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and of inanimate matter, lies catastrophe, discontinuity; a vertical conversion, not merely a horizontal one.

Other examples of the need to rethink our thoughts and make allowance for discontinuity might be found in the doctrine of God, the doctrine of man, eschatology, even Biblical criticism, but space forbids, though one would like to dwell upon the harm that has been done by teaching that the conquest of sin is a gradual business in spite of the emphasis which the Gospels lay upon the *immediacy* of the devils' departure when Christ spoke the word.

Vesuvius is a fairly high hill, but the ascent is easy, being accomplished by train. The traveller leaves Naples by the ordinary Circum-Vesuvian Railway, and at Pugliano changes into Cook's line for the ascent. This is a definite break, a discontinuity. At first, however, it does not seem so; for the new line runs parallel to the old for some distance before turning up the hill. Higher and higher it climbs till it arrives at the foot of an incline so steep that no train could ascend it. However, the passengers are not required to change. An engine, working on the rack and pinion system, comes behind and pushes all up the slope. At the top of the gradient, this engine is left, and the

journey continued, as before. In both cases there is change without break in continuity. At the foot of the cone, however, passengers change once more, this time into a funicular railway which carries them straight to the top, a break, and very decided change. Here we have illustrations of the three kinds of change which we find in both the physical and the spiritual realms, change with continuity, change with discontinuity, and discontinuity with no apparent change at first. It would be absurd to deny evolution, continuity, growth. There are many examples of steady development involving no breach with the past; but it is equally absurd to ignore discontinuity, catastrophe. It, too, can show many examples, the start of something new with a clear breach with the past, whether the difference be immediately appreciable or not.

Scientific investigation has shown that in the lower physical realm God uses both methods, and that neither can be said to be more normal than the other. Therefore, there is at least a presumption that He uses both in the higher spiritual realm. Slow growth is not always His process; the gospel is that if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation; and how catastrophic that new creation can be is seen in Paul himself.

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## In the Study.

### *Virginibus Puerisque.*

#### Prayer.

BY THE REVEREND RODERICK BETHUNE, M.A.,  
ABERDEEN.

'He kneeled upon his knees three times a day.'—  
Dn 6<sup>o</sup>.

SOME time ago I travelled in a railway compartment with a gentleman whom I didn't know. During part of the journey he read from a very large book. After a time, however, he grew tired, I noticed. His eyes just refused to keep open. Do as he liked, his eyelids would keep coming down for longer and longer intervals until, finally, they stayed down, and he fell fast asleep. Do you remember watching your father fall off to sleep in his chair after that very busy day he had? He had been reading, you remember. But his eyes just wouldn't

keep open. Highly amused, you watched his head roll to one side, and then to the other side, and then drop forward where it was content to remain. The book which he was reading began to slip, and slip, and slip, until, with a crash, it fell upon the floor. Well, greatly amused, I watched the same thing happening in the railway compartment. The large book which my fellow-traveller was holding began to slip, and slip, and slip, until it fell upon the floor of the carriage with a terrific bang! The noise wakened my companion who, pulling himself up, proceeded to deny (as perhaps your father did!) that he had ever been asleep! 'Well, well,' you say, 'there's nothing very startling about that.' You yourself, you declare, would have let the book fall had you fallen asleep, and perhaps you, too, should have denied that you were sleeping. Well, perhaps I should. But this is what I want

you to know. When we reached our destination and I had returned home, I chanced to pick up a book in which there was an article about birds. Much to my surprise, and to my great interest, the writer was asking why it was that while a boy or girl cannot hold a book while asleep a bird doesn't fall off its perch when it goes to sleep. I had often watched my canary going to roost. It pulled one foot and leg close up to its body and, standing on the other foot, would tuck its head under a wing and go to sleep. No matter how long I cared to watch it, my canary never fell. Why? I was very eager to know, and so I read on. The reason, this writer suggested, is that the tendons of a bird's leg are so constructed that, when the leg is bent at the knee, the claws contract and grip whatever they encircle, positively refusing to let go until the knee is unbent again. My canary (like other birds) is a lot wiser than I thought! When it goes to sleep it bends the knee of the leg on which it is standing and, by throwing all its weight upon it, keeps it in that position. The bended knee I discovered, you see, gave the power to the bird to hold to whatsoever it desired.

With that thought in mind, I recalled the story of Daniel, of whom it is said that he kneeled upon his knees three times a day. You know what that means, of course? Three times a day Daniel prayed to God. Now the thing that impresses us about Daniel is his power to hold. In spite of many temptations he held to his faith in God and to his character. Many men tried to rob him of his character, endeavoured to weaken his grip upon his faith, but without success. For Daniel had a secret. He had discovered the secret of the bended knee. Whenever he felt a little weak, or unstable, he got down upon his knees, told everything to God and asked His help, and, as birds by bending the knee are able to hold things, so Daniel took a firmer hold of the things he cherished most.

You and I cannot hold things when we are asleep as birds can. But can't they teach us how to hold things while we are awake? Do you desire to hold the things which are most precious to you—honesty, truthfulness, honour, character? Then you, too, must learn the secret of the bended knee.

#### The Voice of Silence.

BY THE REVEREND STUART ROBERTSON, M.A.,  
LISBON.

'Be still, and know.'—Ps 46<sup>10</sup>.

The month of November is not the brightest of months. 'November,' says Chambers's *Book of*

*Days*, 'is generally regarded as the gloomiest month of the year.' Summer is far enough away to be forgotten, and Christmas is still a distant prospect. Hood finishes a poem on 'November,' in which every line begins, as the name of the month begins, with 'No,' by these doleful lines:

No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,  
No comfortable feel in any member—  
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,  
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds—  
No-venber!

Yet, with all its fogs and winds and rains, November has one distinction above all the months; it is the month in which on the eleventh day and at the eleventh hour there is a Silence of two minutes over all the land.

