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Source, and End of the world, so certain is it that religion must not be placed in any such connexion as to suggest that it is dependent upon something else. This third merit of the book, nevertheless, cannot but give rise to a doubt. What is set forth simply as fact may easily appear as cut off from reason. The incomprehensible becomes easily the unreasonable, the aimless easily the valueless. The old evidences for God and the new attempts to derive religion from something antecedent correspond with strong motives of the human spirit. All isolation is dangerous. Otto is aware of this himself. Before this book about the Idea of the Holy, in which he demonstrates the irrational element in religion, he had, in his works on the naturalistic and the religious views of the world and on the Philosophy of Religion, worked entirely in the rationally apologetic vein. May it be vouchsafed to him, in his future works, to illustrate the union of both kinds of theological labour.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

A Letter from You to You.[1]

'Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken to him.'—Dt 13^8.

I DON'T suppose you young folk have ever heard of Lord Haldane, have you? Well, after all, you know he has never heard of you! And yet you are quite an important little person, aren't you? Ask mother, and she'll say, 'Why, yes, we never could get on without our little girl.' And the newspaper men would say the same about Lord Haldane, would find things much drearier and duller and tamer if he were not here. For he is one of those men who make the long, long speeches that Dad sits and reads forever, when you are just itching to get a hold of the paper to see whether Yorkshire beat Surrey, or how the Rangers-Celtic match got on, or something like that—big and important.

Lord Haldane tells this little tale about himself. Once on a time he was War Secretary, that is to say he looked after the army; had the very best toy you can imagine to play with as much as he liked. You have got soldiers too, but only some dozens. But he had hundreds of thousands of them! And yours are only tin, really, though you pretend that they are not. But his were really and truly real, could move their arms and their legs and walk about, were really men. And while your guns can only shoot peas, or balls of paper, his went off with a bang, a lovely bang, and could knock houses to bits miles away. Well, one day he wanted something for his army, felt he must get it, and he wrote asking for it to the Home Secretary. Who's he? Oh, he's the man who looks after a heap of things, the police among them I believe. Not so good a toy as the other, still fairly jolly, don't you think, to have thousands of real bobbies with real batons and real helmets. As it happened, the Home Secretary (that's the bobby man) that very day fell ill, and asked Lord Haldane (that's the army man) to do his job for him for a week or two. So Lord Haldane strolled up to his friend's office; and the very first thing he saw was his own letter lying there waiting for its answer. Lord Haldane had written it as War Secretary, feeling he just must have the thing. But he read it as Home Secretary, feeling that he just couldn't give it. And the first thing he did in that office as Home Secretary was to sit down and write to himself as War Secretary and say 'No.'

Has that muddled you up a bit? Oh, it's quite easy. Suppose you wanted to golf with Father, and weren't going to turn out to a match at football one Saturday, were looking for the captain to tell him so, when there on the board you saw the team, saw that the captain was ill, and that you were to act captain. The bit of you that was captain would say to the other you that wanted to play golf, 'No, you don't; you're going to turn out, and we're going to win this game if it can be done.' Well, it was like that. And indeed we must all learn this way of writing letters to ourselves, saying 'No.' For there are two 'yous,' and two 'mes,' and two of every one. And one of the 'yous' is a decent wee soul, straight and clean and honourable; but the other you (I'm sorry to be rude, but it's true) is pretty mouldy and shabby and third-

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

rate, a real dud of a you, and these two never agree. If you listen you can often hear them scrapping and making no end of a din. Paul knew all about that, tells us that inside his heart there was always a fearsome fight going on, that the worse part of him was always hammering the better part of him, knocking it about and bullying it beyond words, and he could never separate them, nor let the really nice Paul have a half-chance against the horrid Paul, until Christ taught him how to write 'No' to himself.

And you and I must learn that too. No doubt it would be very funny, and the fellows would laugh no end, but would it be kind? After all, he is a new chap; or, if he isn't, anyhow, how would you like it done to you? Oh, very funny, but you'll have to give it up, to take a pen and write to yourself, saying 'No.' Or, you've got the headphones on, and some one has come into the room, and it's the very bit you have been waiting to hear, and it's hardly begun. It would be quite easy to sit on and pretend you didn't notice. Yes, easy but not straight, and not the game. You'll have to write 'No' to yourself, and off with them. Or you are thinking about doing something not quite straight at school. But it's not to count, you say! Of course I wouldn't do it if it did. It's a kind of game, the masters against us boys, and if we lose we get kept in, or have so many lines to write. I know it's quite simple to make out a case, and talk yourself into believing it's all right. And yet it isn't. 'I must have it,' said Lord Haldane the War Secretary. 'Must you,' wrote Lord Haldane the Home Secretary. 'No, you don't, my lad, and you grasp that.' And you and I must learn to back up the straight, clean, manly you, and write 'No' to the other fellow every time.

