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point of Comparative Religion. As a history of religion it appears to be desperately weak. It proceeds on the easy but fallacious assumption that where you find some measure of resemblance you not only may, but must, infer some real connexion. America was discovered long before Columbus was born, yet, for all that matters in the history of mankind, Columbus was not only quite independent and ignorant of his predecessors, he was the real discoverer. Christianity is not to be explained by discovering something in a very ancient world that bears a dim resemblance to its fundamental doctrines.

Dr. A. Baumgarten of Bonn has published a history of Syrian literature (*Geschichte d. syr. Literatur*, pp. viii + 378; Bonn, 1922). It is the kind of work which only a German Professor can accomplish, a monument of industry devoted to a subject little known and of little general interest. This work is no doubt painfully accurate and complete, but it will not increase the interest in Syrian literature. It is an annotated catalogue rather than a history, so full of contractions and references by means of initials and numbers that pages of it seem at first glance to contain curious chemical formulæ.

In *Analekten zur Text-kritik d. A.T., neue Folge* (pp. 131; Leipzig, 1922), Felix Perles indicates in

how many ways errors were apt to creep into the Hebrew text. In many passages he seems to prove his point.

On the perennial problem of the Fourth Gospel, Dr. G. Bert writes, *D. Evan.-d. Johannes* (pp. 144; Gutersloh, 1922). He comes to the 'orthodox' conclusion. He does not solve, nor even face, the real difficulties of a Son-of-Zebedee authorship. His work is valuable, however, for its careful study of the Logos-doctrine in Greek philosophy, and for its collocation of passages from the Odes of Solomon.

The *Palästina-Jahrbuch* for 1921 is as interesting and informative as any of its predecessors. We have a good description and historical account of Tekoa by W. Sütterlin, and a careful study of Jewish and Roman military organization in New Testament times by F. Lundgreen. Dalman demolishes the myth, published in 'Adventist' journals, that manna had become once more the food of the people of Palestine, and was so abundant that it was being exported: 'It is wonderful,' said *The Bible Advocate*, 'what the Lord is doing in our days.' Unfortunately, nobody on the spot where the manna was alleged to be falling in such abundance knew anything about it.

W. D. NIVEN.

Aberdeen.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

Getting rid of the Dross.

'I will turn my hand upon thee, and thoroughly purge away thy dross.'—Is 1²⁵.

A minister was once taken over the famous Kimberley diamond mines. He was shown the blasting, the loads of blue ground coming up from the mine, the great floors on which the blue ground is spread out and left to crumble, then the crushing and washing through which it is made to pass. But what interested him most was the final stages. The ground had been washed down to a gravel in which lay the diamonds. This gravel was then placed on a machine like a table, which was slightly

tilted forward and smeared with a kind of grease. Then this table was set a-shaking and over the shaking surface a stream of water came pouring. Everything that was worthless, all the pebbles and the useless stones were carried away in the stream. But the diamonds remained. You saw them before you when the table had ceased to move, studded over the surface, shining and precious.

Not long ago I had an opportunity of talking with the head of a large school for boys who had not had the advantages that belong to a good home. I could see that his plan was to try to find whatever was good in these boys. He looked for diamonds amongst them. And he went on the same lines as that adopted at Kimberley. The

boys were first cut off from associations which did them harm. Very often these were in their own poor homes. That was the blasting. Then discipline began. A bath, new clothes, obedience to rules, regular work at lessons or something else, punishments if necessary. That was the rest of the process. What was the result? One found amongst these poor laddies many a real gem, a boy without the dross.

Boys and girls, you like your school-fellows in the playground to be without dross. You like them to be above board, straight and true. You like them to be unselfish and ready to give up to others. You like them to be without conceit or 'side.' If they are selfish or deceitful or snobbish or conceited you haven't the same love for them. The more dross they have in their character the less you want to make friends of them. And it is the same in the wide wide world. The world has no use for drossy people.

Here is the story of a grown-up man who had dross in his character. A great business man engaged him at a big salary. Afterwards, chancing to meet a friend, he told him that the man would have to go. 'I can't stand him,' he said, 'he started by bothering me about where he was to sit, and sent me half a dozen notes the second day asking who would pay his salary.' That man lost his salary because it was too high for any one who asked fussy questions and did no work. That man was mostly dross.

