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In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

Keeping in Touch.

BY THE REVEREND WILLIAM ROSS, B.D.,
EDINBURGH.

'Let us draw near with a true heart.'—Heb 10²².

SOME time ago a teacher in a Sunday school spoke to her children about 'Communion,' and tried to explain the meaning of the word. Having explained it as clearly and fully as possible, she asked the children to put the meaning of it in their own words. Several answers were given, but one girl gave the perfect reply when she said, 'I think it is keeping in touch with Jesus.'

My subject then is 'Keeping in touch,' and (1) I would say keep in touch with your minister. John Ruskin says in one of his books that a minister should know every lamb in his flock as well as every sheep. They want to do so very much, but it is no easy matter, and young people can help very much. Ministers are busy people, and they hurry along the street at a great pace, and they often pass the little ones of their own congregation without seeing them. You, children, should not let them. Get as near to them as possible and look up and smile and salute them.

A minister in the west of Scotland met a lady on the street with her little nephew. He stopped, shook hands with the lady and spoke to her, but, being in a hurry, he was about to pass on without speaking to the boy. Robin was hurt and disappointed, and went forward and said, 'Mr. Weir, this is me.' Mr. Weir is now dead, but he told that story in the General Assembly long ago, and he told also how much pleasure that incident gave him and how careful he was afterwards to see and to smile to his young people on the street.

(2) Keep in touch with Jesus Christ. I read in a book recently that many a battle goes wrong and many a war is lost because soldiers get out of touch. The battles of our life often go wrong and the wars are lost because we do not keep in touch with Christ.

In the difficult and dangerous parts of the Alps climbers are roped to their guides. A young mountaineer once asked his guide that he might be unroped that he might climb by himself. The climb was dangerous and the guide was unwilling, but the youth was persistent in his request and the guide yielded and the rope was loosed and taken

off. For some time he got on well, but they came to a steep slope and his axe failed to hold and he slid down and down till he came to a bank of snow at the top of a precipice of bare rocks; here his course was stayed, and he hung in the balance for a moment, but fell over and was killed. Speaking of it afterwards, the guide said that if he had had hold of a thread at that moment he would have been saved, but he had hold of nothing and his life was lost. Boys and girls, life is safe always so long as you keep hold of Jesus Christ.

A mother once said to her little girl that prayer was just like speaking to God through a phone. The child thought that her prayers went through the phone. The family were about to move to another house, and the little girl was anxious about it and wanted to keep in touch with God, and the night before moving, she said in her evening prayer, 'God bless Daddy, God bless Mummy, God bless everybody, and please God our new phone number is 68432.' Childlike and innocent, but delightful to think that the little one wanted to keep in touch with God.

Not long ago when I was in London, a friend called for me to drive me through Richmond Park to Hampton Court. He was very happy, and the secret of it came out when during the drive he told me how he had come to know and love Christ and give himself to Him. One thing he said then I shall never forget: 'The strongest desire I have is that I might get nearer to God, I want to keep always in touch with Him.'

White Mice.

BY THE REVEREND D. M. HERCUS, B.A.,
BROOKLYN, WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND.

'Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.'—
1 Th 5²¹.

I wonder if any of you keep white mice as pets. I can remember all manner of animals that some of us used to keep as pets years ago in England. There were rabbits, both white and grey; doves, bantams, cats and dogs of course, white rats and guinea-pigs—wonderful animals, guinea-pigs, I suppose you know about them—if you hold them up by their tails their eyes drop out. Just you try one and see; it won't hurt him, because when you come to look for his tail you'll find he hasn't got one! All these we used to keep and play with, and—white mice.

I never had white mice myself, though I had rabbits and caterpillars and beetles, as well as a dog and some chickens when I was older, but I had a friend who had the most beautiful white mice, all in a big cage with a wonderful little treadmill wheel which they used to turn as they ran round and round in it. He had one so tame that he used to take it round with him in his pocket ; when the sums were hard in school it was a great comfort for him to be able to reach down into his pocket and feel wee Mickie there warm and happy, and to know that even the arithmetic lesson does not last for ever. Of course he had to be careful that teacher did not know ; for she was a lady and did not understand about mice.

Yes, white mice. I suppose some of the girls think it sounds very dreadful to make a pet of a mouse. The mice we generally see are such nasty, dirty, little beasts that we set traps to catch them because we think them so horrid. But *white* mice are entirely different. They are clean, whatever girls may say, beautiful to look at too, with their tiny pink ears, and their bright wee eyes, and their fine long tails. They would never make nasty holes and get into the bread tin and spoil every one's breakfast.

Do you know, in Edinburgh Castle they have a wonderful building called the Scottish National War Memorial, and round its walls there are carved memorials to all the brave men who fought and died for their country years ago. Nor are the animals forgotten either. There are carvings telling about them too—elephants, and donkeys, and horses, and even reindeer—they all 'did their bit.' The carvings are there to remind us of how they helped, and to show that we are thankful to them.

