

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

In the Study.

Virginitus Puerisque.

Among the Fairies.

'Where the birds make their nests.'—Ps 104¹⁷.

IN the springtime there are country walks that lead to fairyland. A favourite one passes close by Jenny Wren's cottage. It is a quaint little habitation shaped something like a ball, and built of stalks of grass, moss, and leaves, and ornamented with tufts of lichen. The front door is just a wee round hole. You would laugh to see Jenny and her husband going in. Perhaps you do not know that they are both very proud and walk 'with their tails in the air.' Well, they can't get in at their own little cottage door without putting them down. Sometimes I think Jenny's cottage is set near the wayside, just to give people the chance of having a laugh like that of an innocent child.

There were fairies all about when the cottage was being built. It was a little fairy that made the two love each other. Mr. Wren indeed is very like Robin Goodfellow himself. If a mortal wants to see him he will show his little face for a second and then fly off, saying, 'I'm here, I'm here, you can't catch me,' in a most bewitching tone, finishing up with a note so exquisite that it could only be imitated on a fairy flute.

He is a very good husband to Jenny. He had begun to build and even to furnish the cottage before the home-coming of his little bride. And when at last she did come, weren't they happy? As her marriage portion she brought a few tufts of moss and the materials for a feather bed. Her husband would have gone on singing pretty words to her nearly all day, but practical little Jenny said, 'We'll build another house besides this, leave it empty, and, chit, chit, chit, chit chit chit the robbers,' and he answered, making every one of his words beautiful, 'Yes; chea—chea—chea—chea chea cheat the robbers.' And, chirped Jenny, 'We'll take our family into it when the days get cold and keep them cosy.' 'Chea—chea—cheat the robbers,' he answered; it was a favourite phrase with him.

Sitting on her six little eggs in the centre of her feather bed, Jenny looked a gentle motherly creature. But one day Jack Sparrow put his impertinent head in at the door and there was a

sudden change. She flew at him in a fury, and gave him a pecking that he could not forget in a hurry.

One morning Sir Sparrow came sauntering by And cast on the wren's house an envious eye; With a strut of bravado and toss of his head, 'I'll put in my claim here,' the bold fellow said;

So straightway he mounted on impudent wing, And entered the door without pausing to ring. An instant—and swiftly that feathery knight, All tumbled and tumbled, in terror took flight, While there by the door, in her favourite perch, As neat as a lady just starting for church, With this song on her lips, 'He will not call again

Unless he is asked,' said the little brown wren.¹

What is it that makes Jenny and her husband so proud? They are very conscious that they belong to the aristocracy. Although they have no printed family tree that mortals could read, the fairies have records telling how once the birds determined to have a king, and decided that the election should fall upon the one who flew highest in the air. A competition accordingly took place, and the success of the eagle seemed assured. The wren, however, had somehow contrived to hop unperceived upon the eagle's back as the competitors started. The great bird did not feel the wren's weight but soared aloft until he was quite out of sight. At length he began to descend. Then the wren sprang from his back and, exerting all the strength possible to the ambitious soul that dwelt in that tiny body, he was able to reach a still higher elevation than the eagle: whereupon the wren was with due solemnity proclaimed, 'King of all birds.' And to Jenny, dear little mother Jenny, was given the name of 'The Lady of Heaven's Hen.' That was better than being made a bird queen, wasn't it?

And yet among mortals those little feathered folks used to be very badly persecuted. In some places it was the custom once a year for men and boys to go out to hunt the wren. Up till last

¹ A. M. Skinner and E. L. Skinner, *Stories for the Nature Hour*, 142.

century, indeed, the practice was common in Ireland. On Christmas day or St. Stephen's day the boys hunted and killed the wren and carried it from house to house on sticks decorated with holly. The bearers sang some lines, and if at the close they received a small coin they gave in return a feather of the poor little dead bird. These feathers were preserved with religious care, the possession of one being believed to be a preservation from shipwreck for a year.

