

the succour and direction of individual souls must stand in a vital relation to the public ministry of the Word. There is a place, possibly a larger one than has been yet realized by the Church, for men with special training in psychology and moral theology, experts in spiritual direction; but the bulk of this work has to be done by the man who combines the functions of pastor and preacher. And these functions react on each other. It is in his pastoral work as well as in his study that the preacher finds his sermons, and in his preaching that the pastor prepares the ground for the more intensive work of spiritual direction. This last is a point that is often overlooked. Spiritual direction is not lightly sought even by those who stand in greatest need of it, and it is very largely from the way in which a man ministers the Word from the pulpit that he draws or repels his people as a spiritual counsellor. In this the priest whose gifts are pastoral rather than homiletic need feel at no disadvantage, for what counts is not the rhetorical brilliance that will draw crowds, but the sincerity and thoroughness that speak to the heart and will. Teaching Christianity to the young, and proving its truth to the old, said Fr. Benson, are very different things from winning hearts to Christ. There are short and easy methods for the one, but the other

can only be done by lengthened prayer and fasting. 'For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.' So in a better sense than a merely physical one there will be a virtue, a power of the Holy Ghost going forth from us.¹

Here there is possible a legitimate rationalization of preaching. The false antithesis between preaching and pastoral work must be set aside, and then the members of it, being recognized as complementary and not antithetical, will each enrich and stimulate the other. The method is neither an easy nor a short one, but the priest who applies it will no longer find himself saying that his pastoral duties allow him no time for the preparation of sermons, for how can a man face his people in their homes or give them spiritual direction when he has stood before them in the pulpit with an unmediated message or some one else's sermon?

'Will this sermon do?' said an ordinand to the Principal of his theological college, and received the reply, 'Do what?' The application of this test is the first step in the effective rationalization of preaching. The taking of it is not likely to introduce more loud-speakers, though it may mean the preaching of fewer sermons.

¹ *Further Letters of Richard Meux Benson*, 96.

In the Study.

Virginibus Quærisque.

Do you live up to your Name?

BY THE REVEREND WILLIAM S. TERRY,
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'Thou hast a name . . . '—Rev 3¹.

I WANT you to come with me on a visit to one of the ships of the Royal Navy. We will go down to the Dockyard. Here she is in dry dock undergoing a thorough overhaul after a long cruise in foreign waters. We will go on board by the after gangway. There is a host of wonderful things to see; but here, right before us, is the object I want you to notice just now. It is a massive wooden scroll, carved in the finest wood, and the inscription upon it is written in letters of gold. Let us draw near and examine the inscription. We read 'Armada 1588,' then underneath it 'Copenhagen 1801,' then 'Trafalgar 1805,' and so on,

down to the engagements of the Great War. You will wonder what this scroll means and why it occupies such a place of honour. I will tell you. It is the ship's Roll of Honour. Of course this ship has not been in all the engagements mentioned on the Roll, for many of them happened long before this ship was built. But they have a very happy custom in the Navy of handing down a great name from one ship to another, so that there are names in use to-day that have been in use for hundreds of years. These names, then, are the sea-battles in which ships bearing this same name have taken part.

Now you can see the idea of the Roll. The men of this ship have entered into a noble heritage. Great associations have gathered around the name they carry, and they must live up to the name and the traditions of the past. When I look at this Roll of Honour I am reminded of wonderful words written long ago. A Christian leader was writing

to his friends. They had passed through a difficult time and there were more difficult days before them. He was just afraid that in the hour of trial they might fail. So he wrote a letter to them in which he told them of the great men of their race who had stood valiantly for truth and right. They were a noble army of men and women, and the record of their deeds would make their hearts beat with pride. 'Now,' says this writer, 'I want you to remember that all these heroes of the past are looking at you from the ramparts of heaven. They have run their race and won the prize; in your hour of trial I want you to be worthy of them. Look to Jesus, He will help you to be worthy.' 'Wherefore'—these are his words—'seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses . . . let us run with patience the race that is set before us.' You can look this story up for yourselves. You will find it in the eleventh and twelfth chapters of Hebrews.

But I want to tell you a little more about these Rolls of Honour. During the Great War there were so many ships in commission that many new names had to be used which had no great tradition behind them. So, in place of a Roll of Honour, many of them placed inspiring mottoes on their quarter-decks. In letters of gold they wrote such words as 'For God and the King,' or 'For Home and England.' But the strangest I ever saw was also the shortest. It was on a destroyer and consisted simply of two words, 'We Are.' Several times I passed that ship in the Dockyard before I realized its meaning, then I saw the name of the ship. What do you think it was? Its name was *Ready*. Don't you think that was a splendid idea? What better reminder could they have that they must live up to their name? Their name was '*Ready*' and they declared to themselves and all the world, '*We are ready.*'

I wonder if we all live up to the names we bear? Perhaps you are a Scout. Do you live up to your name? Are you prepared? Do you faithfully fulfil the Scout Law? How proud you were when your school badge first adorned your cap or blazer! Do you always remember that the honour of your school is in your keeping? Do you live up to the good name of your school, for it is a name you bear? Many years ago there were some people who were always kind to one another, generous to those who opposed them, always happy and ever seeking to do good. They said they were like this because they loved Jesus and were trying to follow Him. So they called them Christians. We bear that same wonderful name. Let us try to live up to it.

No Answer required.

BY THE REVEREND FRANK J. GOULD, WATFORD.

'Be ye separate.'—2 Co 6¹⁷.