A Clean Game.[1]

'Except he have contended lawfully.'—2 Ti 2^5.

HERE is a story of how the boys in Secundarabad High School, India, play the game. They had entered an inter-schools sports association, and lost their chief tournament after a match in which they were subjected to all the dirty tricks of the game that can be imagined. They managed, however, to keep their tempers, and from the beginning of the game to the end they were never once penalized. On the day when the trophies and medals were distributed they were delighted to find that some outside friends, who had watched the game, had provided special medals for them, covered with a card on which were the words: 'For endurance and clean play, from admirers of good sport.'

The cheers were deafening as they received their medals, and their defeat under the circumstances was looked upon as the school's most valued triumph. They didn't win the game, but they won a victory over themselves, and that is the finest triumph on any playing field. Whenever people speak of the play of those boys, they say, 'They always play a clean game.' Those Indian boys have learnt that the Christian religion concerns their games and the spirit in which they play them. It is not merely a matter of services and prayers and hymn-singing. Boys of that sort may seem too good to be true. Yet they are the right sort. A Christian boy should play a clean game, at all times, not only when it is easy so to play, but when it is most difficult. Even under provocation he chooses not to foul. It may mean a bit of a struggle within, but he would rather win in that struggle against foul practice than win the game. There is an ideal of clean play, which should be his first loyalty. 'Don't foul' was part of the slogan that Roosevelt once gave the young high school captain of a local football team in Ohio, who had written to him when President, to give the boys a motto.

Sometimes boys adopt the motto so long as there is any risk of detection. They do not object to fouling, but they don't care to be seen fouling. There was a race some time ago at a school sports. Two boys outran the others and for a time they were neck and neck, the smaller boy being just in front. As they turned the bend into the straight run for the winning-post, the boy in the rear, thinking he was screened by bushes, shot out his hand and pushed the leader down. He was seen and disqualified. But even had he not been seen a victory of that sort is not worth having. Montaigne in one of his essays quotes a fine word from Alexander the Great, who had been tempted by some of his soldiers to take some unfair advantage. 'No, no,' he said; 'I had rather repent me of my fortune than be ashamed of my victory'—victories of which one is secretly ashamed have no joy in them. That is true right through life—true in the classroom as in the playing field, true in the larger world beyond the school or college walls.

[1] By the Reverend F. C. Hoggarth, Whalley.

I read once of a boy who carried off a coveted school prize. All seemed well and fair, and friends rejoiced in his triumph. Then one day he wrote to the headmaster, confessing that he had won the place by cheating in the examination. He was utterly unhappy in his success. He returned his medal and asked what he might do by way of penance. If the master thought it well he would even advertise his 'foul play' in the newspaper!

There are some so-called 'successes' in life of which men have need to be equally ashamed. There are ways of making money, of growing rich, which at least border on 'foul play.' Things are permitted under the name Competition, which at least ought to make those who stoop to them profoundly uncomfortable, that resemble the big boy pushing down the small boy. Great corporations have ways of disabling the small trader. Men steal marches over their competitors; they do things in trade that Alexander refused to do in war.

Business rather badly needs some Rules of the Game. It would be well if there were some means of disqualifying men who do not play the game. A lie is a foul. So is short weight and so is adulteration, so is the taking advantage of weakness by strength. In business, in law, in politics, or in whatever other field we find ourselves, let our motto be 'A clean game'—and as a postscript 'If in doubt, don't.'

The Christian Year.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Christian Standpoint.

'Gods many and lords many. But to us. . . .'—1 Co $8^{5.6}$.

There is a great deal of meaning in these three words, 'But to us.' They contain at least the mystery of standpoint—the mighty and far-reaching difference made by a point of view.