How are you to get rid of the dross that is about you? To a big person one might say 'Cultivate the presence of God.' In simple language that means make a friend of God, tell Him your difficulties, say you want Him to help you to grow up the best man or woman that it is possible for you to be.

To be a good man or woman means a great deal. It means honour, duty, courage, love, justice, mercy. How are boys and girls to have all these? It sounds as if it were a very hard thing to be good. In one sense it is simple.

Jesus brought the thought of God as a Father into the world, and He left His message to be handed down to you and me. We get rid of the dross that is about our characters by making Him our Friend and keeping constantly in His presence. Then we get into the habit of doing what is right. It becomes natural. The girls know that, if they

practise the piano a very great deal, they at last get to play the correct notes without ever having to think. To be like Christ is not easy. It takes constant practice and constant prayer. But it is more than worth it. This world would be a delightful place to live in if all the people in it tried to live like Jesus Christ. Your Heavenly Father is willing to help you to grow up to be men and women whose lives will make the world better. Resolve to-day that such a life will be yours.

Picking a Side.¹

'As touching the election.'—Ro 11²⁸.

Some weeks ago you kept hearing about something called an election, didn't you? Dad talked of it, and mother talked of it, and all the people who came in talked of it, till you grew sick and tired of it, and still the talk went on. What was it all about, and why were people so excited over it? Your big brother would come running home, and he must have his tea up to the minute, because he was going to a meeting; and mother was as bad, would ask you to come from your lessons and help to clear the things away, because she was going too. And father sat reading at the paper every evening as earnestly and as long as if every night were Saturday night; and yet, when you keeked across his shoulder you could see no football results at all, just columns and columns of speeches that looked dreadfully stale and dry! What was wrong with them all? Well, you know we need to have people in Parliament to speak for us and to look after matters for us, because we can't all be there ourselves. Mother can't go, for what would become of Baby! And Dad has to stay here, or how would you get on without him! And yet somebody must go: and in every place, perhaps two, perhaps three, perhaps four, people said, 'We'll go for you.' And that was very good, but what were we to do, for only one of them could be sent, and we had got to choose which one. And what was happening was that people everywhere were making up their minds, listening and watching and deciding which of them they would send. You small folk often have elections of your own. Every time at school that the team for a house match is put up in the corridor you sprint along to see if you are in it: and sometimes you are, and sometimes you are not. That's an election. Some are chosen, some

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

are not. And you see ones never start a game without picking a side, or finding who has got to be 'it': 'Eenie, Meenie, Minie, Mo' you chant, and at the end 'You're in, and you're out.' Well, that is an election. You manage it all in half a minute; but big people, who are slower at some things than you, take a full fortnight or three weeks. But then, you see, it is a great honour to be elected for Parliament. It doesn't matter very much who is picked upon your side at games, though you like to be chosen, and not left on and on until the very last or nearly so. But to be chosen for Parliament is a big thing, and that's why people take a long time to make up their minds whom they will send. And the wonderful thing I have to tell you is this. God once had an election. There was something, a great big important thing, He wanted to have done; and He Himself could not go to do it, and whom would He send? It mattered far too much to pick just any one, and God thought and thought, and wondered how this one would do, or that one, or somebody still better; but at last He made up His mind and He elected—whom do you think but you? If you had gone to these big meetings at election time, perhaps with thousands in the hall, and had got up upon the platform and said, 'You had better vote for me,' every one would have laughed at you. You're too small to elect. And yet God has elected you for some great work He must have done. 'I must have you on My side,' He said, and chose you as His first pick. There's that life of yours—God thought it out and planned it. What a wonderful thing it is! How much you can do with it, how many big and clean and unselfish things you can pack into it! You remember when you started for your summer holidays, whole two months of them, it seemed as if they never could end. Every day was so long and splendid, and on every one of them you could fish, and you could cycle, and you could climb, and you could golf, and you could play all kinds of games, and all this in one day; and you had whole two months of it before you. But look at your life; perhaps you have whole years and years and years of it, fifty perhaps, or even sixty, or it may be even seventy! What can't you do with a long life like that? And when God had thought it out, all that He wanted done with it, He thought, 'Whom will I choose to live this life for Me, who will do it best, and make the most of it, and use it as I wish it used.' And out of all

His people He could think of He elected you. And every day there are things that you can do for Him. He wants some one to help mother, and here's the very little lass to do that for Me, so He thought, and He gave the chance of doing it to you. He wishes some one to be decent to that new boy at school, and He asks that from you; and so with heaps and heaps of things.

