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teach? One almost gets the impression of a lesson found after the event to justify it, rather than of teaching following naturally from the incident.

When, however, we turn to Jn 15, we do find ourselves in circumstances very parallel to those of the barren fig tree. The simile of the vine is used rather than the tree; but the phraseology is strongly reminiscent of the fig tree, and the lessons are precisely those taught by its cursing. The aim of 15 is to urge the importance of fruit-bearing: fruit, and yet more fruit, is the aim of the husbandman. No show of leaves can suffice. Branches which do not bear fruit are cast forth and 'withered.' Jesus uses here exactly the same word to describe the fate of the fruitless branch, ἐξηράνθη, as Matthew uses to describe the barren tree (cp. Mt 21^{19} and Jn 15^{6}). Also the next verse in Jn 15, 'If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you,' seems to be reminiscent of words connected by Matthew and Mark with the withered tree (cp. Mt 21^{22} and Mk 11^{24}).

It seems, therefore, to be a feasible suggestion that the parable of the Vine was spoken by Jesus on the high road between Bethany and Jerusalem, and that it emphasized the lesson taught by a tree with leaves but no fruit. If this be a true account of the origin of a part of chap. 15, it may also stand for other portions of chaps. 14 to 16. There is so much of importance in these chapters that one would be glad to believe the teaching was not all crowded into one evening, but was spread over several days. The literary problem is also explained; for here is a collection of the closing teachings of Jesus without any indication as to the particular day, and grouped (by a familiar device) round the Last Supper. Is it inconceivable that chaps. 15 and 16 were originally a separate document—a kind of summary of the wayside talk of Jesus during the last week of His life? If so, and the evangelist wished to insert it, perhaps he chose the point he did because he did not wish to interrupt the narrative of 13 and 14; and these words having been spoken whilst walking, it was not unfitting to put them after 'Let us go hence,' as if to suggest that Jesus talked thus as they walked away from the Upper Room. Anyhow, it is interesting to think that these memorable walks to and from Bethany were beguiled by such precious and valuable teaching as is contained in these chapters.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

A Famous Picture.

'Who against hope believed in hope.'—Ro 4^{18}.

If you were asked to write an essay on 'Hope' you would find it a very difficult task.

All sorts of ideas would keep passing through your mind. You would remember how you had often hoped for fine weather, for the present of a cricket bat or a tennis racket, or it may be for something very much less expensive. If you wrote anything down at all I expect it would be a sort of story. Suppose you were asked to draw a picture of 'Hope,' you simply could not do it. Not even remembering all the pictures of 'Faith, Hope, and Charity' that you had ever seen would help you. No language or colour can make Hope visible.

How can it be described? It is not merely a feeling like what you had when you longed for the cricket bat or the tennis racket. It grows out of something more than a wish; there is sorrow and disappointment at the back of it.

There was a boy called George who had a great ambition to become a University student. He had been a good scholar at school, for he loved getting to know things. But his father was only a poor tradesman who lived in the days of small wages, and who had never had time to think about books. He wanted to take George away from school and to apprentice him to a tailor, and he told him so very firmly. George's mother heard him say it, but she kept silent. She was a woman who occasionally went out to work by the day in order to eke out the income, and in this way had a little spare money by her. She always thought of George when she added a shilling or two to her store, for although very

poor she wanted him to grow up to be both a great and a good man.

Passing the door of his little bedroom the night he had heard of his father's decision, the sound of a sob reached her. She went in and stroking her boy's hair—so gently that he never forgot it—she said tenderly, 'Don't cry, George, laddie; I know what's troubling you; I've made up my mind that you'll get to the College even if I have to work day and night to make the money to pay for it.' All through the following winter George went to school, often so poorly clad and shod that he was cold all day; but his spirits never flagged. His mother's promise was constantly in his ears from the time he rose till he went to bed at night. His little life told a story of Hope.

Now, come with me to the Tate Gallery in London. All sorts of pictures are on the walls; but the one I want you specially to look at is a very dim-looking canvas. It shows a bowed and stricken figure cowering over a broken lyre in the twilight. The lyre is damaged but not destroyed. The name of the picture is given in the catalogue as 'Hope.' I dare say you find it difficult to understand why it is so.

Some one called to see the artist's pictures one day, for he was a famous man called George Frederic Watts. He happened to be ill at the time and could not leave his room to show the visitor round the studio, so he sent a little note to him. 'The new picture is "Hope,"' he wrote, 'all the strings of her instrument are broken but one, and she is trying to get all possible music out of her poor tinkle.' That was like little George with his mother's promise. He twanged away on his one string, and it was a beautiful happiness he got out of it—the happiness of hope.

Watts was offered two thousand guineas for the picture. He refused the money and presented it to the nation instead; he wanted people to be made better by seeing it. One day he received a letter. It was written by a stranger to tell him that in a dark hour of his life, when he was feeling very hopeless, a photograph of 'Hope' had arrested his attention. The photograph was bought with his last few shillings. The letter concluded, 'I do not know you, nor have I ever seen the face of him who gave me my hope, but I thank God for the chance of that day when it came to me in my sore need.'