I suppose you know what a quarrel is? It is a nasty little affair that looks harmless enough before it starts, but is always very ugly before it ends. Not long ago, in one of our northern towns, the electric supply suddenly failed. Out went the lamps, down slowed all the machinery, and the whole area was covered with darkness and idleness. You never would have guessed the reason, and it puzzled the engineers for a time. They knew well enough that somewhere a 'short' had occurred, that is, somewhere the two kinds of electricity, negative and positive, had jumped together. And when that happens, except in the right places, all sorts of mischief follow. Well, the engineers examined the machines, the fuse boxes, the wires. But they found nothing to account for the breakdown, and when they had repaired the damage, once again the lights sprang up and the machines began to hum. There was nothing wrong with the system. What, then, had caused the failure? A curious discovery was made. Out in the open fields a couple of dead crows were found. They were lying right under the electric wires, and it was clear that the two crows had been killed by the electric current. What had happened was this. The two crows had settled down on the electric wires for a rest. One of them perching on the negative wire and the other on the positive wire. Of course, as long as they kept to their own wire nothing happened, because the electric current just ran quietly and harmlessly through their bodies. But they didn't remain quiet. Some difference of opinion arose between them. You know how it is when you feel in a quarrelsome mood, anything will give you a start to a quarrel, and I suppose that is how the crows felt. One of them started quite innocently, 'This 'ere 'lectricity's no good.'

'Oh, isn't it?'

'No, not a bit! My mother's old black feathers are more use.'

'Go on with you, this 'lectricity lights the town and cooks the dinners.'

'Cooks the dinners! I like that. Why there's no heat at all in these wires; they couldn't warm a baby crow's cold toes?'

'Oh, couldn't they?'

'No, they couldn't?'

'Then they could!'

'Then they couldn't!'

And so the dispute grew hot and strong, until at last the crows got so angry that they wanted to peck each other, and leaning over they both cried out together 'You take that!' Their beaks banged sharply together, and that was the end of them, for the positive and negative currents now flew together through their joined beaks and both the foolish birds fell down dead. In addition the fuse box fired, the current was cut off, and all the darkness and idleness followed that I have told you about.

You see, the electric current could do the crows no harm as long as they kept apart, it was when they pecked at each other that the trouble began. It was just like that nasty little affair you had with Bob the other day. Certainly, he was rude to you, but if you had just kept quiet and hadn't been rude to him, he would have cooled down, and the quarrel would never have happened. Bad tempers do no harm, or very little, until they meet, but as sure as two boys, each with a bad temper, meet, then look out! It is the same with temptation. Temptation does no harm until we join up with it. It is when temptation and the boy unite that mischief comes. Jesus once said, 'The prince of this world (*i.e.* Satan) cometh, and hath nothing in me.' No answer from Me, no contact, you see. The positive and the negative currents couldn't meet. That was the secret of our Lord's sinless life, and that seems to me to be the true secret of every happy and helpful life. Don't join up with temptation, or bad temper, or meanness, or rudeness. Leave them to themselves. They can't hurt you until you yourself give them the chance.

The Christian Year.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Things that are excellent.

'That ye may approve the things that are excellent.'
—Ph 1¹⁰ (R.V.).

Such is St. Paul's prayer for those whom he loves, whom, as he has just said, he has in his heart; and it is a beautiful prayer, inspiring in substance and almost rhythmical in form—so much so indeed that a modern poet has taken it for the title and refrain of one of his poems. Here is one stanza in which he enumerates some at least of the things that are excellent:

The grace of friendship—mind and heart
Linked with their fellow heart and mind;
The gains of science, gifts of art;
The sense of oneness with our kind;

The thirst to know and understand,
A large and liberal discontent;
These are the goods in life's rich hand,
The things that are more excellent.

Instead of enumerating the things that are excellent, we shall consider some of the obstacles which are likely to hinder us from approving them.

They may be summed up in two proverbs: 'The good is the enemy of the best,' and 'The best is the enemy of the good.'

1. *The good is the enemy of the best.*—This is the obstacle which St. Paul had to meet. He had himself seen the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, but when he tried to make his fellow-countrymen see it, how difficult it was! They were so sure of the goodness and of the Divine character of the revelation that they had already: had they not the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the law, the great promises, the fathers, the Christ after the flesh? What more could there be? They were so proud of the glory which shone on the face of Moses, that they were blind to the glory on the face of Christ, and St. Paul had to remind them that what was made glorious was not glorious when compared with the glory that excelleth (2 Co 3¹⁰). They seemed to him like people who were so charmed with the glory of the moon and the glory of the stars that they were blind to any greater glory in the sun.

We ourselves are faced with the same danger in two different respects.

There can be no doubt that the outstanding factor of our time is that we have come to realize, as never before, how closely linked every part of the world is to every other, how absolutely one all mankind is, what a task it is to gather together into one the children of God that are scattered abroad. This is partly due to the War, which showed that all continents were affected by and drawn into a conflict between two European nations; but it is mainly the effect of the marvellous discoveries of science, which have made it possible for words spoken in an English pulpit to reach India or America as quickly as they reach those present in the church.

Now in the light of this factor two visions have been granted us. The first is the vision of a reunited Catholic Church, of all Christians as members of one organized body, with a common worship in which all can unite, where there shall be no rivalry between group and group, but all shall co-operate in trying to make

the kingdoms of the world to be the kingdoms of Christ.

At the same time statesmen have seen the vision of a League of all the nations of the world, each recognizing the rights of every other, and all co-operating to make peace prevail throughout the world, to substitute reason for force.

