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records, or else disbelieve the Bible altogether. *And the clergy almost universally acquiesce in this attitude of mind*, because—as they truly say—the subject is a difficult one, and it is easier to let it alone. But this policy of reticence is having a most disastrous effect. It is indeed very largely responsible for the “alienation” from religion of which we hear, and see, so much.’

My correspondent puts his finger upon a real danger. The ‘masses of the population’ do not read. The short sermons which are addressed to them cannot deal with literary questions. The children are taught on the lines of an ancient and now obsolete system of thought. The young men and the young women repudiate what they wrongly suppose to be the only Christian view of the Bible. They have never heard of the ‘new learning’ by means of which their difficulties might have been explained, and their objections at least met, if not answered, in a scientific manner.

I am always grateful for the work that month by month is being quietly accomplished by the instrumentality of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES. Much, however, remains to be done. The learning of the University has to be interpreted to the occupants of the classroom and the schoolroom. Those who have to teach must themselves have learned. The

people generally are not yet in touch with the progress of Old Testament studies. It is no good for superior persons to say, ‘We have got long past that problem: that was the problem of thirty years ago.’ They do not realize how long it takes to effect a revolution in thought: how small is the proportion of the population that reads, and how much smaller is the proportion that thinks. I do not think I am guilty of any exaggeration when I say that the great mass of our Christian fellow-countrymen are still wholly unacquainted with the principles which some of us were teaching in the Universities thirty years ago, and which are now practically universally welcomed in the *learned* world. The Bible is the people’s book. The people will love it better and revere it more intelligently when they become acquainted with the more modern method of explaining its difficulties and of interpreting its spiritual message. I doubt not the present generation will loyally cope with the task of teaching the teachers. We of the older generation are passing away. Our successors have profited by our mistakes; they will make up for our deficiencies; they will popularize that which is still only the privilege of the comparatively few. But there can be no going back to the traditional position of ‘Thirty Years Ago.’

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## In the Study.

### Virginibus Puerisque.

#### Birthdays of Good Men and Women.

‘A good soldier of Jesus Christ.’—2 Ti 2<sup>d</sup>.

ONE October day long ago—it was in the year 1849—there was born in a manse in Aberdeenshire a little baby boy. His father was a Free Church Minister, and owned the honoured Highland name of Mackay. The little boy was christened Alexander.

The father was a learned man who loved teaching. Nothing delighted him more than instructing his little son. At the age of three Alexander could read the New Testament, and at seven he was reading books like Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Then the two often walked out together, and the country people used to wonder why they stopped

occasionally as if to look at something on the road. The little fellow was getting a lesson in geography from a map drawn on the road with his father’s stick, or he was having a proposition of Euclid demonstrated to him. With such a father it is no wonder he grew up to be a man who did everything thoroughly.

Alexander’s map-drawing was exceptionally good. Two famous geologists who visited the manse were greatly struck with the accuracy of his work, and one of them sent him a copy of a book called *Small Beginnings, or the Way to Get On*. He was very proud of it, and read it with enjoyment. Later he began to take an interest in machinery. He loved to see it in motion. He would walk four miles to the nearest railway station, and four miles back, on the chance of getting a look at the engine as the train stopped

for a minute or two on its way north. When he was sent to be a pupil at the Aberdeen Grammar School, he frequented the shipbuilding yards on every possible occasion; he was also a frequent visitor at the studio of a photographer he knew; so you see he had the spirit of the mechanic in him as well as that of the student.

Like many another Aberdonian he was undemonstrative; if he loved any one very much he would not readily say so. A person watching him at his work might even conclude that his was one of those stolid natures that have no room for affection. Even on the day of his mother's funeral, when his heart felt like to break, and a dear friend of the family delivered his mother's Bible to him with her dying message to 'Search the Scriptures,' he said little. But years after he wrote to this friend that she had more to do with his being a missionary than she knew of. That was his way of saying that on that saddest of days he made the great resolve of his life.

He remained the mechanic and student, but in both spheres the religion of Jesus Christ dominated his thoughts. To him it was the greatest thing in the world. He was ready to give his life for it. What else could he be, then, but a mechanic-missionary? He offered himself as such, was accepted by the Church Missionary Society, and sent out to Uganda in Africa. Uganda is a country lying north of the wonderful African lake called Victoria Nyanza. Look for it in your map of Africa.

And what a missionary he became! Religion was not a mere thought in his mind. It was like a law in his heart—a law that he could not disobey, because he loved the Heavenly Father who put it there. It influenced everything he did and said. So long as he was speaking of worldly matters to the heathen King of Uganda he was careful not to give offence, but when it was a case of discussing the relationship between God and man, Alexander Mackay spoke straight out. You see, he felt sure about what was right in the eye of God. 'It is not mine, but God's command,' he used to say. He was so full of love to Jesus Christ that in spreading His gospel he felt God Himself was at his back. Away in that far-off land, while he taught the African boys to be blacksmiths, joiners, boat-builders, and farmers, he led them to think of higher things. Stanley, the great African traveller, visited the mission station. Alexander was then a

middle-aged man. Let me tell you some of the things Stanley said afterwards about the little man whom he found all alone in a desert part of Africa. Mackay had seen his friends murdered, his converts clubbed, and yet he could look out on the world with the clear blue eyes of a boy.

