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rely upon. If he believes that Christ is really alive, and is in active relation with the great body of His followers, he will know that the guidance of the Spirit of Christ is something that can be positively and confidently relied upon. This does not save us from the necessity of thinking ; but it does ensure that with thought we shall be able to combine vision—and the vision of eyes far clearer than our own ; and, since Christ is power as well as truth, what is laid upon the Church, the Church will be able to perform. Meanwhile, to quote the closing words of the first Report, on the Nature

of God, 'it is our immediate task to try and discover the significance of the present, to try to learn and publish abroad the truths, new and old, which God is now pressing on the attention of men, to try to carry forward the tasks which God is laying on the conscience of our generation.' If we rely on His inspiration, we must not leave Him alone to make the division of light from darkness ; the children of His Spirit must announce the revolution of the times ; for the old order is passed and the new arises.¹

¹ Augustine, *de Civ. Dei*, quoted in *loc. cit.*

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

What's your Favourite Lesson?¹

'Children sitting in the open places who call to their playmates.'—Mt 11¹⁶ (WEYMOUTH).

WHAT is your favourite lesson ? English ! Maths ! Latin ! French ! Well, I'm surprised. All those are fine, of course, only I thought you would choose football or cricket or something like that. But you said 'What lesson,' and games aren't 'lessons.' Oh, aren't they ? That's just where you're wrong. They won't help much with a Latin prose, or make these wretched dates that get all jumbled up stick fast in your head. But they can teach you lots of things you'll need as much as that and more. And if you don't know them, when you're big and grown up there'll be heaps of trouble. The Inspector comes to your school, doesn't he ? Sometimes he's very decent and jolly and jokey ; sometimes he's rather horrid. Sometimes he asks easy things and you can rattle them off ; sometimes he gives real teasers and you don't know what they mean. Well, there is an inspector called Life, and by and by he'll set you an exam. paper so long that, scribbling hard, it will take you all your days to get it done. And he'll correct it, answer by answer, and page by page as you finish them—he marks fairly hard—and, if you don't know the things that games can teach you, he'll blue pencil your paper all over, and write on it, 'This boy must be kept back.' 'This girl can't possibly go on to the next class.' 'He can do a little Latin,' or 'She's quite good at Maths. But at the biggest things they are no use at all.'

¹ By the Reverend A. J. Gossip, M.A., Aberdeen.

You know the wise men have taken to watching the animals at play, and writing books about them. One will stand for days, and look at the lambs running races, or playing 'King of the Castle.' Have you seen them at that ? One of them gets on a little mound and, for all his meek and mild face, says to the others, 'I'm the king of the castle, and you're a dirty rascal.' And the rest, of course, aren't having that, run at him and butt him off in a playful way till one of them gets the mound. And another man has watched the kids playing with a basket, jumping into it and out again, turn about, till one of them suggested some even better game, and off they all scampered to that. And the ants have games just like your sports at school with crowds of spectators who get quite keen and excited ; and wrestling, and all kinds of things. And the wise men watch it and they tell us this, that it is the creatures that play most that do best, and that what they learn in games helps them by and by no end. And I believe it. If you are not learning what games teach us, either at games or some other way, for there are many other things that teach it too, then you're going to make a bad mess of things, that's sure. Look at the Bible. It knows. Here is the Lord Christ looking at some stupid people who wouldn't be pleased whatever you did for them. They didn't want this, and they wouldn't have that. You know the kind of grumpy folk. And He said they were like sulky children in a temper who hadn't learned how to play games. There they were sitting in the streets, and whatever the others wanted to do they wouldn't have it ; and when they changed over to the game they

wished then they wouldn't have that either. Let's play at weddings, the others had said, when they came out for a romp. But no, they wouldn't play at weddings—wanted to have a funeral, and nothing else would do. 'All right,' the others agreed, 'and you'll be chief mourners.' But no, they didn't want that either now, sat and sulked and did nothing, and spoiled every one's fun. So it was when they were little ones, said Christ, and so it is still. They never learned the lesson games should teach. Or there is Nebuchadnezzar, always bouncing and always boasting. 'Look at the city I have made, bigger than any other,' till even God, who can stand any one, found him a little trying. When he was a little chap and started that kind of thing in the nursery—'Look, Mummy, isn't my card-house, or my picture, or my whatever-it-was, far bigger and far better and far nicer than the others?'—his Dad should have looked up and said, 'Not so much tootling on that trumpet of yours, my young man.' But he didn't; so poor wee Nebbie never learned the lesson games should teach, and made a dreadful mess of things. And then there's Cain. That wasn't the first time he flew into a passion. He was the kind of fellow who can't take a beating; who, when Abel did better and won, got cross and sulked and wouldn't play. And one day he lost his temper once too often. All because he hadn't learned what games should teach us. Oh yes, they are a great lesson.