What is the use of this Silence? What is the use of any silence? A very great one. For silence is not just emptiness, the absence of speech or noise. It is a higher sort of speech; for voices can be heard in silence which noise keeps us from hearing, and there are things that can be said better by silence than by speech.

Mozart was once asked, 'What is the greatest effect in music?' His answer was, 'No music.' Addison, referring to a pause in a fine piece of music, said, 'Methought the short interval of silence had more music in it than any one short space of time before it or after it.' It was said of a famous bishop, 'His talk was rich and full; his silence full of inspiration.' The Bible says, 'Be still, and know that I am God.'

Once when the November Silence fell I was in North London in a noisy street. Motor-cycles clattered like machine-guns. Private cars purred on their way. Heavy lorries and buses thundered past. Horns hooted and yelped. Bells tinkled and clanged. Train whistles screamed. Piano-organs jangled. Horses' hooves clop-clopped on the wood blocks. All the orchestral noises of a great city made up the symphony of sound which beats on our ear-drums every day unceasingly, so that we hardly notice it till it stops.

Then it stopped. It was the Silence. Everything moving froze into stillness. Every noise sank into stillness. Then suddenly I heard a bird singing! Its notes dropped from the sky like a shower of silver music. It had been singing all the while unheard, its notes drowned by the city's noises. When they stopped, it got its chance to be heard.

That is the use of the Silence we keep on that month and day and hour, because on that day, hour, and month nineteen years ago four years of

war and waste and suffering and heart-break came to an end. The Silence gives voices we need to hear their chance to be heard. They are the voices which call to us from the dead in their graves in many lands, and from the dead who had no graves, to take up their task, and work and pray for peace on earth.

The world is noisily busy over a host of problems that press. The hubbub of it all tends to drown these silent voices and make us forget that we are alive to-day because so many men died; forget that we are the children of a great sacrifice and that we must be worthy of it. The task of peace is everybody's task, and unless we take it up with all our heart, all the sacrifices of the War will have been a waste of precious ointment. Therefore we keep silence for two minutes at 11 a.m. every 11th of November that we may listen to the voices of our dead.

Ours is a noisy world; it needs silence and it gets very little of it. And because God knows our need and is mindful of us, He has not forgotten silence. He is like a harpist, who not only plucks the harp-strings to make them sound, but also lays his hand on them to silence their vibrations; and that, too, is part of the music.

He lays His hand on our restless wills and anxious minds and fretted nerves each night and sends sleep and silence; and the wastage of the day is made up in the silence of sleep. Nothing can make up for sleep. Nights on end without it would kill us. Wisely we have forbidden motor-horns to sound at night. Sleep and silence give God a chance to heal and build up our bodies.

Because we are not only bodies but souls, He has given us the silence of the Lord's Day. It is a very broken silence now, more's the pity, for it is as needful for the soul as sleep is for the body, and because body and soul are one we sin against both if we break in on the silence of sleep or the silence of God's Day.

God is always speaking to us, but like the bird on Armistice Day, His voice is drowned and unheard. It needed that silence for me to hear the bird, and it needs the Sunday peace for us to hear God. So He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God,' which is as much as to say, 'You never will really know Me until you are still.'

And just as the Two Minutes' Silence gives us a chance to hear the call of the men who died for us, so the silence of the Lord's Day is our chance to hear the call of the Christ, who died for us, in the silence of our own hearts, in the silence of the sanctuary, in the silence of His Holy Table.

It is told of the great actor Macklin that in his

speeches he had three pauses, a short pause, a long pause, and a grand pause, and that he once knocked down a prompter, 'because,' he said, 'he broke my grand pause.'

The Two Minutes' Silence is the short pause; sleep is the long pause, the Lord's Day is God's grand pause. They have a big service to do us. Do not sin against the Silences.

## The Christian Year.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

### Christian Unity.

BY THE REVEREND DAVID CAIRNS, B.A., BRIDGE OF ALLAN.

'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.'—Jn 17<sup>20-22</sup>.

I. These words of Jesus are the charter of the movement for Church Unity. Since He desired it, we must work for it; since He prayed for it, we must believe that His prayer will be answered. The command to seek for Christian Unity is of equal authority with the command to preach the gospel to every creature; both are part of our marching orders as Christians. And so we can apply a saying of James Denney's made on the subject of Foreign Missions to the subject of Church Unity—'Those who do not believe in it have no right to believe in it, for they do not believe in our Lord Jesus Christ.'

But, it may be objected, is not the unity of the Church of Christ a reality already, in spite of its external divisions? Cannot unity be experienced apart from union? It must be admitted that there is an inner unity which embraces all Christian people in so far as they serve the same Master, and remember each other in their prayers. But how poor a thing this unity is to-day, compared with what it might be! And it must be admitted that the outward divisions of the Church to-day are not merely superficial; they answer to a lack of inner unity and sympathy which is a hindrance to the Spirit of Christ. It is true that Christ did not speak of uniformity being necessary to His Church, and it seems as if the Apostolic Church had within it several varieties of order which may even have been an enrichment, but it cannot be questioned that the Early Church was one, not only in faith and inner experience, not only in prayer and mutual charity, but also one outwardly in face of the world

as our Churches to-day are not. And until that outer and inner unity for which Jesus prayed is recovered, we must remain unsatisfied. How is that unity to be attained?