'If ever man had reason to be doleful and lonely and sad,' said Stanley, 'Mackay had when, after murdering his bishop, and burning his pupils, and strangling his converts, and clubbing to death his dark friends, Mwanga turned his eye of death on him, and yet the little man met it with calm blue eyes that never winked. To see one man of this kind working day after day for twelve years bravely and without a syllable of complaint or moan amid the wilderness, and to hear him lead his little flock to show forth God's loving-kindness in the morning and his faithfulness every night, is worth going a long journey for the moral courage and contentment that one derives from it.' His pupils told Stanley how much Alexander Mackay had done for them. He saw for himself how they read their Gospels, and he heard one of them say, 'There are about 2500 of us belonging to Mackay's Mission.' And there is nothing more beautiful in the whole story than the picture given of the missionary by one of Stanley's party in a letter written to his father after Alexander's death. Let me read part of it to you. 'His kindness, his goodness, his cleverness, his gentle sincerity and kindly cheerful ways endeared him to us all. I shall never forget the morning we left Usambero. He walked part of the way with us, and wished us good-bye; and one's whole heart went out to him when he took my hand and wished me God-speed. That lonely figure standing on the brow of the hill, waving farewell to us, will ever remain vividly in my mind.'

And so we leave him, for he died in that land he loved so well. But he died for a great cause. Alexander Mackay's courage was the courage of the soldier. He was a good soldier of Jesus Christ. And many boys and girls capable of his zeal in the great cause pass through our Sunday Schools every year.

Once a girl heard a missionary address one Sunday afternoon years ago. There and then she made up her mind to go to be a missionary when she grew up. And she went.

## Curiosity-Boxes.

'What shall this man do?'—Jn 21<sup>21</sup>.

If anybody were to ask me what I thought the most striking thing in the character of boys and girls, do you know what I should reply? Well, I think I should answer 'Curiosity.' Boys and girls are always wanting to know things, they are always asking questions. Of course grown-up people want to know things too, but if you counted the number of questions a grown-up person asked in a day and the number a small boy or girl asked, and compared the two lists, I think you would find that the small boy or girl had asked at least ten questions to every one asked by the grown-up. No wonder that children are often called 'curiosity-boxes.'

Why is it that boys and girls are so curious? Well, I think God made them like that so that they might learn things. Have you ever looked into the eyes of a baby? They are just one big question. He seems to be wondering about everything. And as soon as he begins to be able to put words together he asks questions. It is just his way of learning all about the big world into which God has sent him.

Now, when some of us older people were about as big as you are, our fathers and mothers used to believe that children should be seen and not heard. I don't know that there wasn't a certain amount of wisdom in that, but the result was that a great many questions we wanted to ask were never answered, and we had to wait and wonder till we could find out the answer for ourselves. I don't think your fathers and mothers are often like that. I fancy they are quite ready to let you ask questions, and that they generally reply to them when they can. But I want you to remember that there are some questions in regard to which you will have to wait for an answer till you are older. Sometimes father and mother refuse to answer our questions, and we have got to take them on trust and believe that they know best.

Now some people talk about curiosity as if it were a wrong thing, but that is a mistake. Most of the big inventions and discoveries are the result of curiosity. Men have wanted to know and prove things, and they have searched and experimented until they were successful. If people had not wanted to find out more than they knew already we might still be savages living in dens and caves. So, you see, curiosity is not a bad thing in

itself. But it may be used in bad or foolish ways. Shall I tell you some of these ways?

1. Well, first, there is the curiosity that wastes itself in trifles that are of no possible account or use. Did you ever hear the story of the man who was so inquisitive that he could never rest till he knew the why and the wherefore of everything? One dark night he was walking home from an evening party and he saw a lamp-post with a sign on the crossbar. It was too high up for him to read in the dark, so he 'shinned' up the lamp-post, evening dress and all. What do you think was written on the sign? 'Wet paint!'

Now, sometimes boys and girls ask questions just for the sake of asking, and when I hear them I always think of that man who scaled the lamp-post. Only it is generally others who suffer by their curiosity and not themselves. A witty man once said of a certain inquisitive friend, 'Talk to him of Jacob's ladder, and he will ask the number of the steps.' And there is often just about as much sense as that in the questions some little people ask.

2. That kind of curiosity is rather silly, but, after all, it does not do very much harm to any one except that it rather annoys those of whom the questions are asked. But there is another kind of curiosity, which is really harmful. It is undue curiosity about the affairs of other people.

That was the kind of curiosity Peter showed in our text. Jesus had been telling him that one day he should die for his Master's sake, but Peter was not content to know about his own future, he wanted to know, too, what was going to happen to his friend John. And Jesus rebuked him. 'What is that to thee?' He asked, 'follow thou me.' 'I am well able to look after John,' He seemed to say; 'trust his future to Me, and don't waste your time or your energy wondering what will happen to him. Your real concern is to follow Me.'

Now some people are never happy unless they know all about their friends and neighbours. They are always poking their noses into their affairs and trying to find out all their secrets. This is a very mean kind of curiosity; there is something very sneaky about it. Don't have anything to do with it. Never search other people's drawers or read their letters; never listen to conversations you are not intended to overhear or try to find out the weak spots in your neighbour's character. Don't be a sneak. Be above that sort of thing.

