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Son, too, only through the Holy Spirit, and *vice versa*, the Holy Spirit only through the Son.' Monarchianism, however inadequate its expression or unsatisfactory its ultimate conclusions, had this merit at least, that it was an attempt to state the abiding truth that the God who creates and sustains all things is the God who makes Himself known to men in Jesus Christ and whom we experience in the Holy Spirit, and that, in the unity of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are ever doing for men what they so deeply need but what, for themselves, they cannot do.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

A Nazi Parade.

By the Reverend P. N. Bushill, B.A., Orpington.

'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'—1 Jn 1[9].

There are some strange things happening in Germany to-day. I read this the other day in *The Times*:

> Killer of Young Birds Paraded.
> Berlin, May 18.
>
> A thirteen-year-old schoolboy at Wettin, near Halle, who is stated to have taken young birds out of nesting-boxes and killed them, was taken through the streets accompanied by a drummer, with a nesting-box on his back and a placard on his chest bearing the words, 'I killed young birds.'

What a cruel punishment for that poor boy! When I read that I had a dreadful vision. I had a vision that we all had to parade in like manner through the streets of the town, each boy and each girl, yes, and each grown-up too. Before us went a drummer calling the attention of all onlookers: on our back was some symbol of our wrong-doing, and on our chest was a big placard telling forth what evil we had done. There was a girl with a big pencil on her back, and the placard in front saying, 'I took my brother's pencil.' Next was a boy with a huge stone on his back, and the placard, 'I threw a stone at a boy.' Then another boy, with a motor-horn strapped on, with this news for all to read, 'I blew the horn on a motor-car as I passed by.' Then a girl with a copy-book on her back, and the placard telling the unpleasant news, 'I looked over another girl's sums at school to-day.' Yes, and far worse things than these, things that we should not like others to know about at all. What a dreadful vision this was; and every one of us had to be there, none of us could escape, for 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.' And I thought: all these things are known to God, known as clearly as if we were being paraded down the main street.

Think again of that boy at Wettin in Germany. There would be many onlookers, and possibly some in the crowd would not be feeling very comfortable. Perhaps this boy was not the only one who had killed young birds: one can imagine another boy among the crowd who had done the very same thing, only with this difference, that he had not been found out. He would not feel very happy, would he? Probably he would not want to look at all, but would run in and shut the door. Some very cruel men once brought a woman to Jesus who had done wrong, and they said to Jesus, 'Ought not we to stone this woman to death? Did not Moses command that such should be stoned?' And what did Jesus reply? For some time He was silent, and then He said, 'Yes, you are right: it has been commanded that such should be stoned—and now he that hath not sinned himself, let him cast the first stone.' And you know what happened. They were dumb and ashamed, and they silently and shamefacedly crept out of the room. Oh, it does not do for us to criticise others, and think of the sins of others and all the wrong things other boys and girls have done.

What ought we rather to do? Why, think of our own sins and faults, and then take them to Jesus and say to Him, 'Yes, I ought to have this placard and that placard on me, for I have certainly done many wrong things: please forgive me, and help me to do better in future.' If we do that, what happens? We are told in our text: 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' He not only wipes off the writing from the placard, but He takes away the burden from our

backs, He cleanses us from all unrighteousness, and gives us grace and strength to do those things which are pleasing in His sight, and a blessing to all around us.

Guide-Books and Guides.

By the Reverend Chas. M. Hepburn, B.D., Moulin, Pitlochry.

'I will guide.'—Ps 32^8.

One of the most popular pastimes of the holiday season is hill-climbing. It can be very thrilling, but very dangerous too. Some time ago there was a sad accident on Ben Nevis. It seems that two climbers were clambering up a very steep place when they slipped, and one went tumbling down into the depths. A still worse calamity once took place in the Alps. Some tourists went out to make an ascent, but missing their way they wandered on to a dangerous pass, where the ice and snow were specially treacherous. So long were they lost that two of the party died of exposure, while a third went through a crevasse or crack, and when they got to him he was dead. But why had it happened? Well, the answer was printed in a paper in three words. It seems that pass was never used, and that the safe path was quite close by, but they went, said the newspaper, 'without a guide.'

In a sense we are climbers ourselves. As we go through life there are difficult tracks over which we must pass, and hills we need help to learn to climb. In order to travel in safety over these mountain paths there are two things we all require.

A guide-book is one. When we visit a district that is strange to us, it is usual to buy such a book to tell us where it is best to go. Well, fortunately, there is one like that for life, in which good men show us by their own experience where the safe ways are. That book is the Bible. It is God's guide-book, and the best book of guidance in the world. Some time ago there was a terrible flood in India, when the water rose to a height of seven feet in some of the houses. One Hindu gentleman who had bought a Bible did something rather unusual with it. He took his newly purchased Bible, tied it to a rope, and slung it up over a beam, saying that, if all the rest of his things were lost, he could replace them: but this book showed him the way of eternal life, so it must not be lost. Another who valued it was Charles Dickens. In the year 1868, when one of his sons was leaving home to go to Australia, Dickens wrote to him:

> 'I put a New Testament among your books . . . for it is the best book that ever was, and because it will teach you the best lessons by which any human creature, who tries to be truthful and faithful to duty, can possibly be guided.'