Now what about you? You're learning to tackle low, and to jink cleverly, and to shoot straight. Yes, you're learning from games to play football, but are you learning from them to live life? Are games teaching you to take knocks and not make a fuss about them? Wee ones always do, are dreadfully upset about a push or a scratch or a tumble; go and tell Mother, won't play, say it isn't fair, and all the rest of it. But games teach them that won't do, and that one mustn't make a song about a little hurt. You'll need to know that by and by when you grow up. I wonder are you learning it? And games teach us how to bear disappointments. You'll not get all you want from life, not all you think you ought to have, and you must learn to take that cheerily. You can do that at other lessons too, of course. How hard you work, and yet you don't get up the class—seem just as bad as ever. But games are a grand teacher. He's in! No, they got him just on the line. And the boy, though badly disappointed, picks himself up, and grins, and gets back to his place. A goal! No, it

was a splendid shot, but it hit the cross-bar. And the lad just goes on trying. You've won at golf, are all square and are at the eighteenth green, and you are near the hole, and he is on the far edge, in the rough indeed. And by a fluke his ball trickles in; and then yours for the like goes round the lip and doesn't topple over. He's won, after all. Hard lines! Still, over you go and say, 'Well played!' Games teach us how to take our disappointments.

And how to be unselfish. For we must play for the side, mustn't just try to shine ourselves, must be content to do the work and allow some one else to score, and have his name put in the paper. What does it matter so long as the side wins, and we help them to do it. We're not bothering about ourselves at all. And so a good football player will cleverly draw the defenders, and when he has done the work, will sling across a pass to a man left unmarked, and in he romps and scores and wins the game. But, really, it was the other boy who did it. And that's the way that we must try to live our life, to do our bit, to play our part, to help those round about us, and not care who gets the praise for it.

Yes, games are a great lesson and, if you're not learning what they teach us, I'm afraid that that Inspector, looking at your exam. paper as the years go by, will have to say, 'He has got up some Latin and a little French, but he's quite hopeless—doesn't know the biggest things at all. He'll have to be kept back.'

The Game's the Thing.¹

'Joy when ye fall into manifold trials.'—Ja 1².

A popular way of looking at life is to regard it as a game. And any game to be really worth while must have a real trial of strength in it. That is always a poor game in which there is no real to-and-fro tussle. No one enjoys a 'walk over' where the opposition is so limp that it lies down and is trampled underfoot. It is the struggle, between two upstanding, vigorous sides, skill against skill, strength against strength, that gives the game its thrill and its joy. The keener the struggle, the greater the game. Players most enjoy those games in which the last ounce of their quality is challenged.

Games, of course, have their risks. No one plays long without growing familiar at least with bruises. I saw a letter recently from a wee fellow of nine, who had just gone to a new school. He told of his first game and of how he had been hit in the ribs with a

¹ By the Reverend F. C. Hoggarth, B.A., Whalley.

hard ball. Being of the right sort of stuff, he didn't seem to mind. He was being initiated into the hardness of the game. No true player wants games to be made easy and slow, so that no one can ever be hurt or even hit. How many would play if balls had only to be kicked in a gentle and ladylike way, if no batsman had ever to hit a ball hard! Few would continue to play if there were no ding-dong struggle, no uphill going, no risk.

Much the same is true of the game of life. When men begin to look back on the way by which they have come, it is the struggle that memory most longingly dwells on. In his great address two years ago, before the students at St. Andrews University, J. M. Barrie, the creator of *Peter Pan*, had something to say about his own early days and early struggles. He was a poor Scottish laddie with a notion of doing something in the great world. Unknown, almost penniless, he took the risk of going to London. Looking back on those days from the heights of achievement and literary fame, he said, 'Doubtless also He [the Almighty] could have provided us with better fun than hard work, but I don't know what it is. To be born poor is probably the next best thing. The greatest glory that has ever come to me was to be swallowed up in London, not knowing a soul, with no means of subsistence, and the fun of working till the stars went out. To have known any one would have spoilt it. I did not even quite know the language. I rang for my boots, and they thought I said a glass of water, so I drank the water and worked on. There was no food in the cupboard, so I did not need to waste time in eating. . . . Oh, to be a free lance of journalism again—that darling jade.' Thus does a man who has won through to the heights look back to his strenuous beginnings as a poor and unknown youth, struggling for a foothold. Those were the game's great days! More than the joy of victory was the joy of struggle. 'It's the effort that counts,' said Roosevelt, once when he was speaking of success and failure.

Those are thoughts worth keeping in mind amid the vicissitudes of the game. Not all win in the game, as the world counts winning. We all like to win, of course, yet few there are who win through to those heights where Barrie and Roosevelt dwell. The game has strange moods. Merit isn't always adequately rewarded. Supreme effort may fail of success. There is an element of luck, and some have more of it than others. The great thing is to make the effort; to play up and play the game, win

or lose. Whatever the issue all at least may have the joy of struggle, which is the true joy of the game. Even the victors have no greater joy than that.

And when the great Scorer comes,
To write against your name,
He'll write not if you won or lost
But how you played the game.

The Christian Year.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Balaam.

'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!'—Nu 23¹⁰.