In Watts' picture the stooping figure is blindfolded. A bright star is overhead but she does not see it, her gleam of light is an inner one.

I know of nothing better for boys and girls than to have a few pictures of their very own. The man who bought the picture of 'Hope' had only a few shillings to spare. By saving up your pennies, why should you not gather a little collection together? Begin with Watts' 'Hope.' You will never tire looking at it, and if some day it should preach you a sermon it will be one worth listening to.

Say what you Mean and Mean what you Say.

'Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay.'—Ja 5^{12}.

There is a quaint proverb which says that 'a hero's word and an elephant's tooth remain fixed.' I never tried acting dentist to an elephant, so I can't answer for the tooth; but I know that it takes a hero to stick to his word through thick and thin.

Now, of course, we are all going to be heroes; we haven't quite got there yet, but we shall some day, and so one of the things we have to notice is that our word 'remains fixed.' And that just means that when we say a thing people can depend upon us; they know that we are speaking the truth and intend to carry out what we promise.

I think there are two things we have to remember if our word is to remain fixed.

1. The first is to *say what we mean.*

There was a boy once who was sent on an errand to a farm on a hot summer's day. The road was long and dusty, and when he arrived at his destination he was tired and thirsty. Now the farmer's wife had just been baking apple tarts. She had them all set out on a wire tray to cool, and they looked most 'scrumptious.' And through a door at the back of the kitchen the boy could see into the dairy with its great basins of creamy milk. The farmer's wife asked the boy if he would take a glass of milk and a tart. He said 'No,' and he meant 'Yes,' and she took him at his word! I don't know why he said 'No.' Perhaps he felt a bit shy, but years after, when he was a grown-up man, he still regretted the glass of cool milk and the juicy apple tart he missed that hot summer's day.

Now if we are going to stick to our word, it is a good thing first of all to make sure that we say

what we mean, and that what we mean is something wise and good. Don't be in too great a hurry. Think twice before you speak. Think twice before you make rash promises.

There was a king once who was very much delighted because a young girl danced beautifully before him. And because he was so pleased, he made her a foolish promise. He promised to give her whatever she asked, even to the half of his kingdom. And the girl asked for the head of a good and great man. Then the king was exceeding sorry. Yet because he had promised, and because he was afraid of what his friends would say if he broke his promise, he granted the girl's request, and John the Baptist was beheaded.

2. The other thing we have to remember is to *mean what we say*, to mean every bit of it, and to mean to carry it out.

Once upon a time a French sailor was caught in a storm. And he cried aloud to St. Christopher of Paris, promising that if the saint would save him he would give a candle as big as himself to be burnt before his statue in the great church in Paris.

'Be careful what you promise,' said a friend who was kneeling beside him, 'for I don't suppose you could pay for that candle if you sold all you possess.' 'Hold your tongue,' retorted the other rudely. Then he added—but in a whisper, lest the saint should overhear—'You don't suppose I shall give him so much as a tallow candle if I once get safely out of this!'

Now you are not going to play shabby tricks like that. You are not going to make promises that you have no intention of carrying out. Nor are you going to break your promise just because it is going to cost you a little pain or trouble to keep it.

One day a gentleman was walking along a country lane when he heard a sound of sobbing. On turning a corner he came upon a little girl crying as if her heart would break, while on the ground lay the shattered remains of an earthenware bowl that had contained her father's dinner. Well, the gentleman tried to comfort her as well as he could, and the little girl asked him if he couldn't mend the bowl. No, the bowl was past mending, but he would give her some pennies to buy a new one. When he took out his purse he found it was empty, but he promised to bring her the money to that spot at the same hour the following day. So the little maiden dried her tears and went home smiling.

Next day at the appointed hour he was about to set out for the lane when a note was handed to him asking him to go to Bath at once to meet a friend who was spending a few hours in the town. He had not seen the friend for many years, he might not see him for many years to come, but—there was the child in the lane. She was counting on his coming, and a gentleman could not break his promise. So with regret he put the idea of going to Bath out of his mind and kept his promise. That man was Sir William Napier, a great historian.

This sermon seems to be all stories, so I shall give you one more.

You know that it is the custom for witnesses in a court of justice to swear a solemn oath on a Bible, that they will speak 'the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.' Some centuries ago an Italian poet called Petrarch was called as a witness into a court of justice. All the witnesses in front of him swore their oaths as usual, but when it came to Petrarch's turn the judge closed the book. 'As for you, Petrarch,' he said, 'your word is sufficient.'

Boys and girls, if we keep to our word always, people will believe in our word, and a 'yes' or a 'no' from us will be enough.

And that reminds me that we had almost forgotten the text, which would never, never do. You will find it in the fifth chapter of James and the twelfth verse—'Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay'—and that just means—'Say what you mean, and mean what you say, and stick to it.' Let your word be fixed like the elephant's tooth.