It was Dickens' guide-book. Is it our guide-book, and as precious to us as that?

But we need a guide, as well as a guide-book. We require a helping hand to climb the hills, some one who will be a strong companion, and who can lead us over life's rough patches. Well, as the hymn says, 'Though we are strangers, we have a good Guide.' God sent His Son, and He is the most trustworthy guide. Some time ago one of the best of the Swiss guides died, a man who accomplished great feats of climbing in the Alps, and this is what they wrote over his grave, 'He never fell.' So can we say of Jesus Christ, for Jesus Christ is a guide who never fell. You remember, perhaps, what it says in the letter to the Hebrews, that He was 'in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' Our guide is the most reliable that ever was. In our climbing we need His help. A poem on a lad who was climbing says:

> Far over the steep hillside it wound
> The path that his feet must go;
> The road that summer knew blossom-sweet,
> Now covered with ice and snow.
> And he sighed, this lad, as he strove to set
> His feet on the ice-bound track,
> 'Oh, the hardest part of climbing a hill
> Is to keep from slipping back.'

But if, as wise and sensible climbers, we rope ourselves to the Master Guide, Jesus Christ, we may sometimes through our own fault stumble, but we won't slip back, for Jesus Christ who never fell is strong enough to bear us up and carry us through.

The Christian Year.

Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Harvest.

'In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.'—Ec 11^6.

'In the morning sow thy seed.' This is a message to the young—to those who are in the cool, clear dawnlight of their life. The world for them is not peopled with anxieties, cares, and

regrets. They are living in the morning light of life's untold possibility. Nothing seems beyond their reach, if they desire to attain it; nothing seems beyond their powers, if they determine to accomplish it. It means nothing to say the world is cold and cruel—shadowed with countless sins and crowded with myriad dangers. To these it is a fair, true world, where there are strong hands and warm hearts and throbbing joys. Whatever the world has denied to others, it is going to give to them love and faith and loyalty. It is going to welcome their enthusiasms, to foster their hopes, and to deal kindly with their dreams. Life has given them its word—and it will keep faith with them. They have its promise, and they cannot look upon it standing before them lowly, gracious, suggestive, captivating, and say to its face that it is lying. Of course they cannot. And if they did they would be doing life a terrible injustice. People say that life has failed them; when the real truth of the matter is that they have failed it. The great opportunity that men call human life is not fickle, elusive, and treacherous, as some would have us believe. At the very core of it there is love that cannot fail, justice that cannot be unjust, law that must enforce itself.

The mistake that so many people make is that they look upon the promise of life one-sidedly. They do not realize that life cannot keep faith with those who break faith with it. Life, as it comes to a young heart, does not merely say, 'I have come to make you a promise.' It says, 'I have come to ask you to enter into a pact, an agreement; and if you will keep faith, I will.' The earth yields according to the seed that is sown therein. No man would ask us to sympathize with him for his bare fields—looking all the barer in contrast to his neighbour's sweep of corn—if he had idled away the seed-time. The farmer has to keep faith with the land, with the laws of life, with Nature, with Nature's God. Therefore, 'In the morning sow thy seed.' Do not laugh and dream away those precious sunlit hours. There is real and serious work to be done. We think of life as getting more and more responsible as the years pass by. We think that life has a right to demand more of middle age than it demands of youth, and there is a sense in which that is a true view. But it does not represent the whole truth. We are continually recognizing the value of beginnings.

So we should look on life. It is ours to-day—whole and beautiful. It is worth more as a possibility now than it will ever be worth again. How are we going to make the most of it? Under the familiar figure of the sower and his seed-basket, the text says to those who stand in the sunlit fields of youth, 'In the morning sow thy seed.' Do not look down the length of years, and wonder what may be; look at to-day, and decide what shall be.

The morning is the best time to work, but youthful years have a meaning and a value that enter into and affect the years that follow. There is never a day in the longest life when the foolish, wasteful, sinful soul may not turn to God, but no man can consecrate his past save by consecrating his present. If he sow the seeds of faith and prayer and obedience day by day, God shall answer him now and in the coming years more fully than He could if he came to Him in the noontide or the shadows of the evening, with the story of a wasted morning.

'In the evening withhold not thine hand.' As we read the second part of the text, the scene changes. We have been watching the daylight flood the earth—have heard the song-birds, and felt the breeze from the sparkling meadows. Now the light is failing, and the failing light often means a failing spirit. For some of us the morning is only a memory now. We meant to have lived finely and bravely; but the world has often dragged us down to the level of its aims and its sins, and there is no lash in life more sharp and merciless than the memory of wasted years.