It is not necessary for our purpose to consider the record of Balaam critically. The account in Nu 22-24 belongs, it is generally admitted, to the composite narrative known as JE. It is difficult to reconcile this account with that embodied in the Priestly Code (P) and contained in Nu 31⁸⁻¹⁶. It is true that there is one Balaam of the Jehovist, and another of the Elohist, and another of the Priestly writer. We have to face not only the fact that there are three different traditions, but the fact that the compiler of JE combined the first two so closely that they are almost inextricable, and that the ultimate compiler of the Hexateuch, perhaps with a deeper insight into human nature than some of his modern interpreters, has had no scruple in combining the three and treating them all as features of one and the same character. One may accept this correction of the customary treatment of this scripture, and yet, none the less, and even under the light of the new critical understanding of the record, return to the older point of view. The terrible warning of the character remains untouched, an awful lesson to all religious men who parley with suggestions of avarice; an appalling portrait of the double-hearted man, unstable in all his ways; a warning especially to the preacher that no beauty of utterance, however flawlessly beautiful, no heralding of truth to others, however unqualifiedly true, is sufficient to prevent a man from being himself a castaway. It concerns us little to analyse the work of Elohist, Jehovist, Editor, if only we have seen by their joint work a Balaam who is of a type that does exist; if only he mirrors to our eye a moral situation and a spiritual fortune which have been, or may come to be, the situation and fortune of ourselves or a brother man.

'They feared the Lord, and served their own

gods.' J. M. W. Turner, the famous artist, is a striking example of this anomaly. Ruskin testifies concerning him: 'I knew him for ten years, and during that time had much familiar intercourse with him. I never once heard him say an unkind thing of a brother artist, and I never once heard him find fault with another man's work. I could say this of no other artist whom I have ever known.' He was also equal to most noble deeds. When no room could be found in the Academy for a picture of merit by a little-known artist, Turner took down one of his own pictures, sent it out of the Academy, and hung the rejected picture in its place. Well may Hamerton, his biographer, add: 'Now is not that a lovely little anecdote, a story to be told to the very angels in heaven? It is sweet and acceptable to our moral sense as the fragrance of the lily of the valley to our nostrils in the spring.' Yet the same man was guilty of the most vulgar vices. The mingling of splendid traits of character with shameful weaknesses is a common feature of our humanity, although not always so obvious as in the great genius.¹

Let us try to gain from the story of Balaam some insight into our own hearts.

1. Balaam's first downward step was his remaining by the Euphrates while Israel advanced to its destiny. Knowing what he knew, he should have declared himself, and in that case he would never have been troubled by Balak's messengers. Persons who are not cordially spending themselves on some good work are laying themselves open to temptation. The only way to escape being on the side of evil is to be on the side of good. This is a world in which neutrals have no chance or place at all. Balaam knew that God was in Israel, but he did not act on that knowledge; hence his fall. We also know where God is in our time. When it comes clearly home to our understanding that here or there is a good work to be done, God is speaking to us as He spoke to Balaam.

In an essay on 'Moral Decision' in *The Times* we find the following paragraph: 'History affords us examples of men who have chosen evil and made themselves its servants. There is a sinister element in human life, and, however we may explain or account for it, we cannot deny its existence. But more evil and misery are wrought in the world by persistence in moral neutrality than by the deliberate choice of wrong. This neutrality cannot last, and a wise man will make his choice betimes, in the free-

dom of his manhood, and in full view of the alternatives offered to him. He may then expect to choose rightly, and thus, having made his choice, new visions of truth's beauty and of the dignity of righteousness will be given him.'

2. Balaam's second downward step was his not at once refusing to treat with those who wished to buy him over in order to obstruct the good. He was resolved not to disobey God, and yet he had no sympathy with the actual purpose of God regarding Israel; a state of mind very common, but impossible to maintain. He had a sense of duty, a fear of disobeying God, and yet he would fain have made God's will different. This is always the test of religious men. Many of us sincerely desire to keep on terms with God; we know that we must not break His positive commands; but we do not always find ourselves in thorough and active sympathy with the various movements by which He is fulfilling His will in the world. We see that to give ourselves to these means the loss of reputation, money, leisure, and so we listen to the other side. Our soul sometimes turns away from these unremunerative, obscure, arduous, distasteful labours and associations which the forwarding of good in the world calls for. God likes that work, but we do not. Israel has not for us the attractions it has for Him. And so we sell to the highest bidder the gift God has given us.

3. And this leads, as it led Balaam, to a desire to twist God's will into conformity with our desires. Bishop Butler says that though second thoughts may be best in matters of judgment, first thoughts are best in matters of conscience. Overdone solicitude to discover God's will means unwillingness to listen at once to conscience. As Balaam went from hill to hill, so people go from one point of view to another, round and round their own position or purpose in life, to see if from no point of view it will appear right and good, and agreeable to God. They go and consult their friends; they appeal to chance; they let their minds be swayed by the most trivial consideration if only they can be persuaded that duty coincides with pleasure, that they may safely do what they long to do. Many a man who fears to do what is universally recognized as wrong, yet does much harm by refusing to see what is wrong for him. Many a man who would not go counter to what is clearly seen to be God's will, refuses to see what is God's will for himself. The unwillingness of men to believe that to be

¹ W. L. Watkinson, *The Fairness of Trial*, 241.

