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In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

'Dull as Ditchwater!'

By the Reverend Stuart Robertson, M.A., Lisbon.

'Oh that men would praise the Lord . . . for his wonderful works!'—Ps 107[8].

Everybody hates dullness. We like people and places to be interesting, and the worst thing we can say of any of them is that he, or it, is dull. When we have said it we don't stop there, but usually add, 'as . . . (something)'—just to indicate how dull.

I find that 'dull' is connected with an old word meaning 'to lead astray,' and that 'dull' itself originally meant 'foolish'; and how foolish we are, and how far astray when we call any one or anything dull is often revealed by the thing we choose to define dullness.

In *The Merchant of Venice* Lorenzo says, 'dull as night.' But is night dull? Night! that brings a million stars into sight! That shows Saturn with his rings, red Mars, The Milky Way, and The Pleiades, 'like a swarm of fireflies tangled in a silver braid'! That shows us the moon, once worshipped as a goddess, crescent like a golden skiff among the clouds, or in full-orbed glory! Night, that poets have sung, that brings rest to the weary, and sleep to the sorrowful! Dull! If any man calls night dull, the dullness is in himself.

A poet singing the praises of the sea speaks of the 'dull, tame shore'! Children don't find the sands dull. They can be there all day and never weary. Artists and photographers don't find waves and crags dull. Golfers don't find seaside links dull. The treasures of the shore are exhaustless—the beauty of shells, the marvels of rock and pool. 'The dull, tame shore, indeed! Be the shore sand or cliff, the one thing it is not is dull.

Most common of all sayings is 'dull as ditchwater.' We have all said it, and never realized what a foolish thing we were saying. Ditchwater, if you stop to look at it and into it, is marvellous. On its surface long-legged skaters skim to and fro amazingly. In its depths water-beetles dive and swoop like submarines. Weird, jointed things with horrible nippers play the pirate. With luck you may see the bell of a diving spider, and watch him stocking its silken walls with silver air-bubbles, or see a dragon-fly larva climb out of the water up a reed, split down the back, and out of it come a dragon-fly which soon spreads its iridescent wings and flashes away like a stray bit of rainbow. Even a drop of ditchwater is a tiny universe. Hans Andersen tells of a philosopher, Kribble-Krabble by name, who let a friend look through his microscope. He was hugely amused at what he saw. 'It is very dull,' he said. 'Yes,' said Kribble-Krabble, but 'what do you think it is?' 'It is easy to guess,' said the other, 'it is either Paris, or some large town—they are all alike. It is a capital, of course.' 'It is ditchwater,' said Kribble-Krabble. I think Kribble-Krabble was just Hans Andersen, who found interest where others found only dullness, and wrote delightfully about flour and buck-wheat and wild irises, and snails under a burdock leaf.

Take care what you call dull lest you be only writing yourself down as dull and foolish and blind: for dullness is not in people or places or things so often as it is in ourselves. Burns didn't find an Ayrshire cottage and a ploughman's toil dull: he found matter for great poetry there. People talk of dull London suburbs, but Browning wrote his poems in Clapham. Barrie found something to write about in dull little Kirriemuir. Charlotte Brontë wrote her books in a country parsonage in a humdrum Yorkshire village. John Galt made a famous book, *The Annals of a Parish*, out of a little corner in Ayrshire where you would say nothing ever happened. Jane Austen wrote her best books in Chawton, which certainly sounds dull, and is so insignificant that I cannot find it in atlas or gazetteer.

But more than all this. Jesus lived for thirty years in a little Galilean village. Jerusalem sneered at Galilee, and the other Galilean villages sneered at Nazareth, and said that nothing good could come out of it. I've no doubt plenty people thought Nazareth dull, but I'm certain Jesus never did. He found there the stuff of His parables—farmers ploughing, sowing, reaping, mothers patching children's clothes, children playing their games, labourers being hired, housewives baking, the fuss over a lost sixpence, fishermen at their nets, mending, fishing, lamps, seeds, marriages, festivals, funerals, all the common happenings of a little place. Nothing, nobody, was dull to Jesus. Why?

He loved this world of men and everybody in it. Look through eyes that are intelligent, and even ditchwater isn't dull. Look through a lens and even a drop of ditchwater is as vast and interesting as London. Look through the eyes of love and you'll

find something worth finding in everybody. Learn from Jesus to look with His eyes and you'll find God everywhere and good in every one. Above all, you'll never make the awful mistake of thinking holiness humdrum and goodness as 'dull as ditch-water.'

Called by his Name.

By the Reverend R. F. Calder, B.A., B.D., Glasgow.

'We are called by thy name.'—Jer 14[9].

Many of you may have heard of the name of that great thinker and writer, Thomas Carlyle. He married a very clever lady called Jane Welsh, and she has told us an interesting story of her childhood which I want to tell you.

When she was nine years old she fell in love with the Romans. She was at this early age already reading Latin books, and she thought that the Romans of which they told were great and heroic people. 'Would I prevent myself,' she wrote afterwards 'from doing a selfish or cowardly thing, I didn't say to myself, "You mustn't; if you do, God will punish you": nor yet, "If you do, you will be whipt": but I said to myself simply and grandly, "A Roman wouldn't have done it!" That was sufficient under ordinary temptations.'