In England it was supposed that if any one killed a wren or harried its nest he would break a bone or meet with some dreadful misfortune within the year. There is certainly a penalty attached to the ill-usage of Jenny.

Malisons, Malisons, mair than ten,
That harry the Ladye of Heaven's hen.

It were better to leave the little couple with the fairies: they ask for nothing, they give a great deal, and in thankfully taking life as God sends it, they teach us a lesson.

Praise in the song of every sweet-voiced bird,
Nor truer praise has God or man e'er heard;
As all spontaneously it breaks and swells,
The singer's thanks it all unconscious tells.¹

A World in a Bit of Stone.

'Let them praise the name of the LORD:
For he commanded, and they were created.'—Ps 148^o.

Have any of you a fancy for geology? I hope you have. I hope you know a fossil when you see it. I even hope that some of you have started a collection of rocks and the fossils that are found in them. Geology sounds a very learned word, and the name makes you think it must be a dry subject to study. But I assure you that a well-written book on geology is hard to beat for interest and romance. For it is geology that tells us how this world of ours came to be the world we know. It is from geology that we learn how through the long ages God worked His silent and wonderful work of forming the seas and the dry land, the rocks and the mountains, the trees and the flowers, the living creatures of water, land, and air, and, last and most wonderful of all—man.

Geology tells us how the granite rocks of our Scottish Highlands were formed from certain minerals combined with water, heat, and tremendous

pressure. It tells us how the limestone hills of the Black Country were once a limy mud at the bottom of an ocean, in which myriads of fish of strange shape swam. The natural oil of these fish helped to harden the limy mud. And though they lived and died millions of years ago, we see their strange skeletons still embedded in the solid rock they helped to make.

It is geology that reveals to us the hidden story of our coalfields. It tells how these black hard-looking lumps in our grates were once part of a wonderful sun-bathed tropical forest. Tree lizards climbed up and down the trunks and branches of the trees. Marsh flies and beetles hummed through the still air. Strange reptiles, half-fish, half-reptile, swarmed in the shallow seas and lagoons. Small ferns covered the ground with a thick tangle, and tall club mosses and giant 'horse tails' towered above them to a height of sixty feet or more. How do we know? Because their shapes are still to be seen impressed on the coal.

In the sandstones of that 'coaly' period are to be found to-day the marks of raindrops that fell millions of centuries ago. We can even tell from the slant of the marks from which direction the wind was blowing at the time. When the clouds passed over, the sun peeped out from behind the clouds and his heat baked the mud and cracked it as it does still. And the cracks are there, plain to see. So also are the trail markings of the worms which crawled over the rocks while they were yet mud.

It is geology that tells us how the chalk cliffs of Dover and the South-East of England were once a white mud at the bottom of a very deep sea which stretched from the West of Ireland to Russia. That mud was constantly being added to by the shells of minute sea creatures—so minute that a million of them would go into a thimble. They went on piling their shells one above another till the mud reached a depth of fifteen hundred feet. Then very slowly these sea floors were raised. The water grew shallower and shallower. The sea was drained off, and the chalk hardened and became a land surface.

Geology tells how by and by this part of our world grew intensely cold. It was covered by a tremendous sheet of ice, great glaciers formed, and we had what is known as the 'ice age.' How do we know that? Because we see the scratchings and groovings on the boulders which were carried down the valleys by the ice streams and glaciers.

¹ J. Oxenham, 'All Clear!' 62.

Then geology relates how, after the ice age and the melting of the great ice sheet, man appeared on the earth. His rudely-shaped flint weapons and tools are found in the valley gravels near the beds of rivers. And from them we learn how the earliest man slew wild animals, hewed down trees, scooped out canoes, and cut holes in the ice for fishing purposes.

Yes, and when we have studied all these tales, and when we come to realize that there is not a pebble which we carelessly kick aside but has a history of a million years, we learn something else. What is it? This: that behind all these marvellous changes and progresses in nature, behind all these countless created beings, there has been Someone thinking and planning and loving and caring—Someone to whom a tiny atom in a piece of chalk is of vast importance—Someone who is still thinking and planning and loving and caring for all His creatures, even for little you and me.

