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17. keep the guard with you.'[1]
18. Shamash-aḫ-iddin and Ea-kurbanni said
19. as follows: 'The guard of Eanna we will not keep,
20. and the libation bearers we will not summon.
21. If the libation bearers for the guard of the inner city
22. be summoned a transgression against Gobryas[2] satrap of Babylon
23. and the Land beyond the river they will commit.'
24. The scribe is Shiriḳtum-Azagsud, son of Balaṭu.
25. At Erech, month Kislev, 17th day, year of the accession of
26. Cambyses, king of Babylon, king of the lands.

The contents of this document refer to some unknown political disturbance in Erech on the death of Cyrus and the succession of Cambyses. It is, in fact, a state document and of much more human interest than an ordinary contract. The chief importance for us, however, consists in the title of Gobryas and the date. It confirms what had already been assumed by Winckler. When the empire of Babylonia was conquered by the Persians it formed at first a single satrapy, and Gobryas was the first governor under Cyrus and Cambyses. The second governor was Ushtanu, appointed in the first year of Darius Hystaspis.

These considerations concern Biblical criticism, and incidentally South Arabian studies, vitally. For, as we have seen, it is improbable that the inhabitants of Western Asia, the Hebrews, Aramæans, and Mineans adopted the geographical term 'Land beyond the river' for Syria before its inclusion in the Persian Empire as a satrapy. They surely would not have described themselves as the *Ebir-hannahar* with reference to the Euphrates; the term was imposed on them and their lands by the Persian Empire. Therefore those Hebrew texts in which *Eber-hannahar* occurs for Syria are obviously later than 538 B.C. or the first year of Cyrus as 'king of Babylon and the lands.' This fact has long been recognized in Biblical criticism and has a bearing upon only one passage whose date is not otherwise obviously post-Exilic, that is, 1 K 5[4], where Solomon is said to have reigned in all *Eber-hannahar*, from Thapsacus on the Euphrates to Gaza. Naturally this statement could have been composed in the Persian period only.

The Minean inscription discovered by Halevy (535), and later by Glaser in Yemen, and published by Hugo Winckler in his *Muṣri, Meluhha, and Ma'in*,[3] contains the remarkable phrase, 'They who journeyed to Egypt and traded . . . in Egypt, Assyria and *Abar-naharān*.' This word undoubtedly means Syria here, and is due to Persian influence which had penetrated into the remote lands of Southern Arabia. That is extremely important in view of the efforts recently made by Arabists to date this particular inscription several centuries before Cyrus.

[1] According to Keiser, No. 2, keeping the guard of the temple consisted in furnishing clean offerings.

[2] *Gu-bar-ru.*

[3] *Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft*, 1898. See the valuable criticism and restoration of this text by Hartmann in *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, xi. 79, and Ed. Meyer, *ibid.* 327.

In the Study.

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

Third Sunday after Trinity.

APPRECIATION.

'Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.'—1 P 2[7].

DR. HENRY VAN DYKE has an essay entitled 'Who owns the Mountains?' 'What is property, after all?' he asks. 'The law says there are two kinds, real and personal. But it seems to me that the only real property is that which is truly personal, that which we take into our inner life and make our own forever, by understanding and admiration and sympathy and love. . . . We measure success by accumulation. The measure is false. The true measure is appreciation. He who loves most has most.'

And here in St. Peter's words we come against the most important illustration of that general principle. 'The true measure is appreciation,' and

he who has learned to appreciate Christ at His true worth is rich beyond the dreams of avarice. 'For you which believe is the preciousness.' Faith might be defined as the faculty of spiritual appreciation; or if we look at it from the upper rather than the under side, we might call it a grace rather than a faculty, for it is the gift of God. But be it faculty from within or gift from above, there are ways open to us of developing and intensifying its power.

1. This power of appreciation, like that which we use in ordinary life, is partly based on knowledge and grows with knowledge. It is a commonplace of human experience that the great masterpieces are appreciated only gradually, and come into their kingdom as men begin to understand them. It has taken some works of musical genius a generation or two to establish their prestige. They were played at first to the few; the many had not ears to hear. Now with growing knowledge the many follow where the few first led. If a man does not enjoy a lecture by an expert, or a picture-gallery filled with the great masters, the reason, or a part of it, may be that he does not know enough to enjoy. The same thing applies to our appreciation of Christ. The first disciples grew in appreciation as they grew in knowledge. The beginning of discipleship was the beginning of that appreciation; and as intimacy grew, they discerned more and more fully the preciousness which was unfolding itself before them, until Peter, even amid his failures, could assert his love, until John could say, 'We know him that is true,' until they all in their measure discovered, with Paul, 'the unsearchable riches of Christ'—Christ the poor man's infinite portion, Christ the El Dorado of the soul in quest of spiritual reality.