Once too, she tells us, when in her early childhood an angry gander hissed at her, instead of running away, she bravely seized the gander by the neck and turned him right about. All that day she went about with her head high, saying to herself, 'A Roman would have done so.'

Some years ago a German ship with over five hundred people on board was sinking, swamped by heavy seas, off the north-west coast of Spain. Wild and high rose the clamour of the terrified passengers, some of whom leaped into the raging waters before help could be brought.

In the midst of this awful scene one man at least was calm, practical, and helpful. Quietly he set himself to help and soothe the women and children, and many lives were saved by his great courage. His name was William Jubb, a Yorkshire man of Barnsley, the only Englishman on the ship. When asked about it afterwards when the rescue ships had come, he said, 'I made sure I was going down, and I said to myself, "I will be an Englishman."'

Do you see why I told you these two stories together? Here are two people, a little girl and a grown man, who had both taken to themselves a great name—those of Rome and England—and felt that they just had to live up to them. Jane Welsh was ashamed to do anything which would let the Romans down, and William Jubb remembered that he was an Englishman and lived up to it.

You and I have all taken to ourselves names. We have our family name. It may be a very plain and simple one, but we do not want to bring shame to it. We wouldn't like any one to say because of something we have done, 'So that's the kind of people they are!'

We have taken our country's name. Many have been saved from doing foolish and shameful things by remembering that they belonged to a country whose name was honoured all over the world, by reminding themselves that there were things that a Scot or an Englishman would not do.

We Christian people have taken a special name to ourselves—the name of Jesus Christ, of which we are very proud indeed. Like little Jane Welsh when we are tempted to do a selfish or cowardly thing, we say to ourselves, 'Jesus wouldn't have done it.' Like William Jubb when things are hard for us, we say, 'I will be a Christian.' We could not let the good name of Jesus down, could we? For that is just what we do when we forget that we are called by His name.

When William Blake wrote his lovely spring poem to the lamb, you remember how proudly he put in these lines:

> I a child and thou a lamb,
> We are callèd by His name.

Let us all be proud of that great name and do what Jesus would do.

The Christian Year.

Third Sunday after Trinity.

The Church as Restorer.

'I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.'—Lk 15[7].

There is reason to believe that on this occasion Jesus had just dined with Zaccheus, a leading official among the publicans, and therefore disliked by the Jews. So He explained to these offended Pharisees why He liked to be with people who were often ostracized by the social or religious leaders of the day. He told them those parables which we know as 'The Lost Sheep,' 'The Lost Coin,' and 'The Prodigal Son,' the outstanding truth of which was God's love and concern for every individual however far afield he might be.

God's Concern for the Individual.—As a rule, a crowd has much greater effect than any one person. There is some mysterious and emotional power in a mighty concourse of human personalities that enables it to sway our feelings this way and that. We easily mourn with a mourning multitude, and we easily rejoice with a joyous multitude. We are not surprised to read in the Book of Revelation that the angels fell upon their faces and worshipped God when a multitude which no man could number of all nations and kindreds, and people and tongues sang together, 'Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.' But here in these parables it is the restoration of *one* that makes joy in the presence of the angels of God. And this is in full accord with all that we know of the teaching and example of Jesus Christ. It would not be accurate to say that He was interested only in individuals. He attracted large numbers and preached to them; He had compassion on a multitude and fed them; He spoke of His religion as a great movement and described it as a Kingdom. All this must be borne in mind if we would estimate aright our Lord's attitude towards the respective claims of the personal and corporate aspects of human life. But it should be remembered too, that even in a multitude He never lost sight of the individual. One illustration must suffice. As He walked to the house of Jairus, the people thronged around Him, and suddenly He asked, 'Who touched me?' The disciples deemed it a foolish question seeing that the crowd was jostling against Him. But He was insistent: 'Some one has touched me.' And then came that poor woman in whose soul a movement had taken place which drew power out of Him. That mattered to Him infinitely more than the mere presence of a curious mob. So He has taught us that the thing of primary concern is our personal relationship to God.

It is a wholesome practice to test the Church to-day by the example of Jesus Christ in this respect. Where do we stand with regard to it? In the last century the Church was chiefly concerned with the personal aspect of religion, and did little to promote what is known as the social conscience. Then a reaction set in at the outset of this century, and the War naturally gave it a great impetus, with the result that we are now at the other extreme from that which obtained some fifty years ago. In almost all ecclesiastical assemblies to-day there is much talk about 'the group spirit,' 'international relationships,' 'the world call,' 'mass movements,' 'social amelioration,' 'industrial peace.' Not one word would we utter in disparagement of all this. Christianity has a social and national as well as an individual application. But the temptation to neglect the personal aspect of our religion is great, for many of us find it more attractive and easier to set the world right in theory—in a book, or on a platform, or in a pulpit—than to bring ourselves and others individually into the right relationship with God and our fellow-men. And there is this further consideration. Not only can there be no real progress apart from individual improvement, but every soul is infinitely precious in the sight of God, and therefore for its own sake is worth all the trouble we can bestow upon it.

Restoration of the Wayward.—The parable of 'The Lost Sheep' teaches us that our Lord is concerned, not least, for the one that is astray on the desolate hills. We are all sinners, frequently offending God and our fellow-men. But the sinner in this parable is a particular type. He has wandered far afield and is outside the fellowship, without shelter, protection, or support. And God pities him, seeks him, and cannot rest until He restores him, penitent and pardoned, to his natural home. It is an obvious inference that the Church ought to be doing to-day what the shepherd did in this beautiful story. And for practical purposes we are the Church, and God is counting upon us to do these things. He has no lips but our lips, no hands but our hands, no feet but our feet, to do His work in this world.