Treasures in the Sand.

'Hidden treasures of the sand.'—Dt 33^{19}.

'Hidden treasures of the sand!' What does that remind you of? I expect it makes you think of shells and pebbles and polished pieces of glass turned up by your spade on the beach.

Shall I tell you what it reminds me of? It reminds me of the Culbin sands. Perhaps you have heard of them. They are great mounds or hills of sand which stretch for miles along the shores of the Moray Firth, near the mouth of the river Findhorn. You could lose yourself any

day among their many hollows. And, indeed, travellers who have seen both places tell us that they are a very good Scotch imitation of that famous Egyptian desert, the Sahara. They look such a desolate waste as you plod your way down one mound and up another, stopping only to empty your shoes at intervals, that you would never dream that underneath them lie hidden a fine old mansion-house and fifteen farms.

Two hundred and fifty years ago Culbin was one of the richest estates in that part of the country. Its land was so good and its crops were so heavy that it was known as 'the granary of Moray.' But the sand, driven by winds from the west, began gradually to creep up and cover the land. For twenty years it threatened; then one awful night in the year 1694 it blew so fiercely that the people who lived on the estate had to flee for their very lives. In the morning the storm had somewhat abated, but the next night it rose again, and by the following morning not a trace was left of houses or orchards or fields. They say that about a hundred years ago another storm blew away some of the sand which covers the old mansion, and for a little while its chimneys were seen rising above the waste. But ere long they were covered again, and from that day to this nobody has caught a glimpse of what was once Culbin.

But it isn't of the hidden treasures of the buried houses and fields I am reminded so much as of the treasures which even to-day you may pick up on the sands. The wind is constantly working on the mounds, moving and changing them. And as it sweeps over the hollows it uncovers treasures of old coins and old bronze ornaments. It also brings to light fragments of long unused implements for tilling the soil. It even turns up flint arrow-heads which were the weapons our forefathers used in the days when they were little better than savages. Hundreds of these treasures have found their way into museums and private collections, but they are still to be discovered *if you look for them in the proper place and in the proper way.* You won't find them by toiling breathlessly up and down the mounds, nor will you find them by poking holes in the sand with your walking-stick. What you must do is to go to the hollows between the hills—the beaches, as they are called. There the sand is harder and it is strewn with pebbles and crumbling pieces of shell. You must search these beaches patiently inch by inch. If you do, you are pretty certain sooner or later to become the proud possessor of a real hidden treasure of the sand.

The last time I was on these sands I was with a party of fifty people who were there more or less to amuse themselves. Only two of the party found treasures. One was an elderly man who showed me a little bronze Celtic brooch, green with age, and told me that he never went to the Culbins without picking up something of value. The other was a boy of eleven, whose find was part of an old bronze sickle. He too was often on the sands and was a good seeker. So those two who knew how to look found the treasures.

Now that reminds me of something else, and it is this: there are heaps of hidden treasures in the sandy deserts of life if we only know how to find them. What do I mean by the sandy deserts of life? Well, I mean just the drudging, dreary, or disagreeable things that we meet in life. Can you name any of them? I can. What about those lesson books? A happy few of you no doubt find them interesting and delightful, but to most of us studying them is, like plodding over these endless sandhills, a very wearisome business. Ah! but the treasures are there, boys and girls. Just a little patience, a little determination to find them, and they will be yours—not one or two, but hundreds of them.

Then what about those disagreeable duties that we are constantly coming across? They are sands that we'd much rather avoid if we could. What about fetching and carrying for mother when we'd rather be playing cricket? What about darning stockings when we'd rather be reading a story book? What about brushing the boots when we are longing to wield a paint brush? What about cleaning the dinner knives when we'd rather be using another kind of knife to whittle a piece of wood? What about staying at home to let the rest of the family have a 'good time' when we are pining for a 'good time' ourselves? There don't seem many treasures to discover in these sands. Are there not? Why, if you do these disagreeable duties with a willing smile and a cheery word you have found two very big treasures straight away.

There's a third sandy desert some of us know only too well, and it is the desert called failure.

You know how you feel when you have tried your hardest—and miserably failed. For some days the whole world seems made of sand, and you wonder how other people can be so cheerful when you feel so depressed. Do you know that in the desert of failure lies hidden the treasure of success? The 'trying hard' which failed this time will succeed next time, or perhaps the next time after that, for it is 'trying hard' that wins success. And most great successes are just made out of previous failures.

Yes, and besides that, what we consider a failure may really prove a success. Some day perhaps we shall see that failure transformed. Let me tell you a story to show you what I mean.

