

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

is that the actual data of religious and non-religious thought, and the relation between them, are such that only certain assumptions allow us to pursue the study of this great subject. Here one may see the rise of a new apologetic—a new challenge, for one is also led to the conclusion that, when thought is co-ordinated, the religious conceptions of the Universe will stand nearer to the Ultimate Realities than the non-religious. And this is only another way of saying that the former represent a deeper and fuller expression of man's personality.

Our conceptions of Reality are vital both for the development of personality and for the progress of the environment. If there be a moral order we hinder all progress by acting contrary to it. The more our actions are in accord with the Ultimate Realities, whatever these be, the greater their effectiveness. Hence, just as a scientific or a moral fact, once clearly recognized, cannot be cast aside with impunity, so, once we are conscious of something felt to be real and true, an advance must be made at all costs, if there is not to be retrogression or decadence. The torch is borne by the individuals or people who have become more conscious and have striven after that new co-ordination of experience and thought which marks a new stage in psychical development. Their lives, when so regulated after their newer knowledge of the Ultimate Realities, become fuller and more effective, their influence wider, and this because they

have come into nearer touch with the realities of the Universe and have obtained a greater mastery over an environment which, in its turn, is vaster than it was before.

A positive development of thought is indispensable if our civilization is to be purified and enabled to progress. This is far from saying that Religion must be adjusted to Science, or *vice versa*: the history of thought does not suggest so simple—and so one-sided—a solution. Thought has become international, the accumulation of data is so immense, the retrospect of historical development so lengthy, the knowledge of cosmic and human evolution so rich, that any further stage of progress would have to take these up and pass beyond them. Western civilization may decay, a new growth may commence—just as Western civilization superseded that which preceded it—but there is absolutely nothing to suggest that our civilization 'must' persist or 'must' disappear.

Granted that the problems of the age are real enough in all conscience, it is only by raising them to a higher level, and by associating them with the problems of the greatest realities of the Universe, that they can be successfully handled. A new enthusiasm will then be generated—let it not be forgotten that Bolshevik and allied movements are also moved by an enthusiasm!—but it will be one inspired by the highest realities, in harmony with the purest justice, and fortified by its reliance upon the true progress of knowledge.

In the Study.

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

INTIMACY.

'At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.'—Jn 14²⁰.

'YE in me. I in you.' That is a companionship which we can know something of. It can be a direct experience of our own. Jesus Christ, come in the flesh, moving about among us on earth, talking, healing, blessing, purging, sanctifying, has made intimacy between Himself and us to be a very real matter of flesh and blood. That gathers and grows in intensity of experience; it

becomes a personal love with a more and more definite meaning and purpose.

This affectionate and delightful intimacy gives us the best idea that we can form of what the life of God really is in its Divine essence. 'I in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you.' 'Just what I am in you, and you in me, that I am in the Father. My life in communion with you is parallel with, corresponds with, the life that I live in communion with the Father.' So our Lord says. Let us take Him at His word and see how far it carries us. Put it in this way. We want to be able to think of God; to know what the word 'God' means; to give it some intelligible reality;

to bring it near. Well, our Lord declares that the true parallel to God is to be found in the life of personal communion of which our intercourse with Him is our highest example. Recall, then, if you want to know about God, all that you have ever known of sweet human friendship, sweet earthly intimacies. These are the doors that open into Heaven and let you into the Presence even now.

1. Remember what it was when two of you grew together, as brother and sister, perhaps, in old, old days long ago. You could not bear to be apart. You cried when your playmate was away. You laughed with joy, and shouted with laughter when you both were back again together. You had endless talks that never grew stale. Such secrets! Such hidden understandings! Such private and cryptic language, that only you two could speak! So you grew, and grew into a unity of heart, which is still like nothing else in all the world—so sure, so deep, so unchanging. It will be part of your very blood, of your life, till you die. Yes! all this is a symbol, a reflexion, in its dim way, of that rich, intimate intercourse which constitutes the joy of the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit, in their Divine eternity of Glory.

2. Or, again, recall what friendship meant in your youth; in the happy days of expansion and hope, when your soul struck in upon another soul, and fire flashed at the contact, and the quick merry sparks flew and glittered as you flung your thoughts into his, and he flung his back upon you, and the words leapt to and fro, and the fancies danced, and heart throbbed to heart, and hand touched hand, and all the splendour of the dawn was in your eyes, and you looked into each other's souls and dreamed the great dreams of what you would do together on this sad, glad, bad earth before you died, and the Vision shone about you of the better days that were to be, and all that was best in you thrilled in response to all that was purest and highest in him, and you kindled together the heat that fused your lives into one jet of quivering flame, and you felt all that friendship could do and be, if but two men in all the world hung perfectly together and had the faith in common that would uproot mountains and bid them be cast into the sea. Do you remember something of this? Can you recall some such experience? Well, then, in that high hour you had an insight into the life and joy of God. You caught a

glimpse of what it might be to say, 'I am in the Father, and the Father in me.'