Some modern believers feel themselves deficient in the power of spiritual appreciation because they cannot join sincerely in some of the great historic hymns of catholic faith and love. The raptures are too strong for them. The words are more passionate than they would employ. In such matters, there will always be difference of taste and temperament. But it is conceivable that some souls, if they only knew Christ better, if they deliberately made themselves students in His school, might love Him more,—and more consciously. It takes knowledge to appreciate the Portrait that is altogether lovely, to appreciate the Name that is a song.[1]

2. This power of appreciation is also based upon hunger and thirst. Again, one may draw the analogy from the ordinary affairs of life, for appetite is always appreciation. 'The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry every bitter thing is sweet' (Pr 27^7). There is a mental parallel: we appreciate a book which meets our need—our need of guidance, or of instruction, or of comfort; and its well-thumbed pages bear the marks of our appreciation, though a neighbour who did not feel the same need might have it upon his shelves, with the dust of neglect lying thick upon it. These things are parables of a spiritual reality to which St. Peter's words bring us near. Among those who early learned to appreciate Jesus, some of the most eager were those contemptuously branded 'publicans and sinners,' and what key had they to unlock this treasury except their sense of need? They—and many others like them since those golden days of the marvellous ministry — were among the hungry whom He filled with good things while He sent the rich empty away. And the paradox of Proverbs has its counterpart in the spiritual realm —to the hungry even the bitter things in Christ are sweet. A sense of need interprets the Cross which all the wisdom of the world cannot understand: it yields to the majestic and inexorable claim against which the proud will still rebels: it submits to the rod of His discipline, and where others might find only a taskmaster, it says, 'Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.' So hunger is Christ's interpreter, and poverty is His strange evangelist to draw His own to Himself.

3. And appreciation, here as in other realms, is also based on sympathy. When a Walter Pater writes an appreciation of a William Wordsworth, the very act is a confession of a certain sympathy between the two minds. And two souls are often drawn together and learn to appreciate each other because they both have embarked upon a common aim.

Two clear souls
That see a truth, and turning, see at once
Each the other's face glow in that truth's delight,
Are drawn like lovers.

Did not our Lord put that from His own side when He said, 'Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice'? They were servants of truth and He was King of truth, and therefore they and He drew together amid the whirling confusions of the world, and understood one another whosoever

[1] J. M. E. Ross, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 96.

might misunderstand. It is a dangerous thing to allow ourselves to get out of sympathy with our Master, and to that risk we are continually tempted in this world that crucified Him—out of sympathy with His love, His purity, His humble and lowly heart. We must pray for sensitive consciences and loyal wills, that this sympathy between Him and us may not be broken, but that living near Him we may discover how much is in Him of the very fulness of truth and grace. A loyal conscience may discern wonders which mere skill of intellect may altogether miss. That is why the simple and the humble are often wiser than some who would be counted their teachers. They are in the fellowship. They have found their satisfaction. It is real. It is sufficient. It is abiding—a preciousness which life does not exhaust, which still comforts and contents the soul when death loosens the grasp upon all other possessions.[1]

Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE.

'I know.'—1 Ti 1[12].

It is a common thing to hear it affirmed with much emphasis that Christian religion is a matter of faith, not of knowledge; for knowledge, we are told, belongs to the world of matter and of sense, and is based upon observation, whereas faith transcends all such limitations, and moves in a region where knowledge can offer her no resistance. Knowledge is of the mind, and is to be pursued by the careful and industrious exercise of our intellectual faculties, while faith is of the imagination, of the emotions, of the affections, of our moral sensibilities and perhaps to some extent even of the will. In fact, it has to do with all that is covered by that familiar word 'the heart.' Tennyson has given voice to this sentiment in words that are familiar to us all:

> We have but faith: we cannot know;
> For knowledge is of things we see.

We are apt to accept this sentiment as though it could not be challenged, one of those many obvious truths which float about in an undefined way in the brain, until some man of genius expresses them for us, and then we accept them as self-evident, and value them none the less because they seem to be just the very thought that we have always been thinking.

But is it really true? Are we then really all alike agnostics; some of us, devout agnostics who believe although we do not know, and some of us consistent agnostics who refuse to believe what we cannot know? St. Paul, at least, belongs to neither of these classes; he affirms, indeed, that he believes, but he also asseverates that he knows the object on whom his faith rests, and he represents himself as believing because he did know.