Long ages ago, in that part of the world which we now call Arizona, there lived a magnificent tree, a regular giant of the forest. One day a terrific storm uprooted it and hurled it to the ground. There it lay a great helpless log; no more roots or branches could it grow. As a tree it seemed a dead failure. Many centuries later a man who was exploring those regions in search of precious metals found spanning a deep canyon or gorge forty-five feet wide a wonderful natural bridge of wood agate. It was our old friend the forest giant transformed by the age-long action of a special kind of water into a thing not only of use but of exquisite beauty.

So God sometimes takes our saddest failures and transforms them by His wonderful power into glorious and undreamt-of successes.

The Christian Year.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Brotherhood.

'The brotherhood between Judah and Israel.'—Zec 11^{14}.

Brotherhood is emerging in the thought of the world through a heightened estimate of personal values. More and more it is admitted that Brotherhood is not of the *body*, but of the *soul*; not of the pigments in the skin, white or black, but of the potencies of the conscience and heart, aspiration and will: not, indeed, in any way contingent on the accidents of corporeity, or geographical location, or the culture of the mind, or the contents of the purse, or the place in the strata of society, or theological creeds, or ecclesiastical relations; but on the capital fact that 'a man's a man for a' that and a' that,' and that he is a *brother* man for a' that, and in spite of everything apart from his essential soul. It is not merely that science shows us that many of our racial divisions are artificial and superficial and unreal; it is something much deeper. It is not a question of the *animal* at all, but of the spiritual and ethical, of the capacity for God, and for all God is, for the knowledge of truth, the love of beauty, and the practice of goodness.

1. Brotherhood is, in short, a supreme spiritual fact; an ultimate fact deeper than all the physical facts of life. 'God is a spirit,' said our Master, 'and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth; for such the Father seeks to worship him.' The Father seeks His child, seeks his spirit for fellowship; for man also is a spirit; and spirit with spirit can meet. As there is no corporeity in God, so it is not the corporeity that makes the man. He has a body, and life has a physical basis; but he himself is spirit, and functions through the body. The body is not the man, any more than the boat is the rower, though it is the means by which the rower moves along the river. So it is in the spirit that men are brothers; not in their blood, or their language; not in their racial qualities, as Jew or Gentile, Scythian or barbarian; not in their political status as bond or free.

Now the advent of that conception is critical, it marks a definite stage forward. There are revolutions, social and political, in that idea. It is packed full of dynamite. The energies that will make a new world are concealed in it. Set it fully to work in the markets, in society, in states and churches, and you will turn the world upside down, and bring a better era for humanity than most people dream of; the Kingdom of God will really come, and the City of God will be built as a city for man as man, and as God meant him to be when He made him a little lower than the angels—that is, only a little lower than Himself.

2. But brotherhood is ethical as well as spiritual, and achieves its highest and best, not from sentiment and sympathy, but from moral conviction. It is more than kindly help, the throb of pity and the outflow of compassion; it is an integral part of that world-righteousness which builds nations on enduring foundations, exalts them to dignity and greatness, enriches them with abounding

fruitfulness, places them in the divine order, and secures for them continuous prosperity. To realize the ideal of Brotherhood is righteousness; obedience to God and the discharge of the whole duty of man to man.

It is due to God. God claims it. Thou *shalt* love thy neighbour as thyself is an eternal law, and our Master gives that law a universal application. It is not, thou *mayst* be brotherly; but thou shalt. That is the command of God. Therefore brotherly love and service is loyalty to God, to the sovereignty of right in the relations of human life. Our Brotherhoods get their structure of force and reality from the illuminated conscience; that is, from the all-mastering conviction of duty to God.

Abraham Lincoln had no questions as to his duty to the slaves of the United States. He could not have. He must set them free. His mind was made up that the iniquitous system must be destroyed, and he said, 'If ever I get a chance to hit slavery I will hit it hard.' The chance came to him, and his conscience was ready. Necessity was laid upon him, and he struck so hard and so repeatedly that he lost his life in the contest; but he inflicted a blow from which slavery has not recovered, and never will.

It is that ethical element in brotherhood which has been victorious. Men have felt like Martin Luther—'Here I stand. I can no other.' And they have had strength to stand still in patient steadfastness, or to dash forward in conquering attack on behalf of what seemed impossible. Like Stephen, and his and our Master, they have loved their enemies and prayed for them that despitefully used them; like John Eliot, they have soared not only beyond their fears, but higher than their social and racial prejudices in brother service to those who had nothing to offer except their need and their human claims; like Shaftesbury and Gladstone, and many others, they have striven to give to the whole man, both in his personal activities and also to groups of men in industries and villages and cities and nations, those conditions and institutions and laws by which each single soul should have a free, full, and rich life, realized in and through the whole, and the whole itself should become an uplifting and ennobling influence on each. They have sought to free the land for the benefit of the character of those who dwell on it and till it; to get better housing because the home is a momentous factor in nourishing the virtue and building the manhood of the citizens, to prohibit the drink trade because that trade is the foe at once of the home and of the State, to shape legislation so that every statute shall make it easier to be and to do good, and more difficult to be and do evil; and to regulate and order the relations of nations to one another in such a way as to bring war to an end and inaugurate the reign of peace and goodwill for the peoples of the earth.[1]

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Moderate Drinking.

'Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.'—1 P 2[11].

We cannot assume the wrongness of drunkenness without further inquiry, however strong may be the conviction in our own minds, and however decisive for us as individuals the authority of the prophets, apostles, and moralists who have agreed in its denunciation. For we are met by a powerful body of opinion that merely to get drunk, apart from anything really wrong which one may do in that condition, is not only not wrong, but within limits even desirable. The cabman in *Punch*, who, when shown a man described by his benevolent lady fare as 'Very ill, poor man!' replied, 'I wish I had half his complaint,' represents a great number of people even to-day, who see nothing disgraceful in it. Though the tide of feeling is setting strongly against it now, it is not so long since it was perfectly compatible with the highest reputation. If G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc seem to be fighting a losing battle in favour of 'glorious beer' and its effects in the twentieth century, Dickens in the nineteenth carried the vast majority of his readers with him in his appreciation of convivial drinking to a point of what was undoubtedly intoxication, even though few have drawn so repellent a picture of the habitual drunkard in 'Mr. Dolls.' It is probable also that the setting of the tide against drunkenness as such is not wholly because of moral judgment; we have seen that the 'business argument' is very strong, objecting to the spoiling of men not so much as men, but as productive tools. There might easily be a moral reaction against this. It is clear we cannot take our stand merely on prevailing feeling

[1] Dr. J. Clifford in *World-Brotherhood* (ed. Basil Mathews).

or sentiment; there must be convincing reasons for moral as for medical or economic judgments. In fact, we are never safe in our own convictions until we not only know why we hold them, but why other excellent people take a different view.

1. First, then, why does the Apostle Paul, to take him as speaking the Christian judgment, lay it down so strongly that drunkenness is a bar to 'inheriting the kingdom of God'? This cannot be dismissed as a mere ecclesiastical threat, applying an artificial test as regards membership of a Church in this life, or entrance into a place called Heaven in the next. The Kingdom of God means the rule of God in human life, bringing men and women into such order and social relation that fulness of life, in all its powers and graces, is the result. Of course this implies a corporate society of those who are so ruled, and such an embodiment of the reign of God must have its being in some place or other, and at some time in this world, or what corresponds to place and time in what we call the 'next world.' But the kingdom, the reign, the rule of God is always described in terms of character; the ordering principles are Truth, Right, and Love, or Goodwill, and the resulting characteristics are such as love, peace, gladness, strength, etc. Now drunkenness has nothing in common with these. It is shown by strictest scientific test to obscure the vision, which is to conflict with truth; to pervert the judgment, which is to hinder the right; and to benumb the will, which certainly makes goodwill impossible.

It is significant for the Christian interpretation of our problem that in the list of the 'fruits of the spirit' the last place, from one point of view the culmination, is taken by *autarkeia*, self-control. In the wonderful symbolism of the Holy City, of heavenly origin but to be realized on earth, the coping-stone of the foundational virtues is *amethyst*, which means 'not drunken.' They are the positive and negative aspect of the same thing. Because inebriety is the solvent of self-control it is the foe of all society, human and Divine. Drunkenness in its nature excludes from membership, for the man who does not control himself is a danger to others, as well as incapable of taking his proper part in citizenship. In self-defence society has to treat him, not as a full citizen, but sometimes as a criminal, sometimes as a lunatic, sometimes as a child.

2. Secondly, how did it ever come about that a condition so alarming from its medical description and so repellent from the moral point of view and to the æsthetic sense of the onlooker should find not only a defence but a panegyric among people of repute? The answer is necessarily complex. The distinction between occasional or convivial intoxication on the one hand, and chronic alcoholism on the other, undoubtedly supplies a part. To return to Dickens, it accounts for the attraction of Mr. Pickwick and the repulsion for 'Mr. Dolls.' Nowhere is there anything but abhorrence for those of whom the latter is an example. But this difference gives rise to a feeling of superiority on the part of those who can indulge in the 'divine madness' without incurring the bleared eyes and the shattered nerves. Chiefly, however, the sense of *euphoria* or well-being is responsible, with perhaps a considerable amount of resentment against a supposed ascetic view of life which leads to condemnation of others.