It is a great honour to be elected to Parliament; when any one is chosen he always returns thanks, as it is called—that is to say, he makes a speech, and says how proud he is to be so trusted, and promises that he will do his very best, that if he can help any one in any kind of way they have only to write and let him know and he will always do all that he can. And don't you think it is a wonderful honour to be picked by God; that He should trust you as He does, should look to you to do lots and lots of things for Him that He wants? And aren't you going to thank Him for it? and to promise Him that you are going to try never to fail Him, but to do your very, very best?

The Christian Year.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

The Spiritual Glow.

'Fervent in spirit.'—Ro 12¹¹.

What do we mean by an enthusiasm? We mean an intense and generous passion for some supreme interest, so passionate that it dominates the life. And what do we mean by the defensive powers of such an enthusiasm? We mean that such a passion gathers all the forces of life into its own swift goings, so that nothing is left to loiter, nothing is left to trail along in aimless vagrancy. A noble enthusiasm is defensive because it makes life whole and wholesome. This kind of fire tends to keep everything clean.

There may be a bewitching pleasure, a luring indolence, a seductive mischief, but if the man has a passion for learning it is a defensive enthusiasm which destroys the assailments as in a consuming fire.

It is even so with the passionate championship of some great ideal. Emerson's counsel has now become a familiar phrase: 'Hitch your wagon to a star!' It is the wedding of idealism to very mundane tasks. There can be a noble passion in common toil. Yes, and when we do hitch our

wagon to a star, we may be perfectly sure that, whatever the star may do for the wagon, it will irradiate the wagoner and protect him by the ministry of sacred flame.

But when enthusiasm begins to cool our defensive energy begins to wane. Just as soon as radiation ceases invasion begins. Admiral Peary has told us, in his account of the discovery of the North Pole, that it was in the dreary, weary Arctic winter, when enthusiasm waned, that the hidden weakness of his men appeared. As the fires died low quarrelsomeness stole in. The moral defences departed with the glow.

'Be fervent in spirit,' says St. Paul. 'Maintain the spiritual glow' (Dr. Moffatt's translation). This urgent counsel was given to a little company of disciples who were living their consecrated life in the city of Rome. Think of their environment. They were beset by evil incitements and suggestions and antagonisms. They lived and moved where the majesty of evil had its throne and sovereignty. And the Apostle Paul tells them that nothing but a passionate religion will endow them with needful resistance. Tepid devotion will afford no defences.

There is no other counsel of the Apostle which is more urgent and timely for our own day. Now, as then, our spiritual enthusiasms are our moral defences.

1. Let us turn the light of the Apostle's counsel upon the *individual life*. When our devotion to Christ maintains a spiritual glow everything in our life shares the gracious influence of the quickening heat. It is like a garden where every unsprung seed thrills to the common touch of the spring-tide sun.

And as such a fire-possessed life is whole and wholesome, so is it also secure. Its fire is its defence. When night falls upon the explorer in the African jungle he seeks for a clearing and he lights a fire, and the cheery flame is his protection against the growling beast. But if our fires abate, every noble faculty of life feels the withdrawal of the central heat. Ay, but more than this, the lessening of the fires means the loss of our defences. When the fire in the forest dies down, the wild beast always draws near.

2. Now turn the light of the Apostle's counsel to social fellowship, and let it fall upon the *corporate life of the Church*. When there is a spiritual glow in the Church, mean things are consumed like dirt in a furnace. But let the Church lose her spiritual

glow and all manner of un-Christly things swarm across her desecrated floors. We have a glaring example of all this in the state of the Church at Corinth as it is revealed to us by the Apostle Paul.