3. Or, again, have you ever known anything of comradeship in a glorious cause, to which you and your companions should be utterly committed? How the great hope fired you all! How it possessed you! The days were never long enough to satisfy your passion for the work to be achieved. And every one of you impelled the other to greater effort, and you shared every thought for the honour of the great scheme. And you were never tired of discussing it all over and over again with one another and of comparing counsels, and of co-operating in plans. And you laughed together at the obstacles that dared to get across your path. And you cheered each other in dark days of misfortune, and still the very pressure of the task as it became more and more serious drew your hearts yet nearer to one another, and you grew into a nearer and dearer brotherhood of souls as misfortunes menaced and disaster overtook the one hope on which you all had set your hearts. It broke at last only to find you knit by a faster love to one another than ever had been possible in the earlier days of confidence. Have you tasted of this fine living? Have you experienced such blessed intimacy? Then you have got the material by which to conceive a little of the eternal gladness of which our Lord spoke as He said, 'My Father worketh hitherto'—worketh ever at the good purpose on which His Will is for ever bent—'and I, too, work with him.'

4. Or, again, here are two who have entered deep into the secret of wedded union. The first early raptures, which were as music in the morning of their love, have passed long ago into the very fibre and substance of their being. Two lives have blended day by day, through all those innumerable moments at which the two souls touched and interchanged. Now there is an instinctive movement by which each answers to every mood of each, and each balances each, and each speaks, thinks, acts, in and for each. There is a temper, an atmosphere, in which both are enwrapped, and there is one flavour in the united lives, and one scent as it were, that pervades the house, the room, the garden, in which they are at home with one another. It hardly needs speech to keep them in communion together—a glance, a movement, nay, soundless and hidden intuition, is enough. They cannot be divided. Each lives

permanently aware of what the other is about. The common being of both flows in, flows out; forward and backward it passes, yet it is one moving stream.

This is love, completed, disciplined, fulfilled; the twain are become one flesh, one spirit—twain in one, one in twain; conscious always of the delight that belongs to the distinction that keeps them two, transcended by the passion that blends them into one.

That is a human experience that can be seen and realized here and there. That is a human experience which is again and again on its way to being realized, through partial lapse and failure. And wherever it is felt to be possible, there it is our highest and purest suggestion of what the joy and the beauty of the Divine Life really means, in which the love of the Father flows out into the Son; and the love of the Son takes the measure of the Father's love; and the love of Both flows together through and in the love of Him Who proceeds from Both and returns into Both.

Now, there is our Gospel about God! There is surely good news! This Gospel surely means that if God is love, then we, in our human loves, have a real and solid entry into the Heart of God. Up to the measure of our love for one another, we can touch, and know, and feel the Reality of God. For that reality consists in the loving intimacy of person with person, and, though we can know but little of the intensity of the intimacy in God, yet the little that we can know, through our own experiences of what such intimacy means, is not illusion, not pragmatic fiction, not a temporary expedient—but is real and actual knowledge of God Himself as He is.¹

Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

JUST AND JUSTIFYING.

'That he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus' (R.V.).—Ro 3²⁶.

St. Paul in this passage is telling his fellow-penitent, his fellow-seeker after pearls, that the Cross really is the pearl; that forgiveness is there.

1. First, the amazing, wholly inexplicable reality of Love, not man's love for God, but God's love for men, self-moved and moving, wholly undeserved. God sending and then setting forth His Son to be a propitiation by His blood. God so eager to bring the sinner where the sinner wants to be, that He will go to the full length of blood shedding. God so commending His love for men that even while they were sinners Christ died for the ungodly.

So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too—
So, through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying, 'O heart I made, a heart beats here!'

Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
Thou hast no power nor mayst conceive of mine,
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
And thou must love me who have died for thee!'

2. And next the unflinching inexorable reality of holiness; no mere condoning, no mere winking at offences, or at ignorances; that is all over now. Here is no play acting, no grandiloquent forensic, no treating the sinful as though sinless, no denial of Himself; but a lifting up of man in spite of sin, out of the midst of sin, into His righteousness, that at all costs He may be just Himself while doing justice to His children.