We have to minister, of course, to the ninety-and-nine, otherwise there would be no worthy fellowship to which to restore the wayward. But that is not enough. We are not sufficiently zealous for the salvation of those millions who even in Christian England are living without any conscious allegiance to God: some it may be through honest misunderstanding of the true meaning of Christianity, others through impatience with its moral discipline, and many through lack of adequate opportunity. Whatever the reason, Jesus Christ has made it abundantly clear that we ought to be concerned about them and that the Church is under solemn obligation to seek and restore them.

We are tremendously interested in, and occupied with, the trappings of religion—its machinery and external conditions, and it is little wonder that many who have at heart the central truths of the gospel and the primary mission of the Church are growing weary of the limelight that is perpetually thrown upon administrative reforms and liturgical revision and similar questions of financial and legal and semi-political import. We are so absorbed in the design and structure of the enclosure in which the ninety-and-nine are fenced round—about which

Jesus said so little—that we hardly notice the fact—about which Jesus said so much—that one of the flock is missing.

We deal too much with things, too little with men; too much with policies, too little with souls. Yet it is for these imperishable personalities that heaven is concerned.

Joy in Heaven.—Joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth! It sounds too wonderful to be true. And yet it must be true, for He who said it was none other than He who came down from heaven. From all eternity He had lived with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and whilst He was here on earth it is clear that He was never far from that spirit-world. How often and how naturally He spoke of His Father in heaven and of the angels that attend Him. And it is He who tells us that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. It is a sobering and moving thought—that the hosts of heaven, and may we not add our loved ones whom we have lost awhile, are watching us with interest and concern. And it is because they are filled with the Spirit of God that they thus care for us. Ultimately it is God who cares about us; and He rejoices because He is our Father, the Father of every man, woman, and child in the universe. Every soul is infinitely precious in His sight, and He is longing to see us restore the wanderers to their natural home—the Church and the sanctuary. Among all our activities we never do anything to equal in value this particular service—unmistakably implied in our Lord's own statement: 'Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety-and-nine just persons which need no repentance.' [1]

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

An Inventory of the Christian's Possessions.

BY THE REVEREND HARRY Q. MACQUEEN, M.A., LONDON.

'All things are yours.'—1 Co 3^{21}.

The passage from which this text is taken says, 'All belong to you—Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, life, death, the present and the future—all belong to you; and you belong to Christ, and Christ to God.'

'All things are yours; all belong to you.' To whom can the Apostle be writing? Certainly not to wealthy people. There were such people at Corinth, which was the leading commercial city of Greece and the richest, but singularly few of these had found their way into the Christian society. No, it was not to those whom the world deems wealthy that he wrote 'all things are yours.' Indeed, there are many so-called wealthy people of whom such words would be quite untrue, for to be rich and increased in goods does not imply possession in the real sense. A man may have a large library of books in elegant bindings, yet not possess them as a humble student possesses his few treasured tomes in paper covers. And so it may be with artistic treasures and other things—to *have* is not necessarily to *possess*. What strikes one often is how pathetically poor the rich can be, and, on the other hand, how rich the so-called poor frequently are. 'I know thy poverty, but thou art rich.' On the death of Dr. William C. Burns, the English Presbyterians' first missionary to China, nearly all his worldly possessions were sent home in a single trunk. They consisted of 'a few sheets of Chinese printed matter, a Chinese and an English Bible, an old writing-case, one or two small books, a Chinese lantern, a single Chinese dress, and the blue flag of the Gospel boat.' 'Surely,' whispered one who stood by when the trunk was opened, 'surely he must have been very poor.' That was a judgment based on what he had; but a missionary in China, when asked if he knew William Burns, replied, 'All China knows him; he is the holiest man alive.' Could a man of whom that was said be reckoned poor by any one with understanding?

Praise ye Jehovah, Source of all our blessing;
Before His gifts earth's richest boons wax dim;
Resting in Him, His peace and joy possessing,
All things are ours for we have all in Him.

That wise old commentator, Matthew Henry, says that we have in this text 'an inventory of the Church's possessions, the spiritual riches of the true believer; all are yours—ministers of all ranks ordinary and extraordinary. Nay, the world itself is yours.'

The Christian life, properly understood, is one of interest and delight, for Christians alone can see and use and enjoy to the full all that belongs to this world and human life. Theirs is 'abundant life,' not a life narrow and circumscribed. Even the world of external Nature has a deeper meaning for them than for others because it is God's world and they are His children.

Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,
Flowers with deeper beauties shine,
Since I know, as now I know,
I am His, and He is mine.

[1] R. E. Roberts, *The Hope of the World*, 73.

'The beautiful, wherever it is, is ours,' said Clement of Alexandria, 'because it came from God.' And worlds of science and of art are ours, too; parts of the heritage of the 'all things' which belong to us, since we are His.

To enumerate even the main items included in the Christian inheritance would be an immense task. Here, however, are four items which St. Augustine singled out:

A whole Christ for my salvation;
A whole Bible for my staff;
A whole Church for my fellowship;
And the whole world for my parish.