Still the opportunity of life is as long as life itself. 'In the evening withhold not thine hand.' That is another way of saying, 'Do not give yourself up as a bad job.' To hope on when so many hopes lie unfulfilled; to turn again, seek for peace, and self-conquest, and the unworldly view, when the past is full of the story of unrest, and moral failure, and worldliness of purpose—this is a hard counsel to follow; but it is perfectly possible and absolutely sound. So many accept their failure as inevitable and final. They lie where they have fallen without making any attempt to get on their feet again. Many a man is saying to himself to-day, 'Ah, well, I have had my chance like the rest. And I've missed it. If only I could go back and begin all over again, but it is too late now.' It is true, things do not look promising, and there is not so much time; but there is the voice which says, 'In the evening withhold not thine hand.' The inspiration of youth, of novelty, of physical and mental freshness has passed away; but the real inspiration of life is still ours, even the word and the Spirit of the Lord of the harvest. It is never too late to make a fresh start. It is always infinitely worth while to come to Christ and to

make a plea and a promise at the foot of His Cross.

Can it be true, the grace He is declaring?
Oh let us trust Him, for His words are fair!
Man, what is this, and why art thou despairing?
God shall forgive thee all but thy despair.

'Withhold not thine hand.' Part of the battle of life for us all is against sheer weariness of spirit. There is that besetment of our life. We have been sowing the seeds of resistance—only to see the promising ears of victory blighted or broken down by the storm. There is that grace of character that we know we need. We have sown so much seed of prayer and patience and effort; and yet we are not what we ought to be or what we hoped to be. It is so easy to begin, but so hard to keep on.

Dr. Jowett, in *The Friend on the Road*, says that Lady Jeune once asked Mr. Joseph Chamberlain why, in his opinion, so many men fall short of their ambition. And Mr. Chamberlain answered: 'They come to the place where they turn back. They may have killed the dragon at the first bridge, and at the second, perhaps even at the third, but the dragons are always more formidable the further we go. Many turn back disheartened, and very few will meet the monsters to the end. Almost none is willing to have a try with the demon at the last bridge; but, if he does, he has won for ever.'

Some of us are workers for God and can look back over years of service. But across our enthusiasms, our hopes, and our resolutions there creeps the shadows of monotony, and of partial disappointment, and of dissatisfaction. 'I've done enough now,' says one. 'It is the turn of a younger life.' Yes, but it is our turn still. Life never loses its meaning, its value, or its urgency. Every hour we are face to face with life's infinite possibility. So, then, let us take this twofold message, that embraces life from dawn to dusk, and go forth, young and old alike, to toil hopefully and faithfully in the field of life—believing in that harvest that shall one day be reaped by the angels.[1]

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Supreme Demand.

'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.'—Mt 6^{33}.

The function of Christianity in the State is to preach and teach God as He was revealed in Christ, to grow in understanding of His will and kingdom, and to make His purpose the guiding law of all life everywhere. All worship and devotion, all forms of church life and work, all evangelism, all missionary effort must lead up to that. The function of religion is, therefore, essentially spiritual, that is to say, it is concerned with teaching men about God and bringing their lives and institutions into a definite relationship with Him. In fact, the summed-up message of religion to men is, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.'

Now, besetting the path of religion there are two supreme dangers, two real heresies which, when either is accepted, destroy the soul of the faith. The first may perhaps be called the danger of a narrow and perverted spirituality.

In this interpretation, religion is concerned merely with the intangible; its ministry is exclusively to the disposition of the soul. If it does attend to physical needs at all it must be in the guise of a tender-hearted charity. It must not enter into the sphere of legislation. 'You must keep your religion apart from politics and economics' is the cry of this belief. 'Your religion will be contaminated in that press of the world's life where men bargain and compromise, where tricks and subtleties abound on every side.'

The Bishop of Croydon writes in *A Faith that Works* (p. 14): 'At a certain conference, at which the writer was present, where the relation of religion and labour was being discussed, one after another of the working people there got up and said, without any bitterness, that they had left the Church because it seemed to care so little for social righteousness. Such people are impatient with a creed which seems so to concentrate on the Jerusalem above as to shut its eyes entirely to the slums below.'

There is nothing that the evil interests in life desire more than that religion should remain a closed-in section of life apart from the rest. Yet, in spite of that, it is astounding how many people there are who think that this is the highest form of the religious life. 'How unworldly,' they say, 'how beautiful!' Even although they are not made of that stuff themselves, and have no intention of trying to resemble it, their admiration is given to a spirituality remote from life.

Now, if we examine God's methods of working, we shall find that there is no place in His universe for this conception of things. God's world has coarse things in it, lower appeals, sense and selfishness enter into it, the body has a place as well as

[1] P. C. Ainsworth, *A Thornless World*, 136.

the soul, and the only way for that world to be redeemed is for the Highest to enter in unafraid, to capture all things and lift them to a new plane. This is the inner secret of Christian doctrine. Flesh sinks into corruption, the taint of the world spreads, so in answer the Word of God takes flesh and lives in the world. God's Spirit does not shun flesh, it takes it; it does not stand aside, it clothes itself in the very thing which others are turning to a wrong and shameful use.