3. Then the actual miracle of complete pardon; without parallel or precedent (but where is the precedent for sin?); upsetting all calculations and all uniformities (but sin had done that already, men and not God). God, if forgiveness were possible, would be restoring law and order, not breaking through it. Pardon, not in the sense of letting off, but of making good; not a kind word of sympathy, but an act of recreative power; God, not only just, but Justifier.

So St. Paul explains it. God has found the way and taken it, as merciful as it is just, as just as it is merciful. He has neither compromised His holiness nor been baffled by His children's extraordinary need. He is able to love men into holiness and heaven because He is ready to love them to the death. 'All have sinned and fall short, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by His blood, to show His righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; that He might Himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.'

Truly a perplexing and obscure passage. There are clear traces of Rabbism in it, and some signs of Hellenism, with just a touch added to show the influence of those mystery-religions that were even then becoming rife all through the Empire. Many modern exponents of religion will be heard to say: 'Oh, leave all this quasi-philosophic and half-speculative and altogether Pauline talk, and go back to the real Gospel of Jesus; for instance, to the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the pure in heart." "Ye shall know them by their fruits." What do you need more than that? Go back to the real thing.' Well, do you go back by all means if you want to. But I fancy the penitent will stay; for he has different thoughts and different measures. What St. Paul says is greatly to the point, *for him*. If Christ crucified were really that: love, justice, pardon; and all

¹ Canon Scott Holland.

from the very God and all verily for him, why, he would have his pearl, and he would give his life for it. But is it true? Who knows, and who shall say? Only, I think, the Pearl-Collectors.¹

I believe that the justice of God is the righteousness of God, and that His righteousness requires righteousness in man, and can be satisfied with nothing else, and that punishment is God's protest that He is not satisfied. But it is evident that if this be so the judicial office is incomplete in itself, and must be subordinate to the teaching office, so that the condemnation of wrong may minister to the inculcation and acquisition of right.²

Tenth Sunday after Trinity.

THE FULNESS OF CHRIST.

'That we . . . may grow up unto him in all things.'—Eph 4¹⁵.

We are to 'grow up unto him in all things. All mankind, as one whole, is to come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect (a mature, developed, fully grown) man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. If we ask what this means the answer is threefold.

1. *Selflessness*.—The identification of our wills with His. 'Our wills are ours to make them thine.' Every human soul is in a position to say, 'Lo, I am come [into existence] to do thy will.' Not to annihilate my will; that would be annihilation of my personality. That is not Christianity, but Buddhism. When a plant or animal dies, the individuality of its life, so far as we know, is absorbed into the universal life, and its place is taken by other physical instruments by which that life can express itself. But the spirit, the personality of man, is not intended for death, nor to be 'remerged into the general soul.' It is intended for growth towards the perfect harmony of his will with God's.

If we could imagine the condition of a human soul which had reached, in respect of selfless obedience, the perfection of growth, it would not be right to suppose that it had ceased to be a human, individual soul. It is a soul in which God for ever takes infinite delight, because the harmony of the human will and the divine is for ever complete. We can form no conception of the joy in heaven over one sinner made perfect, and no conception of the bliss of the human soul in whom God is eternally well pleased. But it is an aim and a goal which gives to our daily spiritual growth all its meaning and inspiration. Epaphras could not have prayed a better prayer for his converts at Colossæ than that they

might 'stand perfect and fulfilled in all the will of God' (Col 4¹²).

2. *Knowledge*.—'This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.' This is not separate from the harmony of our will with His; it is closely bound up with it. On the one hand, St. Paul prays for those same Colossians that they might 'be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.' A knowledge of God must precede obedience; we must know what He wants before we can want the same. But, on the other hand, the more fully we know Him and harmonize with His will, the more like Him we become, and therefore the more able we are to know with spiritual understanding what He likes and dislikes. Selfless obedience grows from knowledge, but also produces it.

St. Paul expresses this growth in knowledge very beautifully when he prays for the Philippians (1⁹), 'that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.' The last word in the Greek, *asthesis*, suggests something in the spiritual life which may be compared with that wonderful sixth sense which many blind persons seem to possess. We ordinary Christians, who have not advanced very far in our growth, have very little idea at present what it can be: a spiritual instinct, a delicate sensitiveness of perception, an intuitive certainty, 'understanding what the will of the Lord is' (Eph 5¹⁷).

3. *Love*.—What is love? No one knows but the lover. Others might know if he could describe it in words; but that is impossible. As well might the sufferer try to answer the question—What is pain? The physiologist can tell us only the bodily conditions of which pain is the accompaniment.