And—would you believe it?—among the animals carved there on the walls of the Temple of Scotland's pride there are—yes—white mice. Why were they put there? What could white mice do to help win the War? Let me tell you.

They are called 'The Tunnellers' Friends.' You see, it was sometimes necessary in the War to dig deep tunnels under the ground. When the men went down to dig them, sometimes the air was almost all used up ; it became what we call 'too stuffy to breathe,' and they were in danger of being poisoned by the little bad air that was left. So they used to take down with them one or two white mice in a cage. So long as the air was fresh the little chaps played in their cage. As soon as it began to get too thick and foul they felt ill and tired and stopped running about, and then the men

knew that it was time to stop digging and go up to the top of the ground until it was fresh and sweet again. The mice kept a look out for them against the bad air and gave them warning of the danger. And that is why there are white mice carved on the walls of the Scottish National War Memorial in Edinburgh. It shows what even a wee white mouse can do.

I think God wants us to be like white mice sometimes. I don't mean only that we should always be just as still and quiet as mice when we are in His House ; most of you are very good that way already. But also like them in keeping a sharp look out for 'bad air.' There are things which poison the air we breathe into our bodies so that we shall be ill if we breathe it too long. And there are also things which poison the air which our souls breathe so that they die if they breathe it too long. God wants us to be like the white mice, which always prefer the fresh air, and give warning when it gets bad. And when some one is poisoning the air our souls have to breathe by asking us to tell lies or say mean and dirty things or think mean and dirty thoughts, we must show them that we prefer fresh air for our souls, that we must have it, and will have nothing else. It is a fine thing to be one of God's wee white mice ; it means that we try all the time to obey Paul's advice to 'prove all things,' and 'hold fast that which is good' ; and it means that we do it for Jesus' sake.

The Christian Year.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Knowledge through Work.

'His servants shall do him service ; and they shall see his face.'—Rev 22^{3, 4} (R.V.).

Since Jesus stood in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth, the prosaic place of honest labour has become holy ground. Experience has taught us that there are certain fundamentals of character which cannot be learnt from pleasure or from pain, but only from work.

Miss Stoddart, in *Great Lives Divinely Planned*, writes of the historian John Richard Green, that his 'enthusiasm for historical study, which had dwindled during his first two years as an undergraduate at Jesus College, was revived by a course of lectures he heard from Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, afterwards Dean of Westminster. Writing in 1863 to congratulate Dr. Stanley on his engagement to Lady Augusta Bruce, the future historian thus acknowledged his debt : "I was utterly miserable

when I wandered into your lecture-room, and my recollection of what followed is not so much of any definite words as of a great unburthening. Then and after I heard you speak of work not as a thing of classes and fellowships, but as something worthy for its own sake, worthy because it made us like the great worker. That sermon on work was like a revelation to me. 'If you cannot or will not work at the work which Oxford gives you, at any rate work at something.' I took up my old boy-dream—history, I think I have been a steady worker ever since."

God's revelations are not reserved for those smaller and more definite acts of communion with Him which we call prayer. The larger parts of life are illuminated by His Presence. When we begin to realize that all our work is work for Him; that the work in the study, the office, and the shop may be His as truly as the ministry in the Church or the mission room, then we shall learn to expect such visits of encouragement and guidance as some great employer of labour now and again pays to his workpeople. At first, indeed, it seems as though such could never be so vivid or illuminating as the tokens of His Presence granted in prayer, but we soon learn that even the spiritual help which is given in prayer is given, indeed, that the work may be the better done.

It may be that as we have prayed we have experienced something like that which a friend of Bishop Moule described in such glowing terms. 'The glory and beauty of my Saviour's Person, the indescribable reality of His Presence both in me and around me, the absolute "all sufficiency" of His grace and power, the loveliness and attraction of His "perfect will," all shone upon me with a brightness of which the August sunshine seemed but a type and shadow.' It may be that we have known something like that, and, whilst the sense of it was strong upon us, there came a sudden summons to go off to some dull, prosaic duty, some work that we could not well postpone. It seems almost profane to disturb that Presence which is now so near us. But to us, as to the monk in the Legend, come the words:

Do thy duty; that is best—
Leave unto the Lord the rest;

and as we go forth in obedience his experience is ours. As the Bishop's friend expresses it: 'In a sense the glory passed away, as to special excitation. But in a sense, in a yet deeper sense, it abode, diffused among the experiences of life, and proving "its sober certainty of waking bliss" by its power

amidst these experiences to calm and purify and lift above the selfishness of the old life.'

But not only shall we take into our work the sense of that fellowship which has been our joy in prayer, for

Hadst thou stayed, I must have fled,

but we shall find in it, from time to time, what we may best describe as 'surprise visits,' *i.e.* special manifestations of His Presence such as He has again and again granted to His friends.