Surely that great light shows the way for us. We want a better world, we sigh over its failures, its brutality, and coarseness. We must go into that world to save it, love must take us there and keep us there. We want a new kind of political life. The only way to get it is to become a politician. We want economics which regard life as the supreme wealth. We must go into business life where the temptations to the opposite view are met. We want a new earth. We must live in the midstream of life and help to create it. We may keep our hands unsoiled, but we shall leave the world untouched. There is no other way to save than by sharing in the thing which needs saving.

That, then, is the first peril which besets religion, a narrow and perverted spirituality. The second danger is of an opposite kind, and we may call it the danger of a refined materialism. In this view of things, religion is identified with the struggle to improve the outward conditions of life, and no place at all is found for the spiritual aspect of things. Human duty becomes a matter of increasing the outward conditions of happiness and lessening the domain of pain, but beyond that religion has little or no reality at all.

Now let us beware of a reaction of this kind. Religion has a great deal yet to do in inspiring social justice and righteousness, but its power to do so will decline from the very moment when the spiritual side of its message fades into unreality. Lose the thought of man's sonship to God, of his sin and need of redemption, of his immortality and God's great love for the world, and immediately power is lost. We may wipe away the slums and build better houses for the people, but our problem of 'the man in the slum' leaves us with a greater problem of 'the slum in the man.' We may redistribute the wealth of the nation, but we are still left with the greed for material things which makes men grasping and cruel.

Dr. Maynard Smith, in his Biography of Frank Weston, Bishop of Zanzibar, tells this incident of the Bishop's early life. 'He was sitting one night at Oxford with a Don and enlarging on his schemes for a millennium, when the Don asked with apparent irrelevance: "Do you believe in the heavenly Jerusalem?" "Yes," replied Weston. "Ah," said the Don, "I wish I did, and if I did I don't think I should talk much about anything else." The words went home and were remembered. Frank remained a Socialist all his life, but he put spiritual things first. He became more and more convinced that it was only through directing men's attention to the heavenly Jerusalem that real human progress in this world could be made.'

No programme of social reform or of new international relationships can take the place of the gospel of human redemption. At every turn of the road we find that human need calls out for God. This truth, perhaps, is not popular to-day, but that means there is all the more need for us to keep it uppermost in our thoughts. And although it is not popular, the tendencies of modern life make an insistent demand for it. The great problem of the future is going to be how to introduce into the efforts of men some kind of unity of purpose and motive. The prospect before us is struggle and strife unless we can all find together a common motive for the new ordering of society. Can we work together instead of working against each other? That is the greatest question of all, and we see no hope except in a new religious enthusiasm.

Now, it is here that we come into direct contact with the Word of Christ. What did He mean when He said, 'Seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you'? He promised that the true ordering of life would follow the true ideal of life. Was that merely a promise made to the individual soul? Far from it. We shall never understand the depths of truth which our Lord was teaching unless we read it in the light of a divine proclamation to the whole world.

It is in this interpretation that His message comes right to the doors of man's need to-day. The ordering of society which we desire and need will follow a common search for God's kingdom, and it will come by no other way. The cares and anxieties of men, the longing for a true life guarded from want and insecurity will never be settled while life remains a conflict between different sections. The burden may shift from one part of the community to another, but the burden itself will remain. There is only one way out. It is for all men to join together in a common purpose

to build the greater kingdom, to act together, to fight injustice together, to enlarge life's resources together. Then, if friction arises it will not be left merely for the aggrieved to seek a remedy, it will act like a challenge to all men. As it is, the world leaves these things to agitators, and strikes before it even tries to secure a settlement.

The man of the world thinks in his heart of hearts to-day that he can safely leave religion on one side. He toys with it by giving a few subscriptions, but he does not reckon with it as a power. That habit of mind is going to change altogether. We have yet to learn that apart from God the world is lost, and that the only path of salvation is to be found in a return to Him. This was Christ's challenge to the world. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God,' He says, 'and all these things shall be added unto you.' What other spirit can do that for us? There is none. These struggles of the material world are not everything. Man does not live by bread alone, he lives by that Word of God which speaks in his own mind and heart as well as through the lips of others.

A world from which the reality of God has faded is on the way to disaster. A world which has God enthroned in a living faith and worship and service is safe despite all its problems. Seek all the other things in life and the result will be barren. Seek God and His kingdom first, and they shall be added. It is for the Church of Christ to keep that truth to the forefront amid the needs of to-day; it is for the members of every Church to be true to it in the life of their own souls.[1]

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Two Standpoints.

'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.'—Ec 11^{9}.

There are two distinct standpoints from which we may regard life: that of the Optimist, who lays stress on the good, of which there is much, and that of the Pessimist, who lays stress on the evil. Both are familiar to us in literature, and, probably, in experience: there have been times when we have rejoiced in our youth; there have been times when we have complained with the Patriarch, 'few and evil are the days of my pilgrimage.' Edwin Markham has wrought into his poem, *Take your Choice*, the opposing moods and different beliefs which contend for supremacy to-day:

On the bough of the rose-tree is the prickling briar;
The delicate lily must live in the mire;
The hues of the butterfly go at a breath;
At the end of the road is the house of death.