In the Greek of the New Testament there are two words which we translate 'to love.' The difference in meaning must not be over-pressed, but still they may be taken as expressing love from two points of view. Broadly speaking, the one involves a getting, and the other a giving. In the one the lover gets a feeling of pleasure, delight, satisfaction of some sort, from the loved; he loves because of some attractiveness which calls forth his love. In the other the lover wants the loved to get something, and so he gives himself freely. Needless to say, the former word, though it is employed to express the Father's love for the Son (Jn 5²⁰), is never used to express His love for us. Apart from what He gives us there is nothing attractive in us to call forth His love. His love is always a free self-giving. 'God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son,' that is Himself, because the only-begotten Son is God. Nevertheless, having given Himself to us, He longs to receive back from us all that is divine and beautiful, all that we have received from Him.

Our love, on the other hand, must be of both kinds.

¹ P. M. Rhineland, *The Faith of the Cross*, 47.

² *Letters of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, 1840-1870*, 208.

Since He is altogether lovely, the human soul must always want to get Him. 'My soul is athirst for God' is the first aspect of love. But it must not be only a desire to get. The soul, in fact, finds that impossible. The more it gets, the more it is consumed with the passion of self-giving, that is, of giving back to God what it has received. How wonderful this is can be seen from the fact that it is intended to be a reproduction of the mutual love of the eternal Father and the eternal Son in the eternal spirit of love. It is to be wholly and completely mutual, wholly and completely divine. Of ourselves we have nothing to give; but since we get Him, we have everything to give. There is a real sense in which He is incomplete without it. He is 'being fulfilled' according as He receives from us the divine love which He gives us. Our getting and our giving are each inconceivable alone. Our growth and God's self-fulfilment consist in our progress in the give and take of love, that finally God may be all in all.

Now we can understand better the spiritual conditions of which love is the accompaniment. To get God is to get a knowledge of Him. To give ourselves is to bring our will into harmony with His. As we know Him better we obey Him better; and as we obey Him better we grow in likeness to Him and therefore know Him better. It is wholly mutual, and wholly divine, and wholly love. Obedience, knowledge, and love are a trinity in unity; and nothing less than that is the Christian life; it is the ideal towards which we are created to grow.¹

Many more words I should like to say here, but those who possess this have no need of them; and he to whom it has been shown, and who cleaves with love to love, he shall be taught the whole truth by love itself.²

Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.

PREPARING FOR POWER.

'Ye shall receive power.'—Ac 1⁸.

There is a *preparation* necessary before the Holy Ghost can bestow on us the *power* which He came to bestow. What is that preparation? To this question there is a threefold reply.

1. The 'vessel' must be 'cleansed' before God uses it. 'If a man therefore purge himself' (the word is *purge himself right out*, as to the bottom) . . . he shall be a vessel . . . meet for the master's use' (2 Ti 2²¹). This deep cleansing, of which Paul speaks so strongly in 2 Co 7¹, 'from all defilement of flesh and spirit,' is a necessary preparation before the Master can use us in His power.

2. Another step in the preparation regards the object for which we desire power, and the use we would make of it. If we seek it for ourselves; if the desire of vanity or self-aggrandizement enter into our motives; if there be any sectarian or sectional object prominent in our minds, such as

¹ A. H. McNeile, *The Increase of God*, 32.

² Ruysbröck, 'The Book of Supreme Truth.'

to promote the influence or cause of the Church to which we belong—then we cannot expect God to entrust power to us on any such terms. For His glory, not for ours: that is His condition.

3. A third preparatory step is, that we be willing to take God Himself, as well as His power, into our hearts. We cannot have the power alone; there is no separation between it and Him. 'Power belongeth unto God': it is inherent in Him. To have the power within, we must have Christ within. But that means many things. It means something much more than having the power alone, to do with it as we will. It means, among other things, this—that we be emptied of all power, and so become helpless, in order that God within us may be free to use His power through us.

Suppose you are a worker in a great factory, every part of which is worked by steam, the smallest movement as well as the greatest; it is natural for the thought to enter the heart—Would that I were able to use that enormous power! But the answer is, Nothing is easier, if only you are content to use it for the purposes which it is meant to serve; make the connexion, and keep it, and *your* portion of the whole will go equally with the rest. Difficulty would of course come in if you attempted to detach your loom from the others, and make it serve your own ends, irrespective of those for which the whole was working. That indeed would be impossible. You could not have the power, unless you submitted yourself to the person who was guiding and superintending it. Just so, we cannot take God's power out of His own hand, separate it from His one great purpose, and detach it from the movements of His will, in order to make it draw our special train, and exalt our own name. You can have God's power, for God's work, in God's own way—not otherwise.³

The experiences of the [Civil] war left Phillips Brooks a larger man and a different man from what he was before. Henceforth he was no longer his own, but had been bought with a price. He had made the sacrifice of himself—a confessor though not a martyr. Into that sacrifice he had poured all that made life dear, and a thing to be desired. He did not himself know the depth or the extent of his self-abnegation. The changes and the chances of life went over him at a critical hour, when he was absorbed in a supreme issue, losing himself in God, for country, for freedom and humanity.⁴

Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

THE SOURCES OF POWER.