It was whilst Moses was watching his father-in-law's sheep that God was revealed to him. It was whilst Gideon was threshing his wheat that he saw the mysterious angel of the Lord watching his work. It was whilst Saul was seeking his father's asses that his future was first revealed to him. It was whilst Levi was at his business at the receipt of custom that the Lord appeared to him with the summons, 'Follow me.' It was whilst the disciples, St. James, St. John, and St. Peter, were busy washing their nets that they received that revelation of the Lord which led them to forsake all and follow Him. It was when the women were returning from the sepulchre, whither they had gone to anoint the Lord's body, that He met them.

Instances such as these might be multiplied from the experience of those who have had faith to look for them. Handel's account of the manifestation of the Divine Presence when he was at work on the 'Hallelujah Chorus'—'I did think I did see all heaven before me and the great God Himself'—is not strange to many an artist, many a writer, who, in some picture or poem afterward famous, has felt his heart burn within him, the sure sign of His Presence whose 'delight it is to be with the sons of men' whilst engaged in labour.

There are many illustrations of the words which may have been spoken by Christ, 'Lift the stone, and *there* thou shalt find Me. Cleave the wood, and I am there.' Of the many interpretations, that which refers them to the revelation of our Lord amidst humble duties seems to be most satisfactory. Neither the lifting of stones nor the cutting of wood is work of a specially interesting and lofty character, and yet all are at times engaged in such pursuits. The removal of a stumbling-block from the path of a friend; or of some difficulty in the way of a puzzled child; or the simpler tasks fulfilled by every teacher in making learning easier and pleasanter—these may be means by which the Lord will be found. From the witness of the Scriptures and Christian biographies, and from a comparison of the revelations made to those at work with those

made to such as were engaged in prayer or worship, we find that we are more likely to meet the Lord whilst pursuing our daily duty than whilst occupied in private devotion. The work may seem to be poor and dull by comparison, but the character of the work matters nothing provided it be 'in the Lord.'

We have cited these experiences simply to show that work as well as prayer offers a natural means of knowing the Lord—that so Christ has in the past *directly* revealed Himself. And what He has done He will continue to do. But the manner of His doing this will vary not only from age to age, but with the individual; for, here again, we must remind ourselves that the plain purpose of His revelation is that we should know Him. Now, an outward form would, we venture to think, be the least effective in reaching our spiritual consciousness. Naturally we should be so taken up with the external aspect as to be in danger of losing the spiritual message it was intended to convey. And so we may believe that, not only in our own time, but in the Apostolic Age, that form of revelation was uncommon.

Bishop Westcott, in his *Studies on the Risen Life of our Lord*, shows that even to the last the disciples 'knew the Lord only through the interpretation they put upon their experience. . . . Without patient obedience, without cheerful labour, without living insight, those to whom the Lord came would not have known Him. He would have been to them only as one mere chance wayfarer who had crossed their path. This is the uniform law. "The world beholdeth me no more, but ye behold me" is the final promise to the faithful. It was in vain that His brethren, in a moment of unbelief, bade Him manifest Himself to the world. From the world, which has not the will to obey or the eyes to see the true Christ, the risen Christ must be always hidden.' But, on the other hand, the eye of faith sees Him, and 'He is recognized not by His person, but by His working. The gift of success and the gift of refreshment are seen to belong to Him and to make Him known.' The gift of success! How often we are tempted to take it as the natural outcome of the work. We have laboured for it, taken every pains to secure it, and, therefore, it is natural that we should have it. It is our own doing, and the congratulations of our friends assume that it is. Or even if we do recognize that it is from the hand of Christ; if, like St. John on the sea of Galilee, we say when we see a result far beyond our expectation, 'It is the Lord'; yet, even then, we are not disposed to pursue the matter

further and to see what special revelation it carries with it, what further knowledge of Him we reach by it. And yet it is as a sign that it is given to us: a sign either of approbation of the methods we have adopted, or of encouragement that we may go further, or of teaching that as by a parable we may learn its spiritual counterpart. And as we dwell on it, ponder it, and consider its relation to ourselves, our families, or the Church, we learn what is meant by it, and through it gain a new knowledge of the Lord.

It is not otherwise when the work brings refreshment or failure. In the one case, we have a sense of the Lord working with us and imparting to us the joy that sustained Him in all that He did, and we feel that it is His law and appointment that work should bring life. In the other case we learn that failure is no necessary mark of disapproval; that, whilst it rightly leads to revision and careful consideration of principles and methods, it also reminds us that He whose work was perfect failed, failed in Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida. And so, taught by the Spirit of God, all our work becomes a canvas on which is worked in fuller and fuller measure the fact of Christ.¹

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION.

To whom do we Pray?

'When ye pray, say, Father.'—Lk 11² (R.V.).