3. But there is a still more dangerous kind of curiosity—the curiosity concerning evil. It was that curiosity that led Eve astray, and it is the same curiosity that has led men and women, and boys and girls, astray all through the long centuries.

There is a sort of risk and excitement about this curiosity that attracts. People don't want to be bad, but they want to know just a little about badness by experience. They think they are quite able to take care of themselves, and they just want to see how far they can go and come back safely.

Well, I want you to remember two things. First, a great many never come back. Their first taste of evil acts like poison. It is like a match set to a haystack. Soon the whole haystack is in a blaze.

Livingstone tells us about a clever dragon-fly in Africa which catches its prey by appealing to their curiosity. When it is in the grub stage it feeds upon ants and it catches them by putting its head into the ground and waving its tail in the air. The ants come near to examine this strange sight and are immediately seized by the grippers with which the tail is furnished. In the same way a great many people have been ruined just by going to see what evil is like.

And second, those who do return are never quite the same again. You can't touch pitch without having your hands soiled. You can't associate with evil without being a little less pure. If you do come through safely it will nevertheless leave its mark on your mind and your heart and your will, and your most bitter regret all your days may be that you ever had anything to do with it.

God gave us that gift of curiosity, boys and girls, so that we might learn things wise and good and true. Be curious about things that are worthy of your curiosity. Be curious about the highest things. Be curious above all to know more of God and His love, and He will reveal Himself to you and teach you all that it is good for you to know.

#### The Pearl.

'Goodly pearls.'—Mt 13<sup>45</sup>.

The stone usually given to October is the opal, but unfortunately the opal is not mentioned in the Bible, so we shall have to find a gem to take its place. What do you say to the precious stone of the sea—the pearl?

Pearls have always been treasured by man, and a pearl is the very first jewel mentioned in the oldest writings we know. A Chinese dictionary which is over 3000 years old has a word which means 'pearl.' When you come to think of it this is quite natural, for a pearl is a ready-made gem. It doesn't require the cutting that other gems do before they look brilliant. It is lovely without any help of man. In olden days they had not the instruments we have for cutting and polishing precious stones, so they prized the pearl as the queen of gems, and put it at the top of the list.

History tells us that it was because of the pearls which abounded in its rivers that the Romans came to Britain. The Greek name for the pearl was *margarita*. From that we take the name Margaret. So you see there are quite a number of pearls in church to-day.

Long ago people thought that pearls were drops of dew made solid. They said that these drops of dew fell from heaven, but how the dewdrops got into the oyster shell they could not quite explain.

Nowadays we know better. We know that when an oyster or mussel shell is open a little grain of sand floats in. The oyster feels it horribly gritty and uncomfortable, just as we do if we get a particle of something in our eye. And it does what we do in the same circumstances—it sheds a tear. But the oyster's tears are not like ours,—a mixture of salt and water—they are liquid carbonate of lime, and this carbonate of lime hardens into a layer of what is known as *nacre* or *mother-of-pearl*, the same material as that with which the oyster has already lined its shell. The creature is not content with one covering on the top of the grit. It deposits covering after covering till there is a glistening knob fastened to the shell, and you have what is known as a blister pearl.

The perfectly round pearls are made in a slightly different way. It is not a grain of sand but a tiny worm that is the cause of them. This impertinent little worm is floating around in the water looking out for a comfortable home, and when it spies an open shell, in it pops, and immediately begins to bore its way into the poor oyster's body. The oyster's only way to protect itself is to enclose it with pearl, so it sets to work, and by and by you have a perfect round, the most valuable sort of pearl.

The Chinese have taken advantage of this habit of the oyster. They make little flat tin images of

Buddha, open a shell and thrust one in. After a time they open the shell again, and the little tin image is now a shining pearly idol.

The finest pearls are found off the north-west coast of Ceylon, but some lovely specimens come from our own Scotch rivers. The last are mussel pearls, and you can recognize them easily for they have a pinkish-blueish hue very much like the colour of a soft evening sky. You see pearls are not all creamy. There is even a black pearl, but it is very rare. Pearls are of all sizes, from those like a tiny pin-head, known as 'seed' pearls, to the great pearl in the South Kensington Museum in London which measures two inches in length and four and a half round. But it is not size only that counts. Shape and sheen count too. And the sheeniest pearl is the loveliest. That is how the most beautiful pearl in the world is said to be one in the Moscow Museum. It is so exquisitely sheeny that its rival has not been found.

One particularly lovely pearl lies, they say, buried beneath the waters of the canal at Venice; and its story makes us think of Christ's parable of the merchantman and the pearl of great price. This pearl was found in the sixteenth century by a certain Venetian Jew who was a merchant of pearls. He went to the East to look for them, and, after wandering many years and undergoing many dangers, he returned to Venice with a number of fine gems. He sold them all except one pearl of immense size and extraordinary beauty on which he set so high a value that nobody was willing to buy it. Finally he invited all the gem dealers in Venice to meet him on the Rialto. There he offered them for the last time his glorious jewel. The dealers, thinking no doubt that he would lower the price, once more refused to buy. What was their horror and amazement when the Jew turned round and threw the pearl into the canal!—preferring to lose it rather than cheapen it.