Now because there is in this phrase the fact of standpoint, there is also behind it something more—the line of development which resulted in the standpoint. Here the line is twofold—a certain tradition that produced enlightenment, a certain experience that produced conviction. Difference of standpoint, like other things, requires a cause adequate to account for it. If you see the Southern Cross while I see the Polar Star, that is because I live north of the Equator and you south of it. Here is a pebble in the path as we walk through the forest. To the ants that swarm near it that pebble is a mountain; they are climbing over it, running round it, investigating it with as much eagerness as if it were one of the big things of the world. But to us, who are men, it is only a pebble to be ground into the mud or to be kicked aside into the ditch. Behind differences of standpoint there lie other and deeper differences—ancestry, environment, intellectual tradition and inheritance, or it may be a personal experience that has forged conviction in its glowing fires. Gods many and lords many, but to us the world is different, and there is a reason why the world is different; to us the darkness is past and the true Light already shineth!

St. Paul is here setting over against the outlook of the great world the point of view taken by the little circle of the Church. A practical difficulty has arisen, the question of eating meats sacrificed to idols. He follows the matter out on grounds of expediency. But now for the moment he takes higher ground than that of expediency: he takes the ground of absolute truth. An idol is nothing. It is a mere name, even if, to lingering ignorance and superstition, it represents a real influence. There are gods many and lords many from the standpoint of surrounding paganism. There are gods named and nameless. And to the average man who knows no better, these may cast a shadow that obscures the shadow of the Almighty. But to us there is another world, another atmosphere, another consciousness; what have we to do any more with idols, either by serving them or by dreading them, we who have known the living and true God? So with these three emphatic little words he withdraws his readers' gaze from the conventional outlook, and bids them survey the universe from the Christian standpoint. Watch him move to his point of view. 'But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we through him.'

Most of our standpoints are formed by one or both of two things: tradition, whether family tradition, or national, or social, or racial; and experience, which is not so diffused as tradition, but sometimes makes up in intensity what it lacks in comprehensiveness.

These two things go to form the standpoint of the Apostle and his readers.

1. Here is, first, *a great tradition*. 'There is

but one God, of whom are all things.' St. Paul did not invent that sublimely comprehensive thought. Abraham is in these words. Moses is in them. The tables of stone are in them—David also, and Samuel, and especially the prophets. For the moment Paul is writing as a Jew, although he is addressing himself to Gentile converts. But two currents have met and mingled just above the point where he stands beckoning his readers to join him. 'And one Lord, Jesus Christ': the Christian tradition, with the freshness of the morning still upon it, has mingled with that of earlier days. *Jesus*—the human name suggests certain historic facts, too many to be here enumerated, too familiar to need repetition. *Christ*—these facts fitted with certain earlier expectations, and the conviction was born and grew that He was the One who should come, and that men need not look for another. *Lord*—for the impression He made was so tremendous that adoration gathered instinctively around Him, and a new authority was established for the minds and consciences of men. And *One*—for the facts involved were so unique and so divine that, as there never had been, so there never could be, any one worthy to be compared with Him. Even if the world lay in darkness, to St. Paul and to his readers these great facts were known.

2. Yet it required more than these traditions to create the point of view; the tradition might have remained cold and powerless unless it had been kindled into *a great experience*. 'But to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and *we unto him*.' The thinking here is very compact; there is a chapter in a phrase; there is a moral and intellectual revolution in three words. There is not only one God, as a fact external to us—a fact which we might hear of by the hearing of the ear, or hold by some logic of the mind. We unto Him!—turned towards Him, taught to live for Him, enabled to find the end and glory of our being in Him. 'One Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and *we through him*.' Again the thought is concentrated to the uttermost: there is a chapter in a phrase; there is a miracle of regeneration in three words. We are what we are through Him. We are brought near to the living God through Him.

3. What difference did the taking of the Christian standpoint mean? It is easier to illustrate this difference than to summarize it. The New Testament is the only adequate summary—to which the thought of the Church in the early centuries, as men slowly adjusted themselves to the new universe they now beheld, is at once supplement and commentary. One or two illustrations of the effect of the new point of view must suffice.

The thought of the time found a new centre round which to arrange itself. The Christian thinkers did not reject all the thought of their own day; they would have been strangely inconsistent if they had done so, believing as they did in the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. A sufficient illustration is St. John's use of the idea of the Word, which had long been employed both in Jewish and Greek philosophy ere it was put to a Christian use. This idea, like the Old Testament, lay waiting for its adequate interpretation, and that came with Jesus Christ; it was seen from the Christian point of view. The early Christian apologists delight to attempt the very task in which St. John set them so illustrious an example; they link Christianity to the good that had gone before; they view that good as crowned and confirmed in the new Revelation: the good had lain waiting in the world, until the day when the Best was given.