'All things are ours'—and this first and greatest, 'a whole Christ for our salvation.' Yet how many people rest content with a partial Christ! Dr. Gillie has told of a man of letters who, on being confronted with a saying of our Lord's, replied, 'Did Christ say that? but there are so many Christs!' The reply given was, 'Are there? May it not be rather that we do not know how big He is?' And Dr. Gillie comments, 'People know Christ in some aspects; they resent or refuse to recognize other aspects, under one pretext or another'; 'and there,' he says, 'is one of the weaknesses of present-day religion.'

All that is in Christ is for me, for my salvation in the fullest sense of that term. His death—how much that means to the Christian! 'He loved me and gave himself for me,' wrote the Apostle Paul, and followers of the Lord in these days feel that they can re-echo the words. But the same Apostle also wrote, 'If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life' (Ro 5^{10}), which must mean that His life, as well as His death, is of infinite worth to us, by way, for example, of the assurance it gives of the constant understanding of the Father in all our mingled experience, and of the pattern which it affords us for our guidance in everyday life. I have a whole Christ for my salvation.

St. Augustine also declares that the Christian has a whole Bible for his staff. That is worth recalling in these days when some people belittle the Old Testament as if it were of small profit. Of course, one cannot regard every part of Scripture as of equal worth. The supreme revelation is in Jesus Christ, and the Gospels which record His life and death and teaching are surely to be prized and studied and loved the most; yet that does not mean that we should despise the earlier portions of the record of the revelation which had its culmination in Him. How, indeed, should we estimate the glory of the noontide if we knew not the dimness of the dawn? In the Scriptures we have the record of God's progressive revelation to mankind. And this whole Bible which is ours is not to be regarded as a treasury of curious lore, nor merely as a compendium of inspired history and poetry, but as a staff—a help; it has a practical value, and, were we wiser, we should use it more.

Further, we have 'a whole Church for our fellowship.' Many Christian people fail to give the Church-idea an adequate value in their thinking, though others over-stress it. Christendom with its many divisions, the result of deplorable cleavages in the past, which patience and a larger measure of charity might often have averted, is a sad spectacle, yet sometimes separations have arisen through needed emphasis being laid on some aspect of truth which might otherwise have been lost sight of. All that any division of the Church has contended for that is of genuine worth is part of our glorious heritage. I am heir, that is to say, not merely to that portion of truth which my own branch of the Church has treasured, but to all the truth which the whole Church has in its keeping. To the great united Church for which we long and hope and work and pray each severed branch will bring its peculiar treasures—and not merely the historic churches of our own country, but those new churches which are arising in different lands among peoples whose outlook and methods are often very different from ours.

One of the great services of the Church is that it should deepen our sense of comradeship in our Christian warfare. In war-time when people of many different antecedents and classes mixed together in barracks and trenches, such a sense of comradeship was felt to be a good thing, enabling men to face danger with whistle and song. Does the Church always give its members this sense of oneness in a common cause? Is it not true that sometimes other bonds count for more—that people feel more drawn to one another by reason of being, for example, Freemasons or Rotarians or Good Templars, than by reason of their common membership in the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ? It is worth considering whether we are doing our utmost to make the Church a real fellowship.

The last item in St. Augustine's four-fold enumeration is 'the whole world for my parish.' At first sight this seems an item of a different character from the others. They indicated colossal benefits belonging to the Christian; this one has to do rather with his tremendous task. But, on reflection, we shall recognize that this also is a benefit, for it is

really good to have a work that calls forth all our powers—in that way life is enlarged and made glorious. The words 'The world is my parish' are inscribed on Wesley's monument in Westminster Abbey, but we see that the Bishop of Hippo anticipated him in the use of them; however, all who set so large an aim before them approve themselves as great souls. Life displays its quality more in ideals than in achievement, and achievement is largely determined by aim. With such a Lord as is ours, and aided by such a comradeship and such a staff, how wonderful our lives should be, how widespread and tremendous their influence.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Into the Deep.

'Launch out into the deep.'—Lk 5^4.

The ideal life, in Christ's eyes, is the dedicated, committed life, that leaves the shore with its comfort and security, and makes a bold venture into the unknown, relying only on God.

1. This is the happiest way of living. It is not for nothing that our greatest English poet joins these two things together, 'shallows' and 'miseries.' The timid, shore-loving life pays for its small comforts by missing altogether the greater joys that lie farther out for braver souls to taste. It is those who go down to the sea in ships that come upon the works of the Lord. You must 'take the wind in your face' if you would find fullness of life.

True of life in all aspects, this is supremely true of religion. There are people who have only religion enough to make themselves and others miserable. If our religion is not the joy and strength we feel it ought to be, let us make sure that we are not just dabbling along the shore, trying to reconcile two opposite ideals of life, and hoping to reach spiritual results by purely material means. It is a possible cause of unhappiness. The cure lies in committing oneself definitely, wholeheartedly and bravely, to God as revealed in Jesus Christ. To find real happiness the disciple must launch out into that deep. Then the rewards are great. As one of the early voyagers to New England wrote: 'Those that love their own chimney-corner and dare not fare beyond their owne towne's end shall never have the honour to see the wonderful workes of God.' Only those who dare believe that to-morrow holds something nobler than any experience of yesterday ever widen the boundaries of to-day.