II. Each branch of the Christian Church possesses a certain tradition to which it wishes to bear witness. It believes that there are certain truths that it could never give up without disloyalty to Christ and the gospel. And there are certain other customs and beliefs which have become part of our very being as members of one denomination or another. In those traditions—I use the word in an absolutely general sense—there are things which are of crucial importance; there are other things which had a justification in past times, when they were a necessary protest, perhaps, against abuses. But now they are not of the same importance, in the sight of God; and we cannot always distinguish between the essential and the secondary. As we go forward into the Reunion Movement, in what frame of mind are we to carry with us these traditions of ours? Are we to insist that every one of them be retained, or are we to be ready to jettison them all? Both attitudes are wrong; no Church could adopt the second, while the first would make all hope of reunion impossible. What, then, are we to do? Is not the answer to be found in this prayer of Jesus, He did not just pray that His disciples might be one, but that they might be one *in Him*. We must believe that He knows what in our tradition will be of crucial importance to the united Church, and that He will guide us in our deliberations. Can we not trust Him to safeguard what is of real importance in our contribution?

When it does come to Reunion, the uniting Churches must be prepared to die as separate Churches, in order that new Churches may be born. A Church which is unwilling to die for the sake of the cause of Christ inevitably becomes a parasite. It continues to make claims on the loyalty and wealth of its members. But it has no more a right to these services, for it is no longer the Body of Christ, no longer ready to obey His Spirit, to work, to die for the Kingdom. If the death of a denomination as such is God's will, then much fruit will come of it.

Meantime, all our meetings and deliberations must be in a spirit of forbearance and love. And it is hard to maintain such a spirit in such meetings, when party loyalties and prejudices are easily roused and groups near to each other in sympathy may fraternize in talk on a basis of intolerant criticism of other groups. We must continue to expect that God will show a way through our difficulties, by showing us that we had misunder-

stood each other, or by bringing us to a point where we see that the apparently conflicting truths for which we were contending have all had justice done to them. It was a common experience at the Edinburgh Conference, that the Spirit of God was bringing the delegates into a unity which they had not dared to hope for. When impatience or arrogance of thought or word tended to separate us, then a gentler spirit came on us. And what united us most was the common attendance at worship, where we asked the forgiveness of God for all that had been unworthy, and joined in praising Him. The nearer that Christian men and women come to the Spirit of Christ, the nearer they are to the solution of the outstanding problems that separate them. Let us join as far as ever we can in worship with those who belong to different denominations, for that is the way in which we shall come into closest touch with the Spirit of Christ, and with each other.

III. The unity we are seeking is only a means to an end—'that the world may believe.' For the Church has no glory in itself, it has only the glory which God gives to it. And He does so only as it works for the Kingdom of God, only as it performs the duty assigned to it by Jesus, of bringing men to Him. The more we live in His Spirit, the more we shall see the differences that separate us in their true proportions. It has been asserted that it is the scandal of the Church that it emphasizes doctrine rather than life. But the Church must be concerned with doctrine, and it is only a scandal when its doctrine loses touch with life. We Churchmen are often terribly lacking in pity and sympathy for all the millions who are in the dark, the inhabitants of great cities who are adrift in the sea of humanity without anchorage in God, the heathen of Africa and China and India, the poor, the blind, the bruised, the broken-hearted. Any discussion on dogma, which has not behind it a burning memory of those eyes filled with despair, and those hands stretching forth from the darkness, is nothing more than a piece of ecclesiastical millinery. The Edinburgh Conference was reminded by Bishop Azariah of Dornakal on the opening day of the Conference, of the crucial situation of the Christian Church in India. 'We go to the peoples of India,' he said, 'and tell them that in Christ they will find the answer to their problems, and the unity that will transcend their divisions. When they come to us, and they are beginning to come, they say, "You ask us to join the Christian Church, but which of your Churches do you ask us to join? You say that in Christ there is unity, but you are

divided amongst yourselves !” I beg you to remember in your discussions that this is the situation that we will have to face when we return home.’

IV. If we go forward towards unity in the spirit which is ready to accept the guidance of God’s Spirit, determined always to seek for the truth in charity and humility and generosity towards those members of the Church with whom we are least in sympathy, then the day will come when the prayer of Christ for the Church will be answered, and the Divine glory will once more begin to shine forth from it, so that all men will be drawn to Christ. And the spiritual unity of the Church, working always by spiritual means, may then be able to serve a world on the verge of ruin through its fears and divisions.

There are many things of wonderful beauty in the world that make a man thank God that he is alive. But there is one beauty that shines beyond all others :

Fair are the forests, fairer still the meadows  
Clad in the shining robes of spring,  
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,  
Jesus our Saviour, Friend, and King.

And He said of those who were to be His Church, ‘The glory that thou gavest me I have given them.’ Look at His Church as you have never looked at it before, until you see it as it was meant to be, the fellowship of those who are living the new splendid life of adventure for God under the protection and guidance of the Spirit, a fellowship by means of which He challenges all that is evil, gives liberation to the captive and friendship to the lonely, a fellowship of men and women who think nothing about their own glory, but always about His, so that without their knowing it their faces shine with the reflection of the glory that they see in Him.

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TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

**Sacredness of Strength.**

BY THE REVEREND J. G. GRANT FLEMING,  
D.S.O., M.C., M.A., ABERDEEN.

‘This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake. And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.’—Ezk 1<sup>28</sup> 2<sup>1</sup>.

Our text comes at the close of an amazing description of a vision which came to the prophet Ezekiel as his call to serve God. Many words

are used by the prophet in an attempt to tell what he had seen—symbolic pictures that have little meaning for us to-day. But all his words and all his pictures merely illustrate his inability to describe the awfulness of the vision he had seen, and he closes on a simpler and more understandable note : ‘This was the appearance of the likeness of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face.’ Whatever it was—the realization of a power, a presence, an overwhelming sense of holiness—it sent him to his knees in awe and reverence—‘I fell upon my face.’ But in the moments of utter prostration there dawned upon his soul a new assurance, the voice of God came to him saying, ‘Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.’

The greatest of men—men like Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, St. Peter, St. Paul, and the saints of Christendom are humbled to the dust in awe when the sense of the presence of God dawns upon them ; but in the hour of reverence there comes a new power, a new dignity, new assurance, for the voice of God speaks, ‘Son of man, stand upon thy feet, I would speak with thee.’