Surely it would be truer to say that faith rests on knowledge, although it is not limited by it; and that Christian religion is a matter of faith resting on a foundation of knowledge. Indeed, unless we affirm this, it is difficult to see what there is to protect us against the wildest excesses of religious fanaticism. Faith becomes credulity and religion superstition the moment that we lose sight of the connexion between knowing and believing.

In that grand utterance of our text, St. Paul takes his stand against that intellectual agnosticism which asserts our ignorance of all that lies outside the range of sense experience, in fact of all that professes to be spiritual; while at the same time he is equally at issue with moral unbelief, that refusal of the heart to rest in what the mind accepts, which renders nugatory the professed faith of so many that bear the Christian name.

His knowledge was both direct and indirect: for in his vision of Christ there was an element of knowledge that does not usually fall to the lot of believers in the Christian revelation. Let us consider what he knew.

1. To begin with, he could recall as a matter of personal knowledge due to consciousness the violent prejudice and intense antipathy with which he had once regarded the faith that he subsequently preached, and he could estimate the moral effects that had been induced in him by this particular form of religious enthusiasm; how it narrowed his sympathies and hardened his heart, how it killed brotherly love and generated the fiercest hatred. When people talk, as they do, about the elevating influence of religious enthusiasm, they would do well to reflect upon this object-lesson; and compare Saul the persecutor, with his enthusiasm of hatred, with Paul the Apostle, with his enthusiasm of self-sacrificing love.

2. Then again he knew that the change had been wrought, and he knew how it had been

[1] J. M. E. Ross, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 98.

wrought. It was a matter of knowledge with him that a light brighter than the noon-day sun had shone upon him and his fellow-travellers, and that a voice inarticulate, but apparently not inaudible to them, had fallen on his ears charging him with the sin of persecuting his Lord. He knew full well the keen distress, the profound conviction of sin that had weighed him down during those dark days that he had spent in the street called Straight; he knew how he had wrestled with God for pardon in an agony of prayer; and he knew how at last the answer came and the terrible anguish gave place to a heavenly peace, as he arose and was baptized, and washed away his sins, calling upon the name of the Lord.

3. Not less did he know the moral change that this strange experience had introduced. He found himself indeed a new creature in Christ Jesus, with new views of the character of God and a new sense of close and filial relationship to Him; with a new consciousness of spiritual power working within his own soul and a burning zeal glowing in his heart and inspiring his conduct. The joy, the peace, the love, the power, the triumphant philanthropy, the tender sympathy, the fearless courage, the persevering patience,—all these were facts in his experience, and therefore matters of direct knowledge, and he knew to what they were attributable. But this was not all: his direct knowledge of these inward facts was confirmed by that indirect knowledge which came from the inferences that his work was continuously suggesting. He himself tells us that he was not ashamed of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, because he found it to be 'the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.' He found in his wide experience that even without the supernatural manifestations, by which he had himself been affected, others who received his report shared in the moral and spiritual benefits of which he was himself conscious. He proved in his own ministry its wondrous capacity of transforming licentious and degraded heathen into happy, consecrated Christians, adorning the doctrine that they professed by lives that witnessed to the presence of a divine power.

4. And through a long career of many trials and much hardship, he knew that he had lived his life in continuous reliance on this most mysterious Being; he tells us this much, and he knew that his confidence had not been disappointed. Again and again he had proved the truth of the assurance, 'My grace is sufficient for thee,' in many a stormy hour, in many a shock of battle against spiritual foes and adverse human influences, he had put this assurance to the test, and had never found it fail. Hence there was an abundant basis in knowledge for a faith that rose above knowledge; he knew enough to warrant him in trusting more, and now standing on the border land of the great unknown he asserts his fearless confidence not only for the present, but also for a future with which as yet knowledge can have nothing to do.[1]

Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

GUARDING THE FAITH.

'I have kept the faith.'—2 Ti 4^7.

Paul speaks of the faith as a trust committed to his care. It had been given him by revelation from God, and to it he had devoted his whole life. He had kept it from the covert attacks of mistaken Christians and the open assaults of unbelief. He had kept it through those hours of spiritual darkness through which he, no less than others, had had to pass. He had kept it in Jerusalem before the mob howling for his denial of it; before philosophers who sneered at its absurdity; before Roman power, with its burning pitch, and bloody arena, and executioner's block.