2. Again, this is the successful way of living. Not only a richer joy in life, but a truer success is to be found by those who bravely venture out in faith. It is so, as most of us recognize, in daily life. Who are the men who succeed in business? Not those who are afraid to take risks, and embark on no enterprise till they see their safe percentage at the far end.

It almost seems as if God had organized this visible world so that it responds in a marvellous fashion to the man who believes even in himself. Moral philosophers are always telling us that we have it in us all to do almost anything that we want to, if we would only take the ability for granted, and begin. And certainly the men who do things, before whom the obstacles simply melt away, are the men who, with zest and courage, fling themselves out upon their task, completely confident in themselves. Faith, courage, a certain flavour of gallantry and daring, that is the magic virtue before which the world's treasure-stores fly open.

And the Bible leaves us in no doubt that heaven also is on the side of the man who dares. If there is the ring of adventure and experiment anywhere in the Gospels, surely we find it here. Yet caution is too often a mark of the average Christian. We would rather hug the shores and the shallows. May not this explain our frequent ineffectiveness? Try the experiment, says Jesus again, of launching out. Fishermen in the rough waters around the Orkneys, the Shetlands, and the Hebrides tell us that the quality of fish caught there is far superior to the catches along the shores of the Mediterranean. Stormier weather, but richer quality. We do better to risk the storms, Jesus said. As one reads the Gospels, it almost seems as if Christ could and would deny a man no boon he liked to ask for, if only he had faith enough. Only let a man embark bravely upon God, and there is no worthy thing he seeks that he will not find.

3. The last thing to be said about this venturesome way of living is just that it is the Christian way. The only real Christian discipleship begins with a 'leap in the dark.' In a letter to his father, Ruskin once wrote these words: 'I resolved that I would believe in Christ, and take Him for my Master in whatever I did, that assuredly to disbelieve the Bible was quite as difficult as to believe it, that there were mysteries either way, and that the best mystery was that which gave me Christ for a Master. And when I had done this, I felt a peace and spirit in me I had not known before.' There is the venture, the essential launching out into

the deep, without which there is no real discipleship.[1]

Christianity is distinguished above all other religions by its offer of a larger life to men. The Master announced that this was the purpose of His advent. 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' Other teachers have come calling to their fellows to abandon the hope of life and seek the negation of unconsciousness. He offers a larger life: not merely a larger hope for the future, but a present participation in an ever more abundant life, growing in its capabilities to meet the stress of this world, just because it lives and gains its strength from the realms of the spirit. It brings new visions, new joys, new powers, and a peace unknown before.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Individual Responsibility.

'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.'—Mt 5^{16}.

W. E. Beck asks the question, 'What are we as Christians in for?' 'What are we out for?' 'What are we meant to be?' 'What are we meant to do?' Our Lord leaves us in no doubt as to His answer to these questions. We are meant to be 'light in the Lord.' We are designed to be human personalities, transformed and transfigured by the power of Christ's Spirit. Equally it is His intention that we should make the influence of our lives felt. 'Heaven does with us, as we with torches do, not light them for themselves.' 'Rest not,' says Walt Whitman, 'till you rivet and publish yourself of your personalities.' Jesus throws down to His disciples a similar challenge.

1. First of all, let the light shine because it is *its nature and property to shine.*

There is a certain inevitableness about light. Some one has defined influence as 'the effluence of affluence.' Christian influence is the effluence of the affluence within. It is the streaming out of the light that Christ has first kindled in the soul. R. L. Stevenson, in his *Lantern-Bearers*, tells the delightful story of how certain boys were wont to amuse themselves on dark nights by wearing each a bull's-eye lantern buckled to the waist, and over it a buttoned topcoat. To use his own words, 'the essence of this bliss was to walk by yourself in the black night, the slide shut, the topcoat buttoned, not a ray escaping, whether to conduct your footsteps or to make your glory public; a mere pillar of darkness in the night, and all the while, deep down in the privacy of your fool's heart, to know you had a bull's-eye at your belt, and to exult and sing over the knowledge.' That is a charming boyish prank, which we can all appreciate, but it is not fun but disastrous folly, when grave seniors refuse 'to make their glory public.'

A changed life must become in turn a life-changer. That is not true to the same extent of pure theoretic truth. A man may be a scientist or a philosopher or an economist, and yet possess no pressing urge to make his light public. The moment, however, truth becomes conviction, and affects the springs of action, it insists on reproducing itself.

If the light shines it produces its own fruits. An incident in the life of St. Francis of Assisi, quoted by F. W. Boreham, will help to illustrate this point. 'Brother Francis said one day to one of the monks in the Portiumcula, "Let us go down to the town and preach." The novice, delighted at being singled out to be the companion of St. Francis, agreed with alacrity. They passed through the principal streets, the alleys, and byways, and made their way round by the suburbs, and at length returned by a circuitous route to the monastery gate. As they approached the gate the young man reminded St. Francis of their original intention. "You have forgotten, Father, that we went down to the town to preach." "Nay, my son, we have preached. We have preached while we were walking. We have been seen by many. Our behaviour was closely watched. It was thus we preached our morning sermon. It is no use, son, to walk anywhere and preach, unless we preach everywhere as we walk."'

2. Let your light shine because light is *the only force that overcomes darkness.* In the realm of physics, darkness is not a positive force. It is a purely negative phenomenon, implying the absence of light. Darkness is stationary and static, whereas light is radio-active, kinetic, travelling with unparalleled swiftness. In the realm of moral and spiritual life, however, such a fortunate state of things does not prevail. 'For our wrestling,' St. Paul said, 'is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places.'

