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it is to Christians that he appeals, but they are Greeks by race, and so will appreciate the point he wishes to make. Here too he is 'all things to all men.'

To the missionary of the present day the discussion of the question whether Paul was right or wrong is of no small importance. The message of 1 Co 1¹⁷⁻²⁵ cannot be too strongly emphasized. Christ and Him crucified must be the theme of our preaching to all alike. No subtle arguments, or recondite allusions, or eloquence of style, will avail as means of winning men for Christ. Nor are we true to our Master if we avoid topics which, as they are first set before the hearers, must inevitably be stumbling-blocks, or foolishness. If we have been

guilty of any such attempts at worldly wisdom we need to be sharply pulled up by the message of the Epistle. But when some go to the opposite extreme, and say that our only task is to present Christ, with no distinction between different classes of hearers—that, for instance, the method of presentation must be the same to educated and uneducated, to Brahman and 'untouchable'—and emphasize this by referring to Paul's failure at Athens, we may refuse to admit the soundness of the reasoning. So long as we keep the Cross central, and bear in mind the supreme aim of by all means saving some, we need not fear to use all reasonable methods of adapting the message to the various classes with whom we have to deal.

In the Study.

Virginitus Puerisque.

The Gold Standard.

BY THE REVEREND C. M. HEPBURN, B.D.,
MOULIN, PITLOCHRY.

'I shall come forth as gold.'—Job 23¹⁰.

At the present moment there are four words that are very familiar. If you haven't seen them, I expect you have heard them. Almost every day they appear in the newspapers. I am thinking of these words, 'Off the gold standard.' They mean that certain countries, our own included, are not now using gold to measure the worth or value of things.

One result is that in these countries gold coins are not in regular circulation. As some of you younger children may never have seen them, I want to describe one or two I happen to have. One is a Russian gold coin. It has the head of the unfortunate Czar stamped upon it: and on the other side is the two-headed Russian imperial eagle. Round the outside edge are some words in Russian that I can't read. Another in my possession is a German gold coin, with the head of the Kaiser, though not the one we know, upon it: while it has on the reverse side the German eagle. Round the outside edge of this coin are the words 'Gott mit uns' ('God with us'). A good motto when we are sure that it is true. Another I am proud of is one of our own, over a century old. It is a George III. sovereign. It is called a sovereign

because it has the head of the ruler or sovereign stamped upon it. On the other side is St. George and the Dragon. Round the inner edge are the words '*Honi soit qui mal y pense*,' which you can see on the Royal Arms too, meaning 'The shame be his who thinks ill of it.' Round the outer edge there are no words engraved: instead it is milled, or marked with notches, because persons called 'gold-clippers' used to cut the edges to get gold scrapings.

But gold is not only a measure of money values, it is sometimes a standard of conduct as well. When a person is rather impertinent we may say that he is as bold as brass; but when any one is on his best behaviour we often say that he is as good as gold. When a small boy's mummy came home one day she said to his nurse, 'And how has my darling been behaving since I went out? I hope he's been as good as gold.'

Apparently nurse had been reading the papers, because she said, 'I'm afraid, mum, he went off the gold standard about tea-time.'

But of course it is rather difficult to be always on the gold standard of behaviour. We get pushed off it sometimes when some one annoys us and we answer crossly. Or we may slip off it ourselves when we do things that we shouldn't do. One of our children's hymns has a verse about that:

There's a wicked spirit
Watching round you still,
And he tries to tempt you
To all harm and ill.

One knows that even the best boys and girls are not always able to keep on the gold standard. I was most interested to read a story the other day about Alison Cunningham, Stevenson's nurse. He called her Cummy. When visitors came to call on her, as they often did, her answers to them, when they bothered her, were sometimes very short. When one visitor of the bothersome sort said to her, 'Do tell me, just what sort of a boy was Louis?' her reply was pointed and curt, 'Oh, just like other bairns, whiles gey naughty.' So, after all, we may perhaps be excused for failing at times, since even Stevenson as a boy wasn't always on the gold standard.

But there was one who never went 'off the gold standard.' You remember we read of Him in the Bible, 'He was tempted . . . yet without sin.' His enemies couldn't push Him off. And He asks us to aim at the highest standard, for He said, 'Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.' But alas, we can't, not by ourselves. Still we must take that as our standard—the pure gold standard—and be sure He will help us.

Christ is our own Master ;
He is good and true ;
And He'll help His children
To be holy, too.

The Judge's Ermine.

BY THE REVEREND J. HOWARD STOOKE, BRISTOL.

'A few . . . which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white.'—Rev 3^d.

A short time ago I saw the Judge of Assize arrive at the Lord Mayor's Chapel in our city for the service which is always held before the Assize is opened, and the prisoners are tried.

Have you ever seen a real big Judge? This one wore a scarlet robe trimmed with ermine, and with his full-bottomed wig he was well worth seeing.