'Endued with power from on high.'—Lk 24⁴⁹.

If we study the lives of the original eleven who carried such a transforming spirit into the world

³ J. E. Cumming, *Through the Eternal Spirit*, 284.

⁴ A. V. G. Allen, *Phillips Brooks: Memories of his Life*, 188.

that they actually remade it, and so studying find the sources of their power, then we can learn for ourselves how we also may hope in our place and time to accomplish similar results.

The word 'power' really means dynamic force. A rock has stability, but not dynamic force; it can resist, but it cannot put forth effort; it can remain unshaken before the wave, but it cannot throw a life-line to a foundering ship. There is dynamic force in the sap that runs up a tree and causes it to bud and leaf, dynamic force in the purpose that causes Peter to heal the blind man, dynamic force in the patience of the sufferer that makes onlookers marvel at the power of Christian faith. It was dynamic force that Christ exerted when He went everywhere doing good, and dynamic force He exerted when His very presence imparted courage and confidence to men. Many a silent force is a dynamic force—light, gravitation, leaven. Indeed, silent forces are the greatest dynamics. Many a quiet life is a Christian dynamic—a power for good. No, it is not noise nor notoriety that we are to seek, but it is power—the power to illumine darkness, the power to attract Godward, the power to permeate society with righteousness. Others have possessed this power, and possessing it have been the world's benefactors. We, too, must have it. We must accomplish something for the world's welfare, yes, we must accomplish much for its welfare.¹

1. The first source of their power was in their sense of separation from the rest of mankind. Men do not attempt to lift the world when they are on its level; and if they should make such attempt they would fail, because they have no vantage-ground for their foothold. They had something within them that others did not have. It was perhaps a matter of sentiment, of ideal, purpose, satisfaction. But mere matter of sentiment as it was, it made them one class and all other people another class. They never thought of mankind, or mingled with mankind, without feeling that they possessed a treasure which made them rich, while others who lacked it were pitifully poor. What was this treasure? It was the indwelling of Christ within them. Christ was the great force of their hearts. They had received a new explanation of God's character and of the meaning of life through Him. They had been shown by Him how they should live and might live; He had told them of His dependence on them for His kingdom's welfare, and He had imparted Himself to them as their daily Helper, Joy, and Peace. And so in heart blessedness they were different from others.

It is inner conception, inner ideal, inner vigour,

¹ J. G. K. McClure, *Loyalty*, 172.

that most separate people from one another. One man has the artistic taste; he sees beauties in painting and sculpture unseen by others. One man has the musical taste; he derives pleasure from concerts that give weariness to others. If such artistic or musical tastes master a man, they set him apart, almost as it were by an ordination, for his special aptitudes. So the followers of Christ knew that they were the salt of the earth, and though it was their mission to put themselves into closest contact with the earth, they felt that they must preserve the qualities that distinguished them as salt, else they would become of less value than even common earth. If they could not engage in an occupation or attend an amusement without accomplishing the work of salt, they would not have part in the occupation or amusement. They were not here simply to remain unchanged in hurtful surroundings; they were here to take the hurt out of those surroundings. They were the light of the world, who should guide into the right way those who were going astray. As a light their value lay in continuing to shine, yes to shine. So they would not conceal their lights under the cover of the world's customs. It was to them actual disloyalty to Christ and actual faithlessness to their fellow-men to be like their fellows; to act in a way that caused others to feel themselves as well off as the Christians.

2. The second source of power with the original eleven was their sense of stewardship. They looked on everything they possessed, whether it was an inner experience or an outer holding, as entrusted to them by their Master for the Master's uses. Nothing was their own. They were administrators of an estate. The heirs were the whole human race, and they were charged to see that every accessible individual of that race received his share of the estate. The man far away was to have their consideration, and the man at hand was to have their contact. It was this thought that kept them from pride in the knowledge of their possessions; they held what they held, not for themselves, but for others. They were separate to serve; the salt was to help, the light to guide. The very fact that they had what others had not put them under obligations to minister to others. So no man was elated by his godness, his knowledge, his wealth, or his reputation; rather he was humbled by them. The more he had, the more he was under obligation to serve.

To serve he must bend down to the level of the lowliest.