And the world and its history received a new interpretation. Disordered and sinful though the world might be, it was really a divine world; it was in its inmost being and purpose a Christian world. My text with its magnificent breadth and courage is sufficient illustration; even things sacrificed to idols could not altogether lose the traces of their divine origin: 'To us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things.' Everywhere there could be read the signature of the Infinite Power, Wisdom, and Love; everywhere could be heard the whisper of the Everlasting Reason, the Word that had become Incarnate once, and once only, but was diffused throughout all space and time.

Now as for ourselves, we are at least half-way to the Christian point of view because the Christian tradition encompasses our lives. To some, for reasons we cannot know meantime, have come evil traditions and teachings of death, but to us the good Word of God; to some an evil ancestry, but to us a great cloud of witnesses. We must not be content with the tradition, we must seek the experience. If we seek it with our whole hearts

we shall find it; we shall find the happiness of those who believe so much in the one God and Father that they live unto Him, who keep so near to the one Lord, Jesus Christ, that they become through Him all that God means them to be.[1]

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Contemporary Faith.

'We trust in the living God.'—1 Ti 4^{10}.

This is the faith of the Christian Church and also of the human soul. But it is apt to be denied from two opposite quarters.

First it is denied by those who are not believers. They have reasoned that as the miscroscope reveals no Deity in matter, and the telescope does not find Him in the heavens, He is nowhere; or, they have been so puzzled by the anomalies and contradictions of life that they have not been able to accept the idea of any moral controlling will. For one reason or another a number of quite honest people have concluded that we cannot get behind the phenomena of the universe, and that if we did we should not find that intelligent mind and personal will which represents the idea of God. They cannot trust in the living God, because there is no convincing proof of His existence. With this attitude of intellectual agnosticism we have nothing to do on this occasion.

The second person who denies the idea of the living God is an earnest believer, and his denial is not a theory but a practice. He believes firmly that the universe has had its Creator, the human race its Ruler, and the soul her Saviour, but his faith is couched in the past tense. God lived once without doubt, but, and here faith passes unconsciously into unbelief, the same person does not believe with unrestricted mind in the living God of the present, guiding nations now as surely as He guided Israel in the days of the prophets, doing wonders now as in the days of the apostles, speaking to men now as He spoke when the books of the Bible were being formed, visible to those who have eyes to see, and audible to those who have ears to hear. Many a devout person recoils from the thought that God still works as in the former days. If he desires to know what God's mind is he betakes himself to the voices of Hebrew writers: God in that past is clear and active, in this present He is silent and ineffective. And this seems a reverent and devout faith. Is it not really an insidious and enfeebling form of religious unbelief?

1. Can God be living if He has ceased to speak and to act? Can one conceive a God who is indifferent? If He be God in the robust sense in which the Hebrew prophets believed when they made their triumphant comparisons between the living God of Israel, and the idols of the heathen, or in the more intimate sense in which Jesus spoke of His Heavenly Father, then His Spirit is still guiding man as He guided the apostles and prophets, and He is still moving down the paths of present-day history as the ark led the children of Israel. It is thinkable, though less than reasonable, to deny God altogether; it is neither thinkable nor reasonable to affirm a living God up to the year A.D. 100 and then to imagine Him henceforward handless and speechless.

2. When we say that we do not deny that there have been certain periods of unique spiritual receptivity when elect souls came into the secret of God, and became the medium of radiant revelation. There was a century before Christ at Athens when art, literature, philosophy, and politics touched their zenith, and to-day we travel back to see the shapes of beauty and to read the books of that high summer. Never again have we had architecture like that of the Acropolis, or statuary like that of Phidias; no dramatist has risen to be compared with Sophocles, no statesman rivals Pericles. The Jewish people had a genius for religion as the Greeks had for art, and the flower of their race became the ambassadors of God, bringing to their high office qualities which in the case, say, of Isaiah and St. John have never been equalled. Their writings, and above all the words of that Chief Prophet in whom this line culminated, will ever remain an inspiration for religion. Outside that line, however, one must believe that God spoke in the ancient time by such prophets as Plato and Confucius, according to their measure, and that in later days God had spoken by Augustine and Clement, by Luther and Calvin, by à'Kempis and John Bunyan.

Again, one remembers that there was a brief three years when God wrought visibly in human life as He never did before, and never has done since. But it must be added that God wrought by the hands of Moses and of Samuel before Christ came, and that God has been working in the ages since Christ left, and that, always excepting Christ's

[1] J. M. E. Ross, *The Christian Standpoint*, 1 ff.

own life, the things done outside the Bible record have been more wonderful than the things contained therein.