In the arena and on the *stadium* every thing was duly ordered and prescribed, nothing left to chance or choice, and he that strove for the mastery was not crowned except he strove lawfully. In the race, there must be no deviation from the line marked out for the runner; in the combat, no unfairness nor violation of the rules. 'I therefore so run, not as uncertainly,' saith the apostle; 'so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest after having preached to others I myself should be rejected.' 'Would you obtain a prize in the Olympic games?' said the pagan philosopher. 'A noble design! But consider the requirements and the consequences. You must live by rule; you must eat when you are not hungry; you must abstain from agreeable food; you must habituate yourself to suffer cold and heat; in one word, you must surrender yourself in all things to the guidance of a physician.' 'The just shall live by his faith.' Without adherence to this rule, there is no reward. 'The life which I live in the flesh,' saith St. Paul, 'I live by the faith of the Son of God.' It is faith that strengthens the Christian *agonisti* with might in the inner man. It is faith that unites the soul to Christ, and overcomes the world. The shipwreck of faith is the shipwreck also of a good conscience. Keep

[1] W. H. M. H. Aitken, in *The Cambridge Review*.

the faith, and it will keep you. St. Paul kept it, and triumphed in martyrdom.[1]

1. It is not easy to keep the faith. For the chief object of all evil is to take our faith away. Not merely are the arguments of professed infidelity directed to this end. To this end are directed also the far subtler arguments of the practical world with which we must mingle. The pressure of constant work tends to rob us of our faith, because it suggests that what we gain comes only from our own skill and toil. The ways of the world, in its social relations, too often suggest that it is folly to live for distant pleasures and rewards when tangible ones can be had immediately. Then, in the association of trial and sorrow, we feel a giant's hand striving to wrest from us our faith in the goodness and being of God. We find it the struggle of struggles to maintain our faith in God when His ways are strange; our faith in man when the soul is hidden in fleshliness and sin; our faith in immortality; and, as the centre of all truth, our faith in Jesus Christ. And even as we rally our resolution there sometimes comes the sickening doubt whether we are right in maintaining the contest.

2. How do we know that we *have* the faith. We know it by the fruits which 'the faith' has always borne; so that no lives are so God-like as those of believers. We know by the clear historic testimony which has been borne to the truth of Jesus; by the effects which faith in Him have produced in the life of humanity. We know it by the testimony of our own souls to their spiritual and God-like nature.

Wherever this faith is, there will be much besides: there will be a certain sweetness of temper; there will be serenity in life's trials; there will be patience in difficulties and courage in sorrows; there will be a constant endeavour after righteousness; there will be a deep sense of brotherhood, large human interests, and a wealth of human love; there will be hope for humanity, and a calm confidence in God's great purposes; there will be joy in living and fearlessness in dying. Happy are those who can say with Paul, 'I have kept the faith.'[2]

3. You have kept the faith—that is enough—the *faith*, not all the religious opinions of other days, not the crude notions and thoughts of your youth, not the narrow theology in which you were perhaps trained, not all the phrases and confessions and creeds in which you once delighted. There are few of you who have not changed greatly in these things. Your beliefs have grown, your thoughts have surely been refined and enlarged, your creed is more beautiful. The love and mercy and Fatherhood of God and the grace of Jesus Christ have assumed lovelier and grander forms. You have left behind much, you have gained still more. But if through all mental change and shiftings you have kept the faith, the simple trust in God, the belief in righteousness and its rewards, the reliance on a mercy that covers all our unworthiness and sins, the hold on Jesus Christ as the Master of the soul, as the Divine One who gave Himself for our sins, as the Risen One who lives for ever to help us in the struggle and to give us victory over death—then it is well.

I beseech you, young men, to keep the faith. I am not pleading for any blind adherence to tradition for tradition's sake. Let your faith grow with growing knowledge and ripen with the experience of life. I am pleading for that living, spiritual power, that conviction of the truth and that sense of the universal reality of God and of Christ as the only Saviour, which is rightly called 'the faith,' and by which alone you can resist the evil and attain to the final good. This is the shield by which you may quench the fiery darts of the wicked one. This is the treasure by guarding which you will become fit for the enjoyment of heaven and a victor in the present battle of life. Behold the dying apostle, smiling amid his martyrdom, as he catches sight of the crown of righteousness waiting to adorn his brow; and let it give force to the words which Christ sent to His people in their temptation: 'Hold fast that thou hast: let no man take thy crown.'[3]

> Not in the footsteps of old generations
> Our feet may tread; but high compelling spirits,
> Ineluctable laws point the untrodden way
> Precipitous, urge to the uncharted sea.[4]

4. To hold to Christ till the end is to win in the battle of life. In Watts' picture of the 'Happy Warrior' we see what that triumphant end is. He is pictured as slain in battle. He has fallen in the thickest of the fight. Like the greatest Life ever lived, he failed as the world counts failure. But he succeeded in achieving the high end which he had set before him, beyond the range of most men's touch and sight. And out of his saddest experiences had come the purest joy known to humanity. And now in the article of death, the pain vanishes, the darkness disappears, the fear subsides. There is a great calm in his soul. His helmet falls back from his head; and an angelic

[1] J. Cross, *Old Wine and New*, 146.
[2] J. G. Greenhough, *The Cross in Modern Life*, 226.
[3] G. T. Purves, *Faith and Life*, 305.
[4] *The Collected Poems of Margaret L. Woods*, 15.

form, the fair symbol of his aspiration, as the shining heaven above him opens to receive his parting spirit, bends over him and imprints the kiss of everlasting peace upon his brow.[1]

I challenged and I kept the Faith,
The bleeding path alone I trod;
It darkens. Stand about my wraith,
And harbour me—almighty God![2]

Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

THE STRUGGLE OF FAITH.