What is ermine? It is the fur of a little animal of the same name, an animal something like a stoat, and its fur is brown in the summer and white in the winter. There is a special reason why the robes of judges are trimmed with ermine; it is this. Years and years ago people used to say that the ermine was so proud of the pure whiteness of its fur that, when it was being chased, if it came to a muddy patch *it would rather be caught than soil its fur*. I don't suppose that this is true about the ermine, it is very likely just a legend; but that does not matter to us just now. Because, long ago, people thought it was true, ermine was chosen to

be on the robes of the judges, the idea being that a judge must suffer rather than do anything unjust or wrong.

At one time judges used to do all sorts of bad things. They used to take bribes; that is, when they had to judge between two persons, they would accept a present of money from one of them, and give him the verdict. This meant that the man who could give the bigger present would win the day, and you do not need me to tell you that this is not right. No British judge would stoop to such a thing now, they do not need the ermine on their robes to remind them that it is better to suffer than to do wrong.

I wonder if we are at all like this, are we? Sometimes you are tempted to get out of a difficulty by telling a lie. A voice says to you, 'You will get off easily if you tell just a little lie,' and it really seems as if the voice is right. Do you refuse to tell the lie and suffer for it? A temptation to cheat comes to you. You are sure that you will not be found out, and the voice says, 'If you don't cheat, you will be kept in and will have to do all those horrid sums over again.' What is your reply? Will you be punished rather than soil your soul with cheating?

About four hundred years ago there was a great judge in England, whose name was Sir Thomas More. In days when it was the common thing for judges to accept bribes, Sir Thomas had 'clean hands and a pure heart.' King Henry the Eighth ordered all the principal men in the kingdom to do a certain thing, but Sir Thomas More did not believe it was right to do what the King commanded, and he refused. The King threatened to take More's life if he did not do the thing, but the brave man refused to do what he felt was not right, and he was beheaded. He suffered rather than smirch his character. I do not know whether in those far-off days the judges wore scarlet robes trimmed with ermine; if they did, Sir Thomas wore his well.

God help us all, at home or at school, at work or at play, to keep our hearts clean. He says of all such, 'They shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy.'

The Christian Year.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Wings of a Dove.

'Oh that I had wings like a dove! Then would I fly away, and be at rest.'—Ps 55^d (R.V.).

Man has always been ambitious for wings. On the one hand, he is conscious of latent powers and

yearns for range and scope ; on the other, he is oppressed by a sense of the fetters and chains of circumstance, and longs for escape. In one aspect this is a noble ambition, prophetic of man's glorious destiny. It is by giving the rein to this instinct that man has emerged from the jungle, and has conquered the earth with his motors and his telegraphs, the ocean with his steamships and his submarines, and the air with his aeroplanes and his wireless.

But this grand ambition has degenerated into a petulant and ignoble mood. It is shrunken into a craving for escape from the trouble and problems of life to unruffled serenity. Here is a man, dwelling in Jerusalem three thousand years ago, and he is weary of the city with its cruelties and disloyalties. Sombrely he watches a dove winging its way to its nest in some stark precipice, far from the haunts of men, and wistfully he utters the cry of Cowper :

O for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade.

It is a melancholy which has oppressed the souls of men in all ages, from the monk in his monastery, the Stylite on his pillar, the hermit in his cell, down to the restless and joyless captain of industry in our own unquiet day.

What is it men are seeking to escape ? They wish to elude the caprice of circumstance and the uncertainty of things. They find themselves in an atmosphere of insecurity. There is the insecurity of health, for instance. There is the insecurity of circumstance. There is the insecurity of human relations and dear human ties. If only we could be sure of our friends, of their continued loyalty and their survival with us ; but the affections of the heart are unstable, and every year at the roll-call we find that this friend and that have gone down into the grave. There is the insecurity of character. If only we could be confident of our integrity—that our characters would infallibly resist all the shocks and strains of temptation and trial. But, alas !—

I have a sin of fear that when I've spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore.

Men have sought escape in multifarious ways. They have tried the wings of philosophy. Zeno, in his *Painted Porch* at Athens, teaches a grim acceptance of the universe, an attitude of calm resignation to the vicissitudes of life, and of apathy at the loss of friends. But the words of G. H. Lewes, in his *History of Philosophy*, are the final comment on the futility of Stoicism : ' The Stoics, in their dread of becoming effeminate, became marble.

They despised pain ; they despised death. To be above pain they thought manly. They did not see that, in this respect, instead of being above humanity, they sank below it. . . You receive a blow, and you do not wince ? So much of heroism is displayed by a stone. You are face to face with death, and you have no regrets ? Then you are unworthy of life. Real heroism feels the pain it conquers, and loves the life it surrenders in a noble cause.'