How are those antagonists to be met and overcome? The answer of Jesus is, 'Let your light so shine.' Paul's suggested solution is to put on the complete armour of God. And in this he has the mind of Christ. For if we examine the separate pieces of his suggested armour, we discover that

[1] A. Alexander, *By Sun and Candle-Light*, 170.

they are but facets of the light that makes up Christian life and influence. 'The girdle of truth,' 'the breastplate of righteousness,' 'the sandals of peace,' 'the shield of faith,' 'the sword of the Spirit,' 'all prayer.' Elsewhere he slumps them together, and calls them comprehensively the 'armour of light.'

We are often amazed at the tenacity, resourcefulness, and malignancy of evil, but there is another mystery to which we pay less heed, yet which is a more challenging one still—the patient persistency, the unquenchable vitality, the indisputable force of goodness.

The innocent moon, that nothing does but shine,
Moves all the labouring surges of the world.

The ancient Persian religion regarded the moral life as a battlefield, in which Ormuzd, the god of light, contended with Ahriman, the god of darkness, and the battle between those two contending forces swayed backwards and forwards: and the issue was often in doubt. But in the Bible the result of the struggle is never regarded as conjectural. The victory always remains with light. John, speaking of Jesus in the prologue to his Gospel, said: 'Amid the darkness the Light shone, but the darkness did not master it' (Moffatt). The forces of evil tried their uttermost to master it. At Calvary they massed all their serried hosts with a view to a final and decisive conflict, so that Mark tells us, 'And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.' But the light shone steadily in the darkness, meeting rancour with forgiveness, violence with gentleness, falsehood with truth, hate with love, evil with good; and the victory remained with light. God Himself took that gleaming light that shone in the darkness and which the darkness could not master, and set it in the heavens to be the light of the whole world, and to convey to men's hearts the assurance for evermore that love and goodness are at the end of the day the triumphing forces of life. Therefore let the light shine, that it may do battle and reveal its might. Preach and live the gospel, if you would 'knock holes in the darkness.'

3. Let the light shine *because the light is needed.* At least *this* kind of light is needed. There are to-day ample supplies of light in other directions. Scientists, 'those eyeless worms that loosen the soil for the crops of God' have cast a new and wonderful light on the nature, properties, and uses of the physical world. Astronomers have lighted up the heavens, and revealed unsuspected vastnesses and magnitudes. Research workers have successfully combated many forms of disease. And there are other spheres on which new light has fallen. But in that realm which matters most for human efficiency and happiness, the realm of the moral and spiritual life, where men hold traffickings with themselves and with one another, and with God, a darkness that can be felt still broods. We have not yet mastered the secret of living at ease with our tormented consciences. We have miserably failed to live with one another in harmonious and abiding relationships. And God and all He offers of His grace and life are only dim and dubious surmises.

We are living to-day in a disturbed and disillusioned age. 'Let the light shine.' H. G. Wells offers us his scintilla of light. 'Before we can decide how life should be organized, we must have some theory of what life is for, what its purpose is, what man's nature is.' That is certainly true. To understand the nature and the purpose of life is a primal necessity. Our claim, however, is that the answer to these questions is part of the fruit of Christian light. Yet obviously, something much more is needed. What is needed is a practical demonstration of the value of Christian light, and particularly of its power, in modern conditions of life, to make good its claims.

4. Let your light shine because *of its God magnifying power.* In Walter Pater's great classic of the soul, *Marius the Epicurean,* the hero of the story, in his spiritual voyagings, meets with Cornelius, a Christian, and a soldier of the twelfth legion. The writer taxes his rare craft to convey some adequate sense of the subtle and incalculable impression which the character of Cornelius made on Marius. He tries to do justice to its elusive texture, its subtle aroma of influence, the inner and hidden standard which seemed to control the life, the stern austerity, which was mixed with a certain 'breeze of hopefulness, as of new morning about him.' But the most significant impression, which held him and teased his curiosity, was 'that everything about him seemed to be the sign and symbol of some other thing far beyond it.'

Such thoughts as these should give us all furiously to think on the grave question of the responsibility of our Christian influence. To the normal man faith is always socially mediated. The Bible is the Word of God, which tells the wonderful story of His grace and love to the sinful souls of men. But it is a written word, and it is, alas, not widely read. There is still the Bible of human life, and *it* is not neglected. What is the message that our lives are conveying to men? To what spiritual heights and far-off shining goal are we lighting up

the path for the dim-seeing eyes of men? We ought to be showing them God. If our lives were as spiritually luminous as Christ intended them to be, this is the high office they would serve. Christ lays upon us now this solemn responsibility. This is His arresting challenge to the converted: 'Ye are the light of the world.' 'Let your light *so* shine' that men may 'glorify your Father which is in heaven.'[1]

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Ministry of Sympathy.

BY THE REVEREND NORMAN V. HOPE, M.A., B.D., BUSBY, GLASGOW.

'If your soul were in my soul's stead.'—Job 16[4].