It is not possible to get any clear idea of what prayer ought to be until we have discovered to Whom we address our prayers, and people sometimes think very strange things about the God to whom they pray. They have thought that He was the kind of person who would like numbers of animals to be killed in His honour; they have thought He might like human beings killed in His honour. Some people have even imagined that He wanted them to kill their own children in His honour.² In *Adventures of the Black Girl in her Search for God*, Mr. Shaw makes God say, 'Slay it here before me as a sacrifice; for I love the smell of newly spilled blood.'

But Mr. Maxwell in *Adventures of the White Girl in her Search for God* shows Mr. Shaw up as too literal. 'And so the white girl took her niblick and followed the dramatist into the forest in search of God. She also took her Bible with her in order that she might compare its outworn theories and superstitions with the truth which the dramatist would show her.

¹ G. H. S. Walpole, *Vital Religion*, So.

² A. Maude Royden, *Prayer as a Force*, 110.

' Before long they came to the place where the black girl had met the mamba.

' "Near here," said the dramatist, "you will find a false God who will be very angry if you do not at once kneel down and worship him. He will tell you to bring your favourite child and slay it before him as a sacrifice, for he loves the smell of newly spilled blood. If you say that you have no child, he will tell you to fetch your father and let him slay you."

' The white girl felt very angry when she heard this, and grasped her niblick firmly, intending to attack this cruel God when she got the chance.

' The dramatist beckoned her to follow him, and led her to a pile of rocks on which sat enthroned the God of whom he had been speaking. To her surprise there seemed to be a look of great sorrow and tenderness on the face of the God, and the white girl, whose heart was kind although her tongue was sharp, climbed up the rocks and asked Him what troubled Him.

' "I am sorrowful," He replied, "because My people make such sad mistakes about Me and because these wrong ideas make them do such cruel things. They even want to kill their children before Me, because they think it will show that they love Me even more than they love their children. People learn things very slowly, and can only grasp one new idea at a time. I am now going to teach them that the true God does not desire such things."

' The white girl looked round and saw an old man coming towards them, accompanied by a young man who appeared to be his son. The young man carried a bundle of wood and the old man had a large, sharp knife. When they were near the pile of rocks the old man took some stones and built an altar, laying the wood upon it. Then he suddenly seized his son and bound him and laid him upon the wood on the altar [*Gen. xxii.*].

' "What are you doing?" said the white girl.

' "I am going to sacrifice my son, my only son, Isaac," said the old man, and he lifted the knife to cut the throat of his son.

' And then the God spoke.

' "Abraham, Abraham!" He said.

' "Here I am," the man replied.

' "Do not lay hands on the lad, do nothing to him," said the God. "I know that you care for Me more even than you care for your lad; but I do not desire human sacrifice, I abhor it. If you wish to sacrifice, then sacrifice that ram caught by its horns in the brushwood."

' After Abraham and Isaac had gone away the

God said: "Now they will know that it does not please Me if they bring their children and slay them before Me as a sacrifice. Abraham *thought* that I had told him to sacrifice his son. Now he *knows* that I do not wish it. When they have fully learned that lesson I shall teach them that I take no pleasure in the sacrifice of animals, that I love kindness, and that the most acceptable offering is a life of obedience, and faith and love."

' "Well, you were quite wrong about *him*, at any rate," said the white girl to the dramatist.'

Mr. Harold Anson (in *Concerning Prayer*) describes some of the strangely conceived gods to whom people have made their prayers. He gives extracts from a book written by St. Ignatius. 'Consider the anger of God avenging this first *sin* [of Adam] on all the descendants of the first sinner: pestilence, war, famine, desolation of the earth; so many disasters, so many violent deaths, so many tears shed, so many crimes committed, so many children for ever deprived of the sight of God, so many souls cast into hell. What consequences and what chastisements for one single sin! . . . Ask yourself what this God is who punishes a single mortal sin in this manner.'

How could any one worship such a God? But to generations as far removed from us as we are from St. Ignatius many of our ideas of God will perhaps appear not less terrible and strange than the ideas just described.

But the knowledge that other people will turn with scorn from the shallowness, the meanness, the sordidness of our ideas, should only spur us to make the utmost effort to discover what God is really like; for we have not got very far yet. People think of Him, they have been taught to think of Him, as a God who delights in war; who even in war is strangely capricious and unjust. They say that 'God always takes the best,' when some brilliant young life, full of promise, is extinguished. Some one dies who does not think of himself or herself and therefore is likely to be in the way of a danger—which we have caused—and we say how capricious is God, who so often takes away the best!

When, therefore, we pray, we are apt to spend a great deal of time in telling God what He had better do, feeling by no means sure either of His wisdom or His power; we entreat Him to do it, and then we waste a good deal of strength in being anxious for fear that He will not. We have no assurance that He wants to do the best for us, nor have we any conviction that He knows what the best is, and the faith which brings the answer to prayer

becomes for these reasons a demand upon us both unreasonable and cruel. If God is really so capricious and irrational, for Him to ask us to have faith in prayer is most unreasonable, most cruel. It is not possible to have great faith in such a God.