Men have tried art, and in Tennyson's *Palace of Art* we have the parable of the inadequacy of this sensuous way. Men have sought peace in drugs—in chemical drugs, like opium, cocaine, heroin, and what not. One of the most serious problems with which the League of Nations grapples is the international traffic in these deadly drugs ; and our police courts, hospitals, and asylums contain living evidences of the futility of this way out. Men have sought tranquillity in spiritual opiates. Very much of the so-called ' New Thought ' (the irony of both noun and adjective !) is mere mental anodyne. What is Christian Science but a vast system of spiritual doping—escaping the evil by pretending it is not there—conquering the wrongs that make earth hell by declaring with smiling complacency that there is no such thing as sin ?

Now, to this world of troubled humanity, longing for deliverance and peace, Christ comes with His message—' Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest unto your soul. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.' But what does He mean by rest ? Obviously not the deadening of the faculties ; He is come that we may have life, and have it more abundantly. Obviously, too, it is not mere inactivity, for He talks in this very promise of a yoke ; and a yoke, even if your yoke-fellow bears the heavier share, still implies a burden. What, then, does rest mean ? Is it not *purposeful activity* ?

Activity it must be, for mere inactivity ends in boredom. We evolved by struggle, and struggle is still a condition of our well-being ; and when we lose the zest for struggle, we lose the zest of life. That is why so many men die so soon after they retire from business. They have no longer any grip on life, and every day becomes a vast and weary waste. They are literally bored to death. But it must be *purposeful activity*. A director of a huge luxury concern declared the other day that he had no joy in his business, because it was entirely superfluous, meeting no real need ; and so, though he was busy to the point of strenuousness, his

activity had no purpose in it, no point, no sense. A ploughman is generally one of the happiest of men, because his work is natural and necessary, supplying real needs.

Christ comes and gives that peace intensified a thousandfold. He finds us as His Father made us, with our whole personality clamorous for activity; but either our labour is unsatisfying for lack of vision, or our energies are paralysed by the sense of sin. Christ comes, and answers all the demands of our being. To the mind He brings illumination—the conviction that the universe is intelligible, because it has behind it a vast Intelligence; and that its great argument may be trusted to move to a great conclusion. He presents Himself as the expression of that wisdom which rolls the stars along, and implies that in all our reasoning we may think God's thoughts after Him. Christ gives us the 'glory of the lighted mind.' To the heart He brings love, and something worthy to be loved. He makes the universe lovable, because a great heart beats behind it, and gives us the assurance that no quiver of our affection is ever wasted in the universe of God. To the will He brings the challenge of an increasing purpose, a purpose that our energies can further, the clarion-call to a world wherein dwelleth righteousness. We are to march shoulder to shoulder as crusaders, facing fearful odds, jubilant in the confidence of victory.

He comes to free us from the paralysing sense of sin. Many people in our day are suffering from what the psycho-analyst calls 'complexes.' Spiritual evils have physical issues. Many forms of neurasthenia and even of definite organic trouble are beyond the skill of the physician because they are beyond the physical in their origin. They are due to discordant relations with men and with God. A fear lest a wrong done should be discovered emerges in chronic neurosis, a spite born in the heart becomes a hate nourished in the breast until it brings forth a sarcoma which no surgeon's knife can eradicate. A fatuous mind and a feckless will are often ultimately traceable to a poisoned spiritual spring. Christ comes to take away all these impediments, and to give us liberty and power—to make our tasks intelligible to our minds, lovable to our hearts, malleable to our wills—to give us the constant confidence that our resources in Him are adequate to all conceivable demands.

He brings us more than that. So much would suffice for this life. But this life is brief and uncertain. 'After my first great sorrow,' says 'Margot' in her *Autobiography*, 'the death of my sister Laura, I was suffocated in the house, and felt

I had to be out from morning to night. One day I saw an old shepherd, named Gowanlock, coming up to me, holding my pony by the rein. I had never noticed that it had strayed away, and, after thanking him, I observed him looking at me quietly. He knew something of the rage and anguish that Laura's death had brought into my heart; and, putting his hand on my shoulder, he said: "My child, there's no contending. . . . Ay . . . ay . . ." shaking his beautiful old head, "that is so, there's no contending."

No, there's no contending. But there is Christ, and in Him life and love for evermore. And here as everywhere Christ calls us to find rest in Him. When we answer His call, we find that our tears become lenses through which we see something of the glory of that world unknown, and certain great words that great souls have uttered are become for ever true: 'There are green meadows on this side and green meadows on the other, and the blue river between; but the grass is the same and the love is the same on this side and on the other.'¹

Out of the mists a hand is stretched to me,
A hand for my sake wounded, and I turn
From mystery and questioning and doubt
To kneel before the Christ; it is enough;
I can believe in Him, I can believe
The story of the Cross—the world's new Hope—
Her life the purchase of His death: I know
That He is real and true—though all around
Seems like a troubled dream wherein men stand
Bewildered, helpless, hopeless: yet in Him
Lies the grand secret of Eternal Rest.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Family Religion.