The sense of stewardship is a great awakener of power. There was no power in Moses while he thought of his slow and stuttering tongue and forgot the entrusted message. But when he thought of the entrusted message and put his tongue, such as it was, at God's disposition, and tried to deliver the message of Israel's release, Moses emerged from weakness into power, and became a force that Pharaoh and the world could not push aside. Paul Revere, feeling that he was charged by General Warren with a truth that must be told for the welfare of others, made his midnight ride and warned Concord and Lexington of the approach of the enemy, the sense of stewardship putting bravery and energy into the rider. All life takes on a new significance as soon as we realize that whatever we have is ours as a trust. Our temperament is then the special one that God designs should be used for a blessing to others. Our place is the place we are to administer for the welfare of others. Our social recognition is given us to be a means of blessing lives. Even our poverty is particularly assigned us to be a field of Christian beneficence.

3. A third source of power in the original eleven was their perfect trust in their Leader. They kept Him at the head of all their thoughts and ideals. He seemed to be burnt upon their vision, to be engraved upon their heart. To talk of truth was to talk of Christ; to talk of conduct was to talk of Christ; to talk of the future was to talk of Christ's glorious and complete victory. In their inmost being they believed that His cause would conquer. They likewise believed that He would always help His workers, would advance His hosts, would ride triumphantly through difficulties, and would receive His followers to His own rest.

The effect of this trust on them was to give them heartiness in their work and make them unceasingly persistent in their efforts. They expected difficulty, and they purposed to force their way through it. They looked on disappointment as only a temporary delay and as an incitement to new methods and new efforts. They accepted suffering as part of so worthy a struggle as the one they were engaged in. And so they were content; they were even glad. They never let one syllable of discouragement pass their lips, nor did they let one ripple of murmuring run through their souls. They could not be cast down; they

looked for victory always and everywhere, and if it did not come to-day, it would come to-morrow.¹

Virginitibus Puerisque.

AUGUST.

Gathering Lavender.

'Remember therefore how thou hast received . . . and keep it.'—Rev 3³.

Most of you have holidays just now and are having a glorious time. You feel so happy that you keep counting how many of the precious weeks are still to run. And somehow you imagine that everybody else is on holiday as well as yourself. When you tramp along the country roads, you of course meet farm carts, and their drivers always seem to be whistling. Holidays are in the air.

When men walk slowly by their carts,
And women line along the hay,
I sing to them to let them know
The tramp is on his way.

I hear the linnet in the hedge;
The chaffinch sings what I would say;
Oh, leave your work, my friend, and we
Will tramp a summer's day.²

By the end of your holidays I hope you will have become as brown as berries, and strong for your winter's work. God has made this world a happy place for boys and girls. In August it seems just a great place to play in: you fish, you scamper through the woods, you gather wild fruit and eat it. It seems as if everything were put there just for your enjoyment.

But there are happy people in the world who live very quiet lives indeed. They generally have their homes off the public road. I remember being taken to see two old ladies who lived in a very pretty little cottage surrounded by a garden. The house was in perfect order; there were linen covers on the parlour chairs, everything was in its place; it was not a house where one could have a romp. But what remains in my memory most distinctly is a perfume that seemed to pervade the whole place. When I came out I felt that even my clothes had caught it.

¹ J. G. K. McClure.

² J. Learmount, *Thirty Chats with Young Folk*, 94.

Two or three years later, I happened to be back again. It was the month of August. One of the old ladies was out in the garden, and her sister explained that she had gone to gather lavender. 'We must take the good out of the summer days when we have them,' she said. She had no time to say more: her sister came in with a small basket full of greyish-green flower spikes. What there was of flower was pale blue. She explained to me that the spikes would be hung up in the kitchen till quite dry and brittle. Then they were rolled with a rolling-pin, and put into little bags which were placed here and there through the house. These old ladies did not have a holiday, but they kept a summer perfume with them all the year.

I do not suppose that many of you would think of gathering lavender. But you are old enough and wise enough to see some meaning in doing it. You know why your school companion was taken away to the seaside after his illness: it was that he might be made strong so that he should be able for his school work. And I have to confess the perfume in that little cottage meant more than a mere pleasant scent. There was an atmosphere of gentleness, peace, and contentment. The words of the text say, 'Remember therefore how thou hast received . . . and keep it.' The two old ladies did that. Can't you boys and girls take something from your August holidays to remember and keep. You can take what you feel when you are out enjoying the free air of heaven. Then you want to be true, straightforward, to play the game in life. When you go back to school, much will depend upon what you take from August.