Both, surely, visions of what is excellent, but in both we may be blinded to their excellence by the goodness of what we have. We owe so much to our own Church, that we may easily ignore other sides of the truth, and lose a true sense of proportion as to what is primary, what only secondary, what is essential to real unity, and what are the limits within which diversity can be permitted or even encouraged and welcomed, when, that is, we shall all feel ourselves so truly members of one another that, in Shelley's phrase, we shall find

difference sweet, where discord cannot be.

Nor is the danger less on the political side: we are so proud of our national characteristics, of our steady growth into an ordered freedom, of our high standard of law and justice, that we may easily regard England as the sole arbiter of what is right, and be slow to respect the rights of other nations, and to look out for the contributions which they have to make to a common humanity, slow to believe in an ideal of unity, which shall in this sphere also make

difference sweet, where discord cannot be.

2. *The best is the enemy of the good.*—Let us apply this to our religion.

We Christians are convinced that we have the best, that Christ's revelation of God's character is the highest possible, that it touches the deepest instincts of human nature, that it is capable of bringing blessing to all mankind. But that faith carries in itself the danger that we shall be blind to what there is of excellence in other religions, that we shall see no good in them, that we shall despise them and so hinder rather than help our missionary efforts.

To take one instance from China, from the sympathetic account of the chief Chinese religions by our Oxford Professor of Chinese. Here are a few points which stand out.

The central act of their religion is the worship of ancestors, the outcome of filial piety: surely a germ out of which might spring a very real and affectionate worship of the Father of all. The unit round which their daily life revolves is the family: what splendid Churchmen they would make, when

once realizing the Church as the one human family. The virtue which ranks highest in Confucian teaching is sincerity, the very virtue which St. Paul treats as the result of approving the things that are excellent, 'that ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ.' And what joyousness of worship finds utterance in this phrase from the prayer which the Emperor used to offer to the Supreme Being—'As swallows rejoicing in the spring, we praise Thine abundant love.'

We have indeed to widen, to deepen, to complete all these elements of truth by carrying to them the fullness that is in Christ, but meanwhile, as they are, we need to recognize, to respect, and in some ways to learn from them. It was a saying of George Herbert's, 'If a priest would be respected, he must respect,' and this is true of religions. If Christianity would be respected, it must respect all that deserves respect in other faiths.

Think what an example St. Paul himself set us in this matter: we need not look beyond the few chapters of this short Epistle to the Philippians to find many instances.

He was in prison and could no longer preach the gospel, but his friends brought him word of what was happening in Rome. There were many speaking the Word of God, some indeed doing it out of envy or strife, nay, actually wishing to add affliction to himself in his bonds! Yet he sees something which is excellent, and which he can approve, 'in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice' (1¹⁸).

Again, he had counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus (3⁸). He was sure that God had given to Jesus the name that is above every name, that in that name every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (2¹⁰), that in Him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden (Col 2³). Yet he seems afraid that his converts will be blind to excellence in the heathen world around them. How wide his appeal to them is! *Whatsoever* things are true, *whatsoever* things are honourable, *whatsoever* things are lovely, *whatsoever* things are of good report (or gracious), if there is *any* virtue (and he uses the common word of Greek moral philosophy), if there is *any* praise (such, for instance, as the city might bestow on a benefactor), think on these things, take account of them (4⁸). They all come from God, they all lead Christward, they are all worthy of respect.

Or once more in his own life, what discontent of anything short of the highest! how his heart is set

on excellence! 'I count not myself yet to have apprehended: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'

Such, then, is St. Paul's precept and example. Prove, recognize, respect, approve, reverence all that is excellent. Let no pride in what is good in our privileges or in our life blind our eyes to what is best: let not the best make us despise anything that has any mark of excellence upon it, for all such has Christ's mark upon it and will lead us to understand yet more the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.¹

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

An Ideal and its Ground of Assurance.

BY THE REVEREND CANON D. S. GUY, B.D.,
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'The just shall live by his faithfulness. . . . The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.'—Hab 2^d 14.

Here are two extremely arresting statements found among other striking ones, in a short book called after a practically unknown prophet, Habakkuk. Apparently he was a prophet of the Exile, and a contemporary of Jeremiah, and had literary gifts. This is all we can postulate about him personally. But his book will repay study, and he has left a decided mark in history. Moreover, the earlier of these two verses became one of the bedrock truths of Christianity and is quoted more than once by St. Paul (Ro 1⁷, Gal 3¹¹), who, however, used the Greek version, and wrote: 'The just shall live by his faith,' and based on it his teaching about the simple act of faith, by which the sinner becomes justified before God. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews quotes it also from the same version, though in his mind the words have the fuller meaning they had in Habakkuk's, viz. 'The just shall live by or in his faithfulness.'

If you read the earlier verses of Habakkuk, you will find that you are face to face with a prophet whose lot is cast in the midst of cruel tyranny and wrong, which he finds almost impossible to reconcile with his belief in God's love and goodness; with one who 'feels that revelation is baffled by experience, and that the facts of life bewilder a man who believes in the God whom earlier prophets have declared to Israel,' and who, though stunned

¹ Walter Lock, *Oxford Sermons*, 34.

by 'the great disorder which God permits to fill the world,' yet refused to lower his ideal hopes for the world, or to abandon his faith in, and faithfulness towards, the God of his fathers. It is the old, ever-baffling problem of Sin and Evil, constituting a problem of exquisite pain to Habakkuk, yet not dislodging him from his position of confidence in the over-ruling providence of God.

In this second chapter—and there are only three—we see him, having launched his sad complaint and his passionate appeal to God, mounting his watch-tower, and listening for God's answer. That answer is that the vision Habakkuk waits for is a true vision, though it tarries. Therefore, he must wait patiently for it. In due time—which is God's time—it will arrive. 'Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not delay.'