When one desires an illustration of judgment to prove the moral government of God he can find it, not only in the flames of Sodom and Gomorrah, or in the decay of the Jewish State, but in the decadence of Rome, in the humiliation of Spain, in the horrors of the French Revolution. No man may belittle the Hebrew prophets as leaders of men and judges of righteousness, but they are not the only men whom God has called. If Elijah held the pass for his people, Knox bore himself bravely for Scotland; Isaiah was not more to Jerusalem than Luther has been to the German nation, and no one would contend that John the Baptist accomplished more for Judah than John Wesley for England. One may hazard the guess that Xavier has had more souls for his reward than that gracious prophet Hosea. God's hand had not been shortened that it could not save, His ear had not been heavy that it could not hear during all ages.

3. It is open to say that it would have been much easier to find God in the ancient times. But one does not gather from history that people had a keener sense of God in those Bible days. Isaiah's generation believed in the God who brought their fathers out of Egypt and who shepherded the patriarchs; but they did not believe in the God of Isaiah. Contemporaries no more accepted the prophet-ship of Isaiah than Bunyan's fellow-countrymen acknowledged his message. The generation of Jesus believed firmly in God, but He was not the Father from whom Jesus had come. When Jesus claimed to speak for God, they considered Him a blasphemer, and when they heard the voice of God in their synagogues they denied it. If any one wished to know God he must listen to Moses and the prophets. For now, after having been in their own day misunderstood and put to death, the prophets are accepted as the servants of God. God's operations were put back several centuries so that it was piety to hold that God was speaking in the fourth century before Christ, but blasphemy that Jesus represented God as surely as Isaiah.

Are we not also, as much as the Pharisees, hindered by our timidity in recognizing God outside Bible history, and by our want of spiritual discernment in contemporary life. We celebrate a Jewish Providence lavishly, we hesitate to identify an English Providence, and hence spring two evils.

One is the divorce between faith and politics, which was not the habit of the best men of Israel, nor in the great days of English history. But to-day not only does no one refer to God in arguing the affairs of the State, but what is far more important, it is not the custom to think of God.

After the same fashion we not only lose instruction as citizens of the commonwealth, but we also lose comfort in our daily life, because we are enslaved by this form of respectable unbelief. We are sure God spoke to Abraham, we are quite as sure He does not speak to us. As if He were not the same God and we have not as much need of His help! What relief from care, what deliverance from fear, what consolation in sorrow, what light in darkness, would come to our soul if we in this year of our Lord could only muster up enough courage to believe that we are as dear to God as any Hebrew patriarch or prophet, and that there is no work of God recorded in Holy Scripture which He will not abundantly perform for the humblest person who puts his trust in the living God.[1]

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Witness to God in the Gifts of Nature.[2]

'He left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.'—Ac 14^{17}.

These words were said by Paul and Barnabas to the heathen people of Lystra. These missionaries had cured a lame man, and the people had forthwith concluded that they must be gods, and had been preparing to offer them divine honours. Paul and Barnabas, greatly troubled at this wrong impression which their deed of kindness had produced, hastened to preach to these heathen about the one true God to whom alone man's worship is due. And they called them to see a witness, an evidence, of that God in the works of nature, whereby provision is made for man's daily life. These words state, in a very simple way, the argument for God from the gifts of nature to man.

Now the great question about God is never really the question whether God exists, but always the question what kind of God exists. Every one believes in God—some originating and sustaining

[1] J. Watson, *The Inspiration of our Faith*, 203.

[2] H. C. Carter, in *Harvest Thanksgiving Sermons*, 85 ff.

power behind all the universe of things and circumstances. But of what kind is this power?

We are now concerned with that one department of knowledge, the knowledge of the facts of nature, Natural Science, as we call it; and only with a small fraction of that department—our knowledge of the facts of nature which are concerned with the processes by which food is provided for man out of the earth. What witness is borne by those facts—all the facts of the fruit-bearing of the earth by which man's body is supported and his life enriched—to the nature and the quality of that Power above them, of which they are all the outcome and manifestation? What have we a right to infer about God—the Supreme Power of the universe—from what we know by observation and experience of the gifts of nature?