The pearl's message seems to me to be as beautiful as itself. I think it says to us, 'Be a pearl-maker.' That is just another way of saying, 'Be a peacemaker.' A peacemaker goes about trying to smooth away all the roughness and the disagreeableness that he meets. You don't need to wait for a quarrel to be a peacemaker. You can be a peacemaker or pearl-maker in so many different ways.

1. *Be a pearl-maker to yourself.*—There are lots

of disagreeable tasks and duties that come to us day by day. The oftener we meet them the less we like them. Well, it is no use kicking against them, you have got to do them, and the easiest way is to throw over them a pearly covering of imagination. Say to yourself, 'I'm going to pretend this is the very nicest job in the world.' You will be astonished to find how bearable the hateful duty is in its pearl dress. Try the same plan with your worries. It is as good for them as it is for the disagreeable duties.

2. *Then be a pearl-maker for others.*—Smooth away their difficulties. Cover them with a coating of your pearl solution—that is to say, do what you can to help them out of their troubles.

Be a pearl-maker when you come across a quarrel. Smooth industriously at that quarrel till you have turned it into a pearl of peace and love.

Be a pearl-maker when you hear a nasty story or an unkind word about another boy or girl. Bury that story deep as the oyster buries the worm, under layer after layer. Never let it see the light again. Be like the little girl I read of the other day. As her mother was tucking her into bed at night the comfy way mothers do, the little maid said shyly, 'Mummy, I was a peacemaker to-day.' 'Were you, dear?' said mother. 'Did you settle somebody's quarrel?' 'Oh no!' said the little girl. 'I wasn't that kind of peacemaker, I just knew something and didn't tell.'

Boys and girls, there is nothing finer. Start making pearls this very day.

## The Christian Year.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

### A New Light.

'Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is nigh unto Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey off. And when they were come in, they went up into the upper chamber, where they were abiding; both Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James.'—Acts 1<sup>12, 13</sup>.

It is not often that farewells are victories; they are more frequently tragedies. But, instead of being a tragedy, the farewell of our Lord was the crowning hour of all He had lived for—the coronation of His work. And as the Cross was nigh unto the city, so the scene of His triumph was within a Sabbath day's journey of Jerusalem,

a distance of not more than three-quarters of a mile.

1. In witnessing the Master's departure, the true meaning of the Incarnation flashed into the disciples' souls. In a moment it all grew real, and true, and beautiful; the men were amazed, and ashamed at not having grasped the idea sooner. Lowly and reverently they bent down and worshipped. No wonder.

The experience sent them home with a new joy in their hearts; and that joy inspired them with a new resolve. They felt they must away back to the city, and communicate the great, glad tidings to the faithful friends awaiting their return. The fact that they determined to go back at once to Jerusalem was proof of their full appreciation of the hopefulness of the situation. For there was undoubtedly great risk in doing so. Had they been disappointed and disheartened with the sudden translation of their Lord to heaven, they might have agreed to disband, and quietly and secretly find their way back to Galilee, as men mindful mostly of their own safety, and half ashamed of the forlorn hope that had ended only in miserable failure and disappointment and desertion. They had still left for themselves a pathway for retreat and return to their old manner of life among the nets and fishing-boats.

But they had come to the parting of the ways. And right nobly and fearlessly they made their choice. Like heroes, they nailed their colours to the mast. They must needs give implicit obedience to the marching orders of their great Commander. Thus they took the step that compelled them to break for ever with their past. The time was when they arose, one after another, and left all and followed Him. They were now to confirm and enhance that great renunciation.

2. When the disciples reached the city, they naturally and instinctively sought the Upper Room. Epiphanius says that when Hadrian came to Jerusalem, he found the Temple desolate and but a few houses standing. This 'little church of God,' however, remained; and Nicephorus says that the Empress Helena enclosed it in her larger church. It was probably the room in which the Supper had been celebrated, and was to be associated with the power of the risen as it had been, with the suffering of the humiliated Christ. This upper chamber at Jerusalem, a city in the last days of its troubled existence, contained the whole

number of those who acknowledged Christ as their Master. Measured by any worldly standard, anything feebler or more absolutely insignificant than the company gathered there cannot be imagined. But the grain of mustard seed was to become a tree in which the birds of the air should make their nests; the little leaven was to leaven the whole lump; the stone was to become a great mountain which should fill the whole earth. And so it has come to pass that the Upper Chamber at Jerusalem has grown into the Church Catholic, the mother of all the saints that are, or have been, or are to be hereafter.

Were all the kings and emperors, all the men of science and learning, all the poets and artists in the world, to be gathered together in congress, they would never form an assembly so important, so pregnant with reference to the future, and so rich in promise for the progress of the world, as that assembled there.

'The Apostolic band was of every variety of human temperament. Each individual disciple seems to have been the embodiment of some distinctive trait of human character: an incidental proof of our Lord's ability to influence all sorts and conditions of men. St. John was an affectionate man, St. James a practical, St. Peter an impulsive, St. Thomas a critical, St. Matthew a man of business, and St. Simon a political enthusiast. Now, as each of these men came under the influence of our Lord his idiosyncrasies and natural capacities, far from being destroyed or annulled, were guided and directed into wider and deeper channels of usefulness.'