'The trial of your faith.'—1 P 1[7].

1. There is, first of all, the rest of faith. There is the rest of faith in the apprehension of Christ's atoning work, and in our own pardon through Him and acceptance in Him. There is the rest of faith in the fulfilment of His word, that as we have yielded ourselves to Him, so He has come in to reign and to rule.

2. But this is the beginning of a lifelong stretching out to reach the heights He has shown to us. All the metaphors of the New Testament make this clear, that life is something more than rest, than indolence, that the one who has come into relationship with Jesus Christ is committed to a life of strenuous endeavour.

For, just as the child that is born among the cold, wintry mountains, and accustomed to exposure, is likely to be hardy and robust; just as the character that is formed amid difficulties, and built up over conquered temptations, is likely to be stable and steadfast when these things are safely past; and just as the nation that has fought long and hard for its liberties is not likely to let them go: so the faith that has to struggle its way upward, amid manifold doubts and much despondency, may become a very strong faith after all, 'more precious than gold that . . . is proved by fire' (1 P 1[7]).

3. True, we must not always be plucking up salvation by the root to see if it is firm; but we must (at least the Church must) keep verifying it, testing it and our faith in it. We must keep adjusting our compass, by asking always, and showing, if it is still equal to the new moral situation, and still lord of the new problems of life. Faith can only exist as an inner warfare. That is why the easy Christian public hates apologetics, and calls them mere polemics. But we can keep our faith only by constant reconquest. Our certainty must move on with our enlarging personality and our waxing world. As a life it is a constant decision of our soul, a constant functioning of our life-decision in new conditions; it is not a mere relapse upon a decision we made years ago. To possess our souls we must always be mastering our souls. The sure Christ of our frolic youth would not be a sufficient certainty for our tragic old age.

Faith, the belief which saves, is not to be preserved without a struggle. It is not a conclusion which comes automatically from evidence presented. A hundred times a day suggestions are made within us to abandon this or that result we have achieved with much effort, and we are not then to balance but to hold fast with claws.[3]

4. The aim of the larger faith is necessarily threefold. There is, first of all, the upward aim towards the fullest possible apprehension of God; then there is the inward aim, toward the attainment of as perfect a Christian character as is possible for us this side of the pearly gates; and, thirdly, there is the outward aim toward the accomplishment of the service to which we have been commissioned by our Lord.

'Follow me,' Jesus said; and they uprose.
Peter and Andrew rose and followed Him,
Followed Him even to Heaven through death most grim,
And through a long hard life without repose,
Save in the grand ideal of its close.
'Take up your cross and come with Me,' He said,
And the world listens yet through all her dead,
And still would answer had we faith like those.
But who can light again such beacon-fire?
With gladsome haste and with rejoicing souls—
How would men gird themselves for the emprise?
Leaving their black boats by the dead lake's mire,
Leaving their slimy nets by the cold shoals,
Leaving their old oars, nor once turn their eyes.[4]

Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

THE BATTLE AND THE VICTORY.

'Fight the good fight of faith.'—1 Ti 6[12].

No one can hear or read these words without some response of sympathy, whether the response is felt in his kindled imagination or his consenting conscience; whether his future life glows with the prismatic hues of youthful romance, or reflects the white light of sober reality. Even if we chance to listen to them in an ordinary mood, they arrest the

[1] H. Macmillan, *G. F. Watts*, 185.
[2] H. Belloc, *Verses*, 33.
[3] Mark Rutherford, *Last Pages from a Journal*, 302.
[4] W. Bell Scott.

attention, and move the feelings. Much more, if they meet us squarely at one of the halting or turning places of life, and we think of what we have been or done in the past, and what we may be or do in the future.