Nay, nay! On the briar is the delicate rose;
In the mire of the river the lily blows;
The moth is as fair as the flower of the sod;
At the end of the road is a door to God!

Each standpoint represents one side or aspect of the facts; and, if we will see them steadily and whole, must be supplemented by the other. The text unites them—'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes': here is the one side. And here is the other: 'Know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment,' *i.e.* not condemn, or punish; but search, try, scrutinize—as a Father the actions of his children; awarding, according to their deserts, praise or blame, the object of the process being—may we not suppose?—to perfect the good work which He has begun in us unto the day of Jesus Christ.

We are accustomed to associate the Optimist standpoint with the golden age of Greek antiquity. Generalizations of this kind are seldom quite accurate: there is an underlying note of sadness in Greek thought and feeling which the student will not miss. But, speaking roughly, the association may be admitted. The world was young; the bloom of Hellenic civilization, though short-lived, was intense and exquisite; the discord between man and Nature was imperfectly, if at all, realized; it could be overcome, it seemed, by intellectual effort, and the harmony of existence restored. So men dwelt on the joy of life, and threw themselves into its interests—knowledge, letters, industry, the arts of peace and of war. The after- or under-world was far away: they pictured it as a realm of thin, cold shades, neither wholly dead, nor wholly living, gliding through dusky air between light and darkness, and gibbering with faint ghost-like voices. The mistake is to regard this attitude as peculiar to any one people or period. Nowhere, perhaps, is it more unmistakably present than in the Old Testament. The Hebrew was a man of this world, not of a world out of sight and hearing. God's promises, as he represented them to himself, were present and temporal:

[1] S. M. Berry, *The Crucible of Experience*, 190.

'That thy days may be long in the land': that the Lord may 'give you the former rain and the latter rain.' And, as for the horror of darkness beyond, where does it find more vivid expression than in this very book, Ecclesiastes? 'The dead know nothing more, neither have they a reward any more, for the memory of them is forgotten, their love also and their hatred and their envy are perished: neither have they any part in this world and in the work that is done under the sun.'

The point of view is in fact psychological. It is natural to the young, in whom hope is buoyant, and the pulse of physical life beats strong: natural, also, at certain periods in the world's history, when life seems to have expanded before men's eyes and opened up new possibilities of adventure and achievement. Such a period was that of Greece at its best, when the world, as yet unexplored, lay open before the eager human spirit: such was that of the Renaissance, when the long night of the Middle Ages had spent itself, and the buried civilizations of antiquity been brought again to light: such, too, is our own time: a time perhaps uniquely fertile, inventive, resourceful, critical; which in its most distinctive product, the historical method, has given us the key to so many of the riddles of the world.

The Pessimist standpoint dwells upon the sorrows of life, its dangers spiritual and temporal, its shortness, its unreality, its sense of impending doom. This was the feeling which, in the first days of Christianity, peopled the hermitages of Syria and Egypt; and, later, the cloisters of the Middle Ages. Men fled from the world of daily life as from some strange and hostile presence, and would have neither part nor lot in it. 'Come out of her, and be ye separate, my people.'

It need not detract either from the truth which this view of life contains, or from the sacred associations in which, for us as Christians, it is enshrined, to find that it, like the other, has a natural or psychological basis. It is natural to those who have failed in life—and to the old, from whose eyes the world is fading; natural, too, at certain times in history when life has been—as it may be again—hard and grievous, a thing rather for endurance than for joy. This is why we associate it with Christianity, especially in its early days.

Yet it is possible to carry this temper too far. It is good, in so far as it raises our thoughts above the things of time—to which we are so apt to surrender ourselves blindly, not discerning their real significance; taking them not for means, which they are, but for ends, which they are not: but mischievous if it overlooks the fact that it is by the use of these things that we are to rise to that which is beyond, yet latent and implicit in them; if it paralyses effort, and makes us go through life inert and listless. He takes all from God who offers Him a half service: if heaven be His throne, earth is His footstool:

The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein.

This, however, for those of us who are the children of our time, is scarcely the danger: this lies in another direction. Seldom, if ever, has life been so full as we find it. The world is widening before us almost visibly; horizons undreamed of before are disclosing themselves: we feel 'it is good for us to be here.' And the voice of the preacher, telling of better things to come, strikes a jarring note.

You promise heavens free from strife,
Pure truth, and perfect change of will;
But sweet, sweet, is this human life;
So sweet I fain would breathe it still.
Your chilly stars I can forgo;
This warm, kind world is all I know.

You say there is no substance here;
One great reality above:
Back from that void I shrink in fear,
And, childlike, hide myself in love,
Show me what angels feel: till then
I cling, a more weak man, to men.

Could we live on this life for ever, this position, for aught we know, might be tenable. The world is a pleasant place for those on whom its good things are lavished—health, friends, leisure, a sufficiency of means—and the like. Ascetics tell us that even so after a time we should weary of it and pray for death to release us: we do not know. But this we can and will say: that, whatever may be urged on its own ground for the hedonistic view of life, the certainty of death vetoes it absolutely, irrevocably, and brings us to a halt.