'So to-day, when any man becomes a disciple, Christ does not annihilate his natural capacities, but enlists them in the cause of His Kingdom. The Kingdom of Christ requires every diversity of temperament and talent to contribute to its consolidation and extension. Men of emotion, reflection, action, intellect, all are needed, but not least men of enthusiasm.'<sup>1</sup>

3. The gathering in the Upper Room represented no organization. It was simply a company of men possessed by enthusiasm and conviction. We sadly need enthusiasm in religious things to-day. It is the spirit of a living Church, the crowning feature of Christian character, the paramount requisite for the extension of Christ's Kingdom.

When these sincere and devout men and women came to put the Risen Lord in His rightful place in heaven, then everything else came to fit in and balance itself in true proportion. The Christ on the throne gave a new grandeur to the Christ on the cross. The Divine glory of the Man Christ Jesus dominated their entire conception of His character and mission and work, and so they did

<sup>1</sup> M. G. Archibald, *Sundays at the Royal Military College*, 299, 301.

Him homage, and humbly worshipped Him then and there.

'We talked about our work, and our souls kindled. The weather was very fine. When the shadows of evening were gathering a deep and holy stillness rested on all around us. There was not a human being save our two selves to be seen or heard. We stood, the deeply shadowed hills stretched away on either hand, and then your dear father said, "I feel that I must fall down and worship." It was one of those moments when God was very near to both of us.'<sup>1</sup>

'The Mission was wonderfully blessed of God,' wrote Father Stanton on one occasion to his sister. 'All around about the place they thought it would never succeed, and nobody would ever come to church so many times every day. It is because people never realized that all *love*, all *enthusiasm*, all *devotion*, after all must be centred in GOD and GOD alone, and the preaching of JESUS, however simply, if in earnest, is like a loadstone which draws out souls in what is really a miraculous way.'<sup>2</sup>

#### EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

##### A New Spiritual Force.

'These all with one accord continued stedfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.'—Acts 1<sup>4</sup>.

1. If we can withdraw the curtain, and get a real glimpse into the transactions of those ten wonderful days, we may discover and measure the mighty secret spiritual force that has ruled the world ever since; and learn how it is that frail men like ourselves have been privileged to wield it. For do we not find that they had in hand the work carried on in later days by the monks of Bangor? They had already begun the battle, and were fighting on their knees.

One feels as if it were little short of sacrilege to intrude upon these devoutly exercised worshippers. And yet it forms such an epoch in their religious life, and such a memorable and well-defined landmark in their spiritual history, that great life-lessons for the Church in all times are taught and learnt in the thrilling story of that upper room.

When Ethelred, the Saxon king of Northumberland, invaded Wales, and was about to give battle to the Britons, he observed near the enemy a host of unarmed men. He inquired who they were and what they were doing. He was told they were the monks of Bangor praying for the success of their countrymen. 'Then,' said the heathen prince, 'they have begun the *fight* against us: attack them *first!*'<sup>3</sup>

2. Prayer is action; as action may be itself a prayer. And there are times of waiting for all, when prayer is the only possible action. The transactions between the spirit and God are the most real of all, and are ever followed by significant results. It was social prayer. True prayer requires both solitude at times and at times society. We need the help of one another in the pursuit of truth. Plato spoke of the 'joint striving of souls' in philosophy. Common prayer is the joint striving of souls to lay hold upon the strength of God. 'I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.' It was persevering, continuous prayer, as all exertion of the spirit must be to attain worthy ends. Thus was the mind of the Church calmed, and its intelligence cleared for insight into the business of the kingdom. All great religious movements have commenced in prayer. Little the actors have foreseen of the future.

The confidence of George Fox in the real presence of God was the root of his power in the ministry. Penn tells us that the abruptness and brokenness of his sentences, the uncouthness of some of his expressions, which were 'unfashionable to nice ears,' showed beyond all contradiction that God sent him. But the truest mark of his nearness to God, Penn rightly discerned in the character of his prayers. Fox moved England by prayer.

3. To the company and unanimity of the apostles were added 'the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brethren.'

A remarkable painting represents Mary, shaken by grief, supported by the beloved disciple, turning away from the cross. In her left hand she holds the crown of thorns. The thought of the painter appears to be that she will retain that coronet of twisted spines as a memorial of the great atonement. But when, after the cross and after the resurrection, we find her in the upper room, she is about to receive a more enduring token of the mighty sacrifice. She awaits the gift of the Spirit, the quivering crown of flame. Henceforward the unbroken course of her life shall be a holy recollection of her Son and Lord, her every deed a due observance of His will, her every thought a radiant remembrance of the Nazarene.

The Mary of myth is a queen, a mediatrix, an object of worship, a hearer of prayer. The Mary of fact is a poor woman, pure and simple, often mistaken, often reproved, though always humble and resigned. She is seen not queening it proudly over others—not presuming anything because of her relation to the Lord Jesus—rather the great divine lessons well learnt, we see Mary, the Mother of Jesus,

<sup>1</sup> *Love and Life: The Story of J. Denholm Brash*, 32.

