe in it. *Believe in the Light.* That is, at first hearing, a strange word to use of light. And yet it is the fittest to use even of that physical light which we see by the outward eye. We do not look at the sun, for that would be to dazzle and blind us, but we use the sun's light, we read the world as he reveals it to us, we put the brightness he brings us to some practical advantage. And that is just to believe in His light. Of some men we may say that they do not believe that it is day, for they do not use it as day. They waste it, not being really awake. They ignore its value; they do not believe in it.

All this is much more true of moral light. To believe in such is to read life as it reveals life; to take as evil what it displays as evil, to hold as firm the path which it lights up before us, to hold as realities and not as dreams the ideals which it kindles in our skies, and to press on with all our hearts to their pursuit and conquest. To believe in the light is to use it; to feel that it has been given to us for practical purposes: for conduct, for the perception of truth, for the growth of character.

The beams of light which shine from Christ are many. That the Almighty is our Father, infinite in Love; that He grants forgiveness to all who truly turn to Him; that holiness is possible, and virtue can be victorious, because both are His will; that it is better for a man to bear anything rather than to sin; that work is hopeful, and the doing of duty neither vain nor unblest. To believe in the light is to believe all these, and to act upon the belief.

3. *That ye may become children of Light*—that is, natives of it, with the light in our hearts and the health of it in our blood. For to-day the most of us do not live our lives with our eyes open and our hearts pure. Either we do our daily duty in blindfold routine, like a horse on the round of a mill-path, and with no sense of the meaning or the joy of what we do. Or else, if our eyes be open and our hearts keen, and we desire not to be the blind slaves of habit, we are troubled by having to turn from the use of the light to constant inquiry about it; and we are hindered in the work we have

to do while it is yet day, by having perpetually to ask whether it really be day after all. But Christ calls us through belief in the light, to a state in which we shall have burst equally from the blindness of mere habit and the shadows and perplexities

of doubt; in which we shall be as little dead to God and His meaning for our life, as loving children are beyond doubting or being unconscious of their father.¹

¹ G. A. Smith, *The Forgiveness of Sins*, 89.

Recent Foreign Theology.

The Nature of the Church.

I HAVE several times called attention to the revived and growing interest in German theology in the Church. The pamphlet of forty-eight pages² explains the situation. 'There are mainly three factors which are decisive for this, that for theology to-day the thought of the Church comes into sight and seems worth realizing: 1. The separation of State and Church as the result of the Revolution of 1918; 2. The fact of the œcumenical movement and the commencement in connexion with it of a differentiation from Catholicism; 3. A new sense, heralding itself, of community, at least a longing for it' (p. 3). (1) Under the first head he shows that Luther was opposed to the subordination of the Church to the State, although the historical circumstances forced him to rely on the support of princes. As a department of the State the Church lost its interest for theology. The new political situation has revived interest. (2) His estimate of the œcumenical movement is that 'one says *union*, but, after all, is already content to come to an *understanding* regarding a common course of action in all the circumstances which affect the whole of evangelical Christendom' (p. 5). In Germany more than in this country there is an endeavour to get beyond the contrast with Catholicism to some kind of an understanding. (3) To the individualism which was so marked a feature of Lutheran piety there is opposed the growing recognition that the Church is not a sum of individuals, but that the community is historically and logically prior.

Not only is there an interest in the Church, but especially in its visibility. Denying that while Catholicism emphasizes the visible, Protestantism must lay all the stress on the invisible Church, the writer sets himself to show that for Protestantism

² *Das Wesen der Kirche mit besonderer Berücksichtigung ihrer Sichtbarkeit*, von Lit. Dr. Robert Winkler (Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen; 1931).

there is also a visibility, and necessary visibility, of the Church. All German theologians seem to regard it as necessary to justify their position from Luther. It was ever against Rome that Luther laid stress on the invisibility of the Church; he recognized two aspects of the Church either from different standpoints, faith and understanding, according to Ritschl, or from the one standpoint of faith as content and form, according to Rietschel (p. 15). The writer suggests the distinction of soul and body. 'The Evangelical Church becomes visible: 1, in the Word; 2, in love; 3, in its character as institution, the term is to be used with reservation' (p. 16).

It is not necessary to labour the first point, as it is the very core of the Lutheran position. While the Church is manifest in the Word, the operation of that Word is within, known only to faith. Catholicism with its stress on the objectivity of the Church and its subordination of faith virtually identifies the invisible with the visible Church. Protestantism must maintain the correlation of faith and Church. 'The genuineness of the faith shows itself in its being founded in the Church, which, however, on its part can be seen only by faith' (p. 24). What seems to me to be an omission in this discussion is that the relation of the sacraments to the Word is not dealt with. Again falling back on Luther, the writer asserts two aspects of the Church, the special as a worshipping community, and the general as the presence of the Christian people and their activity in the world, or the Kingdom of God. The Roman identification of the Kingdom of God with the organization of the Church has resulted in a depreciation of the conception of the Kingdom of God. This identification Protestantism declines. A discussion of the meaning of the term Kingdom follows. The Kingdom of God is made manifest and active in the world through the Church. As the Kingdom increases towards full realization, the Church decreases,