'Tenderly affectioned one to another; in honour preferring one another.'—Ro 12¹⁰ (R.V.).

The family is God's first circle of society; the pattern of all social life in the economy of the Divine mind. The Bishop of Croydon in *A Faith that Works* writes: 'I like to think that Jesus once lived in what we should call a cottage. There is an enormous meaning in the fact that the Founder of the Christian Faith, He whom many of us revere as Son of God, was a member of a family in a poor home, and shared in all the give-and-take of family life where the work is hard and the pence are few—took His turn to draw the water and light the fire, lay the table and wash up the dishes, sweep out the rooms and tidy the house. The fact that He

¹ R. Armstrong, *The Eternal Purpose*, 42.

did all this helps to make Christianity what He meant it to be, a religion from Heaven which can be successfully practised on earth. And it is a striking thing that when He wished to explain to men what God is like and how men ought to live, He did it by using the simplest family terms—that God is Father and that men are brothers. He seems to suggest that the “love” He wants men to understand and to practise has its natural beginnings in the life of the home, and that through family experiences on the smaller scale a man will learn to think of all men and all nations as being inside the family life of the Kingdom of God.’

In the family the individual is trained and the character developed. The importance of the religion of the home it is hard to exaggerate, for the strength of the nation and of the race is bound up with it. We like a broad and rich life, full of varied interests, and we should like to see the lives of men and women animated by the inspiration of interests outside the family circle. But no shining achievements elsewhere can palliate the guilt of coldness, injustice, and ill-temper in the family; and the noblest public virtues have their roots in the gentleness, the industry, and the self-sacrifice of which only those who are nearest to us have any knowledge.

‘Tenderly affectioned one to another’ is St. Paul’s phrase. No one will dispute the fact that the main pillar of the home must be *love*. There is an extraordinary vitality in love; when its seeds are sown ungrudgingly and profusely it bears its harvest after many days. There is an indestructible music in the gospel; its strains, once heard, are apt to pursue us to the last. ‘This name of my Saviour, Thy Son,’ cries St. Augustine—the Augustine who wandered far and long from Monica’s hearth and the God who fed its fires—‘had my tender heart drunk in even with my mother’s milk; and whatsoever was without this Name, though never so erudite, polished, and truthful, took not complete hold of me.’¹

Christ smiles tenderly on young lovers at their wooing, but with a full heart on old lovers whose wooing has not ended with grey hairs. It is never His will that a man should be shorter with his own wife than with other women, or a woman more touchy with her husband than with other men. There is nothing in the relationship between Christ and His Church that countenances such a view, and that is the model put before us by God. Out of that ideal all the rest will grow. The children brought up in a home where the father and mother

live in the oneness of perfect love will soon catch the sweet infection. The quality of the love in a home has far more to do with its inmates’ happiness than the quality of the furniture, yet how many are elaborately careful of the one, and surprisingly neglectful of the other.

The quality that we would put next in importance is *considerateness*. Most of us have a sore place somewhere, and it is well not to rub it more than can be helped. Some of us have prejudices that cause more trouble than our principles. Let us learn to be considerate, and our reward will be great. We have to keep our unruly personality in hand lest it should collide against those about us. Our opinions need not always be aired; our sufferings can be borne, not paraded. ‘One topic,’ says Emerson, ‘is peremptorily forbidden to all rational mortals, viz. their distempers. If you have not slept, or if you have the headache, or leprosy, or thunderstroke, I beseech you by all the angels to hold your peace and not pollute the morning.’

The third note of family religion we would call *service*. The homes on earth which most resemble heaven are those in which, from the father down to the youngest child, every loved and loving one is serving and being served by each and all. We have a current phrase which speaks of going to Church as ‘attending Divine Service,’ as if there was no other work that deserved to be called by that name. But St. Paul gives a truer definition of Divine Service when he says: ‘Whatsoever ye do, work heartily as unto the Lord.’ Tolstoy tells a story of a Russian peasant who, when he ploughed, always set a lighted lamp upon his plough, just such a candle as he offered on Sundays at his favourite altar in the church. What we need more and more to feel is that we are always in the temple of God; that though we do not see His face, we are ever in His sight; that we serve before His throne when we discharge the upraised duties of the home in the name—that is, in the spirit and manner—of the Lord Jesus.²

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Deflection of the World.

‘Upon my right hand rise the rabble; they thrust aside my feet.’—Job 30¹² (R.V.).

‘Stand therefore.’—Eph 6¹⁴.

It is the trouble and peril of a man who would stand in his own lot and keep the integrity of his mind and soul. There is an everlasting pressure that would thrust aside his feet. The deflection

¹ A. Smellie, *The Well by the Way*, 162.