God's will which runs counter to their purposes, can hardly be exaggerated. Thus, even when we seem to be devoutly waiting to know God's will, it is our own will we are resolved to have.

4. Finally, Balaam would fain have enjoyed the rewards of innocence, though living a guilty life. Looking at Israel, whom he is retained to curse, and seeing the happiness of a God-guided destiny, he cries, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.' Most pathetic is it to see a man in full view of happiness and yet conscious it is not his; separated as by an impassable gulf from the state he recognizes as alone worth living in; feeling in the very depths of his nature that the service of God and life with God are joy and felicity, and yet held back by his own attachment to evil from attaining that state. It is supreme misery for a man to see a good and happy condition, from which he himself is by his own weakness excluded. No man needs to be persuaded that in the time of judgment it will be well with the righteous, that the consequences of sin and the consequences of righteousness are not the same. The profit or gratification which sin brings, the sinner would rather have if he could with innocence. And because we wish to reconcile a careless, indolent, unreal life with the rewards of earnestness and self-sacrifice, we gradually think or live as if we thought these incompatible things can be reconciled. But, to quote Bishop Butler again, 'things and actions are what they are, and the consequences of them will be what they will be.' You cannot alter the great laws and facts of your own life by merely wishing them altered, or by seeing how lamentable the results of your conduct are likely to be. To live the life of the sinner and die the death of the righteous is commonly attempted, but it is impossible. The only way to die the death of the righteous is to be righteous.¹

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The Authority of Jesus.

'He taught them as one having authority.'—Mt 7²⁹.

1. Again and again do we read in the Gospels that the people who heard Jesus speak confessed on the spot that His words had a force, a moral pressure and authority such as they had never before perceived in spoken words. While Christ

¹ M. Dods, *Christ and Man*, 172.

was speaking you somehow could not judge His words. Rather, they judged you, putting you in your true place. Christ's words did not raise questions: He settled questions; and there seemed to be no appeal so long as you remained in His presence. He did not argue > He asserted. His words were messages and revelations. 'His word was with power.'

A word is 'with power' when it comes straight from one man's heart to another's, when it is quite unmistakably the outcome and expression of the man's most real life. A word is with power or authority when in the moment of its utterance it settles some matter for us, when it compels our assent, so that we say, 'That word must be true, it must be the very truth, else we human beings can never be sure of anything; and light and darkness are the same.' A word is with power when our heart and flesh leap up at the sound of it, and when, for one glorious moment, we see our way.

So Christ touched men upon the quick. He spoke to the child of God, sleeping, sleeping unto death it might be, in every soul. He said to people like ourselves, knowing all about us: 'Ye are the children of God; God is your Father. Living as you are just now, you are forgetting yourselves, you are wandering from the true way of your life. You were intended for a high place, and for a blessed destiny.' So Jesus spoke to men, and at length from the heart of man the answer came. He breathed over the dead body the holy words, God, Faith, the Future, and the dead arose and began to speak. At the word of Christ, man set out upon his long pilgrimage to the City of God.

Regarding each one of Christ's great words, or revelations, one thing may always be said. They come each in answer to some profound human cry. They quench some awful thirst of the soul; or they put an end to some intolerable fear. They lift up some dark and inevitable human experience; or they make this world, even at its blackest, something of a home. 'The promises of God,' we read, 'in Christ are yea; and in him, are Amen.' Now where are you to read the promises of God to man? In Scripture? Yes; but not there only. You are to read them by faith, you are to detect them in man's ineradicable instincts, in man's tears and agonies and cries. To these Christ utters His great composing words. Jesus says, 'Our Father,' and in one moment the day breaks over a man who will only believe. Jesus whispers the

word 'forgiveness,' 'My son, My daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee,' and within the soul of every one who hears aright a hard thing begins to melt and give way, and tears of repentance and new resolutions and prayers and praises well up within our souls and make us clean again as we did not think we could ever be clean. So is it with each of Christ's great and fundamental words. Each is the Divine answer to some universal cry, the healing of a wound, the binding up of something within us which must not lie broken or bleed too long. We could not of ourselves have discovered those words of His.

Surely it should be in some measure an evidence to all men of the final truth of Jesus, and of the authority of His words, that the more we live upon those words the better men we are. The more we live upon Christ's words, trusting them absolutely, building our plans for life in view of them, the more truly are we men and women; to the greater height and depth of our faculties do we live. Since this is so, is it not a reasonable thing to propose to any man's mind to believe that the Author of our human nature meant us to stand in need of such words as Christ has revealed; that now, since they have been spoken, we should rely upon them, and lay them up in our lives as matters which are not to be eternally put to the test and debated, but are to be assumed as true because they have been abundantly proved to be necessary?