The Christian Year.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Your Conversation.

‘Having your conversation (R.V. ‘behaviour’) honest (R.V. ‘seemly’) among the Gentiles.’—I P 2¹².

It is not given to all men to have the faculty and function of the prophet, his clear sight, and his power of fruitful interpretation. The persuasive, wooing speech of the evangelist is not an element in the common endowment. The evangelist and the prophet may be only infrequent creations, and their gifts may have only a limited distribution. But we may all exercise the ministry of beauty. Every man may be an ambassador of life, discharging his office through the medium of holiness. Every man may be an evangelist in the domain of character, distributing his influence through the odour of sanctity, in seemliness of behaviour, in exquisite fitness of speech, in finely finished and well-proportioned life. This is a ministry for everybody, the apostleship of spiritual beauty. And so in the passage before us the apostle is engaged in delineating the features of the character that tells. He is depicting the forceful life. He is exhibiting the behaviour which is influential in leading men to reverent thought, and religious inquiry, and spiritual conviction.

Upon the early Christians was put the responsibility of proving by their lives the truth which they

professed. If they had been false to it—if, while preaching God's righteousness and judgment, the holiness and love and redemption of their Master Christ, they had failed to live a life which suited their profession, what would have become of that gospel which they were charged to establish in the world? Who would have believed them if, while preaching goodness, they had been selfish, worldly, unmerciful? Who would have attended to them, if, besides all that was so strange, so unearthly in their teaching, they had seemed no more in earnest about what they spoke of than other men? We know how little the world was of itself disposed to receive their words; how it scoffed, reviled, insulted them; the one thing which forced it to listen, the one thing against such scoffs and slanders fell harmless, was their manifest, undeniable, untiring goodness. That at last did make their enemies, did make the world, in general, ashamed of speaking against them as evil-doers. That at last did put to silence the vain ignorance of foolish men, giving the worst names to that which was to save the world. And so the truth prevailed.

1. How is it with us—with us that rule two hundred million Gentiles in the East, whose flag flutters in every seaport of the world, and whose sails are white on every sea? Is our conversation honest amongst the Gentiles? Why does all the machinery for making temperance better understood seem to fail so utterly, or even to produce the opposite effect? The answer must be that men and women have more money to spend, and that they drink in proportion as they can pay for drinking. Oh, miserable and shameful confession, that there is no restraint upon us but that of want! So then, if God blesses us more, and sends forth our ships laden deeper with our products to gather back the wealth of the world, we will give freer course to that appetite which has made us Anglo-Saxons the proverb of the world. And can you suppose that all this flood of poison poured in year after year leaves us where it found us? Then let physiology burn her books, and let religion admit that her first premises of morality are unsound. As surely as the showers that fall in early spring-time upon the brown glebe come back in glittering shoots that promise later corn, so surely do the showers of poison falling on the soul wither all the fresh shoots of feeling and affection, and reduce it to black and barren misery. God works by laws

and orders, and the poison that men drink acts like poison, not like balm; and the ruin that it works spreads in weakness and sickness and impotence to resist through generations, widening as it descends. There is no doubt of these facts; they are not exaggerations of rhetoric, but clear conclusions of science. They are forcing themselves on the convictions of all men. The very persons that descant of love and wine are sinking into silence. Look on the cup when the wine is red, but know what it contains. It biteth like the serpent, for the serpent's poison is in it. And how long shall a nation like this be allowed to hold, in the hands that grow feebler by indulgence, the sceptre of an empire so mighty? We show ourselves to the distant parts of our empire as though confessing that the only limit to our selfish indulgence would be the means for indulgence at our command. We should be missionaries of self-denial. We offer ourselves the Helots of the world.