² W. Aidan Newman Hall, *The Radiant Life*, 45 f.

of the world is commonly manifest in the region of ideals, and of this we may think first, and then of how a man may and must stand if he is to be open to further dealings of God with his own soul. When St. Paul said, 'The just shall live by faith,' he was using the word of an ancient prophet with an extended and deepened suggestion. But the prophet's saying was that the just shall live by his faithfulness, and his meaning was that faithfulness, in the sense of integrity, is itself a principle of life. By 'live' he meant that a man would hold himself and his ways in moral security and triumph. By no pressure upon him must a man suffer himself to be pushed off the things he sees to be true and right altogether. If he suffer this, he is closing down the gracious approaches of God.

1. The tragedy of deflected ideals must first hold our thought. If it appears that tragedy is too strong a word to use of a deflected and lowered ideal, it is well that we should seek some agreement first as to the nature of the ideal. If it is an ideal of material prosperity, a matter of things which a man desires to possess, it may well be that a lowering here is no mischief. If it is an ideal of worldly success and advancement, a matter of place and influence which a man desires to attain, again it may well be that a deflection of his ideal deserves no such name as tragedy. If it is an ideal of intellectual acquirement, again it may be that to suffer deflection and lowering of his ideal may be no tragedy, but in the long issue a gain. For art is long and life is short, and there are limits to the provinces of knowledge over which a man may wield his sceptre. It may be that the acceptance of limitation will bring the deepest knowledge of all, for the kingdom of knowledge is even as the Kingdom of Heaven; it is not entered save by those who become as little children.

It is of the spiritual ideal that we think when we speak of the deflection of it as tragedy. A worthy man knows that he cannot live the full, balanced, strong life with a soul imprisoned in the interests of the hour and the day. He knows he was made for larger outlooks. His duty may lie in the valley, but he gains his might from the heights, and his hands best serve the duty of the hour when his eyes are lifted to the lofty places from whence cometh his strength.

If a man be a Christian, he has found One who is for him the Incarnate Highest, loving him and inviting him to saturate his understanding with His truth, his imagination with His beauty, his affections with His passion, dwelling with him as a Friend, but shining before him as a goal to which he will press if haply he may attain, and gleaming before him

as a vision to which he may not be disobedient. This is what Jesus Christ is in Himself. In Him is seen a life that is a unity; no divided will weakening it; no inward quarrel and protest, but with all its powers in line. And seeing Him clearly a man needs no other teaching to convince him that life comes to its greatest through the spiritual.

2. There are many adversaries. Most subtle and persistent is the steady pressure of the world. In the New Testament speech 'the world' is simply life conceived and handled without relation to God or thought of Him. It for ever pushes aside the feet. Let a man seek to be 'transformed by the renewing of his mind,' under an ideal whose standard is a character founded in moral and spiritual realities, and made what it is by moral and spiritual values, and always he is under necessity of watchfulness and resistance lest he 'be conformed to this world.' He has to live in a world which sets no store on the things which he counts highest. It would have him off his platform on to a lower which stands nearer. It is in love with those other ideals which have been mentioned; it values gold more than character, comfort more than self-respect, ease more than duty, the opinion of men more than the judgment of conscience, liberty more than righteousness. There is a story in the New Testament of one who, having been captured by the highest, listened to the plea of the lower, and it is told in a single line: 'Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.'

Whenever this comes to pass, tragedy is the only word which fits the case. It means that a man submits to be governed by what he should control. It means a diminished self-respect. It means that his estimate of values is tampered with. It means divided allegiances and civil war in the kingdom of himself, for he has dethroned the only powers strong enough to make a unity of life's loyalties. It means a lost intimacy with Christ, for how shall he look upon Him whom he has pierced?

3. 'Stand therefore—having done all, stand.' There is an ancient psalm which declares of certain people: 'They shall not be ashamed in the time of evil, and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.' These are they, says the Psalmist, who do right just because they know it to be right. No evil is going to befall them. God is always available on the side of the man who is on His side. Do not let us therefore hesitate to challenge and resist the attempted deflection of the world, though it be by the pressure of the majority. We can never be defeated in a moral battle except by ourselves.

More than twenty centuries ago in Greece there

flourished a school of philosophy and conduct built upon a very simple principle. It was the principle that Nothing but Goodness is Good. It seems so plain a thing as to be a truism. But in that school was a scholar who came afterwards to be the founder of the far more influential teaching of the Stoics which, with all its limitations, for long provided many, in a perilous time for the human soul, with an armour against the world's evil. Nothing is worth living for, said these teachers, except goodness, and by 'good' they meant good in an ultimate sense. Simple as it appears, it was a pervasive and revolutionary principle, and it stirred men to that fine form of courage which can defy accepted conventions.