2. How did Jesus come by those great words of His? By what authority did He speak? Well, He Himself tells us, and we know. 'I speak not from myself,' He says. And again, 'The words that I speak are not mine, but the Father's that sent me.' He had His words from God. In saying that, we are not to be understood as meaning that Jesus, when He left His Father's house, came to this earth with all His knowledge of God lying ready to hand. No; our belief in the real humanity of Jesus, however it may be beset with mystery, must mean that Jesus, as indeed He confessed, in coming to this world, laid aside His glory and took upon Himself the nature of a man. Here in this world Jesus received messages from God and an unbroken fellowship with God which caused Him to triumph alike over life's difficulties and its snare. The Divine messages reached Him here. They were wrung for Him—He wrung them—out of life's actual circumstances, out of the hardship and the loneliness. His words reached Him—He compelled

them to come to Him—through the world, through the tasting of our life. That is Christ's authority, His experience. He spoke what He knew.

We sometimes, nay, we usually, forget this. We suppose that Christ's words cost Him nothing, that it was easy for Him to speak as He did. We forget that all real words are personal. We can speak of God only as we know, and we come to know only by experience, through the pressure of life upon us privately, and through our faith. And Jesus, in choosing our human life, accepted that condition also.

Where did Christ get the authority to say to us such words as 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'? How did He come to know that such words as these would always sound like music in the ears of men? How did He know that we needed and were in secret crying out for just such words as these?

His authority was His experience. As He went through our life He felt the need of such things for Himself—the need of the Heavenly Father. And so we read of Him going away into a desert-place apart to pray, going away to make the more real to Himself the Holy Fellowship of God.

At the last, He endures the Cross, faces the uttermost darkness and contradiction of sinners, and out of that conflict between despair and faith, between that which is seen and that which is unseen, He whispers, 'Father,' and with a strong cry gives up the Ghost.

Let us always listen with reverence to any word of Jesus; for it was no light thing for Him to learn that word, and to win the right to say it. Let us listen, rather, to each word as though we were in the presence of some Great Sorrow. Let us receive each word of Jesus, never forgetting that each word was wrung out of the eternal silence by Jesus to save us from some terror of the mind, or to sweeten some bitter and inevitable cup, or to turn the edge of some cutting memory.¹

ROGATION SUNDAY.

Preaching the Gospel.

'And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.'—Mk 10¹⁵.

1. This is the Church's primary function, to bring others into that fellowship with God and

¹ J. A. Hutton, *Discerning the Times*, 145.

Christ in which it has found eternal life. This function, evidently, can be discharged only by *appealing to the individual*. That the multiplication of Christian men will have important consequences for society is indisputable, but in the first instance the Gospel has nothing to do with society. It has to do with the soul. It has to do with God's interest in the soul, and with the possible interest of the soul in God. It has to tell what God is to the soul, and what the soul may be to Him.

Not infrequently we hear this criticised as a selfish and unworthy conception of the Christian religion: it invites men to concentrate attention on themselves, the very sin from which the Gospel has come to deliver them. This criticism forgets that what is in question is the soul's relation to God, and that where God is there can be no selfishness. It is not selfish to be concerned about our relation to Him—so deeply concerned that till this is settled everything else is unreal; it is not selfish, because it is vital. We can do nothing to help others if we are ourselves as helpless as they.

To prevail with men, one by one, to become debtors to Christ for the service which none but Christ can render is the preliminary to all and every Christian service of others.

2. Sometimes it is a misreading of the Gospel itself, which makes evangelizing vain. The Gospel can be conceived as either a gift or a vocation, but whichever way is to be adopted in any given set of circumstances, it must be conceived greatly. If it is a gift, it is an unspeakable gift; if it is a calling, it is the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. In any case, it stands to win by its magnitude, and to renounce or obscure its greatness is to cast the hope of victory away. Yet the temptation to do this is ceaseless, and attacks the Church on opposite sides.

Sometimes it is the gift of God in the Gospel which is minimized. There is something staggering to the human mind in the preaching of the apostles. A Person such as the Gospels represent Jesus to be is too overpowering when we really begin to see Him, and to hear His voice as a voice addressing us. 'Come unto me, all ye that labour'; 'no man cometh unto the Father but by me.' And when to the testimony of Jesus to Himself we add, not as something inconsistent with it, but as something which can be justified by appeal to it, the testimony of the apostles to Jesus, the impression made is deeper still. Could anything be more daunting to

human intelligence than the New Testament interpretation of the death of Christ? What a shock it gives to the mind when we first begin to think what is meant by Atonement! He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for those of the whole world. How did it ever enter the heart of man to assert so calmly a proposition so stupendous, that in Christ who died upon the Cross there was a goodness which outweighed with God the sin of the world, and made it, for those who trusted Christ, as though it were not? The mind is too small for such thoughts, it is too timid, it craves for something more proportioned to its grasp.