1. The first thing we can infer—the clearest thing of all—is the thing which these Lycaonians of Lystra had not learned—namely, the *unity* of God—that there are not many or several rival or discordant powers operating behind all that we see happening in nature by which food comes for us out of the ground, but that all the processes of growth, all the succession of the seasons, all that working together of the forces of soil and seed and sap and atmosphere and sun and rain—everything that enters in to lead on to harvest—are all subject to one concordant law. We use that one word 'nature' because we are so sure that there is one power and principle in it all. The sun that shines, the rain that falls, the dew that glistens in the morning, the seeds that shoot in the spring, the corn that ripens in the field, the fruit that hangs on the boughs, all over the world—we know that it is the one Nature, whose laws are the same everywhere for ever, which determines what they are. And yet do we never forsake in our hearts this truth of the unity of God to which the workings of nature bear witness? Do we always believe that the one same Supreme Power and Principle is ruling everywhere, always? Have we always only one God whom we believe in and worship? For instance, do we believe in the same God—the same ruling principle and power as requiring our allegiance and obedience—in our everyday life as we do in church? We sometimes hear people say: Those ideals of life that you speak of in church are very fine and beautiful and true, but they will not work in life. When people say that, they are really setting up two gods, one to worship here, another to worship there—out in business or society or at home. They are denying the unity of God.

2. A second thing about God to which the gifts of nature witness, closely connected with this, is His *ubiquity*. He is working everywhere, in everything. The ubiquity of God is testified to us by the gifts of nature. But do we never deny this belief? Do we never think of God as if He could not be found and met with in all things that come to us and happen to us? Do we not banish Him in our thought from a great part of His world?

3. Then a third thing that the gifts of nature bear witness to about God is His *reliability*. We have become thoroughly accustomed to the thought of natural 'law' as obtaining everywhere in the world. All science is built upon it. And it has sometimes seemed to some people as if this uniformity of nature, as we call it, must make us banish the thought of God altogether. That is a great mistake. What it does when we grasp this great basic fact of all science — that nature works uniformly, that there is no accident, that cause and effect are always operating with their perfect chain—is to lead us to understand something more about the faithfulness of God. And this reliable order is a condition, and an altogether beneficent condition, of man's life. It makes labour reasonable, it makes knowledge valuable, it makes calculation and foresight possible. It disciplines the mind and will of man in profitable ways.

Have we learned this lesson about God, that His working is absolutely trustworthy? We live in a world where consequences are inevitable—the consequence of sin, the consequence of righteousness. They cannot be evaded. 'Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.'

4. But another thing that the gifts of nature witness to about God is His *gentleness* and *patience*.

All the productive, constructive forces are silent and gradual. It is the forces of destruction that are loud and sudden. In days like ours, is there any truth that we Christians need so to lay to heart and so earnestly to seek to testify to among our fellows as this? Our world seems to be given over to violence.

We are impatient of all quiet, gradual, and gentle ways of changing things for good. Men see that things need altering. They say, we must force a way to it. And then their violence is answered by violence. The newspapers are full of the same

old, bad story. But the Kingdom of God cometh not with observation. 'The meek—the gentle—shall inherit the earth.' God is gentle and patient. By all His workings in nature for the feeding and the helping of our lives He reminds us of it.

5. The gifts of nature bear witness to this also in God—His *impartiality*. That was one of the things shown us about God, by our looking out on the natural world, to which Jesus called attention. He bade us notice that the bad man's fields receive the rain and sunshine to make his crops grow just as surely as the good man's.

God does not revenge Himself on wrong-doing. He does not pay back evil with evil. Wrong-doing carries in it the seeds of its own undoing. It is a world of perfect, invariable order and consequence. God does not counterbalance injury with other injury. He works always to bless and to heal. And that is why we are to do the same, that we may be God's children. That is why we are to love our enemies, and to do good to those who hurt us. God is kind to the unthankful and the evil. We are to learn His way. There is a better, deeper, surer word about God given to us than any that comes from nature. He has spoken to us in His Son. In Jesus Christ He has laid bare to us His heart. But Jesus Christ, in the full and final revelation of God which He brings us, does not contradict or supplant. He carries forward to its crown and completion that witness to God which nature speaks out: how He is the one God of all light and life, always present in all His creation, working with perfect faithfulness, gentle and patient in His ways, and seeking always to do good even to those who treat Him with ingratitude.

Let us give Him our heart's thankfulness and offer ourselves in consecration to His service. And to the God of Harvest, the God of Nature, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, the faithful God, the patient, loving God, our gracious heavenly Father, be all praise and glory. Amen.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

On paying the Price.