Man still has his visions of God ; our minds go out to measure the universe ; we attempt to understand eternity ; we ponder on the mystery of life. Millions of words are written about our thoughts upon these things, but sometimes there comes a moment when man cannot write, when the magnitude and the wonder overwhelm and almost frighten him—when the mystery baffles him, the certainty of death crushes him, the insignificance and frailty of his own person bow him down ; and yet, somehow, out of the very heavens there comes a voice to the soul within, ‘Son of man, stand upon thy feet, for I would speak with thee.’ ‘You of all the creatures of My creating can comprehend the words I write in earth and heaven, stand upon thy feet and grapple with the mysteries of the universe—stand upon thy feet—thy God would speak with thee.’

Sometimes man’s moments of abasement come as this vision came to Ezekiel—as the vision came to St. Paul on the Damascus road—come as a result of a sense of unworthiness in the presence of the purity, the holiness, and the righteousness of God. The vision of the Heavenly Father portrayed in the life and Cross of Jesus Christ is so overwhelming that man is awed ; the wonder of such love claims his reverence, and in the knowledge of his own unworthiness his head is bowed in penitence and shame. The consciousness of sin and failure prostrates him before Almighty God, and yet again there seems to come a voice saying : ‘Son of man,

stand upon thy feet, I would speak with thee. Thou canst have the power to grapple with your failures, the grace to conquer sin, the possibility of new life now—Son of man, stand upon thy feet, I would speak with thee in Jesus Christ.'

Yes, it is true. Despite the vastness, the mystery, the amazing wonder of the universe which bends us low in awe; despite the consciousness of our sin and failure over against the holiness and righteousness of God, there is something within us—something greater than the universe—something greater than ourselves—something within us that calls us to our feet, to conquer our sinful natures and get the better of our failures to conquer the world for righteousness and truth, to grapple with the universe itself: 'Son of man, stand upon thy feet, thy God would speak with thee.' That is in itself a humbling thought—God calls the weakest of us to something great.

We come, weak by week, into God's house to worship and adore. As we seek to live the Christian life, the meaning of the wondrous love of God portrayed in the life and Cross of Christ becomes clearer, and as we gaze at that Cross and think of that love, our own unworthiness and sin send us to the dust in awe and reverence, in penitence and shame, praying, 'God forgive us for our sin.' And in the hour of prostration there comes a voice, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee in Christ; lift thy head, stand upon thy feet, thy God would speak with thee.'

Yes, speak with thee, and the very first words are, 'Stand upon thy feet.' For the attitude of reverence, of penitence, of prostration, will only achieve that which is worth while if it is the prelude to a new beginning, if it means we rise again to new life for God. There is virtue in the dust if we lie not down in it; there is blessing in the humility that bows us down if we but bend to stand again; but it is possible to miss, in our penitence and prostration, the voice of God calling us to stand upon our feet.

I remember, seeing a woman in India who travelled for over a hundred miles to some shrine, and each step of the way she measured her length in the dust. She seemed to have lost the sense of God in her prostrations. Sometimes the sense of sin, failure, insignificance, so overcome us that they fill our minds and keep us down, and we never rise above them. We repent in dust and in ashes, but it isn't the dust that is going to save us, it is the loving call of God. And God calls from above, not from below; look up—up at the Cross of My love, 'Stand upon thy feet, I have something to say to

thee.' And the same voice speaks to us of strength and of courage and wisdom and power to grapple with all the things in life that would bow us down.

Do you remember how the maniac of Gadarea wished to sit at Jesus' feet after Christ had cured him, but the Master bade him stand upon his own feet, and sent him back to his own people to tell the great things that had been done in him. Prostration is the first step in our understanding of God's purposes, but the second is rising to our feet and striving to fulfil His purposes for us. Have you ever thought of that? God has something great for us to do. He is calling us to something higher than we have ever yet achieved, to truth, to righteousness, to a finer manhood, a fairer womanhood, to service for our fellow-men. 'Son of man, stand upon thy feet, I would speak unto thee.'

Perhaps the vision of God has never come our way; the knowledge of God's love in Christ has never dawned upon our souls; perhaps we have not realized our own need. We shall achieve nothing worth while in the spiritual life until we have passed through this experience. Let us remember the presence of God in the world about us, let us think of the power of God in the universe, let us dwell on the wonder of the Heavenly Father's love in Christ. We cannot but bow our heads in reverence then. Then let us turn our thoughts for a moment honestly upon our sin, our need, our unworthiness. We will go right down on our knees then in penitence and shame. I have never met a man who could stand honestly in face of the holiness of God unless he had prostrated himself in the dust of repentance, and God had called him to his feet.

When we are sincere in our sorrow for sin, God does give us the power to arise; and He also enables us to make the new effort glorious. He will do it now as we bow before Him in worship and in prayer. We may fear at first, but the fear passes, for He gives us confidence to stand before Him. 'Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee.'

In these moments of silence, let all our words of theorizing pass away; and let us prostrate ourselves before the Heavenly Father in reverence and humility; and we will hear Him say to us: 'Son of man, stand upon thy feet, I would speak with thee'—words of hope and courage, words of good news, words of salvation from sin and the promise of new life. And in receiving them may we answer with our lives until, having done all, we stand before Him at the last when the mysteries

of life will have been won through and we become perfect in His presence.

Then shall we stand upon our feet  
In very deed, and gaze in wonder  
Upon our Heavenly Father's face.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

**On Winning the Lost.**

'My sheep which was lost . . . the piece which I had lost . . . my son . . . was lost.'—Lk 15<sup>o</sup>. 9. 24.

We would present these parables now as defining the obligation which rests upon Christ's disciples in union with Him to seek the lost. There is nothing plainer in the New Testament than the fact that He who came to seek and to save the lost still carries on that purpose through His disciples, in whom He dwells.