I have heard of a gentleman who had a garden in which there was nothing but sweet-scented leaves and flowers. He was blind, and the sense of smell was the only one by which he could enjoy his garden. And if you take only what is good from your holiday, so will your companions feel the fragrance of goodness about you, and the school will be better of your presence. Remember you can get the greatest blessing of all in these summer days—the giver of your glorious holiday month as your best friend.

The Great, Wide Sea.

'Yonder is the sea, great and wide.'—Ps 104²⁵.

Some people think that the writer of this Psalm was sitting on the slopes of Mount Lebanon when

he composed it. He was speaking about all the wonderful things God had made, and then his eye lighted on the scene in front of him. Away in the distance, as far as the eye could see, stretched the blue waters of the Mediterranean. And so the Psalmist made a little word picture of what he saw. 'Yonder is the sea,' he said, 'great and wide,' and then he described the ships that were sailing on it, and the great whales that were sporting in it.

Now I want you to do just what that Psalmist did. I want you to make a little picture of the great, wide sea. Perhaps some of you will say you can't draw or paint. But that doesn't matter. The picture I want you to make is in your mind. I want you to imagine that you and I are standing on the seashore with the little waves lapping at our feet, and we shall listen to the message they whisper to us to-day.

1. And, first, I think the sea whispers, '*I am a wonderful mirror.* On my bosom I reflect the colours of the sky. When it is dark and stormy, so am I; when it is cold and grey, I also am cold and grey; when it is blue, my surface is like a sapphire. When the sun blazes forth, I sparkle like a diamond; when the moon shines, I carry a beautiful lane of light.'

I think there are boys and girls who are like the sea. They reflect the thing nearest them. If they are with good people, they are good; if they are with bad people, they are bad; if their friends are foolish, they are foolish too.

Will you try to remember two things, dear children?

First, the sea reflects what is *above* it. It is a mirror of the sky. If you must copy somebody, copy somebody good, copy the highest, copy Jesus whom God sent to be our Pattern of all that is pure, and beautiful, and good. Sometimes the sea reflects what is *beneath* it—the rocks and the sand and the mud, but that is only in the shallow parts. It is generally the people who have not much depth who reflect the things beneath them, the things that are foolish and unworthy.

And the other thing I want you to remember is that the sea has a *colour of its own*. It is only the surface that reflects. If you go out in a small boat you will notice that the sea's own colour is a beautiful, cool green. God has given us each our own colour too. He has made you just *you* and nobody else, and He wants you to be just *you* and nobody else. Learn everything that is wise and

noble from your friends and your books and your surroundings; but don't forget that you have a place to fill that nobody else can fill, and that you can fill it best by being just yourself.

2 And, second, the sea whispers, '*I am very strong.* To-day I break in ripples at your feet, but to-morrow I may dash ships to matchwood and toss great boulders as though they were pebbles.' Yes, the sea is very strong, but God is stronger. The winds and the waves must obey His voice, and when he says, 'Peace, be still,' their raging ceases. When I stand by the seashore and hear the boom of the breakers, when I watch the great green billows roll in, curl over, and dash in helpless fury upon the rocks, I always think of two verses in one of the old Scotch psalms I learned when I was just about as big as some of you are :

The floods, O Lord, have lifted up,
They lifted up their voice;
The floods have lifted up their waves,
And made a mighty noise.
But yet the Lord, that is on high,
Is more of might by far
Than noise of many waters is,
Or great sea-billows are.

God can still the raging of the great seas, and He can still, too, the storms in our hearts. When we are filled with angry passions He can say, 'Peace, be still.' Will you let God lay His gentle hand on you and take away all your angry, spiteful, ungenerous feelings?

3. Once more, the sea whispers, '*I am very great.* I am very wide, I am so much bigger than the land, that if you were to divide the world into seven parts I should occupy five of them, and the land but two. And I am very deep. In some places I am five or six miles deep, and if you sunk the highest mountain in the world into these depths I should cover it by half a mile.'

Yes, the sea is very wide and very deep, but not wider than God's mercy, not deeper than His love. That love is like a great ocean surrounding us and overwhelming us. We can never get beyond it or above it. It is grander, and more tender, and more compassionate than we can ever think or dream. Some day, on the other side of the great ocean we must all cross at last, we shall see God's love in all its breadth, and length, and height, and depth. But we can ask Him now to open our eyes so that we may behold a little of that

love, to touch our hearts so that we may give Him in return our entire love and devotion.

The Chrysoprase.

'The tenth, chrysoprase.'—Rev 21²⁰.