There is no doubt about the urgency for the correction and tightening of a moral fibre greatly loosened in our generation. But it is easy to be led into exaggeration about this. Comparisons with other times are unsafe, and the sturdy conscience has always felt its own immediate time to be morally precarious and enfeebled. This is because moral goodness belongs to the world of struggle in which we live here, and it is never in danger of perishing for lack of antagonisms. More than fifty years ago a non-Christian Puritan was stirred by the habit of mind and by tendencies in our English life which he deplored and feared. He described it as the mind which says: 'Think only of to-day and not at all of to-morrow. Beware of the high and hold fast to the safe. Dismiss conviction and study the general consensus. No zeal, no faith, no intellectual trenchancy, but as much low-minded geniality and trivial complaisance as you please.' So wrote John Morley in his book, *Compromise*, which remains, and will remain, a living book just because there is no time when men do not need to be recalled to honesty of mind, and to hear the preacher who proclaims that they who tamper with veracity tamper with the vital force of human progress. The eternal temptation to give ourselves to the things that are seen, and fling away faith in the unseen, comes in many forms, and one of the commonest as well as subtlest of its forms is that we are quietly seduced into subordinating principles to expediences. It is against this that the author of *Compromise* lifts his voice. If we would know the reason why there are recognizable limits to compliance with opinions that secretly we are convinced are false, and unarguable refusals to be given to actions which we know are evil or feel to be dubious, we may hear it in the saying of Archbishop Whately, which stands like a trumpeter on the opening page of John Morley's book: 'It makes all the difference whether

we put Truth in the first place or in the second place.' We have to choose whether we shall tamely adopt the standards of the morally indifferent world, or be true to the inward voices of our souls and risk ourselves upon them, if risk it is. Mr. Facing-Both-Ways is the name of the expert in the method called compromise. And he makes as poor and disastrous an appearance in life as he does in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

How differently, for instance, one thinks of the two great characters of the Reformation—Erasmus and Luther. For the one we have admiration, for the other, reverence. Erasmus, in the dark day of his visitation, said, 'I intended to be true to truth as far as the times would allow.' Luther in the assembly of the princes and papal legates at Worms answered Eck, 'I retract nothing except I be convinced from the Scripture. Here I take my stand. God help me.'

As for consequences, do not let us think or talk heroics about them. There is no need. As a fact, the sky does not fall, and will not fall. Of Truth and Right and the doing of them we may say: 'By these the ancient heavens are strong.' Disconcerting, unwelcome, and apparently impoverishing things may happen to us in the plain doing of right. But the sky does not fall, and it will be all the serener for us because we have not turned the light that is in us into darkness, but have walked in the light while we had it, and with a strong step of courage. The sky does not fall for the right-doers in scorn of all consequence. What happens with those who fail the right, in fear or weak compliance, is that the bottom falls out of their ideas of good and their scheme of values. In an atmosphere of mean purpose and under low conceptions of the sacredness of truth and right the very fibre of the mind and soul is rotted. Let us remember the men who have stood fast for the things they saw to be right: Elijah who could not be cajoled; Elisha who could not be bought; Joseph who could not be wheedled; Daniel who could not be dismayed. When our own stand has to be made, let us call them to mind. Did the sky fall with them? Best of all, in some secret place, with the door shut, let us go slowly over again and again the haunting story of the Temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. Mark it stage by stage, for it was told for our sakes by Him who was tempted in all points like as we are, and is able to deliver them that are tempted. Did the sky fall with Him? Follow Him also when upon His right hand were the rabble to thrust aside His feet. 'Carpenter and carpenter's son,' they cried. 'Whence hath

this man learning?' they sneered. 'Glutton and winebibber,' whispered the scandalmongers. But did the sky fall because men talked? He had nothing to go on but the certainty that He was doing the will of God, and though the heathen raged, and the people imagined a vain thing, and the rabble would have thrust aside His feet, it was enough to stand on, and still to stand.¹

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Character.

'Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man.'—Jer 5¹.

In this passage the prophet reveals his opinion of contemporary society at Jerusalem, and it is not flattering. He declares it to be a city of hypocrisies whose citizens in their lives deny the religious profession of their lips. He does not allege that there is any definite lack of outward or ritual observance. Jerusalem declares its corporate belief in the being and sovereignty of God, and no doubt, as is our own custom, would have considered it only fitting to associate with the celebration of its major civic festivals an act of public worship. But it is this very outward profession which stirs the prophet to passionate indignation, for the common life and individual practice of the citizens show up their faith as an unreality and their religion as a sham. 'Though they say, the Lord liveth,' cries Jeremiah, 'surely they swear falsely.'

Surveying the life of his generation he is dismayed by the contradiction exhibited between its profession and its practice. The people call upon God with their lips; but whatever else may be characteristic of their general life, justice and truth—His attributes—are conspicuous by their absence. 'Find me one man who executeth justice and seeketh truth!' That is the prophet's challenge.