Christ gave these parables, not to sinners to convince them of their lostness, but to Pharisees and Scribes. These Pharisees were not consciously hypocrites, but men sincerely striving to preserve their personal sanctity. But they became so absorbed in externals that they actually came to that state in which they saw nothing in the really vital factors of any situation. Now the Lord Jesus hated Pharisaism just because He loved Pharisees—never forget that—and because He hoped and longed to save them from the unavoidable Nemesis of their own self-centredness. And He is not here speaking to them in irony when He calls them 'righteous' persons, 'just' persons. He says in effect to them, 'You have discovered your own need of relationship with God, and you have satisfied yourselves that by meticulous ritual observance that need is met. But you have lost sight of the fact that your mission in life concerns others who have not so found their need of definite relationship with God, and you are doing nothing to help them to find themselves. Your religion is altogether too self-centred, and on this account it has actually ceased to be religious.'

Now, first of all, we have the parable of the straying sheep; that is the parable of the thoughtless, those who yield to the herd instinct. They are like the one who, when asked, 'Where are you going?' replies, 'Nowhere in particular!' They are, in the main, heedless, restless, thoughtlessly keeping up with the throng, and bleating in unison its silly catch-phrases. They are mistaken, of course, and self-opinionated and pathetically self-satisfied. But they are of tremendous worth to the Shepherd!

We have given our young people laws enough, God knows. But have we ever sought to inspire them with enthusiasm for their true Leader? We have deplored—perhaps too publicly—their restlessness. Yet all the time we actually have the secret of which they are in quest. And were we filled with the Spirit of Jesus, doing the works that He did—ay, and greater works, as He promised we should—we should be impelled to go after them until we find common ground between our convictions and their yearnings.

Then there is the second group of lost ones. They are not a bit like sheep—not alert, restless, in almost perpetual motion; but rather are as insensible to their lost state as a coin that has fallen out of a woman's hand and rolled under a bed or a bureau. There are men who are exactly like coins out of circulation. They are making no contribution to life, for they are out of true relationship with God and with His will for which they were created. They are good enough when they are found and put into circulation. The metal is good; the image is there; the superscription has not been defaced. They just represent the ordinary folk, as like to each other as any one coin is like to another, who have got wrong ideas of life, who are selfish, narrow, self-contained and self-content. They are not doing harm to anyone, at any rate not wittingly. But they are altogether unaware that they were created for a life of serviceable fellowship with all God's other children, and that they are denying the very reason for their being. They have almost immeasurable potentialities for good or evil, as money, indeed, always has when it is in alliance with the great social forces of the world. But now, like the lost coin, they are useless. They are out of right relationship with God and life. They need to be convicted of the sin of living a life that is not increasing its dimensions, that is gaining nothing, that is accomplishing nothing in the world. They are apt to rely upon the fact that they are not influencing anybody for evil; that they are just living their own individual lives. We all of us know men who answer to this description; men who will only be saved if new thoughts of God's purpose, of life's value, and of ultimate morality in terms of individual responsibility, can be given to them. And it is well that we recognize that this will never be effected by exhortation, only by example.

Then, thirdly, Jesus said there are those who are like the younger son in the parable of the father and the two boys. He was lost, not because he went into the far country, nor because he became

a spendthrift rioter, but because he did not, while in the home, come 'to himself.' He did not come to a realization of his own nature and the purpose of his being. Riotous living was not his essential sin, nor were extravagance and impurity. These were rather just the outcome of his wrong ideas about his father and about his own life. It was quite evident, from what Jesus tells us of him, that he had dwelt on what was due to him rather than on what was due from him; until at last he broke out into a demand for the opportunity of self-realization, and left home. Had he invested his money and used it to give him power to exploit his fellows, or to gratify his senses, or to live comfortably until the soul within him died, he would still have been just as far from 'himself' as he was in the far country—perhaps farther.

His father let him go! He let him go because he knew that only by going could he fulfil himself; that only by cutting loose from the home control could he ever ultimately find himself. One cannot believe that Jesus intended to convey the lesson that the young should for ever stay at home! It was probably the best thing this young man could do to leave home. And when he ultimately 'came to himself,' when he got the new and true view-point of life, he was at once made conscious, not of the sin of riotous living, not of the sin of squandering his money. He became aware of his sin against heaven, and of the unworthy conduct which had become his record by his outrage of life's true purpose. In the days of his ignorance he said, 'Give me what is mine!' In the days of his awakening, 'Make me what I ought to be!'

There are all round about us people—and young people in particular—who are misunderstood and suspected, and who are in consequence bored with religion and uninterested in anything connected with it. Unspokenly, they crave sympathy, and seek after self-expression. They labour under the misconception that any idea of God is merely prohibitory of the desires of their nature. They have gone out to seek in a far country what they failed to find in their homes, and what they failed to find also in the Christian Church. One of the reasons for their failure is that there is too much 'Don't,' and not enough 'Do' in the average presentation of the Christian gospel.

Now, last of all, Jesus tells us about another son, representative of the fourth class of people who are lost all round about us. These are the lost people who are to be found in all the Christian churches, the adherents of all forms of organized religion. And they are typified by a man who was lost by the

sheer littleness and pettiness of the life in which he found contentment. If we look at his language we find it strangely familiar: 'I,' 'me,' and 'mine.' It is characteristic of a pitifully small mind without generosity or any thought beyond self. There is only one way to win such, who constitute quite the most obstinate and difficult case of the four classes here represented. Read again Christ's word: 'He would not go in. Therefore went his father out.'

It is quite impossible to say whether his father was successful with him. The inference is that he was not. But one thing is certain, that love and not indifference, long-suffering affection and not scorn, are the only forces that can break such an one down. And, thank God, they can.