In most lists of gems for the month the sardonyx is the stone for August. You remember we spoke of it away back in January when we were talking of the onyx. I told you then that the sardonyx was the red and white onyx, and as we said nearly all there is to say about the onyx in January, I think we had better choose a stone of our own for August. What do you say to one of those with a queer name—the chrysoprase?

That is a stone we rarely hear of, but it is a very pretty stone all the same. It is what is known as semi-precious, that is to say, it is not found in the first list of precious stones. That list, by the way, is a very small one. It includes only five gems—the diamond, the emerald, the ruby, the sapphire, and the pearl. And some people want to keep out the pearl!

Chrysoprase sounds strange to our ears, but those of you who are learning Greek will know that it is a word made out of two Greek words *chryso* and *prasos*, the first of which means 'golden' and the second 'leek.' Golden leek!—that describes the chrysoprase to perfection—for it is a leek-green stone, one variety of which is golden-green, and the other pale apple-green. It is rather a brittle stone and apt to splinter, so the lapidaries or gem-cutters have to be specially careful in cutting it; but it has one advantage over some other stones, it does not lose or change its colour in artificial light.

Towards the middle of the eighteenth century the chrysoprase became very fashionable. The reason for this was that Frederick the Great of Prussia, who conquered Silesia in 1745, took a fancy to the stone, which was found in quantities in Silesia. He had two famous tables made of it and used it largely for mosaic work. And, of course, because it was the favourite of a king it became a favourite of many people.

There is one story about the chrysoprase which I particularly want to tell you to-day. It is this. Many many years ago, so the legend runs, there was a certain good and beautiful Princess of Roumania called the Princess Trina. She was greatly beloved by her subjects, for she loved them and

cared for them in endless ways. But alas! one year a famine arose in the land. The people had to buy bread from other countries, and the prices rose higher and higher till their money was gone, and they were in danger of starving. All this time the Princess Trina had been selling her jewels and giving the money to the famishing people, but she too had come to the end of her possessions, or almost the end. She had only one jewel left—a little golden lizard with chrysoprase eyes which her mother had given to her on her wedding-day. A wizard, or wise man, had once told the Princess that on no account must she part with it, because it would one day bring her help and untold wealth, and also because whoever wore a chrysoprase would be able in time of great distress to understand the language of animals.

Now the Princess Trina was very unwilling to part with this jewel, but she was still more unwilling to see her people suffer and hear their children crying for food; so she was kneeling one evening by her window weeping and praying and making up her mind to sell her golden lizard with the chrysoprase eyes, when in popped a real live little lizard at the window. It looked up at the Princess and then it spoke in lizard language and, to her astonishment, the Princess understood. This is what it said, 'Do not despair, O Princess! Help shall arise for thee out of a river. Only seek.'

The Princess felt tremendously cheered, so she dried her eyes, and put on her cloak, and went out to look for the river. She searched one after another of the rivers of Roumania till her feet were weary and her eyes were aching and her heart was nearly in despair—nearly but not quite, for whenever she felt specially discouraged she repeated to herself the lizard's message and began to search again. At last she came to the rocky bed of a beautiful stream, the Riul Doamnei, and there she discovered the promised help, for she found in the river bed, a vast treasure of chrysoprase the same

as her golden lizard's eyes. She had it mined and sold it, and the money bought bread for her hungry people, and they were fed till the days of famine were ended. And in proof of this story they say that the waters of the Riul Doamnei are leek-green to this day.

Well, that may be only a legend, but there is a great deal of truth in it too. And I want you to remember the story when you think of the chrysoprase, for the message of the chrysoprase seems to me to be the message of the little lizard, 'Never despair! Hope, and go on bravely!'

Now, boys and girls, there is not much need for me to preach to you and tell you to hope. When you are young, to hope is the easiest thing in the world. No! what I ask you to do is to preach hope to me and to every other grown-up person you meet, especially when we look sad or weary or discouraged. There are heaps of despairing persons in the world. They are finding life very dark and dreary because for them there is no hope, and hope is one of the foundation stones of life as the chrysoprase was one of the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem. Now, you young people have so much hope in your hearts that you are simply bubbling over with it, you have enough for your own use and plenty to spare. I want you to give of your plenty to others who need it badly. Just keep looking around, and if you see anybody in want of a little hope give them some of yours on the spot.

I need not tell you exactly how you are to do it. First, because there are about a thousand ways you can do it; second, because I want you to find out these ways yourself; third, because the ways you find out will be better than any way of which I could tell you. Just say to yourself in the morning, 'I'm going to be a chrysoprase. Before night I'm going, if I can, to bring a little cheer and hope to somebody.' Say that to yourselves, boys and girls, say it and *truly mean* it, and I've not the slightest doubt but you'll do it.