'I will verily buy it for the full price.'—1 Ch 21[24].

The context of the words is unimportant. But they will serve to draw our attention to one of those great laws by which God carries on the government of the world. It is the law of exchange. Its formula is this: Everything has its price; if you want the thing, you must pay the price; if you pay the price, you shall have the thing. That is the rule of Divine Providence. God keeps, stored up in His treasuries, an infinitude of blessings, of every kind of description and of every degree of value; but—except the very commonest, such as rain and sunshine—He does not give them away gratuitously. Every boon, every blessing, is (so to speak) on sale, and if we desire to possess the blessing we must be prepared to pay the price of it. Give, and it shall be given unto you. Give nothing, and you will get nothing. It is a perfectly just and straightforward transaction. God approaches human beings in a business-like way. 'What will you have?' He says. 'Pay for it, and take it!'

1. *Everything has its price.* Everything is worth so much; and in order to acquire the thing, one must pay the amount that it fetches in the market. That principle holds good in every department of human life. As we all know, it governs the commercial world. And the same principle obtains in the intellectual world. Here also everything has its price. For those who are content with a mere smattering of information—just sufficient to enable them to sustain their part in social small talk—the price is comparatively trifling. But for those who aspire to real eminence in scientific or literary pursuits the price is often very high—fatigue, exhaustion, wear and tear of brain, sometimes resulting in permanent damage to health and loss of faculty. Here is Thomas Carlyle, for example, declaring to the students of Edinburgh that he has found out by experience that health is incompatible with literary production. Or here is Keats, in the middle of composing his 'Endymion,' saying to a friend, 'I went day by day at my poem for a month, at the end of which time I found my brain so overwrought that I had neither rhyme nor reason in it.'

Now this same law of exchange, which rules all other departments of life, is operative also in the moral and spiritual sphere. Do we want goodness? Do we wish for Christian character? Do we desire eternal life? Then we had better understand at once that even these things have their price. In one sense, of course, it is literally true that all these things are gifts—free gifts of Divine Grace.

'Tis heaven alone that is given away,
'Tis only God may be had for the asking.

We cannot earn salvation; we cannot merit it: we cannot deserve it. 'Nothing in my hand I bring.' The highest life, eternal life, is, indeed, the gift of God, inasmuch as we cannot attain it without God's help and inspiration. Yet the gift can be ours only on certain conditions. If God bestows the crown of righteousness, we at the same time must achieve it by denying ourselves, by taking up the cross, by wrestling with the 'tough resistance of nature and habit,' by disciplining our mind, our will, our feelings, our affections, by sacrificing, if need be, our fortune, our health, our comfort, our convenience, for righteousness' sake. That is the price we have to pay for goodness and eternal life.

If I find Him, if I follow,
What His guerdon here?
Many a sorrow, many a labour,
Many a tear.

Thus the very gifts of Grace—the glory of goodness, the beauty of holiness, the happiness of sainthood—have to be bought and paid for; and there is deep truth in the prophetic paradox that even 'he that hath no money' must still 'buy,' yea, 'buy wine and milk without money and without price.'

2. The next point is that *we can generally get the thing if we are willing to pay the price.* Of course it is not always so. There are particular and specific goods which are for most of us unpurchasable. But the general goods are within the reach of the endeavour of ordinary humanity—riches or power or knowledge or usefulness or spirituality. As an ordinary rule any one who is prepared to pay the price of them can have them.

Disraeli, in one of his novels, makes a character exclaim: 'I have brought myself by long meditation to the conviction that a human being with a settled purpose must accomplish it, and that nothing can resist a will that will stake even existence for its fulfilment.'

It is not luck that brings success. It is paying the price. As Sir Frederick Treves once said to the students at Aberdeen University: 'The man who is content to wait for a stroke of good fortune will probably wait until he has a stroke of paralysis.'