Determined are the days that fly
Successive o'er thy head;
The numbered hour is on the wing
That lays thee with the dead.

This is the answer to the *animalis homo*, and it is a sufficient one: 'I see that all things come to an end.' If it be true, as we have seen, that we cannot live for the world to come unless we live,

and live strenuously, for this world, it is also and equally true that we cannot live rightly for this world unless we have the other world in view. 'So teach us,' then, 'to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.' [1]

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Study of Jesus and the Christ.

'But ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus.'—Eph $4^{20f.}$ (R.V.).

Here we have laid down two subjects of study. They are two, and not one only, though one is always the presupposition and the test of the other; and they are not alternatives; they must both be taken up by all. The one is the learning of the Christ, the other that of truth as it is in Jesus: the message of the Christ as based upon the historic life of Jesus.

We are often told that St. Paul knew little and cared little for the historic life; that to him the Risen Christ was all in all. This, surely, is a mistake. Remember only how careful St. Paul is to quote definite commands of the Lord, where they could be had, as about divorce or the maintenance of those who preach the gospel, 'Not I, but the Lord'; think what is implied of knowledge of the earthly life in the appeal to 'the meekness and large heartedness' of the Christ as the example which he wished to imitate; or if we may give more free play to our imagination, picture to yourself what fifteen days spent on a stay in Jerusalem, when the one object was to visit Peter, would imply; how on some long missionary walk in Cyprus, John Mark would make the time pass with recollections of all that had happened in his mother's house at Jerusalem; or, at a later time, how the beloved physician, as he watched his patient recovering from an attack of the thorn in the flesh, might tell the stories of healing which he was collecting for his gospel.

1. The first subject of study, then, is the historic life of Jesus of Nazareth.

We may be quite sure that Jesus lived a life which was at every moment a life of belief in God and in man; belief in God as a Father, always trustable, however dark the outlook might be, always lovable, always fatherly, however much He might discipline or teach obedience by suffering; belief in man, always lovable as man, the Father's child, however much the lovableness may be overlaid; always forgivable, however deep the sinfulness; always curable, however bad the disease; always immortal, though held for a while by death. It was always a life guided by a sense of mission, always a life devoted to service; always a life which can become a source of inspiration to others. All this is part of truth as it is in Jesus; and as we look out on the distractions of the world at the present moment, as we realize how lukewarm is the interest in missionary work, we need to go back again and again upon these fundamental truths.

2. What, then, is the learning of the Christ? It is the learning of the extension of the work of Jesus of Nazareth in His Church; of the Head in the Body; of the Inspirer in those who caught His spirit.

Here and there in the Old Testament the whole nation of Israel seems to be spoken of as the 'Lord's Anointed'; and as the conception of the suffering servant of the Lord seems to have narrowed down to Isaiah's vision from the whole suffering nation to the righteous remnant, and then to one great Sufferer, so after that Sufferer had appeared it had to widen out; it had to find a wider fulfilment in the small band of His followers, until it shall in time embrace the whole of humanity.

In the learning of this lesson we may notice three stages which were learnt in the first age, and which still have to be learnt by all:

(1) The first is the ethical tone of 'the Christ.' To become a member of the Christ a moral uplift was necessary; to pass from personal and racial divisions and hatred, from a low personal morality to a life which should imitate the kindness of God our Saviour and His love towards man, and so 'to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be gentle, showing *all* meekness toward *all* men.' That is the witness of one who had himself gone through the change, and that is the main thought in the text. 'But ye did not so learn Christ . . . that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the new man.'

(2) The second lesson is the scope of 'the Christ.' The Acts of the Apostles is the account of the gradual way in which this lesson was learnt—first the Samaritans—half-Jew by birth and half-Jew by religion—then the Ethiopian eunuch and the Roman centurion—the one coming to Jerusalem to worship and wanting to know the meaning of suffering, the other giving alms freely and praying to God always—both half-Jew in religion, though aliens by birth—then, lastly, the Gentiles—wholly alien in religion and in birth. All who felt the attraction of the truth as it was in

[1] A. Fawkes, *The Church a Necessary Evil*, 104.

Jesus were welcomed, and ultimately welcomed to entire equality in spiritual privilege. All are parts of the Christ, so that to wound the conscience of the weakest brother is to sin against Christ. And this, too, was according to truth as it was in Jesus, who, however much He had limited the scope of His own work, had always treated each man as God's child without reference to Jewish privilege.

(3) There is yet another lesson to be learnt, the attitude of the Christian Body to truth itself. What were they to say to the religions around them? This was a more difficult lesson, and admitted of no simple answer; but from the first they saw that God had not left Himself without witness anywhere, that their task was to announce and make clear what others worshipped in ignorance. They found the citizens of the Roman Empire looking to their Emperor as God and Saviour; that would prepare them for the true attitude to Jesus, and they pointed them to the great God and Saviour of all men. They saw many of them finding religion in the sense of brotherhood by joining some mystery-religion which offered them purification and immortality and knit them together by common meals and by union with some God or mythical hero; and they showed how all these truths were embodied, without any sense of magic and with purity of worship, in the union with an historic Person. Or, again, they found a high moral standard of self-control, self-mastery, dignity, orderliness, usefulness, enforced by the Stoic Teachers, and they pressed these on their converts as the complement of the deeper Christian triad of faith, hope, and love. A comparison of the teaching of the Pastoral Epistles with that of Epictetus or M. Aurelius is illuminating in this respect.