Many people pray to one who seems more diabolical than divine. Their prayers go into the void, for this being whom they imagine is not there.

Do we perhaps pray to ourselves? Well, that is something. There is a divine spirit in us and we can achieve something by our soul's sincere desire: but the conquering power of a great faith is almighty in power and is only possible in proportion as we know and truly worship the God to whom we pray. Is not that what our Lord meant when He said, 'Ask in my name,' and—'When ye pray, say, Father'? If we who are evil and stupid know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more should our Father that is in heaven know and give them! Should we give them something lovely? That is what God is like: that is what He desires to do.

This is why we should continually seek to know more and more about God. Now we see through a glass very darkly, but some day, face to face. Now we know a little, but at last shall know even as we are known; and on the degree of our knowledge our faith depends. The faith which is required to make our prayer effective depends on knowledge. It is not knowledge, but it depends on knowledge. The difference between faith and superstition is precisely this, that faith depends on knowledge and superstition on ignorance. If we are going to make a leap we take a run; but if we run in the wrong direction the farther we jump the farther we are from our goal. Faith is a venture indeed. But its basis is reason. Let us reason as far as we can. Then, and only then, take the leap which we call Faith.

To believe what is not true is to become weak and powerless. Let us take an extreme example. If a man believes that he is God, he believes a lie. There are people who believe it. It is not an uncommon delusion among the insane. But such a belief does not bring power and freedom.

If we believe that there is a divine spirit within us, and that it is possible and natural for us to be in communion with the Divine—if we believe that, we find our faith gives us power, because it *is* faith—it is belief in Truth. Let us be sure that we are praying to a God who is our Father: that is the truth.

To what God do we pray? Let us purify our conception of God and be sure that it is as near

the truth as we can reach in these conditions of time and space: and then when we pray our prayer ascends to God and is answered.¹

WHITSUNDAY.

The Spirit of Joy.

'But the fruit of the Spirit is . . . joy.'—Gal 5²².

In the paragraph from which these words are taken the Apostle is drawing a contrast between life in the flesh and life in the Spirit. 'Flesh' must not be understood as if it meant just the physical substance of these bodies of ours. In the Apostle's use of it 'flesh' is not so much a material as an ethical and doctrinal term. It is the lower, baser, sinful side of this human nature of ours. But there is also a higher side. And between these two sides of our human nature there rages ceaseless war—'the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.'

That is true of every one. But this letter was written specifically to Christian people. And the mark of the Christian was that he had received the Holy Spirit and lived by His power. The Spirit, to the Christian man, was not simply some vague aspiration after higher things—it was the very life and power of God within him. But it was possible for men who professed to have received the Spirit to live in the sphere of the flesh.

'The works of the flesh . . . the fruit of the Spirit.' There is some significance in that variation of words: '*Works* of the flesh . . . *fruit* of the Spirit.' 'Works' suggests something made, produced, artificially fabricated. Works are not the offspring of life. Every *made* thing is dead. Man has been able to produce some marvellous things. We gaze with something like awe at the mighty buildings he erects. But, wonderful though his inventions and creations are, there is one thing he has never been able to create, and that is *life*. All his works—however vast and wonderful—are dead things. Cathedrals, locomotives, aeroplanes—they are all dead things. And that is why the Apostle uses the word of the effects of yielding to fleshly impulse. 'If ye live after the flesh,' he says in one place, 'ye shall die.' These works of the flesh which he enumerates here, 'fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery,' and so on, are the enemies of life, they are dead things and deadly things, and they carry the seeds of death within themselves.

But the '*fruit* of the Spirit,' and fruit is only found where there is life. An apple tree or a pear

¹ A. Maude Royden, *Prayer as a Force*, 111.

trec must be alive if it is to give golden fruit in the autumn. Now, the Spirit is just the life of God in the soul. The Spirit is a vitalizing power and, as a result, where the Spirit is there is fruit, and the presence of the Spirit is known by the fruit it produces: 'the *fruit* of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,' and so on.

The Apostle meant something also when he described the result of yielding to the flesh as 'works' (plural), and the issue of life in and by the Spirit as 'fruit' (singular). 'Works' are dead things, and there is no coherence or cohesion in dead things. The works of the flesh disintegrate the character. There is no unity in death. The man who yields to the flesh becomes the victim of various appetites and lusts—the *works* of the flesh.' But the 'fruit' of the Spirit—because all the virtues grow out of the presence of the Spirit like, let us say, a cluster of grapes on the same stem. It is not a case of the Spirit in one man revealing itself in *love*, and in another man in *joy*, and in another man in *kindness*, and in another in *self-control*. They all spring from the one life.