Dr. Ambrose Shepherd in a sermon on luck told the following incident. A man spoke to him of one of the leading commercial men in Glasgow. 'What is there in him or about him to explain his success?' he asked, and he answered his own question with the round assertion that 'it was all luck.' Dr. Shepherd then adds: 'It happens that I have some reliable information about the man under discussion, and I want you to have it. Thirty years ago he was working from ten to twelve hours in the day as just an ordinary workman. At the close of each day's toil he had his programme of studies, which, in its range and character of the subjects attacked, would not have disgraced a good student at any university. Eventually his attention to business and his marked attainments won for him the recognition of his employers, which meant in after years a place which was ultimately a leading place, as one of them. Yet this was the man who was said to have won his success by a lucky turn of the wheel.'[1]

3. In order to get the thing desired *we must pay, not merely a price, but the full price without abatement.* Take money, for example. Do you think it impossible to become rich? It is nothing of the sort, if a man be resolved to pay the price. But the price may be a stiff one. It may mean sacrifice of conscience, sacrifice of principle; it may mean sacrifice of the pleasure of spending, not to mention that of giving; it may mean sacrifice of human interests, and the transformation of the man into a mere 'money-making animal.' But if a man pay that price, if his sole object be to make money and more money and as much money as possible, and if, regardless of everything else, he keep that aim steadily before him for years and years and years—why, there is very little doubt that, by the time he comes to die, he will be worth a considerable amount.

Or take again the Christian character. People have said that Christlikeness is an unrealizable ideal. 'The Christlike life,' they say, 'is very beautiful as an ideal, but it is not practical policy. Men and women are not made like that. And there is nothing so stubborn and unmanageable as human nature. Human nature is human nature, and you cannot change it.' But is it really so? Do not believe it for a moment. The Christlike life, the Christlike character, is not an impossibility. It is simply a question of paying the price. Only, just as the good to be gained is the greatest of all goods, so the price to be paid is the heaviest of all prices. Listen! 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and

[1] *Men in the Making*, 73.

brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple. . . . So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.' Do you see? The price of Christ-like character is undoubtedly a tremendous price, and we can hardly be astonished that there are many who refuse the bargain. But let them honestly confess that the thing costs more than they are prepared to spend.

4. *Two things cannot be bought for one price.*—Yet are we not perpetually hoping and trying to get two things for one price? What else can be the meaning of our indignation and astonishment when we see good men unsuccessful in this world? We say that goodness ought to prosper. But why should goodness be rewarded with material prosperity? The good man seeks spiritual things and he has his spiritual compensations. He gets exactly what he paid for—purity, piety, honesty, nobility of feeling, excellence of life. But there is no reason why he should get also what he did not pay for. And he did not pay for worldly prosperity. He did not cultivate the special qualities that are needed for worldly prosperity. William Blake once remarked of Lawrence and other prosperous artists: 'They pity me, but 'tis they who are the just objects of pity. I possess my visions and peace. They have bartered their birthright for a mess of pottage.' And again he said, 'Were I to love money, I should lose all power of thought, and my business is not to gather gold, but to make glorious shapes expressing godlike sentiments.'

This, then, is the Divine law of exchange which governs God's dealings with mankind. Every blessing has its price; we can have any blessing we please, if we pay the price, and the full price; but we will not get any blessing beyond that which we have paid for.

May God, in His mercy, grant us grace to choose the things of real worth, and resolution to pay the price of them! A divine life is offered to each of us. May each of us have grit to say—'That life shall be mine, no matter what it costs. I will buy it at a price. "I will verily buy it for the full price."'[1]

[1] F. Homes Dudden, *The Dead and the Living*, 39 ff.

Richard Baxter's Paraphrase of the Psalms.

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Baxter is mentioned in Prothero's book—*The Psalms in Human Life*, chap. ii.—but the author seems not to have consulted the 'Paraphrase' for himself, else he might have cited him as a pre-eminent example of what he designed to illustrate the influence of the Psalter on devout souls, especially in times of crisis and suffering. When Baxter lay in prison for eighteen months, in consequence of Judge Jeffreys' barbarous sentence (May 1685), he found, like Job, that his nights were his severest trial. In the daytime distraction came by the visits of friends, or by the sedative of writing, or by books. But night, with its darkness and loneliness unrelieved by sleep because of constant pain, taxed all his inward resources. If these had failed him, the slow hours between dark and dawn would have worn out his life. But they did not fail him. They gave him songs instead of sighs; and not the least effective was his repetition of the Psalms:

> 'I found the Psalms so fitted to my use as if they had been purposely made for me. When I used not to sleep one minute in many nights, through pain and disturbances, these Psalms were my recreation.'

This use of the Psalms went back at least to the years of his married life: for he tells us that the last thing he and his wife did together at night was to sing a psalm. They were married in 1662, and Mrs. Baxter died in 1681, so that for nineteen years, if the practice was regular from the first, the music of the Psalter's words, thoughts, and tunes had been the 'Joy of his heart.' And they were so to the end. According to Matthew Sylvester, his editor and friend,—at whose house in Charterhouse