This was loyal to the truth as it was in Jesus, who had promised that His Spirit should lead them on their way to recognize the Truth wherever it was found. This lesson, too, we still need to learn; in our attitude to other religions we are bound to emphasize their weaknesses and failures, but this should not be all that we do. When we are told that an African who becomes a convert to Muhammadanism finds himself welcomed more as a brother than one who becomes a Christian, have we not yet to learn from Muhammadanism what 'the Christ' implies? When we contrast the Hindu's power of restful absorption in the thought of his God with the restless materialism of many Christians, is there not a side of the Divine Nature and of its reflection in man which they may contribute to us?

Thus far we have spoken of 'the *truth* in Jesus' as if it were only the revelation of that which satisfies the intellect, but it may well be that a deeper meaning lies in the word which would correspond more with our word 'Reality.' The Christ has to be consistent, not merely with truth of doctrine, but with reality of life. Life has to become no plaything, no passing pageant, but consciously real, consciously eternal. For when do we feel that a thing is perfectly real? Is it not when some word is spoken, or some deed is done, which goes right home to the centre of our personality, when some incident of love or of sorrow makes these words have a far deeper meaning than we had ever conceived, and yet we feel immediately and instinctively that this is no individual truth or blessing for ourselves? It touches the depths of all human nature; we feel that it is universal, that it is eternal, that it has come to us from outside, from above.

> How sure it is
> That if we say a true word, instantly
> We feel 'tis God's, not ours, and pass it on,
> Like bread at sacrament we taste and pass,
> Nor handle for a moment, as, indeed,
> We dared to set up any claim to such.

And such were the words, and such were the actions of Jesus of Nazareth.

In a letter written by a missionary in Central Africa there are these words: 'It is at the sight of the eternal mountains that the Infinitely High seems Infinitely Nigh.' Does not that give us a description, almost a definition, of Reality? We are in the Presence of Reality when the Infinitely High draws Infinitely Nigh.

As Dr. Hort says, 'The life thus given was a life in God. It rested on the feeling that the Father in heaven who once had seemed so distant had now been brought nigh to those who looked for Him. The sense of this nearness was the highest condition of life.'

So the reality that was in Jesus: the reality of a perfect human life with a sense of mission, with service of others as its chief characteristic, passes into the Christ and makes each member of the body able to live a real life; as he realizes God's purposes for him, as he finds the happiness of work and service he knows that life is real; he feels that it must be, and he is eager that it should be, eternal.

These are the two subjects of study, but, as with the Apostles, they are approached still in different order. Some have learnt from their childhood the

story of the truth in Jesus; He became for them the Teacher, the Master, the Saviour; they have to go and learn the Christ that He was, and they in union with Him are bound together in a Church, to preserve the ideal of brotherhood and to guide Humanity into the fullness of its destiny. Others in riper years have been attracted to the Church's work in the world; and see in it the truest opportunity of service to mankind. To them Christ, Christianity, Christendom are the watchwords rather than Jesus of Nazareth; but they, too, must keep their ideals and their plans true to His historic life; they must learn of Him the meekness and gentleness, the love, which alone can introduce true reality into their own lives.[1]

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Marriage-Feast.

'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.'—Mt 22^2.

1. Towards the end of the First Part of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, when Christian and Hopeful are safely over the River, they are sped by the Shining Ones to their journey's end, and amid the blowing of trumpets and pealing of joy-bells are welcomed by a heavenly host into the city of God. The Dreamer looks in after them with longing eyes at that sunny, golden place, and says in well-remembered words, 'Which when I had seen, I wished myself among them.' It was to stir some such yearning in men's hearts that Jesus drew His pictures of all God has to offer to the soul of man. 'A certain king,' He says here, holding out to needful men the wealth and splendour of the Divine resources. We remember the prodigality of Nature—the 'immeasurable laughter' of the sea, as a Greek poet has it, the endless beauty of the earth, and how the sun pours down upon it a hundred million times more light than it can take. He whose name from of old is Redeemer works on that lavish, opulent scale.

And this King, the story goes, had a 'feast' prepared, and the word is plural, signifying a celebration lasting perhaps as long as a week. Joy and satisfaction and fellowship continuing from day to day—this was religion as Jesus knew it, a thing of happy faces and constant gladness and fulfilment. 'A marriage-feast,' He says, envisaging an occasion of peculiar happiness when two hearts, made one, put on their crown of joy. The festival in the parable is there to celebrate the marriage of the King's Son, and men are bidden to lift up their hearts and rejoice because Jesus Christ has made common cause with mankind. How vivid the word 'marriage' in this sense has become since the Teller of the story sealed the bond on Calvary where, as W. R. Maltby says, 'He betrothed Himself for ever to the human race.' 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?' The anxiety of the King that not a guest should miss the feast is evident in his urgent and repeated invitations. Time and again the messengers go forth calling and pleading, and we cannot but think at once of the grave and earnest voices, some whispering, some crying aloud, that all through our lives have besought us to give heed to God.