Meanwhile the just man will continue to live by his faith, his faithfulness, his constancy of reliance upon God and of co-operation with God. Faith in the Bible is not mere belief, but a venture made in alliance with God. It is 'the spirit of adventure consecrated to its highest end.' And what the vision, the ideal, the longed-for solution was, is told by v.¹⁴:

'The earth shall be filled,' etc.

It is a grand thing in life to possess a great and lofty ideal or ideals; in other words, it is good advice to 'hitch your waggon to a star.' Nothing is sadder in life than to see young men and women renounce early ideals, and rest content to tolerate wrong and evil, which before they would have scorned and resisted.

That is a far-reaching admonition of Schiller's, 'Reverence the dreams of thy youth.' The halo which surrounds certain things in the eyes of the young should be carefully cherished. Young ideas, young hopes, young confidences, young reverence for great men, young enthusiasms over favourite books, all these are precious heirlooms. It is a costly moment when any one pawns his youthful reverence for woman, or for his own sacred personality, and its only proper fulfilment in dedicating body, soul, and spirit to God and to His service.

Emerson said, 'When you shall say, "I renounce—I am sorry for my early visions," then dies the man in you.' So Habakkuk's glorious ideal that—'the earth shall be filled,' etc., sustained him even when things looked blackest, and he sustained his hopes by patient loyalty to God. As we know well, Habakkuk was not destined to see the fulfilment of the vision so ardently cherished, but his very faithfulness to it helped to bring it about;

and the New Testament, which does tell of its accomplishment, is bound up with Habakkuk's record and words.

There we see Someone in the line of succession to Habakkuk taking His stand on the same faith in God, and not only declaring that the time has come for the vision to be fulfilled—the vision Habakkuk was bidden to wait for—but also in His own person fulfilling Habakkuk's ideal.

And it is interesting in the case of Jesus to recall how, as a boy, He had entertained the same inspiring ideal as Habakkuk, and had never subsequently renounced the dreams of His youth. His earliest recorded words, when only twelve years old, announce His devotion to the same ideal. Then later, when grown to full manhood, we watch Him in the Gospels working hard to accomplish it. 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,' and this was what they were working at, the fulfilment of Habakkuk's vision.

And because He Himself was Man, and had come to set up His Father's Kingdom among men, He had to associate with Him other men in His emprise. Early in the Gospels we find Him doing this. He sees certain fishermen. He will detach them from their present calling, to attach them to Himself and to a higher one. Instead of labouring to fill men's mouths, they shall henceforth labour for men's souls. Instead of toiling to fill their nets and their pockets, they shall be engaged in filling God's Kingdom. So He bids them to a nobler toil, a more stirring adventure, and worthier ambitions, with promise of infinitely more satisfying results: 'Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men.'

And the way He trained and fitted these men for their new vocation was by imbuing them with His ideal, or, since He Himself embodied His ideal, by bringing to bear the impact of His sacred personality upon them, till they gradually looked through His eyes, desired His desires, and laboured for His ideals.

We see the importance of having noble ideals. Thank God, He has given us a clear standard by which to judge them. Every one of us can measure our hopes and ideals by those of Jesus Christ. If we feel He would share our wishes, approve our choice, co-operate in our aims, then we may be sure the ideal is high and holy. If not, it is no ideal or hope for a Christian man or woman.

To His Church, and to us as members of it, is committed the task of carrying to a successful completion the work to which He summoned those early disciples. Some of us will be familiar

with the suggestive parable or allegory of the conversation between Jesus and the Archangel Gabriel after the Ascension. Gabriel is looking with awe at the wounds in the hands and feet of the Ascended Lord, and says: 'Master, you have suffered.' Jesus answers, 'Yes, Gabriel, I have suffered.' Gabriel continues, 'And, Master, you have died.' 'Yes, Gabriel, I have died.' 'But, Master,' replied Gabriel, 'what have you done to secure that the cause for which you have suffered and died shall prosper and be brought to a final issue?' Jesus says, 'I have instructed Peter, and John, and James, and others, and told them to carry it forward, and tell others about it, that they in their turn may spread it yet wider.' Then, after a pause, Gabriel, who is not so confident about men's trustworthiness, says, 'But, Master, suppose they do not do it. Suppose Peter denies you again; suppose the love of John and James waxes faint; and suppose others of your disciples forsake you as before, what then?' '*Nothing then, Gabriel, I am trusting them.*'

Surely those words should sound in our ears. Is it to be wondered at that the religion of One whose whole life was one of faith in God, or who was so marvellously ready to trust His few chosen disciples, should express one of its basic truths in the short statement, 'The just shall live by faith'? On the other hand, what a pathetic thing it is to prove disloyal to a trust! Jesus looks to you and me to be fishers of men, to be extending His Kingdom, to be fulfilling Habakkuk's ideal, that 'The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.'

Is that not something which makes life worth living? Is not that a higher aim than wealth or power or pleasure?

To help to fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of God, and to do it chiefly by living a consistent Christian life, for Christianity is a thing caught rather than taught, though it needs to be both—that is a high calling indeed. 'O Lord, by these things men live;' yes, it is by his faithfulness in these things that a man can live the life which alone is worthy to be called Life, the life of which the New Testament speaks when it says, 'The just shall live by faith.'

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 TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Tragic Failure.

'Sleep on now, and take your rest.'—Mt 26⁴⁵.