There is a great deal in the Bible about soldiers and fighting, especially in the Epistles written by St. Paul. We find that when he wants to explain a matter by an illustration, he constantly takes something connected with military life—the armour of soldiers, or the habits of soldiers—and thus makes clear the truth which he wishes to teach. St. Paul lived a great part of his life in towns where he would frequently have seen the Roman troops, and so all these things were quite familiar to him and to his readers. Here, the Apostle says, life is a battle; and he exhorts Timothy—whom he calls his son in the faith, because he had converted him to Christ's religion—to fight the good fight of faith.[1]

1. We win this fight, first, by clinging to Christ. To Christ—not to the unseen and spiritual in general.

He fought his doubts and gathered strength,
He faced the spectres of the mind,
And laid them;

not by parleying with them; no, by simply casting himself in his helplessness on Him who is mighty to save and strong to deliver. To expect success by turning round to face the doubts whilst we meanwhile let Christ go—a folly of which many are guilty—is as though a drowning man were to let go the lifebelt which keeps him afloat, in order to battle with a foe behind him. Our one safety is to cling as for very life to the unseen Lord whose presence and power we have learnt to hold for true and real.

2. The next thing is constant prayer. The clinging must take place in some form or other; its best form is prayer, at all events its first and most frequent form. 'Pray without ceasing.' 'Be instant in prayer.' We must ask for aid in specific difficulties and perils, against specific impulses and habits, against specific inclinations and temptations; we must pray for the capability to exercise specific virtues and graces; we must pray that we may be strengthened where we are weak, enlightened where we are dark, controlled where we most easily go astray. Yea, mystery of mysteries, we must pray for energy to cling, and just when our hold seems about to loosen, it will become firm as a vice; we must pray to be able to pray, and then our prayer will become a visible and tangible ladder up to the very secret place of the Most High.

[1] T. Teignmouth-Shore, *Saint George for England*, 18.

3. But a third thing is also needed, without which all else will end in failure after failure: we must be willing that God should do all His will in us and by us. Here is our weakness. We reserve, more or less consciously, some little domain or corner of life to be managed by ourselves, and according to our own or worldly notions; and because we shut God out thence, though we would fain have Him elsewhere, He leaves us to stumble and fall, to restlessness and darkness, to a sense of being forsaken and mocked, until it dawns upon us—perhaps at the very brink of an abyss which it would at first have seemed impossible we could ever approach—it dawns upon us that God must have all or none; and that to be entirely God's is the way to freedom, peace, blessedness, and true prosperity.

Virginibus Puerisque.

JULY.

A Beloved Tyrant.

'Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded'—2 Ch 15^{7}.

In these July days many of you boys and girls meet the great, strong, masterful monster that can make both big folks and little folks run for fear. Fortunately it is chained, and the boys and girls know it: they laugh all the time they run. Big people generally sit and look on at a safe distance; for while this monster, because of its hugeness and strength, is one of the greatest wonders of this earth of ours, it is very much beloved.

Just think of one of England's greatest writers speaking of it one moment as giving great rough kisses, and the next as rushing upon what comes within reach—it might be a little boy or a little girl—like a great hungry leopard. There is both love and fear in that, is there not? And a very worthy man who used to sit watching it straining at its fetters confessed that it had done more to help him to be good than even the stars up in heaven, and you know how solemn the sight of them sometimes makes you feel. He said too, that if he had not come to know God, the very bigness and strength of this monster would have made him its worshipper.

A great many people have loved it; and that may be why it has come to be spoken of as *She*. There are poets who even go the length of calling

it 'mother.' There was once a very great poet who did not love his own mother. He felt she did not understand him. Certainly she said very unkind things to him when he was little, things which he could never forget. But he found a friend in this fettered giant and *She* somehow made him think of God as nothing else could. Have you guessed her name? You have run from her many a time, but you were never really frightened; you knew you could easily get beyond her reach. Haven't you built sand castles—perhaps even a strong fort, and then feeling very happy have sat down with your chums beside it. But after a half-day's real holiday fun you saw the enemy drawing nearer and nearer. He (now I call him 'he') had a great army with him, and they wore white caps.

A fort we built upon the sands,
We boys and baby brother Paul,
We shaped it with our busy hands,
And squared the ramparts and the wall.

We held it bravely half a day,
No enemy durst venture by;
But as the morning wore away
We saw the foe was drawing nigh!

He led with him a countless host,
Far farther than the eye could reach.
Their haughty heads they proudly tossed,
And mustered all along the beach.

And all the while their music played
A march so wild and strange and sweet,
The best drum that was ever made
So loud and stirring could not beat.

And near and nearer still they drew,
And shouted like the thunder's roar;
Their uniform was brightest blue,
And caps as white as snow they wore.

We stood our ground like valiant men,
But fast and faster on rushed they
Until they reached the fort, and then,
To tell the truth—we ran away![1]

The sea is the sort of teacher boys and girls need—a teacher who, although he loves them, makes them work. He keeps saying, 'Peg away! Don't get disheartened although things go wrong with you. Just try, try, try again.' And with that he destroys a whole morning's work. We get other castles than sand ones demolished. We are constantly finding ourselves in positions to get out of which requires all the courage we can command.