2. And that other class of vices which, being almost secure from mention in the pulpit, grow bold upon their immunity, shall we not exhort one another to abstain from these? Impurity waits ever upon luxury, and the luxury is there. There was a time when sins of this class were secret and brought shame; they lift up their heads now, and are spoken of as an inevitable feature of highly civilized life. But 'they war against the soul! The dead are there, and the depths of hell!' Of all noble endeavours, of all firm resolutions, of the fresh affections and the quiet feeling of enjoyment, chastity is the condition. In the word 'libertine' is a covert claim for freedom on behalf of the impure, for whom in reality there is no freedom, nor growth, nor peace, nor real joy. We know of what the poet spoke when he said, no doubt from a sorrowing heart:

But oh, it hardens all within,
And petrifies the feeling.

So when the glozing tempter tells a young man that he 'shall not surely die for doing as men do,' the answer is ready, and the Bible and science are agreed upon its tenor. The one says that 'all that is best in human achievement is done upon the condition of chastity and self-denial, and that Nature herself has affixed a high reward to the resisting of a passion which nature yet implanted.' The other says, 'if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.'

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The Spirit and Spiritual Life.

'When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.'—Jn 16¹³.

What is given to us as value for spiritual life in the thought of the Holy Spirit?

1. First of all, as the Passion of Christ gives to us all that we need in respect of the conception of a suffering God, similarly the Christian belief in the Holy Spirit gives us all that we need for the satisfaction of the idea of the divine immanence, of the indwelling of the divine life in the universe, including man. The idea of divine immanence is immensely valuable. In itself it is a most potent corrective of every kind of materialism, since materialism or naturalism—to use a rather more adequate term—shuts up its adherents into the belief that the whole of the natural order is self-sufficing, and that no place can be found for the transcendental conception of the natural order as merely one piece, and not the most important piece, of reality, and of its existence and life as something given and upheld by God. But it is also exceptionally easy for the idea of the divine immanence to be misapplied and abused, so that there results a pantheistic merging of God in the world, and the reaction from materialism comes round, full circle, to very nearly the point from which it started, the point where no discrimination between God and the world is apprehended. In both naturalism and pantheism the world is all that really remains at the end of the process of thought, though the character of the world is conceived of differently in the two systems. But a true notion of God's relationship to the world allows of a real distinction between Him and it. Now in the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit there is essentially present the thought of God as working in the world and in man. But, at the same time, God's independence of the world is apparent. For the doctrine of the Holy Spirit implies the free, vital energy of a personal God working world-wards and man-wards. The idea of the Spirit implies from the opening verses of Genesis the action of a gracious God who cannot be identified with creation. In the doctrine of the Holy Spirit there is no danger of God's transcendence being forgotten, and so it enables us both to think of the Holy Spirit as God, present in the world to inspire and guide, and also to

receive according to its natural interpretation the opening words of the Lord's Prayer, Our Father which art in heaven.

2. Secondly, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit gives us security for our belief that the immanence of God in the world is essentially a holy immanence—that is, to adopt Matthew Arnold's well-known saying, that there is in the world a 'power not ourselves which makes for righteousness.' That 'power' is not, as Arnold unfortunately regarded it, a general tendency, an idea which does not reach to the level of personality, but the Holy Spirit, revealing and effecting God's immanence in the world, in ourselves as conscience and in history as progress.

Conscience is the profoundest fact of our own human nature of which we have any direct experience. But while it is the profoundest, it is not obviously the most rational, though we are compelled to find some rational explanation of it, an explanation and not an explaining away. It is not in itself an immediately rational fact that we should find within ourselves something which so powerfully obstructs us from doing many things which we should like to do, and so powerfully commands us, and even drives us forward, to do many things which we do not wish to do. But a rational account can be given of conscience if we conceive of it, not under impersonal imagery, as a particular kind of force directed to particular ends and stored up within us, but as the expression or the register, not necessarily a perfect one, of the voice of God, so that in conscience the Holy Spirit of God, dwelling within us, makes Himself heard.