Give me a faithful heart, likeness to Thee,  
That each returning day henceforth may see  
Some work of love begun, some deed of kindness  
done,  
Some wanderer sought and won, something for  
Thee!<sup>1</sup>

#### TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

##### Colonists of Heaven.

'For our conversation is in heaven.'—Ph 3<sup>20</sup>.

Words, like people, have their ups and downs, and like people they have more downs than ups. Here in our text we have a word which has come down in the world. What the translators of three hundred years ago meant to convey by using 'Conversation' was that the place to which we belong is heaven. The Revised Version is nearer our modern English when it translates 'Our citizenship is in heaven,' meaning that the city, the country, the state to which we owe loyalty is heaven. Paul, the Roman citizen, never forgot his Roman citizenship, nor, once he became a Christian, did he forget his heavenly citizenship. You remember that Andrew Melville told James VI. of Scotland, 'There are twa kingdoms in Scotland.' At the time of writing this Epistle, Paul was in Rome awaiting his trial. Looking out from his window on the great Mother City, he could not but remember the vast empire which she ruled over. Before his mind's eye there appeared the scattered outposts of Rome, in Britain and in Gaul, in Macedonia and Armenia, in Egypt and in Spain. In all these foreign lands the citizens of Rome were doing the work of the city, as pioneers, settlers, magistrates, soldiers.

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Holden, *The God-Lit Road*, 197.

With his mind coloured by this thought, he wrote these words to the Philippians: 'We are citizens of heaven.' What Roman citizens in lands far distant were doing for the Mother City, that the citizens of heaven were doing for the City of God. Dr. Moffatt brings out the full significance of our text when he gives the translation, 'For we are a colony of heaven.' Paul knew how the scattered Roman citizens were surrounded on the frontiers by aliens and enemies, their business and their pride to remain loyal to the Rome they had never seen. And so it was that the Philippians, the Ephesians, and all the rest, including Paul, and including ourselves, were the colony of heaven. We have never seen it. We are surrounded by aliens and enemies; it is our business and it should be our pride to remain loyal to the city that we have never seen, that city of God which has not known, and can never know, a decline and fall.

What does that loyalty involve? In the case of the Roman colonist, loyalty to Rome meant loyalty to Roman law. Every Roman colony and settlement lived, not according to the law of the indigenous inhabitants, but according to the law of the distant city. Paul had only to mention the fact that he was a Roman citizen to procure in Philippi itself his freedom from prison, and to secure his safety in Jerusalem when he was threatened by the mob. At its most distant borders, as at its centre, the Roman Empire was built on the majesty and the justice of Roman law. Christ's empire is built on a similar foundation. The law of Christ's kingdom is not native to this world. Whatever be the rules of life which govern the conduct of others in any land under the sun, these are not necessarily rules which should guide and control and govern Christians. Their loyalty is demanded to a higher law because they are colonists of heaven. Should it be the case that Rome expected and received from her absent exiled colonists what heaven cannot expect and does not receive from us? Rome, we may say, had blessings to confer; but is it not true that heaven also has blessings to confer? The whole of the laws of Christ's Kingdom are shot through and through with promises of blessing. These blessings are not, indeed, material, but they are blessings which time cannot take away and which are ours when time is no more.

There is no need to describe the lonely outposts in which loyalty to the laws of the city of God is demanded. We have only to remember that the world in which we live is not a world in which the majority of the people are pure in heart, or peace-makers, or humble, or merciful, or prefer righteous-

ness to profit. We have only to remember that, to realize that Paul's picture of the lonely outposts of heaven is as true to-day as ever it was.

There was something more than Roman law which was binding on Roman colonists, there was Roman tradition, there was the Roman spirit. No doubt there were renegades amongst the Roman colonists, but the tradition and spirit of their forefathers had a long and glorious lease of life in their successors. As late as the time when Rome itself was threatened by barbarians and had to call in her far-flung legions to defend her walls, that handful of Roman legionaries who were left in England, men who had never seen the city, were true to the old spirit and tradition. It was they who inscribed the tablet found on the Roman Wall, 'To the discipline of Augustus.' The spirit of the founders of the city breathes still in these simple words. Pompeii, as we know, was a city of unrestrained luxury and vice, so different from the old Roman sternness and simplicity, but it is in the city of Pompeii that we find our best-known example of loyalty to duty. A sentry stood at his post while Vesuvius was in eruption, and was buried alive at his post, erect in the ashes.

We are colonists of heaven. We, too, are inheritors of a tradition and a spirit. The writer of these words was at the building up of the tradition which we have inherited. He was among the first of a long Apostolic succession of men faithful to the spirit of Christ. What was that spirit? From the very beginning it was a spirit of service and self-sacrifice, it was a spirit which did not count the cost; it was a spirit which even in the darkest night believed that the day would dawn, and that the kingdoms of this world would become the kingdoms of God and of His Christ. That spirit and that tradition are preserved and active and potent still. The Church has not forgotten, and cannot forget, its past, the glory of its prophets and martyrs and missionaries. There are, of course, renegades; the spirit of the world creeps in in places; but in other places, perhaps in the obscurest corners of all, there are those who erect their tablets to the discipline—not of Augustus—but of Christ; there are men and women, unnamed and unnoticed, who realize that they are colonists of heaven, not merely to receive benefits but to fight battles and to defend frontiers and to extend these frontiers till the City of God shall rule over all. But we had best admit that if there were nothing more to hand on than some of us could hand on, the next generation would see the Church, not old, but dead, and most of the dearly bought territory over which

the flag of Christ had been raised by the toil and sacrifice of our fathers, surrendered.

For the Roman colonists there was not only the law, to which they were loyal, for the most part; there was not only the spirit and tradition of Rome, to which they were wonderfully loyal, for the most part; but there was Cæsar himself. The empire knew the value of that figure about whom it ultimately threw the cloak of a spurious divinity. As the empire grew old, more and more depended on the loyalty of the colonists to him; they were taught to worship him, and had he been worthy of such worship and such trust as he received, there is no saying what the course of history would have been—but he was not. We ourselves in our Empire know something of the value of that invisible bond of personal loyalty to the throne. It is almost the only bond that binds our dominions into one commonwealth.