3. Let it be clearly stated that the fact that alcohol is agreeable to many, and that it produces a sense of *euphoria*, does not enter into the indictment; if it stood alone it would be a distinct point in its favour. Let it also be added that in so far as it relaxes those inhibitions which produce the unsociability of awkward self-consciousness and other impediments to good fellowship, it might well score more points in its favour, were there nothing else to be said. We would join with the apostle in declaring, 'Not that we have lordship over your faith, but are helpers of your joy.' Even if the action of alcohol were merely to negate pain, it would be good, for there is neither sense nor virtue in suffering without some positive good to be reached thereby. The trouble about the sense of well-being which alcohol affords is not only that it is fleeting and illusory, but that it is secured at too great a cost. As it only paralyses the sense of pain, it does nothing to make one really healthy; as it merely deadens worry, it neither removes the external object of anxiety nor builds up a strong and calm character; as it simply 'removes inhibitions,' it is valueless for positive self-control. And it actually stands in the way of the real well-being and consequent happiness, because by the nature of its action it masks the need of them, and weakens the will to take the necessary steps to secure them. This is putting it at the best, by supposing that true moderation is continually observed; there is also to be reckoned the persisting danger of excess. The true argument for personal abstinence, therefore, is founded upon the joy of well-being, not in any sense upon its despisal.

4. So we come to the real question of what has

been called the *formative* action of moderate drinking as opposed to abstinence. What effect has it upon character? Here we have no statistics to help us. Many abstainers are undoubtedly finer in character than many moderate drinkers, but then the statement can be put the other way round with equal truth. What we really want to know is whether the same people lose or gain in character according as they abstain or drink in moderation. The case of communities such as the American States which have 'gone dry' might seem in favour of abstinence, but if any one contends that there is no greater moral improvement than is accounted for by the removal of the excessive drinkers, what can be said in reply? There is, however, one real point which the moderate drinkers have to meet. The scientific analysis of the action of alcohol has demonstrated that its very first destructive action is upon the higher and more recently acquired characteristics. The inference seems irresistible that the delicate appreciations of beauty, the finer sensitiveness to honour, the keener discrimination of truth, and the subtler workings generally of the soul must be in some degree blunted by the taking of alcohol in what is called moderation long before the damage becomes so marked as to be generally noticeable, and without bringing the taker into disadvantageous contrast with abstainers who had not acquired these characteristics to the same degree. It is the same man with or without alcohol we have to consider, not any man with and any other man without it. So the argument remains against moderate drinking on the score of its effect upon character, even though there be many moderate drinkers who are more lovable than many abstainers, until it can be shown that these drinkers would become less lovable if they also became abstainers.[1]

First Sunday in Advent.

Christlikeness.

'It is enough for the disciple that he be as his lord.'—Mt 10^{25}.

There are three currents in every human life—inward, outward, and upward; and there were three currents in the human life of Jesus Christ. And we ask, What were the three keynotes of His life of service along these lines? For these must be our keynotes. 'It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Lord.' Christlikeness can never be gainsaid. Our message is our character. And Christ says to you and me as He never said before: Through Me, God is your Father; in Me, ye are all brothers, and in My love go and serve your brother.

1. The first keynote in its application to *Himself* is just this: *Self-denial.* Jesus denied Himself. Of course He made, as Son of God and Revealer of the Father, certain tremendous and fundamental claims, but as man, brother, and servant He denied Himself. There is nothing self-assertive about the Carpenter of Nazareth. There is no egotism about Jesus, the Son of Mary. He denied Himself. 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.' He was the Man who emptied Himself, who became as a servant of man and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And it was that which gave Him the right to rule and to reign. 'Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.'

2. And the second thought: What was the keynote of our Lord's service in regard to *others*? Again one word expresses it—*Self-sacrifice.* You cannot read the life of Jesus without realizing that that life was just one of unstinted generous Love; a life that was poured out like a drink-offering for others; a life that was the perfect illustration of His own marvellous statement: 'The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.' And is not that the supreme need of to-day, as we look out over the world of men? Is not self-love the supreme problem of all of us?

You remember, probably, that striking illustration Canon Burroughs uses in one of his books, where he tells us the familiar story concerning London, how Sir Christopher Wren in 1666 prepared a great scheme for the reconstruction of London to centre in St. Paul's Cathedral, from which broad convenient thoroughfares would radiate in all directions. The plans were accepted, but never carried out. Why? Because of the selfishness of men. Because individual citizens insisted on having their own little houses in their own little plots, built exactly as they had been before. And as a result you have London with its crooked and narrow streets to-day, instead of broad highways radiating from a common centre.

3. And the last thought is this: What was the

[1] Will Reason, *Drink and the Community.*

keynote of our Lord's ministry in regard to *God*? Was it not *Self-surrender*? Jesus surrendered His life to God, and consequently His life was a Spirit-controlled life from first to last. That is the source of the stream; that is the secret of His self-denial and His self-sacrifice. And that must be your secret and my secret. Is that ideal too great? Does it seem too far above us? Remember that Divine precepts are backed up by Divine power. God's commands are His enablings, and all He wants is the surrendered life, that will allow Him to come in and take possession, and will therefore express itself in self-denial and self-sacrifice, thinking only of others, not of self.[1]

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

The Principle of Growth.

'Abide in me, and I in you.'—Jn 15^4.