. . . I
Have had my times when, though the earth did wear
Her selfsame trees and grasses, I could see
The revelation that is always there,
But somehow is not always clear to me.

Above all, we have only to look at the face of Jesus Christ to see to what lengths the beseeching of God will go—no stone unturned, no labour of love undone, no pain too hard to bear—if only we will come.

2. There, then, on the one hand are set the goodness of God in all its amplitude and availableness, and the intensity of His desire that the whole human situation should be met, and, on the other hand, the incredible indifference of which mankind is capable. 'They made light of it!' So great is the power of the things that are seen to preoccupy the heart of man. Some concern for these things is legitimate enough. The work of the world must go on. It is all a question of perspective. Our great need is a decisive sense of values.

O purblind race of miserable men,
How many among us at this very hour
Do forge a life-long trouble for ourselves
By taking true for false, or false for true!

The doom of destruction visited upon guests whose one offence was that they declined, though flippantly, an invitation to a feast, may seem excessive and unfair; but Jesus has in mind the fearful retribution He sees coming to engulf the Holy City. That doom He views not as the retaliation of God, but as the solemn penalty that sin works out for itself in a moral universe. He is speaking in full view of the Cross. His words in

[1] W. Lock, *Oxford Sermons*, 12.

that last week of His life have a stern and peremptory ring. But moral stringency did not suddenly betray itself in His voice because death drew near. He was always telling men that to leave God out of one's life spells disaster in the end. He spoke of 'the light that is in thee,' and we all *know* that love is better than hatred, that kindness is better than selfishness, and that honour is better than treachery. We all have some kind of conscience, the secret voice that protests when, knowing the better way, we choose the worse. But it is possible to stifle that protest, to go on ignoring it, until, this being a world where one thing leads inexorably to another, the guiding voice is silent, so that a man does with ease what once he would have shuddered at. That surely is a haunting passage at the end of *Romola*, where a noble woman looks back on the life of the husband who had wronged her. 'There was a man to whom I was very near, so that I could see a great deal of his life, who made almost every one fond of him, for he was young, and clever, and beautiful, and his manners to all were gentle and kind. I believe, when I first knew him, he never thought of anything cruel or base. But because he tried to slip away from everything that was unpleasant . . . he came at last to commit some of the basest deeds—such as make men infamous.' 'He abhorreth not evil,' says a psalmist of the last phase in a soul's undoing; and Jesus said, 'If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness.'

Nor must we ever forget that the choice is left with us. The King issues an invitation, not a command. Once, John tells us, a strange sound was heard at a critical moment in Christ's life, and adds that some imagined it was a distant rumble of thunder, others that it was an angel's voice. It is a solemn thing to think how it is laid upon us to say whether the longings and compunctions that visit us at times are the very voice of God, or are due to what we call natural causes. When men came to Jesus with a question, how often He pressed it home upon themselves for answer! 'Who is my neighbour?' for instance, a scribe once asked, and it is as if Jesus said to him, 'Now, I am going to tell you a story, and meanwhile you will be making up your mind.' Then follows the tale of the Good Samaritan, whereupon Jesus puts the man's own query to him, 'Well, now, which of them was neighbour?' It was characteristic of Him to say, as He must have said often, 'How think ye?' 'Why judge ye not yourselves what is right?' God confirms, corroborates, supports, and blesses our judgment when it is given. He will leave nothing undone to assist our decision, but the 'Yes' or 'No' is for us to say.[1]

[1] A. W. Burnet, in *British Preachers*, iii. 133.

Treasures of Chance and Choice.

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Chance is the luck of life—and who will deny the reality of that factor in all success?—while choice is the lore of using what life may offer. The one is a door opened by circumstances; the other, mastery in face of varying circumstances, wielded from within our own experience.

It is the reality of choice in this sense of a 'mastery of one's fate' that constitutes ethics. Despite the insistence of such an authority as Aristotle that ethics is a science which aims at knowledge, not an art which shall determine action, one cannot but agree with the older teacher of Justice—or should we, with Mr. H. A. Pritchard, render the subject of inquiry in *The Republic*, righteousness? 'Our discussion,' declares Socrates, 'is not concerned with the trivial and chancy, but with the right and proper manner of living.' And the ground of that is certainly the sovereign authority and reality of human choice.

Chance, however, must also be taken into account in any sane and practical philosophy of life. The sudden break in the even tenor, and often humdrum routine, of existence is likewise a reality. It must be grasped firmly and without hesitation, for such an opportunity, as the wisdom of this world continually reminds us, will not occur again. Choice itself is largely the art of seizing this elusive opportunity and wresting its blessing from its quick hands.

So choice is as consistent and watchful a lore as chance is sudden and elusive an interposition. 'Well-living,' as Plato calls this lore, is the reward