The most important question of all is whether we are personally loyal to Jesus Christ, whether we have realized that the real bond is not between us and a city, but between us and Him. The real question is—How seriously do we take our oath of allegiance to Christ? The difficulty of keeping the law of Christ in this world is altogether too great; the tradition and spirit of Christ are far too high for us to maintain in these times, or in any times unless we are the servants and fellow-workers of a living Lord.<sup>1</sup>

#### TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

##### A Sermon for Remembrance Day.

BY THE REVEREND STEWART MECHIE, M.A.,  
EDINBURGH.

'And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.'—He 11<sup>39</sup>!

The roll of honour which is presented to us in this chapter contains a surprising variety of types. There are warriors like Gideon and Samson, national leaders like Moses and Samuel, prophetic figures of the ancient dispensation as well as a crowd of humble and heroic folk whose names are not recorded. Can we say they had anything in common? The writer to the Hebrews is in no doubt. To him they were all men of faith, men whose lives were dominated by a sense of the unseen realities, men who lived for ideals not for immediate gain, men who endured as seeing the invisible and counted life itself well lost in the service of the highest. As he

<sup>1</sup> E. D. Jarvis, *More Than Conquerors*, 97.

sums up in the flowing phrases of our text, we seem to catch three notes which resound afresh this Remembrance Day.

**1. Disappointment.**—'These all . . . received not the promise.'

Scarcely any of those to whom reference is made in this roll of honour were successful in realizing their aims. Most of them were failures, albeit glorious failures. They had great promises held out to them; they cherished lofty hopes and made strenuous endeavours; but all apparently in vain. Samson and Jeremiah, differing so widely, join hands in a common lot of failure. Abraham at the end of his life owned nothing in the promised land but a grave. Moses got no more of it than a distant prospect from the top of Pisgah. The prophets passed on without seeing the great day of their confident declarations. 'Received not the promise' might be the epitaph of them all.

Must we not say the same of the men whom we especially remember to-day? The bitterness of the disappointment lies not merely in the fact that they did not live to see the end of the War, but much more in that the ideals they strove for have not been realized. No doubt in this as in all things human there was some mixture of motives; but the best of them—yes, the most of them—were led into the War by devotion to ideal ends. In that sense we may hail those who appear on our rolls of honour equally with those who appear on the roll of honour of the ancient Jewish Church as men of faith. But what can we say of their ideal ends? Perhaps they might have known that disappointment was in store for them. Certainly the Church of Christ ought to have known. Our Lord told us that men do not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. We might have guessed that modern war is not a plant likely to bear the peaceable fruit of righteousness. A war to end war, to uphold the sanctity of treaties, to crush militarism, to make the world safe for democracy—the very phrases have a cynical sound nowadays, for in these respects, one and all, the world is worse off now than it was before the War. The ends proposed by our men have not been realized. Their hopes have been bitterly disappointed. Whatever else we may dare to say of them, this at least is obvious and true—'received not the promise.'

**2. Achievement.**—'Having obtained a good report through faith.'

On the merely naturalistic or humanistic level there would be nothing more to add. 'Received

not the promise' would be the last word. But it is not the last word for us, as it is not the last word for the Bible. That God must be taken into account in all our judgments for He is the dominant factor in every situation, such is the invariable testimony of Scripture. So when the writer to the Hebrews brings God in, so to say, and reviews his roll of honour against the eternal background, disappointment fades away before the brightness of achievement. God is quick to mark men of faith and give them a good report. They have their certificate of character as faithful ones, and that can never be taken from them. If God is, then faith counts for something. To live for ideals under a sense of the unseen is an achievement in His sight, whatever the apparent ill-success. Further, if God is, the lives of such men are not lost. They are safe in His keeping, treasured up in some unseen realm. Yea more, if God is as He has declared Himself in Scripture, the effect of such lives is not wasted; it is a contribution to God's great ends, a little impulse which, under His ruling and overruling, may count surprisingly in the end of the day.

May we not say the same of those whom we remember to-day? He, unto whom all hearts are open, has seen all the good that we have seen in them and more. Their faith has gained them a good report, and we can be sure that they themselves are not cast as rubbish to the void. Through their faith they achieved something in God's sight; yes, and, by His overruling, their devoted life and death may yet achieve something in the sight of all men and in strange and indirect ways promote these high ends which at this moment seem more illusory than ever. On the merely human level disappointment and failure are the dominant notes, but on the level of Biblical faith it is otherwise. By confident trust in the unseen realities, by seeing God in our situation and resolutely persisting in seeing Him there, we, too, like the writer to the Hebrews, may well hear achievement sound more loudly than disappointment this Remembrance Day. We may the more surely do that in view of the remainder of our text.

**3. Postponement.**—'God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.'

The writer to the Hebrews is no individualist. In his view the final goal of God's purpose is not an aggregation of individual perfections, but a perfected organism, a corporate entity, a body with many members, a temple in which each soul is a

living stone. That is the consummation which all the New Testament sets before us—the family life of the Eternal Father and His redeemed children—and not till all are gathered in is it perfected. Till then there is something lacking to the bliss of the saints. True, we cannot speak of the consummation exactly as this writer does. He is expecting the end of the age and the final coming of the Lord very soon, and that expectation puts the emphasis where we can hardly put it. He tells his readers that something better is provided for them than for the heroes of the Old Testament, not in the sense that they will receive a better salvation than the faithful ones of old, but in the sense that their case is better, since they live in the Christian dispensation and the interval of waiting till the consummation is for them so very brief. We to-day, still awaiting the full coming of the Kingdom in power, are more impressed by the delay than this writer was, but we can join with him in the assurance that our lives and the lives of all the faithful departed of all the ages are part of one great movement. They, whether of the old dispensation or of the new, without us are not made perfect. There is something lacking to them, something that shall yet be made up, for God's purposes cannot be defeated. The ideals of men, in so far as they are His will, are not frustrated but merely deferred. Far from admitting that faithful lives are futile, since faith seems to bring them nothing more substantial than a certificate of character, this writer calls to his readers to hold fast their faith. The men of old have not lost their full reward, they are merely kept waiting. The full triumph of God's purpose is only postponed and their part in it is sure.