It is here the temptation of the evangelizing Church comes in. It is to extenuate the unspeakable gift, to assimilate Christ to other men, to place Him in the ranks of the prophets, to discount the Atonement, and along with it the reality of sin and the cost of redemption to God. It cannot be said too strongly that this is not the way of hope, but the way of despair. There are things that could never have been said at all, things indeed which could never have been conceived, unless they were true, and the great things of the Gospel are of this description.

It is the same when we think of it as a calling. There is a sense in which it is free, but it is never cheap; at least it never ought to be. Yet it is often cheapened. The question, What is a Christian? is discussed as though the object were to find the very lowest terms on which that noble name could be assumed. There is always temptation for the Church to retain in some kind of connexion with itself all whom it can possibly retain; and when people show signs of drifting away, to modify the necessary minimum for good standing in its fellowship, as if this were the way to secure its position in the world. But this also is vain. It is the exact opposite of the line which was always followed by Jesus. He was compassionate and forbearing, as we do not know how to be; He did not break the bruised reed nor quench the glimmering wick; but He demanded the utmost from all men, and He obtained what He demanded.

'If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross.' There is a capacity for sacrifice in men to which the Gospel is designed to appeal; but when it is cheapened so that this appeal can no longer be made, the cause of the Gospel itself has been betrayed.

The kind of testimony to Christ which wins men one by one to commit themselves to God's redeeming love in Him, and to meet His challenge to a life of self-renunciation, is the Church's chief end. As 'Ecce Homo' has it, the article of conversion is the article by which the Church stands or falls.¹

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION.

The Joyous Mystery of the 'Going Up.'

'And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, blessing God.'—Lk 24⁵¹⁻⁵³ (RV.).

There are difficulties in the Ascension, but they are all of them difficulties for the imagination rather than for the reason. Men of science and philosophers assure us that they can conceive a world of four dimensions. The late Professor Chrystal used to tell his students that the ways in which matter would behave in a fourth dimensional world had all been worked out mathematically; a wonderful tribute, he held, to the reach and power of human intelligence.

Apply the illustration—imperfect as all illustrations must be—to the fact of Ascension. Think of the fourth dimension of the scientific thinkers; an aspect of reality hidden because of the imperfection and limitation of our optical apparatus: a plane or sphere of existence real but invisible to our bodily sense. Then let your thoughts rest on the New Testament conception of the glorified body of Christ. A 'spiritual body'—doubtless Paul derived his conception from Christ's post-resurrection appearances—a body not keyed to a world of three dimensions only, but capable of living in a fourth: becoming visible intermittently to the first disciples, then when it passed beyond that belt of light into the fourth dimension—visible no longer.

'He was carried up into heaven.' So they put it in the only language available to them in their day. Thus they interpret the evidence of their senses. But who shall say that heaven is 'up,' or who shall say that heaven is 'far'? It is life on another plane: that is all we know. A world of reality, perhaps all about us, but hidden by the veil of sense. A world as far above our imagining in any definite picture as the mathematician's concept of the fourth dimension, yet real, glorious beyond all telling in its possibilities for living souls. You can

¹ J. Denney, *The Church and the Kingdom*, 27.

think the thing although you may not be able to picture it. Christ is the first-fruits—not in time but in visible evidence—of all the harvest. For it is not the discarded body with which the spirit clothes itself, but the prepared body; not the natural body, but the spiritual body, a body plastic to spirit and relating spirit to spirit in such fashion as to make recognition and communion possible. Christ, for evidential purposes, was able to project His changed body into the lower plane for a time. But that was not its native environment. So it was withdrawn to function more vitally and, for us, more fruitfully in its own plane.

Luke goes on to tell us of some immediate consequences of this withdrawal. He notes that when the Unseen World received their Lord, three things happened to the first disciples. That they are relevant and significant things is just what we expect of Luke. He has a way of selecting such things.

1. *They worshipped Him.*—He had been so much the comrade and friend that it was difficult to realize He was so much more. But with the Ascension they understood, and understanding, they worshipped. Which does not mean that the old familiarity became less dear to them, but that it was filled now with infinite meaning, with height, and depth, and atmosphere. And that meant that they thought of Christ far more adequately and far more spiritually. It was a precious memory that in the glory of His new life He had kindled a fire on the shore to give them welcome after a night of toil. They knew He was still thoughtful of their common needs. But they and all men had deeper needs. They needed love, purity, immortality, God. And His vanishing into the Unseen brought these things near, made them supreme, lifted their thoughts and affections to the undying things of the Spirit for which all the rest of life is but the scaffolding and preparation.

2. The second significant detail is that *they returned to Jerusalem with great joy.*—The cloud received Him. But that did not quench their joy, rather it heightened it. For they loved Him, and rejoiced that He had gone to His Father and their Father, to His God and their God. They took then the uplift and happiness of their new realization of the Unseen, their new sense of the wonder of Christ, back with them to fill the common task with meaning, the daily life with an infinite and eternal significance. And that is what happens always when the mystery

and glory of Christ become the dominant fact with any of us, and the future shines in His revealing light. All life is lifted by it, becomes more wonderful and more inspiring. And let us remember that life ceases to inspire when it ceases to be wonderful.