<sup>2</sup> G. W. E. Russell, *Arthur Stanton: A Memoir*, 80.

<sup>3</sup> J. Morgan, *The Ministry of the Holy Ghost*.



with the brothers and with the women, with all the lowly company of Christ's, '*continuing steadfastly in prayer*'; bowing her great soul humbly before the Throne of God. As the curtain of history rose so it falls on Mary praying. The life of the Mother of Jesus was rounded with prayer. To the last she was the bondmaid of the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

4. It was this continuing in prayer on the part of the apostles, and on the part of the holy women, that led, ten days afterwards, to Pentecost and to the birth of the Church of Christ; and ever is it true that the continuing steadfast in prayer leads to fresh pentecostal gifts, and leads to fresh outpouring of the Spirit, that men and women may do the work to which the Master has called them. Let us continue in that spirit, and the result must be fresh gifts of Pentecost and fresh workers to win the world for Christ.

#### NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

##### Peter as a Leader.

'Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples.'—Acts 1<sup>10</sup>.

1. The gathering in the Upper Room represented at first no organization. But society without leadership sinks into confusion, and leadership resolves itself into a question of personal qualifications. Men may arise who claim commanding positions who are unable to discharge the duties which their ambition has coveted. In such instances there would seem to be a miscarriage of the natural law and order of things; yet it is only temporary; sooner or later unqualified men have to resign positions which they ought never to have assumed. In a great leader many elements of qualification are combined. Other men may excel him in detached points, but, taken as a whole, he rules not perhaps by one dominant faculty, but by a noble proportion of natural and acquired gifts. The position of a leader is not so easy as it may appear to be to unreflecting observers. Men see the elevation, not the strain and responsibility which that elevation involves. The only sound rule for promotion to influential positions in the Church is, that wisdom, wheresoever found, in the rich or the poor, the old or the young, should be recognized and honoured. These reflexions upon leadership are the more needful and pertinent to the occasion, because some have sought to wrest the action of Peter into a justification of an unauthorized primacy. Peter's action is itself the

<sup>1</sup> J. M. Gibbon.

best answer to such interpretation. Peter did not take the case into his own hands; nor did he claim superiority of judgment, much less infallibility; there is nothing to show that he exalted himself at the expense of the assembled Church. In a simple business-like manner he stated the case which the Church had to consider, and then called upon the whole assembly to come to a conclusion.

It is possible some more phlegmatic disciple in the infant Church may have whispered to his companion, 'How hasty our brother Peter always is!' It would not indeed have been surprising if it had seemed so: Christ's farewell words to His disciples say nothing of any duty which belonged to them between His ascension and the day of Pentecost but this, 'Depart not from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father.' It was a call not to activity, but to stillness and expectancy. But Peter at once organizes a council.<sup>2</sup>

2. It was Peter's very impulsiveness, chastened by prayer, solemnized by his own sad personal experience, deepened by the bitter sorrow consequent on his terrible fall, that urged him to take the first conscious step as the leader of the newly constituted society. How very similar the Peter of the Acts is to the Peter of St. Matthew; what an undesigned evidence of the truth of these records we trace in the picture of St. Peter presented by either narrative! Just as St. Peter was in the Gospels the first to confess at Cæsarea, the first to strike in the garden, the first to fail in the high priest's palace, so was he the first 'to stand up in these days in the midst of the brethren,' and propose the first corporate movement on the Church's part.

For conversion does not change a man's mental characteristics any more than it changes the colour of his skin. 'I am very happy,' said a young theological student in a class-meeting. The wise old man who conducted the class said, 'Yes, you were born happy. You would be happy at a funeral; but it is no proof you are good.' A man's temperament is not changed by grace. It remains the same temperament. Grace works through the stuff out of which the man is made. It does not alter it out of all shape. The temperament is the clay which the potter moulds and shapes to his own purpose; and Peter's blundering, impulsive temperament was not to be crushed, it was to be shaped. God takes men and women as they are. He has created them to glorify Him, and it is out of the stuff He has created that He brings His glory.

<sup>2</sup> H. C. Potter, *Sermons of the City*, 250.

It was said of Dr. Bushnell that the more of a Christian he became, the more individual he was. Everything that was characteristic of him flourished in the sunshine of his faith. If Christ was his, everything was his, and, most of all, his living self. His faith also increased his energy. It stimulated his imagination. It gave it form and power. Before his new life of faith, the poet in him was scarcely known to himself. But after his eye was opened to those inspiring realities that engird and penetrate this world of sense, he found himself possessed of a poet's imagery and a poet's fervor. His literary resources were enlarged a hundred-fold by the elevating power of his faith. His faith also increased his joy in nature. It softened his heart towards man. It kindled and sustained his public spirit. It justified his ardent hopefulness in human progress by his faith in the resources that are provided for man in Christ. It stimulated his inventive activity, as it warranted the hopefulness in which his sanguine nature rejoiced. It increased his sympathy with men, and therefore made him more brilliant in conversation and more genial in society.<sup>1</sup>