Job, a wealthy, pious, and upright man, is suddenly stripped of all his worldly possessions by a series of terrible calamities. He loses his asses, sheep, camels, and finally his children, with devastating suddenness; and then, to crown all, he himself is stricken with the hideous disease of leprosy. Three of his friends, on hearing of his terrible misfortunes, come to comfort him—by their way of it. Snug and secure in their heaped-up worldly possessions, they believe that if a man is honest and upright he will be rewarded with worldly wealth. So, reversing this, they argue that if a man is despoiled of his goods as Job has been it must be because he is a secret sinner. So the gist of what they say to Job is this, 'Repent and confess, and get back to straight, honest dealings with God and man.'

This crude argument is more than Job's flesh and blood can stand. For he knows that he has committed no wrong, secret or open. He can bear his misfortunes, terrible as they are. But what he cannot bear is his friends' interpretation of these misfortunes. So he cries out in agony of spirit. 'If your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you.'

The crux and essence of the matter lies in this phrase, 'if your soul were in my soul's stead.' For the secret of all real sympathy—sympathy of the helpful, practical kind that reforms abuses and destroys entrenched evils—is to be found in it, in this divine art of changing places.

1. This is the secret of all important social and moral reform—that some one has, in imagination if not in actual fact, put himself or herself into some one else's place.

Take the case of John Howard, the famous pioneer of all our prison reform. Appointed High Sheriff of Bedford County, he at once began his long series of tours throughout Great Britain and Ireland, in order to investigate the conditions of public prisons and to inquire into the management and treatment of prisoners. He found the prisons narrow, filthy, and unhealthy; debtors and real hardened criminals were herded together in one place; the sexes were not kept separate. Gaolers were given no official salaries, but made an income through selling liquor to prisoners, thus increasing drunkenness and immorality.

Chiefly as a result of Howard's investigations and the evidence he brought forward, two Acts were passed by Parliament. One of them provided for fixed salaries to be paid to gaolers; and the other enforced greater cleanliness in prisons in order to do away with the dreaded gaol fever, which had hitherto carried off its victims by the hundred.

Or take Mrs. Sidney Webb. The daughter of a wealthy house, she was early in life deeply touched by the conditions under which the women workers in the 'sweated industries' of East London had to carry on and attempt to exist. So deeply was Mrs. Webb moved by this question that not only did she study the problem in official documents, but she even went to work as a 'plain trouser hand' in several sweating workshops. As a result of her experience she collected first-hand evidence to lay before a Royal Commission, and finally the Trade Boards Act was passed by Parliament, which fixed minimum wages for some of the sweated industries, and made it a criminal offence to offer less than the minimum, or to work for less. This reform was thus in large measure due to Mrs. Webb putting herself in the place of these sweated women workers.

And as it has been in the past so it will be in the future. Economists like Sir William Beveridge of the London School of Economics have suggested that strikes and lockouts and other industrial stoppages could be put an end to pretty quickly, if employers and employees would try to put themselves—in thought and imagination—in each other's places, and see the various questions at issue from the other's point of view.

We want—as do all who know anything about the matter—housing reform both in town and country. Well, the quickest way to get it is to get those of us who are living fairly comfortably to project ourselves—if only in imagination—into the housing conditions of our less fortunate fellow-citizens, some of whose houses are a disgrace to a civilized society.

[1] R. Menzies, *The Magnet of the Heart*, 121.

Or we want—as do all thinking, not to say Christian people—the curse of war done away with for ever. One sure way to create enthusiasm for peace-making is for those of us who never knew anything about war at first-hand, to try to realize the feelings and conditions of those who went over the top, and those others who had to stay at home in anxiety and mental torture. If and when we can enter into such feelings, we will determine to put an end once and for all to this insane barbarism.

2. If each of us could change places—even for only a short period—with a few of our fellow-men, three happy results would assuredly follow.

(1) We would be much more enthusiastic about all kinds of reforms than ever before. Here is a statement which the late Mr. T. P. O'Connor once made, and which his biographer, Mr. Hamilton Fyfe, quotes: 'If I have the power of understanding and a persistent desire to make the lot of the poor somewhat brighter and happier, it comes from the fact largely that there is scarcely a sorrow of theirs which I have not known in my own person and in my own heart.'

(2) We would become much more contented with our present lot than ever before. Outsiders are apt to see a man's advantages and good fortune. But if we could project ourselves into another's place, we would realize very forcibly and effectively his defects of heredity—the not very promising legacy of mind and body which he inherited—and his defects of environment, the limiting and difficult surroundings in which he is compelled to live. And when we had fully entered into his limitations as well as into his good fortune, we would return much more contented with our present circumstances—because we would be much more sensitive to our advantages and blessings.

When Matthew Arnold retired from his duties as an Inspector of Schools, he received a presentation from his teachers. In replying, he said that when he began his work he was oppressed by the irksomeness of its duties, and felt for a time that they were almost insupportable. But he met daily in the schools men and women discharging duties as irksome as his, and less well paid. He saw the cheerfulness and efficiency with which they did their work, and he asked himself again: 'How do they do it?' 'Gradually it grew into a habit with me to put myself into their places, and try to enter into their feelings, and to represent to myself their life, and I can assure you I got many lessons from them.' Quite clearly one of the lessons was this—a deeper contentment with his own lot.

(3) And we would become much more appreciative of our fellows. We are very apt—are we not?—to look down on a man because he does not appear to have made very much of life; but if we knew what he started from, and how little he had to work with, perhaps we would alter our opinion. Then we do not think very much of another man, because he has so often fallen away from strict righteousness—but what kind of temptations has he had to fight against? If we knew about his difficulties, through being in his place for a short time, we would perhaps alter our attitude.