By precept and example the Bible seeks to impress upon us the great seriousness of life, and

points out the tragic possibility of failure and irreparable loss which is the underside of its privileges. Just as the lightship or the burning flare is placed in the vicinity of a wreck to warn navigators of the nearness of danger, that they may steer clear of it, so along the track of life which the Bible outlines with such saving clearness are placed many warning flares in the shape of lives which have somehow failed of the grace of God. If we rightly receive their warning, and seek to avoid the causes of their undoing, we shall be doing something at least to fulfil the implicates of that grace which comes to us by Jesus Christ, the grace which co-operates with every honest and sincere endeavour of ours unto certain victory.

One of the clearest and loudest warnings which reach us is that of the failure of the men who during His lifetime were closest to Christ in privileged intimacy. They, above all men, should have known the inwardness of His prophetic statements regarding His own end, and the imminence of the hour. And they, more than any others, ought to have been lifted above anything like failure at the time when He most needed them.

How truly human is Jesus in His longing for the watchful presence of those who have been awakened into responsive affection by His love. And how pathetic and tragic is it that in that hour, when all was darkest and hardest, He should be disappointed. In His loneliness and isolation, three times He came to the men to whom He had accorded the high honour of watching with Him, as though to refresh His heart by fellowship with them, and three times they failed Him.

What a failure! And what a heart-piercing rebuke! as in that hour of victory, which was so soon to look like utter defeat, He said to them, 'Sleep on now! The hour of your great opportunity and of my great need has gone, never to return.'

They have missed the golden chance of ministering to His need; and at the same time of acquiring a knowledge of Him which the future would never hold for them. For the future, however carefully guarded, never atones nor makes up for the neglect of past days. For all time these men are not what they would have been, had the hour found them ready and alert with the keenness of a warm love to their Lord.

In what did their failure really consist?

We do not find a mother going to sleep when the doctor has told her that the sick child's life hangs by a thread. We do not find the anxious watcher, to whom the flicker of a loved one's eyelid is

significant, going to sleep. Love breeds a vigilant anxiety. Affection's head always wears an uneasy crown. These men failed because their love was not keen enough to interpret Christ's words, and to recognize that their hour, like His, had come.

The history of most failures is the history of unrecognized and neglected opportunities. The disguise of the commonplace tests both our powers of perception and our readiness of action. The tragedy of many lives is that its truly high hours come and go without evoking any semblance of recognition on our part. In business, in politics, in friendship—indeed, in all the realms in which men live their lives, this tragedy is being frequently enacted. And to it is traceable how much of the world's sadness and unavailing regret? For instance, could anything be more pathetic than the case of one who has been awakened by the rude hand of death, to see how he has for ever lost the opportunity of repayment and response to a love which has enriched his life, but which he has always taken as a sheer matter of course?

There is hardly any experience so bitter as that of waking out of self-indulgent slumber to find that some supreme opportunity has been for ever lost. For conscience, with unerring instinct, invariably points out the secret cause of the costly absorption. We see, when it is too late, the real inwardness of the call of Christ and of the offer of privileged service which He made to our undiscerning and unready hearts.

We awaken to our loss, for Christ loves us too well to have it otherwise. We almost always come to know what might have been, had we but been wakeful and ready in our love to Him. The influence which our courageous word might have exerted; the young life which might have been rescued from unspeakable sin; the joy which our gift might have brought to some weary toiler; the soul which might have been saved had we but accepted the privilege extended to us—all life's 'might have beens' sooner or later come back to us, and unite in speaking our bitter condemnation—'Sleep on now, and take your rest.' We get to know, when it is too late, that Christ has been asking us to watch with Him, and that we have preferred our ease.

Of no other love but His can it be truly said that it 'surpasseth knowledge.' That is to say, that knowing all there is to know of a man's weakness and defection, He still trusts Him and believes in the possibility of a future brighter and better than the past has been. This alone explains the further invitation He extends to the awakened and shame-

faced band in the garden—'Rise, let us be going.' Here is the confidence of a great love. They have failed Him only an hour ago, but He refuses to regard that hour as their best. So He opens up the opportunity which shall restore to them their lost self-respect, and win them to confident and close following, in almost the same terms as He had used when they rose from the supper and went toward the garden of His sorrow and their shame. 'Rise, let us be going.' It is as though He says, 'You have failed here, and the opportunity you have lost will never recur. But I offer you another one.'¹

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The World Drama.

'Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not: and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren.'—Lk 22³¹⁻³² (R.V.).

Peter did not fall for lack of warning. More than once our Lord told him what would happen. But the warnings fell on absolutely deaf ears. The reason for Peter's neglect of these repeated warnings was twofold. First of all, he had complete confidence in his own courage. He was by nature a strong and forceful personality, and he honestly believed he could stand up to any menacing peril without flinching. And, secondly, he was so entirely and completely devoted to Jesus that the very idea of defection and cowardice seemed wildly and absurdly impossible. For his love for Jesus was, in very truth, the master-passion of Peter's life.

This passage contains our Lord's final warning to this impulsive but devoted disciple of His. It was spoken in the Upper Room on the night in which He was betrayed and after the Supper. Coming events had cast their shadow over the mind of Christ. And, perhaps, the deepest shadow of all was cast by the thought that there was treachery in the inner circle of the Apostolate amongst the men whom He had called His friends. 'Behold,' He had said, with a breaking heart, 'the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.' He felt the Tempter was present in that quiet room. 'Simon, Simon,' said the Master, using the old name of His disciple's unregenerate days, 'behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat.'

We shall best understand that phrase 'asked to

¹ J. S. Holden, *Life's Flood-Tide*, 152.

have you,' or, as the R.V. margin puts it, 'obtained you by asking,' by turning to the first chapter of Job, where Satan is represented as asking God's permission to put Job to the test. And so here he is represented as asking God's permission to put the Twelve to the proof, and he undertakes to prove that at bottom the best of His disciples is but a Judas at heart. 'Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you that he might sift you as wheat'—that he may prove you are not wheat at all, but worthless chaff. He asked for *all* the disciples. But chiefly did the Tempter concentrate his attack upon Peter, because he was the natural leader of the Twelve—the future leader of the Christian Church. If he could only make Peter his captive, he might bring Christ's work to naught.