You know how, when trench after trench had been taken from our soldiers, they stuck to their posts. Their spirit of hope gave us a new catch-word, 'Are we down-hearted? No!'

One day a boy named Tommy was flying his kite. The string snapped and the kite flew far away out of sight. Tommy stood still for a moment and then went home whistling. 'Why, Tommy,' a friend said, 'aren't you sorry to lose your kite?'

'Yes, but what's the use, I'll just have to make another.'

It was the same when he broke his leg.

'Poor Tommy,' his sister cried, 'you can't play any more!'

'I'm not poor. I'll have plenty of time to whistle. Besides, when I get well I'll beat everybody in the class at arithmetic. I keep saying the multiplication table over and over again till it makes me sleepy, when my leg is painful.'

That boy had begun life with our text as a motto. Can you not do the same?

[1] E. H. Thomas, *The Story of a Fort.*

The Man who liked to be First.

'Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them.'—3 Jn 9.

Some years ago I visited an industrial exhibition in one of our large cities. The exhibition was held in a big public park and there were many interesting and curious things to be seen. There was a huge industrial hall where you could see all sorts of wonderful things in process of manufacture, and where the whirr of the wheels and the throb of the engines was so tremendous that you had to shout to make yourself heard. There was a beautiful picture gallery where some of the finest pictures in the world had been collected. There were buildings containing strange exhibits from all parts of the globe. There was an Irish village where Irish peasants were at work on lace and embroidery, and where everything was included except the pig. There was an immense concert hall where splendid concerts were given, and there were band-stands in the open air where some of the most famous bands in the world played.

The first day I visited the exhibition I was talking to a friend outside one of the buildings when all at once there was a piercing shriek quite

near, and then something tore past us panting and puffing and snorting. What do you suppose it was?—It was a toy engine followed by a toy train, and in the toy train there were dozens of boys and girls going for a 'joy ride.' That engine made us laugh. It was so fussy and important. It seemed to say, '*I* am the Exhibition. Look at me. You won't see anything so fine in a hurry again, and just observe how hard I am working.' And yet it never got anywhere. It only carried a few toy carriages backwards and forwards over two or three hundred yards of toy rails. It would have been utterly useless for pulling a heavy goods train, or carrying passengers up hill and down dale, over difficult ground.

Now there are some people who are like that toy engine. They make a great deal of noise and fuss. They like to be important, they like everybody to look at them, but they do very little real good in the world. Diotrephes, the man who is mentioned in our text, was one of those people. He liked to have the pre-eminence among the Christians in his church. And that just means that he liked to have the first place. He liked to boss everybody, he liked everybody to defer to his opinion, and he was very angry when anybody tried to interfere with him.

When John, who was the real head of his church, sent missionaries to it bearing a letter from himself, Diotrephes refused to receive them. But he didn't stop there. Perhaps he was jealous of John and of his influence. Perhaps he thought the apostle had not taken enough notice of him. At any rate he began to say nasty things about him. He said things that were unkind and untrue. Then he went on to forbid the other people in the church to receive the messengers John had sent. And all because he wanted to be first. You see to what lengths his love of power and self-importance led him.

Now I think most of us are inclined to be a little like Diotrephes. We all like to be first. Fortunately, most of us have brothers and sisters at home and companions at school to take the nonsense out of us, or we should turn into very horrid people indeed.

There is a sense in which this desire to be first is a good desire. It is good to wish to make the very best of yourself—to do your very best work and win the very best place you can. The boys and girls who have a good ambition are kept from many mean and unworthy things. But this desire to be first is not good when it makes you vain and selfish. It is not a good thing when it makes you forget the rights and feelings of other people, when it makes you over-bearing, and self-important, and unkind.

Diotrephes called himself a follower of Jesus, but I think he must have forgotten that Jesus told His disciples that he who wanted to be chief among them must be ready to serve others. Do you know the finest thing you can do? It is not to carry off prizes or make a great name for yourself. It is just to serve other people by kind and loving deeds.

Once a missionary in China sent home for an assistant. A young man appeared before the committee as a candidate, but he seemed so unlikely that they said he would never do. Then they thought he might do for a servant, so they asked him if he would be willing to be that. And the young man replied cheerfully, 'Certainly. To be "a hewer of wood and a drawer of water" is too great an honour for me when the Lord's house is building.'

The true followers of Jesus are glad to do even the humblest work for Him. It is a good thing to be first. It is a finer thing to be able to take the second place sweetly and cheerfully. But the greatest honour of all is just to take the lowest place and to help others with humble and loving service.