The fruit of the Spirit on which we want to concentrate attention is the one the Apostle mentions second, 'The fruit of the Spirit is . . . joy.' Without this mark of 'joy,' we haven't got the Spirit—at any rate, not in fullness. It is in this respect we modern Christians are so startlingly different from the Christians of the first century. Nobody, by any stretch of the imagination, could speak of us as a joyous people. Why is that?—for where the Spirit is really present there is an irrepressible gladness. There is only one conclusion—that our religious experiences have not been deep enough. We are much in the condition the disciples were in those days between Easter and Pentecost, when they kept themselves locked in the Upper Room for fear of the Jews. They had the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus to preach about, but they remained dumb. We are much like that. Christmas Day, Good Friday, Easter Day—we know all about the facts they commemorate. But there has not been a Pentecost in our experience. We have no sense of the Spirit as a triumphant power within us, and so, in face of a hostile world, we are despondent and distressed. Dr. Stanley Jones tells a story of a negro woman who, while the minister was unfolding the glorious gospel, kept shouting, 'Glory' and 'Hallelujah.' Some tried to make her keep quiet. 'I can't,' she exclaimed, 'for I's overcharged.' That was the condition of the disciples after Pentecost—they were 'overcharged,' and therefore irrepressible and

irresistible. 'To the discomfiture of every one they listened to false accusations in council halls, while their faces shone like those of angels; they departed from judgment halls with bleeding backs, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His name; they rejoiced their way through prisons and saluted death with a smile.' And the reason for it all was this: they knew Jesus as a glorious Presence and Power in their soul. So they marched to music. The fruit of the Spirit was . . . joy. And what we want to banish our weakness and our anxieties and our fears is just a similar experience of the Spirit.

What did Pentecost mean for those first disciples? To begin with, it meant this: *Jesus had come back*. Their happiness was only complete when they were with Him and He was with them, and that happiness of theirs was simply dashed to the ground when He said that He was going to leave them. The grief of David over the death of Jonathan, or of Tennyson over the death of Arthur Hallam, was nothing to the grief these disciples felt at the mere prospect of losing Jesus.

When they saw Him on the Cross, their hearts broke. They had lost their dearest and best. Easter, of course, scattered that despair of theirs, for they knew that their Lord was not dead. But Easter didn't give them their Lord back again. During the space of the great Forty Days He appeared now and again, but those were just fleeting appearances. And without Him—even though they knew He was alive—the disciples felt very timid and helpless.

But at Pentecost He came back *to stay*. That is the whole meaning of Pentecost. Pentecost was the fulfilment of His promise, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' In the person of His Holy Spirit, Jesus ceased to be localized and became universalized. It did not matter where they went, it did not matter in what circumstances they found themselves, Jesus was with them. He was with them, because He was *in* them. For those of us who have sons or daughters in some far-distant part of our Empire it is a great day when the time of furlough comes round and our dear ones come back. But we know they come back only to go away again. Over their weeks or months of furlough there lies the shadow of coming departure. It is pathetic to read how Mary Livingstone longed for the day of Livingstone's return, and how passionately she longed for the day when he should return to stay. That is what happened at Pentecost—Jesus came back to stay!

And the second thing that Pentecost did for these disciples was this: it brought them the *assurance of triumph*. Jesus had laid upon these first disciples of His a tremendous task—they were to go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation, and they were to begin in the most difficult place of all—at Jerusalem. Easter came, but even the knowledge that their Lord was alive was not sufficient to inspire them to make a start. During those forty days the little church was a church behind closed doors. But when Pentecost came, and they knew that Jesus was with them in the Person of His Spirit, they flung the doors wide open and began preaching their gospel boldly to the assembled pilgrims in Jerusalem. And nothing could daunt them.

They used to say during the American Civil War that the coming of General McClellan was as good as the addition of another battalion to the army—he brought with him a certain confidence of victory. Lord Kitchener had a similar effect on the British folk. When we knew he was at the head of affairs we felt everything would be all right. And his very name was good for a million men. All that, and infinitely more, the coming of the Spirit was to the first disciples. After all, McClellan and Kitchener were no guarantee of victory. The one was superseded and the other died before the victory was won. But the disciples, inspired with this blessed assurance that God was with them, that all the might of God was working through them, flung themselves with a kind of dash and gaiety upon that embattled world. 'The fruit of the Spirit was joy.'

Joy multiplies our strength. Dr. Hadfield, the great specialist, says that 'we are only as tired as our minds,' which means that tiredness will flee once we realize that we have power adequate to all our needs. And we have that adequate power in the Spirit of God—the Christ, who is with us always. Joy is not to be manufactured. Multiplication of machinery will never give us that assurance of triumph which will enable us to sing as we move to battle. But if we really let God into our lives and hearts, He will soon demonstrate His own presence. And when we feel His presence then will come the joy. Dr. Stanley Jones tells how the Himalayan villagers, when engaged in weeding their fields, work to music. One of them is beating a drum and all of them are singing. And we shall go to our work with music in our souls and on our lips if we have the Spirit.¹

¹ J. D. Jones, *Richmond Hill Sermons*, 221.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

Immanence and Personality.