The moral and religious teachers of mankind have consistently emphasized the supreme value of a good minority. And the central message of the Good News which came in Jesus Christ was its thrilling call of hope and encouragement to those who, following the highest light they knew, found themselves in a distinct numerical inferiority with a hostile and cynical world against them.

Our Lord never told those who desired to follow Him that their lines would fall in pleasant places, or that they themselves were destined to popularity. On the contrary, His appeal was to the adventurous

and heroic, and not to the ignoble, in human nature. A religious life, as a great French writer reminds us, is a struggle before it is a hymn. The disciple of Jesus in the twentieth as in the first century need expect from the worldling nothing but the treatment which the Master Himself received. But such was the perfect equipoise of our Lord's sympathies He always preserved a great understanding and compassion for that very worldling who hated Him, opposed and thwarted Him. He knew, what some of the official exponents of His religion at times forget, how hard it is for ordinary men to preserve amid the glittering deceptiveness of the things that surround them that sure vision and level judgment which recognize what is seen to be temporal, but what is unseen to be eternal. Faith in the Christian values as alone worth seeking is not come by easily. As a thing rises in worth, so correspondingly does its price increase. Yet the Gospel pages ring with that reiterated call, 'Be of good cheer!' He had overcome the world, and so would they who followed Him. He assured them that, however contrary might be appearances, they, and they only, were the lights of the earth.

Those who are moved to despondency because the appeal of the Christian Church does not apparently arouse a universal response, either in this nation or in any other, view human affairs from a wholly different standpoint from that which was our Lord's. Christ quite naturally expected His Church to find tribulation, and He would be the last to be surprised to find, in our own day, many empty pews where His gospel was purely and fearlessly preached. We learn from the New Testament that from the time when His position was realized to be spiritual and not political many turned and walked no more with Him.

'Seek if ye can find a man.' The world's sorest needs, despite the contrary assurances of many of our garrulous advisers, are neither political nor economic. Nor is the world's supreme need, as some have told us, for more first-class brains, desirable as such a commodity may be. We have by this time had evidence enough that first-class brains, unless allied with first-class character reflecting the mind of Christ, have a dangerous tendency to become the curse of society. The world's urgent need lies deep rooted in a necessity for the development in individual lives of high moral and religious character. Many of us, unfortunately, lose our sense of perspective as life goes on. We cease to recognize the obvious when we see it; we confuse life's greater issues and values. Our heads

¹ T. Yates, *The Strategies of Grace*, 129.

and our hearts become absorbed with our possessions and consumed by the lust for more. Who has not known men and women who once were characterized by earnestness of purpose, by intellectual culture, by the capacity for worship, by love of the good and appreciation of the beautiful, but who, driven to spiritual self-destruction before the insensate desire for the accumulation of mere things, have murdered their better instincts one by one? Yet, what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Our common life, too, is often degraded by blatant and unashamed selfishness, by uninformed class antagonisms, and by a blind disregard of our duties towards our neighbours, who have rights as well as we. We are all more or less affected by such things, and have good cause to examine ourselves in order that we may see whether our outlook is that of free intelligent people, or is twisted and distorted by environment, acquired prejudice, or inherited tradition.

There is also an increasing tendency in many departments of life towards self-centred aggressiveness, and our public activities, both secular and ecclesiastical, are frequently disordered and robbed of their fruitfulness by the reckless conduct of parties and sections who are out mostly for their own hand. What we regard as selfish conduct in the individual we must also repudiate in the wider sphere of our corporate life. 'It is of the utmost importance,' once said Lord John Russell, 'that a nation should have a correct standard by which to weigh the character of its rulers.' And to this we might add that the true greatness of nations lies in exactly those same qualities which constitute greatness in an individual.

Back again we are forced to Christ's centre of emphasis. It is the individual, and always the individual. The Kingdom of God is within you. 'The soul of all improvement is the improvement of the individual soul.' Back again we are forced to His advice to all who are concerned with the world's troubles and filled with earnest anxiety to alleviate and banish them. It is the little leaven that leaveneth the lump, so He insists again and again. Therefore—and this is the inexorable first command of His social gospel—Be ye yourself true to your faith, your work, your personal responsibilities, remembering that by one man the city will find its pardon

Not in the clamour of the crowded street,
Not in the shouts and plaudits of the throng,
But in ourselves, are triumph and defeat!

But idealism itself must be conditioned by the

wisdom which is from above. There is, for instance, much idealism abroad these days, enthusiastic and impassioned. It is a matter of grave urgency that we carefully examine it before accepting it as being wise in the sense in which Christ would define wisdom. Still, even when in our view misguided, it should always be listened to with respect. The ocean of our social and religious thought is disturbed to-day by many conflicting currents. Let us try to keep a big and warm heart for humanity, and have the sympathy and common sense to respect genuine conviction. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and we never know from what unexpected quarter comes the life-giving whisper of the Holy Ghost. Our task remains to try to adjust our own idealism to the mind of Christ, and to have the courage to discard it and to seek for another, if such an adjustment cannot sincerely be effected.