The Ruby.

'More precious than rubies.'—Pr 3^{15}.

July is—or should be—a month of warm glowing sunshine, and the July stone is a warm glowing gem—the ruby.

The ruby is the rarest of the precious stones, and a perfect ruby brings a price three times as great as a diamond of the same size. The ruby is made of a material called corundum, and it has two cousins the sapphire and the Oriental topaz, which are corundum but with different colouring. Though we may not have heard the word 'corundum,' we all know one variety of corundum. We often beg some from mother when we want to polish up any steel that has rusted; for emery paper is made of grains of corundum, and these grains are far-away cousins of the ruby and the sapphire.

Our finest rubies come from Upper Burma. That is the natural home of the gem. Indeed, the earliest rubies known to history came from the Burmese mines. Till 1886 these mines were worked by natives who jealously guarded their secrets. But in 1886 Burma was annexed by Britain, and after that date the mines were taken over by a British company who, for the privilege of working them, pay a huge sum every year to the Indian Government.

From Siam too come rubies, and the King of Siam styles himself 'Lord of the Rubies.' But the rubies of Siam are darker and less pure in colour than those of Burma. Rubies are found also in small quantities in Ceylon, Australia, and the United States; but the same holds good of all —they are inferior to their Burmese brothers.

Rubies are of every shade of red from pale rose to deep crimson, but the most valuable are of the shade known as 'pigeon's blood.' The test of the colour of a ruby used to be placing it on a white paper beside a drop of fresh pigeon's blood, and that is why to-day people speak of pigeon's blood rubies.

The ruby has always been a royal stone and a favourite of kings. There is a great ruby among the English crown jewels. It was given to the Black Prince in the year 1367 by Don Pedro, King of Castile, and it was worn in the helmet of Henry V. at the battle of Agincourt. It is said to be worth £100,000.

Although the ruby is so rare, it has many stones which closely resemble it—such as the garnet and the spinel. Sometimes only experts are able to tell the difference. If the expert is in doubt he takes an instrument called a dichroscope and examines the stone through it. The dichroscope makes him see double. It gives him two images of the same stone. If the one image be orange-red and the other carmine-red, then the expert knows he is looking at a real ruby, for the garnet and the spinel do not show two colours under the dichroscope.

If you hunt up in the Bible all the texts that speak of rubies you will notice they nearly all tell you that *wisdom* is more precious than rubies. Now, I quite agree that wisdom is a precious thing, but there is something more precious than the wisest wisdom, more precious than gold or silver or diamonds or rubies—and yet we all can have it. What is it? Why, just *love*! So wherever you see 'wisdom' compared to rubies I want you to change the word to 'love.' The ruby is a splendid stone with which to compare love. Wisdom is a cold sort of thing, and to me it seems to compare best with a green stone, but love!—why love should be red and warm and glowing like the ruby! And besides that, if we need another reason, the ruby is supposed among precious stones to be the symbol of love.

So the ruby's message to us is 'Love.' Yes, but love of the right sort, love that stands the test of the dichroscope, love that divides in two. What do I mean by that? Let me tell you in a story.

A teacher was once trying to explain love to a class of tiny tots. She knew it was no use to give them an explanation out of a dictionary, so she asked instead if any of them could show her what love meant. At first they were all silent. Then one little maiden of six rose shyly from her seat, flung her arms round the teacher's neck, gave her a good hug and said, 'That's love.' 'Yes,' said the teacher, and smiled. 'That's love. But love is something more. Can you show me what more love is?' The little girl thought a minute or two. Then she began to set the chairs in order, to clean the board, to tidy away the papers and books, and to sponge the slates. When she had finished and everything was in order she said, 'Love is helping people too.'

That little girl was right. Love is not only hugging, it is helping. It is not merely saying, it is doing. Some boys and girls—and I'm sorry to say some grown-up people as well—seem to think that love ends with hugging, and saying, 'I love you heaps and heaps.' That is quite a good way of showing love, and some folks don't do nearly enough of it. This world would be a happier place if there were a little more hugging and telling people that we loved them. But that is only one half of love, it is only one image of the ruby, the orange-red. It leaves out the other image, the carmine-red, and without it we cannot have real love any more than we can have a real ruby. The love that stops at words and doesn't go on to deeds is not, after all, worth much.

In Scotland they sometimes say of a person, 'Oh! So-and-so is very agreeable, but he *wouldn't put himself about* for you.' That means he would not go out of his way or give himself any trouble to do you a kindness. Boys and girls, I want you all to *put yourselves about* for others. I want you to help as well as to hug, to do as well as to say, to serve—which is the better part of love.