There is an equally startling revelation of the smallness which invades a lukewarm Church in the example of the Church at Jerusalem. The Church in Jerusalem had no missionary enthusiasm because it had lost its spiritual glow. When the great missionary-Apostle returned from the last and greatest of his missionary tours he reported his work to the Church in Jerusalem. And what happened? Paul had kindled a line of holy fires through Asia Minor. Sacred beacons were blazing in Macedonia and lower Greece. Isles of the sea had become luminous with the light of life. He had incurred perils innumerable. He bore the marks of the Lord Jesus. And he was now old and broken, but his quenchless fire was burning. 'He declared particularly what God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.' And what did they say about it? In what kind of holy rapture did they express their glowing praise? 'Thou knowest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law.' Yes, and what next? They urged him to take a purifying vow and to shave his head! Can you imagine that if that Church had been glowing with a passion of devotional love to the Lord, such a peddling bit of Jewish ritual would have been forced into a season of spiritual wonder and exuberance?

And we need not go to ancient Corinth and Jerusalem for examples. We have examples in the Church to-day, when the spiritual glow has gone out and organism is supplanted by organization. What would the glow do for us? It would bring union. The Scriptures say nothing about welding sundered things into vital fellowship, but they do speak about separated things flowing together into union. We have been rather like ecclesiastical blacksmiths trying to weld lukewarm Churches into vital Communion. But before things can flow together they must have become molten. We must have molten affections, fluid sympathies; we must have genialities and fraternities flowing like molten streams from a central fire.

3. So it is in *international life*. Peoples become one only in the uniting energies of noble fire. We have seen the uniting power of a commanding passion in the fiery travail of the Great War.

This was especially true in the relations of the British and American peoples. Old prejudices melted away like icebergs in tropical seas. Antipathies which were the creation of a hundred years changed into friendship. We found each other, and we saw each other, in the revealing fires of a vast enthusiasm, and all the meaner things perished like stubble in the flame. Are we maintaining the glow? Or are the old evil things creeping back? How can we repel them if so? Only by feeding the fires of a large and noble enthusiasm. Everybody can bring fuel to the holy flame. We can strengthen it with knowledge, we can feed it with thought, we can quicken it with expression, we can deepen it with prayer. We can live and labour for the passion of fraternity, the enthusiasm of humanity, the glow of Christ, the fire of God.¹

Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly dove,
With all Thy quickening powers,
Kindle a flame of sacred love
On these cold hearts of ours.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

The Human Argument.

'Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.'—Mt 8¹⁰.

Although Jesus did many wonderful things, He never seems to have marvelled at them Himself. The consciousness that He wielded powers which had been given to no other does not appear to have amazed Him. Every thoughtful man, although he knows that he exercises no power which is not equally in the possession of others, is nevertheless burdened by the very abilities which constitute his being. 'I am fearfully and wonderfully made,' said the psalmist.

But Christ was never oppressed with the mystery that He was. And when He spoke of Himself, He used words of the utmost precision, and expressions which are amazing in their repose, for 'I know,' saith He, 'whence I came and whither I go.'

Neither did He marvel at the many marvellous things around Him. He met disease in its various forms and degrees; but whilst His nature went out in spontaneous sympathy towards the sufferer whomsoever he should be, He never wondered at any one's pain. And again when He confronted

¹ J. H. Jowett, *God—Our Contemporary*, 185.

sin, whether under the coverlet of its false refinements or exposed in the nakedness of its natural grossness, it failed to astonish Him.

But what is stranger still is that He marvelled at nothing which came to Him from above. He could hold converse with Moses and Elias, the choicest spirits of the past, and be transfigured before His followers until His face did shine as the sun and His raiment was white as the light, and the silence became vocal, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'

And yet He *could* marvel. It is said of Him that He once marvelled at the unbelief of the people, and here that He marvelled at the centurion's faith. Christ could wonder that some had no faith, and wonder equally that some others had. If we have had the opportunity of spiritual knowledge and culture in our homes and through our friendships, much is demanded of us, because He knows that much has been given us.