3. Peter was winning his soul through restraint. He was broken loose and running downhill apace, denying and forswearing his Master; Christ put a restraint upon his spirit by a look. It is so frequently with the saints of God, though in lesser evils. Like as a hawk sitting on a man's hand, eating her food in quietness, is suddenly, by the original wildness of her nature, carried out to an attempt of flying away with all speed, but is checked by the string at her heels, upon which she returns to her meat again, so we have an innate wildness in us, provoking and stirring us up to run from God. Were we not recovered by some clog fastened on us for our restraint, we should often run into the most desperate paths. And this restraint is from the indwelling Spirit. Peter was learning to face things deliberately; on the present occasion he based his arguments on justice. It was not in his nature either to forget his early association with Judas or his own grievous shortcomings when he quoted from the Book of Psalms, the mystical application of which to our Lord and His sufferings he recognizes, selecting passages from the sixty-ninth and the one hundred and ninth Psalms as depicting the sin and the fate of Judas Iscariot, and then sets forth the necessity of filling up the vacancy in the apostolic office.

Doubtless he had many memories of Judas. He could recall the time when the other apostles looked to him with reverence, and were strongly influenced by what he said. He could remember too how the Master chose out Judas Iscariot for a position of responsibility amongst His followers, and the terrible tragedy that followed. Peter had many

things with which to reproach himself; to the end of his life he would remember with contrition that threefold denial and threefold absolution. He stood in the Upper Room feeling himself absolutely unworthy. He had been a shuffler—a coward. Yet Christ had said to him, 'Thou art Peter.' As has been said, 'All the empires and the kingdoms have failed because of this inherent and continual weakness, that they were founded by strong men and upon strong men. But this one thing—the historic Christian Church—was founded upon a weak man, and for that reason it is indestructible. For no chain is stronger than its weakest link.'<sup>2</sup>

## TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

### Witnesses of the Resurrection.

'Wherefore of these men which have companied with us . . . must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.'—Acts 1<sup>21</sup>, 22.

1. How swiftly step follows step, as the redemption wrought by Christ begins its conquering career. On Friday evening the fabric of faith and hope lay shattered in the dust, and they were broken men. But ere the mourners' tears were dry, as the women were bringing spices to anoint the body for burial, the Easter message was declared: 'Why seek ye the living among dead?' and He was among them, breathing peace, bestowing benedictions, allaying fears, saying to them, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' And for how short a time, how few, how fitful, and how unexpected were the appearances themselves! The forty days were just the *minimum* to satisfy faith's need, the brief prelude to the giving of the Spirit, and the inauguration of the Church on earth for which creation waited, and for which Christ had lived and died.

Peter spoke as an equal to his equals. He claimed no supreme authority; no authority, in fact, at all, over and beyond what the others possessed. He did not, for instance, on this occasion claim the right as Christ's vicar to nominate an Apostle in the place of Judas. He merely asserted his lawful place in Christ's kingdom as first among a body of equals to suggest to the whole body a course of action which he knew to be in keeping with the Master's wishes, and in fulfilment of His revealed intentions. He laid down the conditions of a possible Apostle: he must have been a witness of all that Jesus had done and taught from the time of His baptism to His ascension. But this qualification alone

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters of Horace Bushnell*, 199.

<sup>2</sup> Chesterton, *Heretics*.

would not make a man an Apostle, or qualify him to bear the witness peculiar to the apostolic office. There were evidently numerous such witnesses, but they were not Apostles, and had none of the power and privileges of the Twelve. He must be chosen by his brother Apostles, and their choice must be endorsed by Heaven; and then the chosen witness, who had known the past, could testify to the resurrection in particular, with a weight, authority, and dignity he never possessed before. The apostolic office was the germ out of which the whole Christian ministry was developed, and the apostolic witness was typical of that witness to the resurrection which is not the duty alone, but also the strength and glory of the Christian ministry; for it is only as the ministers and witnesses of a risen and glorified Christ that they differ from the officials of a purely human association.

2. Their office was testimony; and their testimony was to this effect: 'We twelve men knew this Jesus. Some of us knew Him when He was a boy, and lived beside that little village where He was born. We were with Him for three whole years in close contact day and night. We, all of us, though we were cowards, stood afar off with a handful of women when He was crucified. We saw Him dead. We saw His grave. We saw Him living, and we touched Him, and handled Him, and He ate and drank with us, and we, sinners that we are that tell it you, we went out with Him to the top of Olivet, and we saw Him go up into the skies. Do you believe us or do you not? We do not come, in the first place, to preach doctrines. We are not thinkers or moralists. We are plain men, telling a plain story, to the truth of which we pledge our senses. We do not want compliments about our spiritual elevation, or our pure morality. We do not want reverence as possessors of mysterious and exclusive powers. We want you to believe us as honest men, relating what we have seen. There are twelve of us, and there are five hundred at our back, and we have all got the one simple story to tell. It is, indeed, a gospel, a philosophy, a theology, the reconciliation of earth and heaven, the revelation of God to man, and of man to himself, the unveiling of the future world, the basis of hope; but we bring it to you first as a thing that happened upon this earth of ours, which we saw with our eyes, and of which we are the witnesses!'

To that work there can be no successors. Some of them were inspired to be the writers of the authoritative fountains of religious truth, but that gift did not belong to them all, and was not the distinctive possession of the Twelve.