But that is not the whole of the picture. If Jesus had said that Satan had asked to have Peter to sift him and had left it there, implying that Peter had only his own strength to rely upon in his fight against Satan, there could have been but one end to Peter's story. His life's barque would have sunk like lead in the stormy waters. But the picture is this. Satan on the one side tempting Peter, and on the other Jesus praying for him. That alters the case. There may be failure and defection and cowardly denial in front of him, but there cannot be irretrievable ruin. Temporary eclipse there might be, but not final failure. The plotting Satan is no match for the praying Christ. In forecasting the history of this disciple of His, Jesus sees beyond the failure recovery and restoration. 'Do thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren.'

There is always Satan seeking to have us. Sometimes he works upon our own evil natures. For it is a plain and undeniable fact that we are born with a certain bias to evil. The dice seem loaded against us from the start. This is not to deny that we are born with a certain original goodness too—a certain capacity for love and purity, a certain hunger for God. But the baser instincts are the more clamorous and imperious. It takes effort and struggle to be good. It takes no effort at all to be wicked. But we keep and win virtue only at the point of the sword. It may be that our fleshly lusts are so strong because they get so long a start over the aspirations of the soul. They assert themselves as soon almost as life begins, but it takes time before the soul awakes. Anyhow, there these baser instincts are, clamorous and insistent. And Satan seeks to have us by appealing to them. That is how he appeals to youth—he

attacks them through their physical appetites. And, in case after case, he gets them.

Sometimes he seeks to get men by seductions that appeal to them from without. Perhaps this is not really another method, but just another aspect of the same method. Our baser instincts might remain quiescent were they not excited and inflamed. On the other hand, seductions from without would cease to be dangerous were there no base instincts within to which they could appeal. It is just a case of the powder and the match. The inflammable stuff is there in all our natures, and the temptations of the world outside supply the match. Temptations to evil abound in these days. Never were the incitements to folly and sin more numerous and more shameless and more insistent than now. And much of our literature is poisonous, often clever and brilliant, but full of peril to the moral life.

And Satan works not only upon men's passions, he works also upon their fears. When he cannot wheedle and seduce men into evil, he bullies them into it. And it is none the less Satan that does it that he uses as his instruments companions in shop and office, and sometimes members of the same household. It was by playing on his fears that he got momentary hold of Peter. For fear he might be put in the dock side by side with Jesus, he denied that he even knew Him. And, for fear of the gibes and insults of foolish companions, men deny Him still.

Satan is amazingly busy in our world. There is no one immune from his wiles and his assaults. He desires to have us all that he may sift us as wheat. But what gives us hope is that we see not simply Satan desiring to have us, but we see also *Jesus praying for us*. If there is an evil and destructive power at work in our world, there is also a saving and redeeming power. This transfigures the entire prospect. Satan doesn't get it all his own way. Jesus Christ is also at work. He works by means of the sacred influence of the home. He works by means of Church and school. And sometimes He seems to dispense with means altogether, and to work directly on the human heart, as He did in the case of John Bunyan—when, as Bunyan was playing tip-cat on the Sunday, he seemed to hear a voice, and with the eyes of his understanding saw the Lord Jesus looking down upon him with displeasure. In all kinds of ways Jesus pleads with men, and by means of holy memories and the warnings of conscience comes between them and Satan's temptations. From one point of view, it is fatally easy for men to fall.

And yet, from another point of view, it is difficult for a man to get past the seeking love of Christ. Satan desires to have us, but the mighty Son of God is making supplication for us.

What is true of the individual man is true also of the *corporate life of the world*. Satan desires to have it. The evil power seeks assiduously to gain control. He does it by stirring up suspicion and ill-will between the various classes within a nation, and by sowing seeds of discord and strife between the nations of the world. Consider the state of things within our own borders—how again and again we are cursed by industrial strife, how suspicion and ill-will between employer and employed threaten to bring this land of ours to the dust. And consider the state of things on the international stage. Greed, selfishness, and aggressive ambition are sowing seeds of discord amongst the nations. Militarists still preach their exploded doctrine that the best way to secure peace is to prepare for war. Europe seethes with the restlessness of fear. And all nations seem to be busy building partition walls against one another, and every such wall is a further cause of irritation and friction and possible strife. The world's sky is black with menacing clouds. As we think of the sinister forces at work we should despair of this world if we could see nothing but scheming diplomats, and militarists ever plotting for larger armaments, and chemists in secret preparing deadly gases—if we could see nothing but the jealousies and suspicions which exist between the nations.

But we see something else. We see Jesus making supplication for this perverse and wayward world which yet He loved so well as to die for it. If the Devil is active seeking to destroy it, Jesus is active seeking to save it. He is working through every peacemaker who tries to foster the spirit of mutual goodwill and trust; He is working through the League of Nations, which seeks to substitute law and reason for the ordeal of battle; He is working through His Church, ever proclaiming the great truth of the Fatherhood of God. And in many another way unseen of us He works upon the minds and consciences of men. *Jesus is making supplication for us*. And it is the realization of that that keeps us from despair.

And we cherish the same great hope for our world. We do not close our eyes to the evil influences that are at work, nor do we shut our ears to the sounds of dissension and strife. But we refuse to believe that the world is rushing to destruction. The power of evil is limited, the ultimate triumph rests with God.¹

¹ J. D. Jones, *The Inevitable Christ*, 125.