'A rainbow round about the throne.'—Rev 4².

Divine immanence means the presence of a throbbing spiritual life in every movement of the universe, not only the revolutions of planets and the rushing of winds, but the fluttering of a bird's wing and the bursting of the buds in spring. That such a teaching as this is, if not peculiar, at least not foreign to the Christian faith, no one who has rejoiced in the great feast of Whitsuntide can for a moment doubt. Nor can it fail to appeal with irresistible fascination to the mind of any man who feels the harmony between his own spirit and the manifold life of Nature.

Divine immanence! Yes, the thought is full of beauty and consolation when amid the fret of modern life the spirit seeks repose. But what power has this doctrine to arm us for the hour of battle, to guide us when we are face to face with that stern prerogative of manhood, the tremendous necessity of choice, and to uphold us in the evil day?

There is a striking scene in which Mr. Shorthouse has described his hero, John Inglesant, in the great crisis of his life. He stands in the loggia of the pavilion, where, in the deep glades of the Italian forest, he had halted with the young girl, his companion, on their midnight flight from Florence to Pistoia. Silence enwraps the world. The brilliant moonlight gleams on the enchanted woods. Above him in thick festoons hang the luxuriant creepers. The air is heavy with sensuous perfumes, and Inglesant himself is flushed with wine. The very harmony of his surroundings, the spirit that breathes in the still air, bids him go forward. There are no restraints of custom or public opinion in the hot southern land to hold him back. He turns. He is about to enter the room behind him; when, lo! as the first wind of the returning dawn sighs among the trees, he is kneeling as on those Sunday mornings long ago in England among the small community at Little Gidding as they receive the communion of Christ's body and blood; and then standing by the dying bed of the saintly Mary Collet, as he hears her say, 'I will do nothing night and day while I live, Johnny, but pray to Jesus that He may lead you to Himself.' And then the spell is broken, for once again he has seen the glory of God.

In the moments which make or mar a man, which do not await our opportunity but which anticipate with hasty feet our readiness to meet them, when

action must be now or never, then those pleasant dreams of Divine immanence and the spirit of the universe will prove of no avail. One thing, and one alone, can help the imperilled soul, and that is the voice of God and the vision of the Great White Throne.

Let us take a typical Old Testament scene and consider the path by which men have been led to recognize God. We are on Horeb, on the lower slopes of which Moses feeds his flock. It is the story of the Burning Bush. Ah! here, we say, is Divine immanence. Well!

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes,
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.

Moses saw. Moses heard the voice of the personal God proclaiming as His name, 'I will be what I will be.' What does this mean? 'You and your people,' the voice seems to say, 'are at the beginning of a great living experience in which, if only you are true to what you have already learned, if only you are faithful to conscience, to each still, small voice of the Eternal that summons you to fresh acts of obedience, to new destinies, to expanding opportunities, to progressive enfranchisements, to an ever closer walk with God, He shall reveal to you, as you are able to bear it, His abiding nature and His everlasting Name.'

Those who bow the knee before the Sacred Trinity have reached the consummation of that great experience, the earlier stages of which are represented by Moses. We learn what God is, not by thinking but by living, not by argument but by obedience. If God be indeed not force nor power nor even spirit but personality, this must be so. The discovery of personality even among men is to any one who has a genius for sympathy and friendship a perpetual wonder and delight. But it is a progressive revelation that makes a constant and painful demand upon the labour, the responsiveness, the tears of him who would fain explore the mysteries of the human spirit. Again and again what could never have become known by the anticipations of reason, even about our fellow-men, is verified in the experience of life. So is it with God. There must come, first of all, the conviction of the guiding hand that directs, the everlasting arms that support, our life.

But if God be indeed a personal God, then He has a further communication for every soul of man. Have we faith enough to bear it?

When God of old came down from heaven,
In power and wrath He came;
Before His feet the clouds were riven,
Half darkness and half flame.

We cannot long have dealings with that God who is a consuming fire before He will bring us by a desert pathway to the mount that burns, to the horror of a great darkness, to the sound of the trumpet which awakens the shuddering conscience, to the voice of words which proclaim the Moral Governor of the universe. There is no philosophy of Divine immanence which will thus convict the man of sin, of righteousness, of judgment. We must come face to face with the inexorable demand of 'the Eternal that loveth righteousness.' There is but one way to the land of the promise and God's dwelling-place on Zion. It leads us under the frown of Sinai.

Then there is another hill—Calvary. How did St. John the Divine reach the blissful assurance of the Fatherhood of God, the Deity of Christ, the presence of a Personal Spirit through whom we have fellowship with the Father and the Son, wherein our Christian faith issues in a sublime act of adoring love and wonder? The very God came to him in the facts of experience. He had stood by the Cross of Jesus. He had seen the water and the blood. He ran to the sepulchre. There he saw and believed. He had stood on the mountain of the final blessing and the veiling cloud. He had been baptized with Pentecostal power. Then, when at length he stood on the Ægean rock, a witness to the Godhead of the Crucified, whose blood had redeemed and was even then cleansing him from all sin, he saw within the rainbow as it spanned the summer sea the mercy-seat of the Triune God.