3. The third significant thing in the experience of these witnesses of the Ascension was *the new interest it gave them in one another and in the common worship*.—Their eyes were opened. They saw one another newly; as heirs of immortality, comrades in an adventure reaching beyond the boundaries of time and sense, sharers in an experience which filled their small commonplace lives with glory and with dignity. 'Your brother whom you have seen,' who living to-day may die to-morrow and mount high above you, 'walking in an air of glory whose light does trample on your days,' how can you look upon him with anything but love, how be anything but kind to him? It is our practical materialism that breeds antagonism and ignoble animosity. When we realize ourselves as fellow-immortals we change the whole social climate.

And against the background of eternity worship becomes a new thing; in hymn, prayer, page of the evangel, spoken message, soul is calling to soul, and God through all is wooing us to the ecstasy of adoration to possess our possessions, to know what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we are called to be His sons, heirs of God—think of it—and joint-heirs with Christ.¹

PENTECOST.

The Holy Spirit.

'He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?'—Ac 19².

1. *The mystery of the Holy Spirit*.—In the New Testament the Holy Ghost is sometimes called the Spirit of the Father, sometimes of the Son—or of Christ—or, in one place in the Acts, the Spirit of Jesus. And the word 'Paraclete,' or Comforter, which is now appropriated to the Third Person in the Trinity, is used by St. John of the Ascended Christ. The conception of the Virgin Mary is attributed directly to the Holy Spirit, and at the baptism of our Lord He is represented as brooding a second time on the face of the water, to inaugurate the new Creation, as in the beginning He inaugurated the old. The Apocryphal Gospel of the Hebrews puts into His mouth on that occasion the words,

¹ C. Allan, *The New World*, 139.

'My Son, in all the prophets I have been waiting for Thee, that Thou mightest come, and I might rest in Thee, for Thou art My rest.'

Whatever may be the authority for this tradition, the words correctly express the New Testament doctrine. The Holy Spirit became permanently immanent in humanity from the time of the baptism of our Lord. So long as Christ remained on earth He was the habitation of the Holy Ghost, but before His departure, as St. John tells us, He breathed upon His disciples, and said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost'—another allusion, probably, to Genesis, which tells us how God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

This gift of the Holy Spirit is commemorated to-day. How important this event seemed to the apostles and their contemporaries may perhaps best be gauged by two passages—the one in our text, and the following words from St. John: 'This spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him were to receive, for the Spirit was not as yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified.' It is quite clear that the apostles believed that the Day of Pentecost marked the beginning of a new era in the relations of the Spirit of God to mankind, and that they thought that they had palpable evidence of this new dispensation.

Now in what did this evidence consist? We find that from the first there were two notions about the operations of the Spirit in the Church. On the one hand it was held that He comes fitfully, unaccountably, sometimes throwing men into a convulsed state, which is more than once compared with the effect of wine; and on the other, that He is a constant possession of the Christian, enlightening his mind and purifying his character.

The second view of the working of the Holy Spirit is dwelt on far more emphatically by St. Paul, and it was sure to be better understood as the excitement connected with the spiritual gifts subsided. 'The fruit of the Spirit,' says St. Paul, 'is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.' These, and not an exalted, or ecstatic, state of consciousness are the signs that St. Paul would have us look for in those who possess the Spirit of God. Members of the Christian Church should all exhibit these signs, for, he said, we have all to drink the same spiritual drink.²

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² W. R. Inge in *C.W.P.* lxxxiii. 334.

thing to notice is that it does not supplant our personality. What is the relation between it and the human will? Several phrases used by St. Paul show that he regarded the two as distinct; for instance, 'The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit.' The Apostle here clearly holds that the Divine indwelling does not in any way annihilate human personality. Even in the closest union between God and man, God remains God and man remains man. Occasionally, indeed, in his vivid imaginativeness St. Paul almost suggests that the Spirit of Christ has become identified with, or has even taken the place of, his own personality. 'I live,' he says, 'and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me.' If we were to press these words, they would mean that Christ, the perfect Man, had taken the place of the imperfect human self in the Apostle's soul, but the next moment we see that the passage is not to be pressed literally, for it goes on, 'That life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God.'

But it does not follow from this that the Divine and human elements within us are altogether independent. We cannot perhaps ever clearly distinguish the operation of the Spirit from the action of our own self as inspired by Him. What we feel within us is not so much an overruling force as a co-operating influence. That is what St. Paul means by his paradoxical injunction: 'Work out your own salvation . . . for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to work.' The reason here given why men should work out their salvation for themselves is that there is a Divine Power working in them in the same direction. The work is our own, and yet it is God's. It is our own, for until we have placed ourselves in the right attitude towards God, we cannot obtain the presence of the Spirit: that must come from an effort of our own will and from no other source. But the work is also God's, for a Divine influence is present which we did not ourselves originate, and which will lead us on towards truth and goodness, if only we will not resist the gracious impulse.¹

3. *The gift of the Holy Spirit.*—There is one gift that invariably accompanies the bestowment of the Spirit—power. 'Ye shall receive power,' said our Lord, 'when the Holy Ghost is come upon you.' They were but a handful of humble Galileans, and the task committed to them was the evangelization of a world!