The origin of the Christian character is a new heart and a new spirit, and all development begins with that inward renewal, a renewal in the spirit of the mind. The culture of character may be attempted on other lines, prompted by different motives, dominated by independent models; but such culture is not Christian. Revelation teaches that character is based on a spiritual principle, a principle of life, and its growth in power and beauty implies a fuller expression of that life. It is therefore vain to seek the ennoblement of the outer life unless we are careful vigorously to maintain the interior life. 'I am the true vine . . . Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me.' Here, then, the vital truth is stated without theological or metaphysical verbiage; the principle of moral perfection is affiance in Christ. He is absolutely essential to the realization of all the high, far-off excellence of which we have an intuition and to which we sincerely aspire. In His presence we must dwell, His beauty contemplate, His merit trust, His love share, into His spirit drink, and in His steps we must follow. As the vine is *everything* to the branch, so fellowship with Christ is *everything* to the aspiring soul. 'I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus' (Ph 3^{12}).

John Gibson, the famous sculptor, writes thus in his diary: 'I renewed my visits to the Vatican. It is not to criticize that I go there, but to seek instruction in my art, which the Greeks carried to perfection. Those few masterpieces which have come down to us, though I have dwelled upon them thousands of times, still at every new visit are contemplated by me with fresh wonder and admiration, such is the influence which anything perfect, both in design and execution, has upon the mind. Those grand works of the Greeks are ever new, and always produce fresh enchantment however often they may be surveyed.' Thus must we linger over the pages of the New Testament, contemplating closely and lovingly the living, speaking, active Jesus, whilst He grows upon us, more and more filling our imagination, mind, and heart. We can grow in strength and grace and blessedness only whilst this is our habit.

1. We must grow in the *knowledge* of Christ. To increase in the knowledge of Christ is to increase in the knowledge of God; He is the only true, saving, vivifying source of such knowledge. How prone we are to think that we *already* know Christ, when indeed we only know something about Him! There are many degrees of knowledge, and we have not fully learned Christ until we know Him and the power of His resurrection. The tourist who, guide-book in hand, hurries through the Vatican galleries, may flatter himself that he knows the immortal masterpieces, and for the rest of his life talk as if he did; but he does not know them as Gibson did, who had 'dwelt upon them' intently and sympathetically 'thousands of times.' Really, only Gibson knew them at all. So, if we are to attain to the knowledge of Christ, a thousand times must He engage our thought and affection, and each time it will be with fresh wonder and admiration.

2. We must grow in the *faith* of Christ. Accepting Him as 'the way, the truth, and the life,' it is essential that we confide increasingly in Him as such. Then in the midst of trouble and mystery our souls will experience a deeper calm, being content to ask Him fewer anxious questions. But having confessed our sin with the sighings of a contrite heart, let us once for all, and with growing conviction, shelter in His merit, trust in His grace, expect His utmost salvation; and as He has given us solemn assurances for the great future, we may with unshaken faith boldly face death and the grave, resting upon His word and promise. 'That we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but dealing truly in love, may grow up, in all things unto him, which is the head, even Christ' (Eph $4^{14.\ 15}$). In his Second Epistle to the Thessa-

[1] W. J. Southam, in *World-Brotherhood*.

lonians, St. Paul writes: 'We are bound to give thanks to God alway for you . . . for that your faith groweth exceedingly' (1[8]). Ever more deeply satisfied with the hope of the gospel, let us once attain this 'full assurance,' and to us the promise shall be fulfilled: 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee' (Is 26[3]).

3. Lastly, we must grow in the *love* of Christ. How continually the apostles dwell upon this! To realize in our Saviour more vividly the goodwill of God to His creatures, His unfailing kindness and faithfulness, His eternal mercy and grace, until our heart glows responsively, this is to grow in the holiest passion of Divine love; and herein is plenty of room to grow. Shakespeare affirms:

There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it.

Yet most of us know even a human love in which this, happily, is not true; and as we apprehend more clearly the love and beauty of God in the face of Jesus Christ, we become conscious of an adoring affection that no kind of wick or snuff can abate, and in this white inextinguishable flame our soul and its felicity are perfected.[1]

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

Privately.

'And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.'—Mk 6[32].

Glancing at the New Testament, we see this adverb in close and almost sole association with two significant nouns—'mountain' and 'desert.' There, on 'the high mountain apart,' or in 'the desert place,' He appoints the trysting-place with the saints. Surely here is a holy hint that God embraces the extremes of life. This double trysting-place of mountain and desert is His own royal rebuke to the old lie that 'The Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys.'

1. Watch Mark's first use of the word. The sent-ones have come back to the Sender. Where the word of the King had gone there had been power, and they who had seen much of man must now see much of the Master. So to the desert they must go—to Christ's retreat from the strife of tongues. That place of His Temptation is to be the place of their rest; where the Christ was with the wild beasts, even there He gathers the lambs of His flock for rest (He 4[9]).

God hath His deserts broad and brown—
A solitude—a sea of sand,
Where He doth let heaven's curtain down,
Unknit by His Almighty hand.

To the desert, then, by ship they go; but as though to mock the idea of hermitic solitude, the crowd take the short cut by land, and lo, the desert is no longer desert!