Then there is progress. There are those who regard the whole idea of progress as delusion. But even with the war so little removed from us in time, and still present with us in its consequences and our many distresses, it is impossible to look on the idea of progress as the supreme instance of man's faculty for myth-making. History is full enough of reversions and degenerations, but on the whole it becomes more difficult to identify right with might and to preach a doctrine of the devil take the hindmost. In that increasing difficulty is the mark of progress. It was felt as an immense difficulty by Germany, for though Germany acted on the identification of might with right she always had to find some defence of her action which involved the distinction between the two. She did not, and could not, talk to the

world like a book of Bernhardt's or as an immoral or super-moral prophecy of Nietzsche's. It is an immense difficulty in industrial troubles. Of course, the difficulty is constantly solved in practice, and might and right are identified. But that kind of practice, while it reveals clearly enough man's sinful condition and his remoteness from moral perfection, is less significant for a judgment upon man's history and development than is the gradual diffusion of an atmosphere which is more and more clearly seen to be completely antagonistic to such practice. Ethical progress, involving this most important distinction between might and right, is the sign of the working of the Holy Spirit upon and within history. And when we thus conceive of the moral developments of human life, we realize that everything in the world which is good and true—the beautiful also, for that, too, has a divine meaning and value—represents the action within the world and within ourselves of the Holy Spirit.

3. Thirdly, the Holy Spirit is the Guide to truth. Most clearly is He so represented in the discourse before the Passion in St. John's Gospel. There the assurance is given that the Paraclete will teach, will remind, will bear witness, will guide into all truth, will unfold the future; it is He who will interpret Christ to the Church and the world.

Light is thrown upon this aspect of the Holy Spirit's work by that notable passage in the First Epistle of St. Peter which declares how the prophets searched what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. There we have the key to the inspiration of Scripture, with the preparation under the Old Covenant and the fulfilment in the New. And the guidance into truth is not an operation of the Spirit which is to be limited to men or books commonly spoken of as 'inspired.' All Christian believers, at whatever stage of Christian life they are, whether a catechumen saved alive from the degradation of a horrible and cruel idolatry, or an aged saint far advanced on the road towards spiritual maturity, express the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. To the Christian Gospel as a transcendental Gospel there is a corresponding response. The saints, the martyrs, the great pastors of the Church, the glowing words of the Church's prayers and hymns, the spiritual enthusiasm and mystic

devotion which is our heritage, are not mere facts of the past but live on as a perpetual inspiration, and from their fires new fires are ever being kindled. And all alike receive their warmth and light from that central fire which is the presence of the Holy Ghost in the world, from the inexhaustible activity of whose divine life there is supplied the power to meet and answer to new times and fresh needs. It is not an accident that one so far advanced in Christian saintliness as Mr. Keble said that after the Lord's Prayer nothing helped the spiritual life so much as the repetition of the *Veni Creator*.

So the mystery of God, the mystery of the Holy Trinity, in the Godhead Itself and as the Godhead is revealed to us, is made complete in the thought of the Holy Spirit. It is not an altogether easy thought, nor one whereof the religious value is immediately apparent and usable. And just because of this we may find that the more we look into it the richer it becomes, and the more illumination it can shed upon the nature of God and the dealings of God with man.¹

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The Church and its Responsibility.

'Go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God.'—Lk 9⁶⁰.

The Church has immense responsibility for the social conditions which shape the individual life. It must refuse to condone or tolerate conditions which make religion impossible. This denomination represents the extreme of emphasis upon the individual. We believe that 'the soul of all improvement is the improvement of the soul.' We believe that the world will never be saved by social reform, by hygiene, by soup kitchens, or by modern plumbing. It will be saved only as individuals are saved, *i.e.*, transformed in purpose and allegiance and made partakers of the divine nature.

But as no man can breathe in a vacuum, no man can long remain Christian if all his surroundings are anti-Christian and his whole environment is a denial of the possibility of a Christian order on the earth. An anti-Christian society will poison and suffocate the individual Christian man. We need not only good men but good relations

¹ J. K. Mozley, *Historic Christianity and the Apostles' Creed*.

between men, and without such relations the isolated individual Christian will shrivel up and cease to be. Hence the Christian Church has a vital concern with reconstruction of the social order. What can the Church do to-day as it stands between the shattered world of 1914 and the Christian world that is to be? It cannot pose as an authority in sociology or economics. It should not rush in where experts fear to tread. It cannot offer competent opinions on municipal government, or on taxation, or social insurance, or the exact number of hours a man ought to work in a day, or the amount of wages he ought to receive. But of certain things the Church is absolutely sure, and on these it must speak in trumpet tones.