ARMISTICE SUNDAY.

The Unknown Grave and the Unknown Soldier.

'So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab. . . . And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.'—Dt 34⁶.

Here, in the text, is the unknown grave of the Known Great; one of the foremost men of history, one of the outstanding figures of all human record: one of whom we know more than of any man of his time, both personally and by implication of his achievement. Emil Reich, the well-known Orientalist, said once, 'They are trying now to make us believe that Moses was a myth, that he is not an historical figure: but remember this—the great pivot of history is personality. Behind every great movement of the human race there stands a great man. Call him what you like, all history is a lie, unless behind the beginnings of the story of Israel, its development and amazing persistence on the basis of monotheism, there stands some immense personality like Moses.'

The text, then, speaks to us of the unknown grave of the Known Great man. But to-day we have become strangely familiar with a new portent—the known and almost venerated grave of the unknown *common* man. In an article in an American periodical on the 'Unknown Soldier,' the writer says: 'Within the span of not many months I have stood beside the graves of three "Unknown Soldiers"—one buried on the slopes of Arlington, in Washington, one who rests beneath the stone flags of Westminster Abbey, and one buried in the middle of the swirling traffic of the Place de l'Etoile, in Paris. Italy also has her *milite ignoto*, and doubtless others lie in other lands, whose troops took part in the Great War. Even making all allowance for the laws of imitation and the herd spirit which govern so much of our life to-day, this widespread honouring of the unknown is a novel and remarkable phenomenon.'

Heretofore throughout history it has always been the great leader who has symbolized a cause, or a movement or an aspiration. In the century that has elapsed, between the placing of the body of Napoleon beneath the dome of the Invalides and the burying of the unknown *poilu* beneath the Arc de Triomphe, there has occurred one of the mightiest revolutions that man's thought has ever known. It has come, this honouring of the symbolic unknown dead, to be a cult. The first thing that a distinguished foreigner must do on visiting the countries of these canonized Unknown

is to go and place a wreath on the tomb, though the visitor himself may have nothing to do with the War, nor need the visit have the remotest connexion with anything military.

In literature also the common man has become the hero. Rarely now does a serious drama depict a protagonist who by any stretch of the imagination can be called a great character. In fiction we have abandoned 'Vanity Fair' to mingle with the drab and narrow inhabitants of 'Main Street.' Truly, there has been nothing like it in the history of the world before. History has kept its monuments, its dedications, its memorial odes for its Duke of Wellington, and its Nelsons and Drakes, its 'Adonais' for its Keats, its posthumous honours for its Miltons, its Shakespeares, its Lincolns, and its Gordons. Go to Rome and you will find ancient Israel commemorated and symbolized not in the mouldering stone of some helot recently delivered from the slavery of Egypt, but in the imperishable marble of Michel Angelo's 'Moses.' Go to Paris and you will find Napoleon the Great lying beneath the immense dome of the Invalides, as symbolical of the early nineteenth century: but the 'Unknown' lying beneath the Arc de Triomphe, as the symbol of the early twentieth century. Look at it how you will, it is a very striking and undoubtedly significant fact.

Men have died in battle before, and been praised and forgotten. But this man will never be forgotten, as long as Westminster Abbey endures. He is not himself: he is a multitude, literally, that no man can number. He is not merely a million British; he is ten million *men*.

'It may yet be that the dead will save us *again*,' as a writer said at the dedication of the Cenotaph—to echo their cry, whatever politicians may do or may not do: 'This shall never happen again.' That is true. But that is not all the truth. Vitally important as that is, there are deeper things still.

There is more here than a hatred and repudiation of war. Death is familiar to us—so familiar that commonly we think very little about it. But this multitudinous death, this wiping out of a whole generation, has made us think, as never before, not only of the causes and uselessness of the holocaust itself, but of the significance of the generation that has gone. Has it gone? What do we mean by gone? Does it really matter? What *is* a generation? And a new sense of the worth of humanity—of the essential, intrinsic, inalienable worth of personality—is rising above that vast pyre and is duly symbolized in the

'Unknown Soldier.' It is a new and unique way of saying that the common soul has found itself.

Now materialism would never have made that discovery. War would never have revealed a spiritual value of such fundamental and revolutionary moment—though it has helped us to see it, and though the world has done it lip-service for generations. It is essentially and primarily—yes, primarily—a religious value; not a mere social change but a spiritual revolution. It is Christ who discovered the unknown soldier.

But this is not really a new thing: it is a very old thing: as old as the teaching of Christ. It is only a newly recognized thing. 'Christianity has not failed: it has never really been tried.' Always to get things right, we must get back to Jesus and the values of Jesus. Sometimes He is represented as a sort of Social Reformer extolling the virtues of the poor and championing the poor against the rich. Jesus held that it is difficult to be rich: but He never championed the poor against the rich. He championed the *man in himself*. Once the Pharisees brought a woman to Jesus and made their accusation against her, expecting to catch Him in a dilemma of the Law: hoping that if He championed her against the Law, by the Law they might condemn Him. To their confusion and her surprise, He did not mention the Law: He did not champion her against anything: He championed her to herself. 'I do not condemn you: I believe in you: go and begin again.' When Christ spoke to the woman of Samaria some of the deepest spiritual truths ever spoken to a human being, He was preparing the way for the Unknown Soldier in Westminster Abbey. Jesus never said, 'Blessed is poverty': He said, 'Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.' No one surely is foolish enough to imagine that Jesus taught that every poor man is a good man. Clearly the meaning is that to be poor is to suffer less temptation to be influenced by spurious values, and to be in a position to see much more easily and clearly the new, essential values: that a man is 'worth' not what he possesses, but what he is, neither more nor less. And—this is the heart of it, that his worth as a man is enormous. 'There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over *one* sinner.' Such a thing was never heard in the world before Jesus: and would not even now be believed apart from Jesus. It is that and nothing less that makes the glory of the known grave of the Unknown.