May we not again recall the men who fell in the War? They, too, are in the one great movement of Divine activity with us and those who went before us and those who may come after us. They cannot attain full blessedness apart from us. The realization of their ideals, so far as these were God-inspired, is not defeated but merely postponed. That means that we have our battle to fight. The best tribute we can pay them, the best service we can render them, is to carry on their fight of faith. We, too, must live for ideal ends, not for present or personal gain; we, too, must strive and endure as seeing the invisible. So shall we receive a good report through faith and gain our lives in losing them.

We must not, however, slavishly follow those who went before, but must listen to hear what the Lord will speak to ourselves. Samson and Gideon

as men of faith were different in their actions from Isaiah and Jeremiah. Our men fought. It may be that God will call us not to fight. It may be that our war is rather against the root causes of war. Have we, for instance, sufficiently applied our minds and our wills to the internal economic frustrations, afflicting every country, for which war often seems the only or the easiest safety-valve? Here surely is a warfare more subtle and not less exacting. Not the method of our brethren's warfare necessarily, but the faith, the purpose, the completeness of devotion, these we must follow as God gives us

guidance. As it is to Him we look for victory, so it must be to Him we look for light as to the manner of our warfare and the part of the struggle He has committed unto us. The blessedness of the faithful of all the ages and our blessedness, too, will lack completeness till that something better than He has provided is fully revealed and the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God and His Christ. The promise still stands. If we give up in despair we shall be traitors to our brethren, traitors to the faithful of all the ages, traitors to our God.

## Ecclesiasticus: A New Fragment of the Hebrew Text.

BY G. R. DRIVER, M.A., OXFORD.

MR. JOSEPH MARCUS has recently discovered and published a new fragment of the original Hebrew text of the 'Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach,' under the title of *The Newly Discovered Original Hebrew of Ben Sira* (*Ecclesiasticus xxxii. 16-xxxiv. 1*), and he is much to be congratulated on the skill with which he has accomplished his task in view of the deplorable state of the manuscript (called E) which the facsimile betrays. The purpose of these notes, then, is to suggest alternative readings or interpretations of the text in seven passages where the editor seems to have gone astray.

32<sup>10</sup>: [בלא עצה אל] תפעל דבר ואחר מעשיך אל תחקפך.

Such is the reading of E (restored at the beginning of the verse from B), and Marcus suggests that אל תחקפך is a scribal error for אל תחקפני 'vex not thyself,' which is the reading of B; for he knows of no Hebrew חקפך suitable to the context. It may, however, be explained from the Syr. *q̄pas*<sup>1</sup> Pe. 'drew back' (especially the hands, as in the Pesh. in 2 S 24<sup>16</sup>=1 Ch 21<sup>16</sup>), and Ethpa. 'drew oneself back, shrank' (e.g. Syr. Aq. in Ps 32 = 33<sup>8</sup>); thus the verse may be translated:

'Do nothing imprudently, and after thy deed draw not back.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Brockelmann, *G.V.G.S.S.* i. § 88, for Hebrew  $\text{ש}=\text{Syr. } s$ .

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 4<sup>23</sup> (D) and 4<sup>31</sup> (A), where again  $\text{קפך}$  occurs, in both places with various readings which suggest ignorance or misunderstanding of a rare word; but *difficilior lectio potior*.

i.e. be prudent in everything and finish whatever you begin.

33<sup>2</sup>: ומתמוטט כמסערה אנוני. If the nonsensical אנוני is corrected to אנוני = אָנִי<sup>3</sup> 'vessel,' as Margolis suggests after the Gk. version, the meaning of the phrase is 'and tossed about as a ship by a storm' (cf. Gk.  $\text{ὡς ἐν καταγιδι πλοίου}$ ); clearly כַּמְסַעְרָה is an instance of the rare retention of another preposition after 'כ' 'like.'<sup>4</sup> If, then, this explanation of E's כַּמְסַעְרָה is right, it follows that B's כַּמְסַעַר is an error for כַּמְסַעַר, which must be read כַּמְסַעַר, and not כַּמְסַעַר, as Peters vocalizes it; thus the un-Hebraic מְסַעַר disappears from the language.

33<sup>4</sup>: [הבן דבריך] ואחר תעשה ובית מנוח ואחר חניה. Marcus translates this verse, 'prepare thy words, and then shalt thou do; build a resting-place, and then shalt thou go forth (?), reading בנה for בית. The first half of the verse is clearly rightly so rendered, but his version of the second half scarcely makes sense; at the same time it seems impossible to bring the Greek translator's  $\text{σύνδεσον παιδείαν καὶ ἀποκριθῆτι}$  into relation with the Hebrew text, even though אַתְּ-הֵבִית is oddly enough translated  $\text{σύνεσχον τὸν σύνδεσμον}$  by the LXX ( $\text{I} = 3 \text{ K } 6^{10}$ ), as Marcus rightly observes. The Hebrew text can only mean:

'Prepare thy words, and afterwards thou shalt act; And pass the night in rest, and afterwards thou shalt be bright';

<sup>3</sup> Cf.  $\text{הָיָה} = \text{רוּמִי}$  (44<sup>10</sup>, in margin).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Kautzsch-Cowley, *Hebr. Gramm.*, 376<sup>a</sup>.