The conditions under which the faith of the centurion of Capernaum appeared were as difficult as they could be. This Roman officer was a Gentile and an outsider; how near he had come to the Jewish church we do not know, but at best he could never come really close. In the Book of Acts we see what elaborate preparation of mind was needed before Peter could be persuaded merely to enter Cornelius's house. This man knew of the existence of such antipathies, and when he reached out his hands to Jesus it was across these yawning gulfs of separation. He had no possible claim that he could urge, unless (and this is where the wonder of his faith appears)—unless this peasant teacher should prove in some way like himself. This audacious reasoning from his own heart to Christ's heart is the key to the story.

1. Conscious that he himself would do a kindness to anybody without thinking twice, he dared to believe that Jesus also might be kind. Leaping the barriers, he had actually come to love a nation which in history has not been found lovable, and he was not ashamed to show real fondness for his slave, though that was an unwonted thing in the ancient world.

And what he asked of Jesus was that He also should look below the surface, and he approached Him in the frank assurance that He would. That seems homely enough, but it was a true beginning of faith. His thoughts of Jesus were pitifully imperfect. He suspected Him of sharing the dis-

like felt even by friendly Jews to entering a Gentile house, and so he did not ask Him into his. Still the Nazarene and the centurion had common ground on which to meet. Grant that I am half a heathen still, although I built these Jews a synagogue, and my poor servant is a pagan out and out, still when he is in such agony you will surely come—simply for need's sake. And the Master answered, 'I will come and heal him.'

2. There was a second common ground. It was the possession of authority. As an officer he did not ask, he gave orders; to his men he said—Go, come, do, and he was obeyed. And he believed that Jesus also had His servants. In the Galilean land stories were filling the air of the most astounding recoveries. And what impressed the onlookers was that when Christ came to a sick-bed it was not as a sympathetic visitor, to lay a kind but helpless hand upon the sufferer; He came like one assured of His own power. Life seemed to return at His word; His confidence gave the ebbing strength a chance, and great things thus were done. One may interpret the stories as one will, but this element of authority must have its place in any explanation.

It was natural for a soldier to think of this in the terms of his own profession. I sit in my tent, but messengers are hurrying here and there upon my errands; I give commands, and my men advance, or wheel, or retire, as if the whole company were an instrument of my bare will. You also, as I hear, have troops at your command—strange, ghostly powers which wait upon your orders; and if you only give the word, my servant shall be healed. No doubt there were elements of superstition in his thought, and yet he did essential justice to one chief claim of our Lord's, who loves that men should credit Him with power.

3. But this authority, as the blunt soldier felt, was ultimately nothing less than God's authority. The third point in his reasoning was: I gain obedience from my men because I am myself under authority, because at my back there rests the majesty of empire—is there not also behind Him an Authority without limit, so that I cannot ask of Him what is too great to expect? The centurion knew that, in his company, he had men stronger and more active than himself, who yet obeyed him; and the reason was that he also was under authority, so that it was not he whom they obeyed, but the power behind him. Here in his presence

stood this peasant teacher, of whom he was asking such astounding things—a young man poorly clad, with hands roughened by continual labour, and with His face marked by the effects of sleepless nights and the weight of a world of evil. What could He do? How could He bid death withdraw? But if He also is under authority! if, as He stands beside me, He has at His back the strength that sustains the world! If this man is nothing less than the representative of the sovereignty of God!

On any day of excitement when crowds are out, you may see a policeman here and there, motioning back the multitude; he could not possibly enforce his will, and yet, in a marvellous degree, he is obeyed; the mere hint of force is commonly sufficient, because at its back remains the vague sublimity of empire.

Anthropomorphism, you say? Of course! How is man to be anything else than anthropomorphic? He has no knowledge of anything that does not arrive at him through his humanity, his human organs, his human experience. Any knowledge whatever, in order to reach him, must have adapted itself to his capacities and conditions. Revealed knowledge can come in by no other channel. It depends on his natural organs to receive and to assimilate and to report it. If he is to know anything of God, he must know it in the terms of man.