One of the chief claims of Christianity, where it is really understood and given its opportunity, is that it lifts human personality to an entirely new

place in the thoughts and considerations of men. 'In a world, largely indifferent to children, Christ gave a new value to the child, that persists to this day.' He didn't pamper children. He just valued them. 'In an age which hated lepers and left them to rot, Christ stretched out His hand and touched them.' Hardly less to them than that their flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child was the amazing realization that He had found a value in them: and that the soul is the measure of the man. Christ touched the 'untouchables,' and they became men. He did not set class against class, because He recognized no distinction whatever in social values. The only differences He admitted were character or personality values. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free. The Jews crucified Jesus quite as much *for His new teaching about man* as for His new teaching about God.

Christianity opposes slavery, vice, opium, alcoholism, sweating, *not* because it is a repressive system, but because all these things threaten and debase and enfeeble *personality*: not because sin arouses the implacable wrath of God, but because it injures us. And there is a lack of riches which, as Christ saw, sets men free to think in terms of actual reality, just as there are riches and an extreme of poverty that prevent them from thinking and facing reality at all. For riches or poverty in themselves, Christ cared nothing. He was the enemy of both when either so fettered the mind and blinded the vision of a man as to prevent him realizing himself—and every other—as a son of God. There is a lot of loose talk about the brotherhood of man. There is only one sound and irrefutable basis for it—common sonship of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jewish theology knows nothing, or very little, of the worth of the individual. Its unit is always the nation. Even the great promises of the Old Testament to individuals—as to Abraham and Jacob—are always promises about the nation. In opposing the Pharisees, Christ was always up against the exclusive preferential nation idea. 'We have Abraham to our father.' Christ told them that names counted for nothing with God: and that the only ultimate human value is personality. It was not a question of Publican against Pharisee, but 'this *man* went down to his house justified rather than the other man.'

'And the woman *left her waterpot*, and went back to the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did"—that is, "one who knows me much better than I ever knew

myself, and has shown me things that I never dreamed about myself." He had given her a new value to herself, which was her unsuspected true value. Conversion is a reality. And it means many things, and the trouble about it is, that traditionally it has been made to mean only one narrow and conventional thing: but the basis of all that it means is this—our value to Christ.

'But that was a long time ago, and He is dead?' Then how do we explain this—that after knocking

at the doors of hearts and Churches for nearly two thousand years with His new values, only a few years ago He got into Westminster Abbey with one of the oldest and yet newest of His values. Every man, the Unknown: the Unknown crowned not with the tinsel glory of an adventitious and fading fame, but discovered at last and crowned at last with the inherent and inalienable immortality that belongs to all the sons of God.¹

¹ H. E. Brierley, *Life Indeed*, 175.

The Function of Religious Experience in Biblical Criticism.

BY THE REVEREND A. G. PAISLEY, M.A., B.A.(LOND.), EDINBURGH.

1. To one moving among the people with thought for their spiritual welfare, perhaps nothing is more impressive than the present tendency towards a fresh approach to Jesus Christ, manifested even in the most unexpected quarters. Time and again one comes across men to whom the expression of religious ideas and aspirations is not easy, breaking through the bonds of a long reticence to pay tribute, and add their quota, to this general tendency.

The same trend may be observed in the organized or semi-organized religious movements of the day. Whatever views one may hold concerning Barthianism, there can be no doubt that it is uttering a genuine and authentic call for a more definite expression of Christian truth. As Professor N. W. Porteous says, 'The Church to-day is suffering from the widespread neglect of theology, and Barth has done us the incalculable service of summoning us once more to the earnest consideration of the big central things of the Christian faith.'² In a different way and with a different emphasis, the ever-growing Oxford Group Movement, of which so prominent a feature is the pooling of the witness of its members concerning what Christ has done for them, is performing a similar service; while the renewed interest in the second birth, brought about by the insistent testimony of the twice-born, is a further indication of this same quest for Christ. Even the disruptive anti-God movement is a tribute to the importance of the challenge of Christ to the men of this generation.

The religious movements mentioned, and others

² THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, xliii. 342.

like them, appear to be attempts to examine Christian experience reflectively and to give it more definite expression than it now has. And behind these, it may reasonably be surmised, is just that body of nameless and inarticulate longings which are stirring the average lay mind of to-day. After all, the great need for theology which Professor Porteous so wisely stresses is real, simply because theology is the medium through which men give expression or assent to their reflectively assimilated experience of God in Christ. It is because the old theology, in some measure and in certain ways, ante-dates modern experience that the need is clamant for a re-statement of the faith once delivered to the saints.

One feature in all these movements is noteworthy. They are taking place within the Church itself. They are not schismatic or sectarian. Here again, we are convinced, is evidence of that solid background of inarticulate will towards Christ of which we have spoken. The widespread effort to achieve the external unifying of the Church of Christ in Protestant Christendom to-day is, rightly or wrongly, an endeavour to meet the needs of this temper, which is certainly no atmosphere in which mere sectarianism may thrive. Men to-day are a little tired of the analytical tendency of much of the religious thought of the immediate past, and are seeking more and more for a convincing synthesis of the claims of Christ which will afford them, in their whole being, relief from their present spiritual bewilderment.

To the Christian minister whose life is spent in