What then? What, indeed, if not a feast, a table in the wilderness? He who was forty days and nights in the wilderness without bread will not let them go hungry an hour. For this invitation to come apart shows that Christ had resolved to feast them bountifully in the desert. They, who had no 'leisure so much as to eat,' must come apart to rest, and the resting consists in the feasting and the giving others to feast. Here, then, the Master teaches them the double lesson, that while to be apart privately is the soul's deepest need, it is no easy thing in this desert of life to get apart with Him.

2. But the Teacher must finish the lesson. He is the perfect Teacher, because He perfectly lives His own homily. Not even the apostles may break into His privacy. Disbanding the ranks of hundreds and ranks of fifties, He sends them away back again to the bustle of their towns, and even His own He constrains to depart in the ship to the other side. For He who so suffered this interruption of the desert-rest must needs show them how much to be prized above all life's prizes is aloneness with God. There jutting up into the blue sky is God's mountain, and what the desert denied Him of solitude the mountain afforded. 'He went up into a mountain privately to pray.' Here, then, He teaches where this word 'privately' first leads us. Not to the united prayer of saints, but to life's holiest of all-lone prayer on the lone mountain.

God hath His mountains bleak and bare,
Where He doth bid us rest awhile;
Crags where we breathe a purer air,
Lone peaks that catch the day's first smile.

3. The next 'privately' is still the mountain; yea, a high mountain, and Christ on it with only three, and not twelve, of His own. He does not

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *The Shepherd of the Sea*.

go where they may not come, and He would thus lead them into His own way of living life. They must know Him on the mountain as they could never know Him in the desert. 'He bringeth them up into a high mountain' privately, and was transfigured before, alas, not them all, only three, and so suggestively three too! Here is Divine irony indeed. For in all ages, not even in the ratio of three in twelve, has Christ been a transfigured Christ to His own.

4. Pursuing the track of this adverb, we see unity of design, and find ourselves among the same apostles who come 'privately' to their Lord with the powerless query: 'Why could we not cast him out?' 'We' is the emphatic, for who are these, if not those who came back rejoicing that even the devils were subject to them? 'We, oh, we! Where is our old-time power?' What a private affair this is! How often we publicly lament our impotence when the remedy is all in our private life. The question they ask in secret is, however, answered by Christ on the housetops for the Church in all ages to hear: 'Because of your unbelief.' Ah, no wonder the power is lost! Power means publicity as to its exercise, and as night wars with day, so publicity wars with privacy.

5. And, granted the power bestowed, what so necessary as the last use of our adverb? There are about to be left on this earth the chosen custodians of Christ's truth. From their lips and pens will come anon the Divine 'form of sound words,' and they, in turn, will transmit the same as a Divine unit to faithful men who will be able also to teach others. How necessary then for them, as for all of us, to spurn human creeds, and approach Christ privately on the matter of His own teaching. 'The disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us when these things shall be.' Not to particularize prophecy (though well we might), how little, indeed, is Christ permitted to preach His own truth privately to His own! Nay, He is not spicy enough for itching ears, and the public ministry of the Word often supersedes such private Divine tuition as He loves to give. Yet as now, so in all ages, the greatest need is to be in private audience of our God, that the good Word of promise may be fulfilled in us: 'They shall be taught of God.'[1]

[1] Dan Crawford, *Thirsting after God.*

Temptation.

By the Right Reverend John W. Diggle, D.D., late Bishop of Carlisle.

One of the chief difficulties connected with the problem of temptation arises from the double sense in which the word is used, especially in the Bible. The word 'tempt' is almost equivalent to 'attempt.' Its radical meaning is to test, or try, or prove. At its root, therefore, 'temptation' is practically synonymous with 'probation.' But a subsidiary implication is often attached to it; and the testing is accompanied by a motive, either the motive to incline and strengthen the will-to-good, or to incline and allure it to evil. God often tempts in the former sense, never in the latter; Satan constantly in the latter, and never in the former. When God tempted Abraham, the purpose was by the trial of his faith to establish and exalt it: when the devil tempted our Lord, the purpose was to undermine His faith and destroy it. God's temptations are as the furnaces of the refiner which purge away the dross and purify the gold; the devil's temptations are as the baits of the gambler who by illusions of gain ensnares his victims in inevitable, sometimes irretrievable, loss.

Our Lord's life was one continuous series of temptations, at times by God through the instrumentality of Pharisees and Sadducees and lawyers; at times by the devil when He was weary and lonely and misunderstood by His disciples, and in other ways. In His great temptation in the wilderness both God and the devil had a share. He was led up by the Spirit to be tempted for His triumph, and tempted by the devil to secure His defeat.

Whatever view we adopt of this Great Temptation, whether we regard it as history or as parable, in any case it is biography and its teachings are the same. It was a threefold temptation applied to the tripartite human nature of the Very Man, Jesus