And what do we find in these undeniably and admittedly genuine letters a quarter of a century after the supposed fact? We find in all of them reference to it—the distinct allegation of it. We find in one of them that the Apostle states it as being the substance of his preaching and of his brethren's preaching, that 'Christ died and rose again according to the Scriptures,' and that He was seen by individuals, by multitudes, by a whole five hundred, the greater portion of whom were living and available as witnesses when he wrote.

3. With the resurrection there is mystery. As mystery closes the old dispensation, mystery opens the new. And yet how much there is we can apprehend! We can be witnesses of His resurrection. But you say, How can we be witnesses to that which we did not behold? Well, we witness the resurrection of a tree by the fruit of it; though the tree itself we never beheld. And the witness to the resurrection is to be borne by every one of us. The resurrection life is the life of God in the soul of man. It is not the result of travelling, it is the result of the cogitation of the human mind. It is not the result of social amenities, it is the sacrificial power of God the Holy Ghost, working in the natural souls of men, raising them from death to life, turning them from darkness to light, liberating them from the power of Satan unto God, and enabling them to taste of the freedom with which Christ has made us free.

'Is that the table of your opportunities?' asked Hampden of a respectable well-doing man in Stephen Graham's *Priest of the Ideal*. 'Civilisation has touched you, and, like a caterpillar, you sham death. Why, your opportunities are boundless. Your whole life should be a miracle. You are on the threshold of life; its wonders are all untried. Instead of making a living you can *live*, and instead of finding a calling you can listen for the *call*. Your young heart beats bravely in the midst of the beautiful body; the dweller in the innermost is enthroned in your being; poetry is behind your eyes, the pathos of existence, tenderness unrealised; the majesty of power is on your brow. You are body, but you are also spirit. Nothing can hurt you. You own a God, and you can follow Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego into the fiery furnace, and it can never consume you. You are proud; there is nobility in your aspect. Yet you are

humble; there is aspiration and yearning in your heart. You *are*. You have also a need to *become*. You were not born to be a slave. About you is a wonderful world of nature beckoning you, enticing you to *become*.

'You need never cast a glance or say a word or touch a person without doing something vital. Each glance or word or touch may be a constraint. Learn

to look creatively on men and women and upon things, to say words which change and make, to touch with a touch pregnant with the magnetism of love, with the spirit of love that flows from you to that which you touch.'

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Graham, *Priest of the Ideal*, 352.

## William Sanday.

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THE Editor of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES has asked me to say a few words about Dr. Sanday, on the occasion of his well-won retirement from his Canonry and Professorship at Oxford. Happily this retirement is not caused by illness, but simply by the lapse of time, Dr. Sanday feeling that at the age of seventy-six he can very well leave the labour of teaching to younger men. May he yet be spared to us and to the cause of sound Learning for many days!

I am not going to attempt to make a balanced estimate of the special contribution to knowledge made by Dr. Sanday. It would not, indeed, be appropriate; for we hope we have not yet received the last fruits of his ripe scholarship and erudition. What I have in mind is something much simpler. I want to tell a younger generation of the three occasions on which my studies in the past have been stimulated and helped by Dr. Sanday's work.

1. It is difficult for present-day students to realize how confused and uncertain the study of the Gospels appeared to be thirty and more years ago, when I was an undergraduate. In Old Testament study we were reading Robertson Smith and Wellhausen, and the decisive change of putting the prophets chronologically before the written Law threw a new light over the whole, and showed much of the history of Israel for the first time in its true perspective. But there was little corresponding to this in New Testament study. No clear light seemed to come either from Germany or from our English guides, such as Lightfoot and Westcott. These latter, indeed, seemed more occupied in exposing the crudities of the work called *Supernatural Religion* than in solving the problems which the ancient evidence itself raised. Indeed, these learned guides did not seem (to

some of us) really conscious that real problems existed at all. Westcott and Hort never talked of 'the Synoptic Problem,' and Dr. Westcott, in particular, seemed quite satisfied when he had pointed out that each canonical Gospel represented more fully a particular aspect of our Lord's character and mission.

I was dimly conscious that before we were in a position to reconstruct for ourselves, whether on paper or in our own apprehensions, a comprehensible picture of the Gospel History and of its Central Figure it was necessary to tackle a literary problem, that the Canonical Gospels were not independent one of the other, and that the curious aloofness of second-century Church writers (the Apostolic Fathers, I mean, and Justin Martyr) to our Canonical Gospels needed explanation. It was in this state of mind that I came across Dr. Sanday's book, *The Gospels in the Second Century* (Macmillan, 1876), and found it was just what I needed. In form it was even more a controversial work than 'Westcott on the Canon of the N.T.,' for it was written at the request and published at the cost of the Christian Evidence Society, and its sub-title is *An Examination of the Critical Part of a Work entitled 'Supernatural Religion.'* But it was particularly fair in spirit, and, most important of all, it showed everywhere a real appreciation of the literary problems. Much of Dr. Sanday's book is now either old-fashioned, or (more often) his detailed results are treated as almost obvious. But they were not obvious then; indeed, to some of us they were pioneer work in the uncut jungle. I may particularly mention here the remarks on Papias (pp. 145-160), which are a clear and intelligent formulation of the main elements of the literary problem presented by the Synoptic Gospels,