Whatever life may bring us, and whatever it may take away, we do not need to be with the crowd to have our own personal influence really effective. There is nothing in the world so strong in influence as human personality. There is none of us but has owed something to the personal influence of some dear friend. It is the personality of Christ that calls forth all that is best in human nature—His courage, strength, and gentleness, His love and power, His sympathy and understanding, His mercy and pity. Whatever we may question in this bewildering and mysterious world, let us never doubt the eternal influence of our own life and character. Amid the noise and tumult of affairs; when men, some of whom know no better, and some of whom ought to know better, requite our good with evil, when the most cherished ideals and convictions of our souls can find no place even in the hearts of those we care for most; when loyalty to our faith demands of us misunderstanding, loneliness, and loss—well, let us look yonder to

those holy fields,
Over whose acres walked those blessed feet,
Which, nineteen hundred years ago, were nailed
For our advantage on the bitter cross.

And from Him, one lonely but gallant youth walking so bravely those Galilean fields, has come the peace of God to the restless hearts of men. There is no sphere of life, no enterprise into which the vicissitudes or responsibilities of our lot may call us, but in which He is, and remains for ever, the supreme standard of judgment, thought, and conduct. 'What would Jesus do?' is still the question which in things trivial and commonplace,

as well as critical and weighty, each one of us ought daily and hourly to ask of his conscience and endeavour to answer in his practice.

In such an identification of our lives, our work and our endeavours with His mind, there is a security to be found in life and in death. We know ourselves to be safe amid the universe, since that

universe is His, and He is able to keep what we have committed to His trust. Whatever we may have to leave behind us when we pass from these temporal scenes, we may be assured that the values of Christ and the dominion of His love will still endure.¹

¹ C. L. Warr, *Scottish Sermons and Addresses*, 142.

A New Date for Jeremiah.

BY THE REVEREND T. CROUTHER GORDON, D.F.C., B.D., CLACKMANNAN.

ONE of the results of the intensive study of the great literary prophets is the truth that most of these outstanding personalities arose at the call of a national crisis. We are accustomed to believe that the hour produces the man, and certainly in the case of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel it is quite clear that they did not step upon the stage at a haphazard moment. Of no great character is it so essential to understand the historical background as of the prophet. While dealing with eternal principles, he is essentially a man of the times; and without an understanding of the times, the man loses his significance.

This means more than it seems in the matter of Palestine and the Hebrews, for the times cannot be grasped until we have made clear to ourselves the position of affairs not only inside the country, but also in the great countries that flanked either side of this little buffer State. Assyria lay on one side and Egypt on the other, and the history of Palestine is the sorry tale of a small political power that was played like a pawn in the great game of world forces, only at last to be cleared off the board. If the Netherlands was the 'cock-pit of Europe,' then assuredly Judah was the cock-pit of the East. It was really impossible for her, as she found to her cost, to free herself from entangling alliances, and if she fell at last between the two stools it was not for lack of a subtle diplomacy.

The great power that lay to the west of the Hebrews was Egypt, rich in her legendary lore and the memory of military triumphs. A hot and dusty desert divided the two countries, preserving Egypt from fulsome invasion that might have destroyed her arts, and shielding the little monarchy of Judah from unpremeditated attack. The main reason

why the Golden Age was destined to dawn in Egypt was just because she was surrounded on all sides by the desert, which was her strongest defence and best friend. The Golden Age had passed with Akhnaten, long before, but it is a remarkable fact that with the twenty-sixth Dynasty of Sais and the accession of Psammetichus a gleam of the old glory was seen again. This energetic ruler refused to remain as he had begun, a mere vassal of Assyria; and calling Ionian mercenaries to his standard he threw off the yoke of the foreigner, and within a decade, while his adversary was engaged at home in Babylon, made himself despot of the whole land of the Nile. In 610 B.C., at the end of a long reign of fifty-four years, he was able to pierce as far as Azotus in Palestine and capture it. During all this time the prestige of the country was rising, and neighbours and enemies alike were expecting great things from the phoenix-head of the resuscitating Egypt. The revenue went soaring higher each year, trade came in from every quarter of the Mediterranean, and with trade came fresh knowledge and novel ideas that agitated and aroused the people. Religion was prosperous and well patronized. A feature of the time was that a new study was made of all the old classical models of art, archaisms came into vogue, and old models became the ideals of the new sculptors. Legal documents became more precise. 'The mechanical arts of casting in bronze on a core and of moulding figures and pottery were brought to the highest pitch of excellence; and portraiture in the round on its highest plane was better than ever before and admirably lifelike, revealing careful study of the external anatomy of the individual' (*Encyc. Brit.*, ix. 87). It was at this time that the hieroglyphic