1. *The Church can and must affirm the sacredness of personality.* A person is not a thing to be bought and sold, used and flung aside, exploited for another's gain. A person is not a means to anything but an end in himself. He is never a tool or a 'hand,' but is a spark of the divine and eternal. In three consecutive stories Jesus set forth His conception of the human being—the stories of the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the lost son. The lost coin was still precious metal, the lost sheep was still dear to the shepherd, the lost son was still a son and heir to all the Father possessed.

Hence labour that degrades and stunts the personality cannot be tolerated in a Christian land. Labour cannot indeed be always agreeable. Work is not play, and religion is not afraid of hard work. Honest work is not a curse but an education. It means burden-bearing, strenuous, unremitting effort, heroic overcoming of obstacles. Let no Utopian dream, whether painted by evangelism or Bolshevism, hide from us the grim reality. Some men must dig our ditches through the rocks and mud, and mine our coal in the sunless depths of the earth, and breathe the hot air of the glass-factory, and make sulphur matches, and feed the blazing fires in the hold of the ocean liner. Some women must scrub prosaic floors, and wash dishes, and mend torn garments, and do the daily drudgery which is the price of a home. 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread'—no mass meetings or street orators can reverse that sentence. This is not an easy world and was not meant to be.

But the toil of the home need not crush out the soul of womanhood, and the toil of the farm and the factory need not crush the aspiration of man-

hood and womanhood. Toil that undermines health, that permanently saps nervous energy, toil that is aimless and hopeless because it sees no outcome, toil that has no satisfaction in the process and no share in the result—that is anti-Christian toil and must not be allowed in a Christian land. From the standpoint of mere production that kind of work is wasteful, since it means lessened output reluctantly yielded by sullen workers. But from the standpoint of religion that kind of work is condemned as dwarfing to the souls of men.

2. *The Church must affirm democracy; i.e., equal opportunity for all persons to develop their highest powers.* Of course, all men are not born equal—that is the flashing phrase found in the Declaration of Independence, nowhere found in the New Testament. Persons are not equal in capacity or attainment, and never can be. Men are no more alike in their ability to imagine, administer, and create than they are in the colour of their eyes and hair. Men are not bricks in a row, each one eight inches by two by four; they are members in a social body. But each member must participate in the life of the whole body, and if shut out of that life it will make trouble for all the rest. A little finger left to fester in pain will send pain through every limb and at length still the beating of the central heart. The whole body is crippled when a single member is left to suffer and to die.

The remedy for the rule of the tyrant and the rule of the mob is to be found in the simple, far-reaching principles of Christian democracy. That democracy must prevail in the Church, in political life, in business life, and in the entire social order. Democracy does not mean that one man is as good as another, but that all men are good enough to have a voice in choosing the best. It does not mean that all are equally wise, but that all are wise enough to help in discovering the wisest and letting him lead the way. Democracy is clumsy but Christian. Autocracy is smooth-running, but sure in the end to run upon the rocks. Some one has said that autocracy is like a swift ship, beautiful to see until it strikes and founders on a ledge; while democracy it like sailing on a raft—your feet are always uncomfortably wet, but your craft cannot sink. But whether comfortable or not, democracy is the only social order that is compatible with the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith.

3. *The Church must affirm that the law of love is a law of nature as well as a law of God, and is not to be subordinated to any so-called laws of biology or economics.* We are in constant danger of fatalistic surrender to supposed economic laws formulated by thinkers long since dead. We sometimes say: 'There is no escape from the iron law of supply and demand,' when as a matter of fact one of our chief tasks in life is to prevent the mechanical play of blind economic forces. We say: 'Men can always be depended on to act selfishly,' and as we say it the men in khaki go marching down the street to disprove our pagan theory. We say: 'Strong men must triumph and the weak must always go to the wall,' but every Christian orphanage and hospital and school is built to combat our assertion. We say: 'Salaries and wages go up and down according to the number of men standing idle,' and every combination of capital or of labour is designed to defeat that automatic process.