Why do we worship one God in Trinity? For answer I will not elaborate a long series of proofs which will avail nought to the man for whom there is no 'bow in the cloud,' who is a stranger to the covenant of grace, to whom the gift of Pentecost has not become a living reality. I will not tell you that it is the only reasonable view of God. For, even though this great mystery be for me the one mould in which the highest thought becomes possible, who am I that I should judge another man's intelligence? But we will say, as St. Paul said, 'God hath sent forth the Spirit of his son into our hearts crying, Abba, Father.' 'Because ye are sons'—that is the secret of the Apostle's language. Because we are resting on the death of Jesus as a finished work; because we have spelt out the words 'No condemnation' writ in letters of gold over the

now empty Cross ; because our life as baptized believers is based on the message of Divine forgiveness—therefore we call God Father ; therefore we acknowledge Him, who to us is the Author of eternal salvation, as His Incarnate Son ; therefore we know that those influences which uphold our lives are not broken fragments of a universal spirit, but the whole and undivided God.

What, then, is the great strong fact of Christianity ? Is it salvation through the Name of Jesus, or is it the worship of the Blessed Three ? Is it the cry that goes up before the throne, ' Holy, Holy, Holy ' ? or is it ' Worthy is the Lamb ' ?

In the grey old cathedral of St. Bavon at Ghent hangs the masterpiece of Jan Van Eyck. Before you is a wide stretch of pasture, rising toward the back of the picture into low rolling hills, crowned with foliage, and beyond the towers and spires of the celestial city. The trees are laden with fruit, the meadow bright with flowers, each one painted with that exquisite patience and tender minuteness

which is the glory of early Flemish art and the counterpart of that loving workmanship with which our God, immanent in Nature, has clothed the transient grass and arrayed the lilies of the field. And in the midst, surrounded by the emblems of the Passion, and receiving the homage of apostles and martyrs, kings and priests, angels and men in a wonderful order, and pouring into a chalice on the altar the living stream of His most precious blood, stands the Lamb as it had been slain. Over the whole scene the Holy Dove spreads the benediction of His brooding presence. And seated on a great throne, with hand uplifted in blessing over a world that gathers at His feet, is the crowned figure of the Eternal Father.

It is no paradox but a plain truth, which, while others reason, we Christians know. The worship of Him of whom and through whom and in whom are all things and the adoration of the Lamb are all one.¹

¹ J. G. Simpson, *Christian Ideals*, 323.

Recent Biblical Archaeology.

BY THE REVEREND J. W. JACK, D.D., GLENFARG, PERTHSHIRE.

FURTHER Mousterian deposits, deeply stratified, have been found in the caves at Athlīt, where Miss Garrod has been conducting excavations. Another skeleton, resembling *Palaeanthropus Palestinus*, has been discovered in the third layer. It should be remembered, however, that this type of ancient Palestinian man is only a transitional one, and has features which make it difficult for him to be the direct ancestor of man. Sir Arthur Keith is of opinion that the evolutionary cradle-land of modern humanity lies much farther to the east, and has yet to be discovered. Whether it will be found in Mesopotamia, as some think, remains to be seen. In recent years important prehistoric work has been done at such ancient sites as Nippur, Babylon, Ur, and Kish, but no human remains or artifacts much older than 4000 B.C. have thus far been unearthed. Probably, no scholar any longer believes that the birthplace of man was in Palestine or Mesopotamia. In recent years Central Asia has come to have the best claim to be the earliest home of mankind.

Some time ago the excavators at *Tell Billah*, in Assyria, had the good fortune to discover a number of cuneiform documents antedating the period of

Ashurnasirpal II. (ninth cent. B.C.). Though these are in an exceedingly poor state of preservation, only one of them having been baked, they have been tentatively transliterated by Professor Chiera of Chicago. The majority of them have been found to be dated to years of Assyrian eponyms, belonging to the Middle Assyrian period, and therefore much earlier than any of our hitherto discovered lists. This method of dating by the Assyrian Canon or calendar (the *limu* lists), in which every year bore the name of an Assyrian officer (an ' eponym '), has enabled us to fix the dates of many Biblical events accurately, without being dependent on the Biblical chronology. The Assyrian dynastic chronicles are not always trustworthy, for they give the dynasties one after the other as if they succeeded each other, whereas we know now that several of them were contemporaneous. Such chronicles as these were the source from which Berossus drew his information, and for this reason his dating is not always correct. With the Assyrian eponym calendar, however, the case is different. This calendar exists in several copies, all agreeing with each other, and so far as hitherto found covers the period from