¹ H. G. Woods, *At the Temple Church*, 113.

Power is always the mark of the spirit-filled individual or Church. Let the Spirit take possession of Francis, and he takes thousands in Italy captive for Christ. Let the Spirit come upon Luther, and he makes religion real to half a continent. Let the Spirit come upon Wesley, and, like the walls of Jericho, the vice and indifference of the masses of England fall prostrate before him. Let the Spirit come upon Evan Roberts, and all the forces of evil in Wales are scattered like chaff before the wind. Power—resistless, subduing power—is one of the marks of the Spirit.

There are various stages of Christian life and experience. There are some who dwell on the earthly life of Jesus, and who accept Him as Lord and Master, and toilsomely seek to follow Him. There are others who advance a stage higher, and who know something of the power of His Death and Resurrection, and the consequent release and emancipation He brings. But there is a third and higher stage still, when men know Jesus, not simply as an Example, not even simply as a Sacrifice, but as a Power through His Spirit dwelling in us. It is in one or other of the two former stages we, for the most part, sojourn. It is this latter stage that brings fulness of power and joy. Our Christian life is empty, and poverty-stricken, and toilsome! There is no freedom, or ease, or fulness about it! We live at a poor dying rate. And the reason for it is that we 'have not received the Holy Ghost.' We have not opened our hearts to the incoming of the Divine Comforter with all His wealth of inspiration and power.

And the fault is all our own. We cry and beg for the Spirit, as if God begrudged bestowing Him. We are not straitened in God, we are straitened only in ourselves. We have not the Spirit, not because God refuses to give, but because we do not open our hearts to receive.

This is our bottom need—to receive the Holy Ghost. 'They that wait upon the Lord,' says the prophet, 'shall renew their strength'; or, as the phrase may be translated, 'They that wait upon the Lord shall change their strength.' Instead of their own poor strength (which, after all, is but weakness) they shall have the inexhaustible and resistless strength of God—so that 'they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.' And that is exactly what we want—we want to change our strength. We want to exchange our own efforts,

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puny and baffled as they are, for the omnipotent energy of God. And all that omnipotent energy becomes ours when the Spirit dwells within us. Have we received the Holy Ghost? Are we willing to receive Him? He is to be had for the asking.

'If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?'¹

¹ J. D. Jones, *The Unfettered Word*, 139.

The Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

BY THE REVEREND V. T. KIRBY, M.A., THURGARTON VICARAGE.

THE Epistle to the Hebrews is in the main a treatise on the relation of Christ and the Church to Judaism, a subject which from the facts of the case necessarily occupied the minds of the leaders of the Apostolic Church and the writers of the New Testament. This paper is an attempt to trace what ideas on that relation were in the minds of those leaders, in order to see if any indication can be found pointing towards the author of the Epistle, or at least towards the school to which he belonged.

The People of God in the Old Testament is Israel; the People of God in the New Testament is the Christian Church. The one is limited to a single nation, the other is intended to spread into all the world. The greatest of the Prophets and of the Psalmists looked forward to that extension: the Gentiles would be gathered into the Messianic kingdom: 'All kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him.' So, when our Lord was born, Simeon could recognize Him as 'A light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of God's people Israel.' So the Lord Himself taught, and His teaching culminated in His last recorded words before His Ascension: 'Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.' And on the day of Pentecost St. Peter could say, 'To you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him.'

The fact is clear: there is no need to enlarge upon it. And, 'beginning at Jerusalem,' the Apostles began to put it into practice. The Acts of the Apostles gives us the most important steps of the work until the Church had gained a footing in the chief cities of the eastern half of the Roman

Empire, and, in the person of St. Paul, had reached the capital.

The fact is clear, but what was the idea in the minds of the leaders? how was the new People of God to be made? what was to be its relation to the old? To answer these questions we look at the minds of those leaders as they are shown to us in their deeds and in their words as recorded in Acts, and in their writings in the Epistles of the New Testament.

To St. Peter, the first leader after the Day of Pentecost, the new People of God is a continuation of the old, extended, enlarged, regenerated by the work and teaching of Jesus, inspired by the Holy Spirit, but still a continuation of the old. After the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, he said, 'Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed' (Ac 3²³). Again, a little later, before the Jewish Council, 'Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins' (Ac 5³¹). Israel is the sphere of God's work, and the Gentiles are to be added to Israel. At this stage he still thinks of the Synagogue as the door of the Church to the Gentiles; that idea, indeed, he outgrew, but the idea of the Church as the continuation of Israel remained. He learns much in his vision before going to Cornelius, and in his dealings with him. At the Council at Jerusalem he can join with Paul and Barnabas in refusing to impose the Jewish Law on the Gentiles, but so too can James. He can eat with the Gentiles at Antioch. But he never loses the idea of the continuity of the People of God before and after