Christianity cannot recognize industrial war as the future basis of society. That kind of war is to-day advocated by two classes: those that have desperately failed and gone under in the social struggle and so think any change must be for the better, and those who have completely succeeded in the struggle and who will welcome no change in a social order which has made them prosperous. But a society built on industrial antagonism is a pyramid standing on its apex already toppling into ruin.

The Church does not know enough to serve as arbitrator in specific troubles. But it does know and must say that until the motive of suspicion is replaced by mutual confidence, until industry is based not on fear but on faith and respect, there is no peace and no progress. Fear is weakening and demoralizing, and every industry which uses fear of poverty or sickness or social stigma or any kind of fear as its main motive will prove financially disappointing and socially dangerous. That leads us to our fourth principle.

4. *The Church must affirm that all honest enterprise is a partnership in which all men should work with common purpose, common responsibility, and common share in the result.* Seventy-five years ago private business was usually and obviously such a partnership. The shoemaker sat in his little old-fashioned shop with his apprentice beside him, and together they made a pair of shoes

for the neighbour who bought them. The whole process was shot through with personal regard and friendly service. Now the shoemaker employs a thousand 'hands' and sits behind a glass door—and glass is a non-conductor. Neither side knows how the other half thinks and does not try to know. Yet until each side knows what the other thinks, and why it thinks so, we shall have not honourable partnership but dishonourable and impoverishing warfare.

This modern impersonal mechanical relation must be swept away by the incoming of a genuine desire for partnership and a resolute determination by all parties to establish it. We had that partnership in war. Our millions of soldiers flamed with a common purpose, and they realized that the officers shared their purpose with them. If millions could organize so effectively for destruction in war, can they not do it for construction in peace? If they could combine to annihilate the farm and the factory and the cathedral, can they not combine to till the farm and operate the factory and make the house of God the gate of heaven? They can—they will! All we need is eyes to see the absolute necessity for doing it, and united resolve that it shall be done.

We must Christianize the process as well as the product of industry. We must give fuller, freer, finer life to all who work beside us, on whichever side of the glass door they sit. We must give that fuller life not out of benevolence but out of justice; not as 'welfare work' but as one of the costs of production. We must lift up the standards of housing, schooling, living. We must prevent the depletion of health, the exhaustion of energy, the strain and tension of fear, and must make the health and happiness of the workers the first charge upon all productive industry.¹

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION.

For Witness.

'Ye are an elect race.'—I P 2^o.

1. This was something to rejoice in. The very keynote of this Epistle may be said to be joy in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, joy in Jesus the risen Saviour Himself. He strikes this note of praise when, immediately after inscribing his Epistle to the strangers scattered throughout

¹ W. H. P. Faunce, in *The Biblical World*.

Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, he begins: 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' It is this bright hope which is to gladden the disciples in all their tribulations, this lively hope, this hope which has life in it, which is to sustain and carry them forward.

2. But it was something to rejoice in with trembling. Day and night Christians were face to face with a hostile world; in the very first days, not so much a hostile world as an insinuating and seducing world. It was a world which was—in all its manifold activities, in its religion and in its want of religion, in its daily behaviour, in its speech and manners, and in the very accent of its mind—a systematic denial of all those dear and sacred things which warmed the heart and maintained the will of those first believers. And so they drew together around the sacred Name. They met to invoke and to share the presence of their Exalted Lord. They had no strength and no resource except there, in the depth and solitude of things. But they knew, as we know, how delicately poised the soul is in those high moments; how the presence of even one who, in secret, is indisposed or treacherous may trouble and corrupt the atmosphere. They knew that the Holy Spirit—that blessed tasting of God's reality—still descends upon souls in the form of a dove; in the form of a timid creature, susceptible and shy, which will depart offended by any want of welcome. And it was their awful care that they should not lose the great assurance in the Holy Spirit that what they believed and were suffering for was, indeed, the very truth.