> Judge not the workings of his brain
> And of his heart thou canst not see.
> What looks to thy dim eyes a stain
> In God's pure light may only be
> A scar brought from some well-won field,
> Where thou wouldst only faint and yield.

3. This same principle gives us some insight into Divine sympathy as well as human, and into one of the deep mysteries of the Christian religion. For in a very real sense it is true that Jesus Christ came down to earth and put Himself into our places, endured our human lot, lived our human life, and was tempted and tried just as we are—yet was without sin.

Dr. E. Stanley Jones, in his book *The Christ of the Indian Road*, quotes the saying of an Indian professor, one of the leaders of Hindu thought: 'The thing that strikes me about Jesus is His imaginative sympathy. He entered into the experiences of men and felt with them. He could feel the darkness of the blind, the leprosy of the leper, the loneliness of the rich, the degradation of the poor, and the guilt of the sinner.'

And because Jesus Christ knows our human temptations, because He has overcome them, He has the right, as well as the power, to forgive our sins. John Drinkwater has a poem, the main drift of which is that self-righteous people can never forgive his sins, because they know nothing at all about his temptations.

> The dark, the error of my days
> Shall be consoled by none
> That have not, in forbidden ways
> Wandered as I have done
> With faces from the sun.
>
> Princes of virtue, keep your skill
> Of pardon for your peers,
> Frail with the frail I travel still
> Along uncertain years,
> Forbear your holy tears.

One hour in dark Gethsemane
I walked with Him alone;
He sees, He knows, He touches me,
How shall it then be known
To you, O hearts of stone.

And as we receive His forgiveness and enter into the life to which He calls us, we are meant to drink in something of His spirit, the spirit of Divine compassion and sympathy.

Contributions and Comments.

A New Reading in the Text of the Apocalypse.

THE discoveries which we have recently been making with regard to the relation between Egypt and the countries lying farther south have had a curious reaction, as we propose to show, upon the text of the New Testament itself. It seemed to be clear that the Egyptians colonized the Somali coast, and prospected in Abyssinia in quest of rare plants, animals, and minerals, many of which are actually described on the Egyptian monuments. The Somali coast, including Abyssinia, was known by the name of *The Land of Punt*. Now this means that the gold-bearing regions of Africa which the Phœnicians called by the name of Tarshish, and the Hebrews by the name of Ophir, were comprehended under the Egyptian term of *Punt*. What we propose to do now is to show that there is a trace of the Egyptian *Punt* or *Pont* in the New Testament, and that in particular it ought to be restored to the text of the Apocalypse.

If we refer to Apoc., ch. 18, we shall find a very vivid description of the actual or possible burning of Rome. We shall see the groups of merchants and importers standing on the shore at Ostia with their unsaleable goods around them and joining in a chorus of lamentation over the fall of the great city. The picture is not purely Roman nor limited to the banks of the Tiber, although it is extremely probable that it reflects what actually happened when Nero set fire to the city. The language, however, goes farther back, and we have in the prophet Ezekiel a lamentation of the merchant fraternity, ship-masters and importers, over the fall of Tyre. No doubt the fall of one city has been made the background for the description of what was thought to be the fall of the Roman metropolis.

Now when we look at the description in the Apocalypse (18^{17}) we see that the disappointed traders were spoken of as 'those who sail to a place (*ἐπὶ τόπον πλέων, sic*),' and it has been thought by some commentators that the language could be justified by a reference to a certain voyage in which a ship was said to be taking in cargo for the ports of Italy. The language is, however, obscure, and it was suggested by my friend Professor Eberhard Nestlé that instead of reading 'ships that go to another place,' we should read '*ships that go to the Pontus*,' Pontus being here taken as representing the distant country from which products were sent to Rome, just as we might talk of ships that were in the China trade. This was a bright suggestion. It did not, however, make it clear why all the merchandise that was piled on the shores at Ostia came from the Black Sea, and it was evident that many of the rare spices and animals never came from the Black Sea at all. Suppose, however, that we take the hint from Professor Nestlé, and, instead of talking about those who work the sea and those who sail to Pontus, we read a reference to those who sail to *Punt* or *Pont*, and everything will then be clear, *Punt* or *Pont* being an alternative description of the Ophir or Tarshish of the Old Testament.

We suggest, then, that this name be restored to the New Testament text. The text will now run: 'All those who sail to Punt and all those who work the sea' (? traverse the sea). The reading is actually attested in a number of authorities in Hoskier's great Collation. Our re-editing of the text and the involved interpretation differ from the ingenious solution proposed by A. D. Knox in *Journal of Theological Studies*, October 1914, p. 77. Experts may enjoy the task of estimating the merits of the two solutions.

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Around the Fig-tree.

SINCE coming to live in Jerusalem it has always been an interest to look out for information about fig-trees. The one in our garden in the Newman School of Missions, for instance, has ample evidence of full foliage year by year, but otherwise is quite obviously of the class referred to in Lk 13^{7}. The fruit is never anything but small and hopeless. This is the case with another tree a few hundred yards away in the garden of Canon Hanauer, who has watched fig-trees for many decades. Perhaps this personal experience of the fig is a corroboration of the tradition of the 'fellahin,' that fig-trees never do bear anything 'but leaves,' when placed in too close proximity to human habitation.