Christ founded His Church to be a home, to be a place of refuge and retreat and recovery for the souls of those who, in this difficult world, are seeking to live 'as seeing him who is invisible.' You recall those words of Newman's in which he states—in incomparable speech—the function and final necessity for a Divine Society in the world—a Society which cannot but be separate and exclusive, and one which, it may even be, from time to time, according to the spirit of an age, must present a hard and hostile countenance to the world. For we must live, and good people must live in a godly way, and life is hard, and we must find reasons for living by the higher call and

resources to sustain our obedience. 'Starting then with the being of a God (which . . . is as certain as my own existence, though when I try to put the grounds of that certainty into logical shape, I find a difficulty in doing so in mood and in figure to my satisfaction), I look out of myself into the world of men, and there I see a sight which fills me with unspeakable distress. The world seems simply to give the lie to that great truth of which my whole being is so full, and the effect upon me is, in consequence, as a matter of necessity, as confusing as if it denied that I am in existence

myself. If I looked into a mirror and did not see my face, I should have the sort of feeling which actually comes over me when I look into this living world and see no reflection of its Creator.'

It was for souls which have something of that sensitiveness, something of that capacity for fear, for loneliness, for reflection, and for the consolation of faith, that the Church of Christ came into being; and it is by the force of the necessities of such souls, and in answer to their cry, that the Church survives and will survive.¹

¹ *Record of Christian Work*, Jan. 1913, p. 32.

The Rationale of Corporate Worship.

BY PRINCIPAL E. GRIFFITH-JONES, D.D., UNITED COLLEGE, BRADFORD.

IN these days of lessened attendance at public worship, which seems to be a feature of all Western nations, the question has been agitating the minds of those interested in the subject—*Why men do not go to church?*—the postulate behind this question of course being the assumption that they ought to do so, but that, for some reason mainly connected with the unsatisfactoriness and unhelpfulness of the services usually rendered, they have ceased to find any help from them. But, is there not a prior question? *Why should men go to church at all?* Is there any reason in the nature of religion, or in human nature itself, why worship should be normally *communal*? Why, in a word, should the worship of God be more satisfactory by way of human fellowship rather than of individual meditation and aspiration? Can we give a rationale of corporate worship? This is a question which has not been sufficiently explored, and I propose in this paper to endeavour to throw some light upon it.

For it is undeniable that men in all ages and under the most diverse circumstances and conditions have found it helpful to worship in fellowship. So far as I am aware, there is no religion, ancient or modern, which has not had a more or less elaborate system of rites and ceremonies to be celebrated in common. The approach to the Divine has normally always and everywhere been made in the fellowship of like-minded people, who share the same beliefs, and who find their spiritual affinities reinforced and enriched through the

medium of this communal approach. Without for a moment forgetting that there is a place in religion—and a great place—for private devotion, meditation, and prayer, there must be some profound reason why men have thus instinctively (or intuitively) gathered together in groups, often in great multitudes, in a common effort to envisage spiritual realities, and to link themselves to the object or objects of their religious worship. The vast majority of men and women find it unquestionably easier to cultivate religion in company than in solitude. Why is this?

I am not satisfied that it is mere unthinking habit; or that it is one of the unreflective automatisms of human nature; or that the 'herd' or social instinct accounts for it. Such a universal phenomenon must have a deeper source in the constitution of human nature itself, and in the necessities of the case. 'Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus igitur' bears witness to a fundamental and irrepressible need in the soul of man. It is worth while trying to run this elusive something to earth.

I.

Let it be fully conceded that the prime sources of religious inspiration are to be found not in congregations but in spiritually gifted individuals, whose grasp of spiritual reality is original and at first hand. Every great religion had its inception in the soul of a single seer or prophet, whose vision of spiritual reality owed little or nothing to