Man knows whatever he knows through his humanity only. Revelation can be no exception to this primal necessity. And so his knowledge of God is inevitably anthropomorphic. And it was because anthropomorphism was so perilous and so apt to blunder that the Incarnation took place to exhibit the right standard by which to anthropomorphize God. Jesus Christ is the evidence and the verification of how God can be made known to us in human form through the flesh of our manhood.¹

'I have not found so great faith.' But there is little profit in talking of the centurion's faith unless we have it.

In the *Paradiso* (Canto xxiv.), Dante, in answer to a question gives an accurate theologian's account of the nature and the power of faith; but his teacher replies, 'Right well hast thou run over the composition and the weight of this coin, but tell me if thou hast it in thy purse.' In turning to our Lord

¹ H. S. Holland, *Facts of the Faith*, 201.

are we confident that He is pitiful and great of heart, that He is strong to heal, and, most of all, that, in love and power, He is none other than the visible embodiment of Almighty God? The best of us still in these things needs to pray, 'Lord, increase my faith!'

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

The Enthroned Christ.

'Jesus . . . is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.'—He 12².

1. We have here brought together the name of the humanity, the name that was borne by many another Jew in the same era as Jesus bore it; we have brought together the name of the humanity and the affirmation of the Divine dignity. 'Jesus . . . is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.' And over and over again, not only in this Epistle but in other parts of Scripture, we have the same intentional, emphatic juxtaposition of the two ideas which shallow thinkers regard as in some sense incompatible—the humanity and the Divinity. Remember, for instance, 'this same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go.' And remember the rapturous and wonderful exclamation which broke from the lips of the proto-martyr. 'Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.' So then that exaltation and ascension is—according to New Testament teaching, which is not contradicted by the deepest thought of the affinities and resemblances of the divine and the human—the lifting up of the *Man* into the glory which the Incarnate Word had with the Father before the world was. And just as the earthly life of that Incarnate Word has shown how divine a thing a human life here may be, so the heavenly life of the still Incarnate Word shows us what our approximation to, and union with, the Divine nature may be, when we are purged and perfected in the Kingdom of God, whither the Forerunner is for us entered.

2. But, in addition to this thought, there comes another which is constantly associated with the teaching of this session of the Son of Man at the right hand of God, namely, that it is intercessory. That is a word the history of which will take us far. But one thing must be made very emphatic, and that is that the ordinary notion of intercession

is not the New Testament notion. We limit it, or tend to limit it, to prayer for others. There is no such idea in the New Testament use of the phrase. It is a great deal wider than any verbal expression of sympathy and desire. It has to deal with realities and not with words. It is not a synonym for asking for another that some blessing may come upon him. The intercession of the great High Priest, who has gone into the holiest of all for us, covers the whole ground of the acts by which, by reason of our deep and true union with Jesus Christ through faith, He communicates to His children whatsoever of blessing and power and sweet tokens of ineffable love He has received from the Father. Whatsoever He draws in filial dependence from the Divine Father He in brotherly unity imparts to us; and the real communication of real blessing, and not the verbal petitions for forgiveness, is what He is doing there within the veil. 'He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.'

3. But, further, in this great figure of the enthroned Christ there lies a wondrous thought which He Himself has given us. 'I go to prepare a place for you.' What activities are involved in that idea it profits us not to inquire, nor would it become us to say. We know that never could we tread those pure pavements except our robes and our feet had been washed by Him. But that is the consequence of His earthly work, and not of His heavenly and present energy. Perhaps, in our ignorance of all that lies behind the veil, we can get little further than to see that the very fact of His presence is the preparation of the place. For that awful thought, that crushing thought, of eternal life under conditions bewilderingly different from anything we experience here would be no joy unless we could say we shall see Him and be with Him.

I know not how it may be with you, but I think that the nearer we come to the end of the earthly life, and the more the realities beyond begin to press upon our thoughts and our imaginations as those with which we shall soon make acquaintance, we feel more and more how unquestionable is the misery the thought of eternal life would bring if it were not for the fact that the world beyond is lighted up and made familiar by the thought of Christ's presence there. Can you fancy some poor clod-hopping rustic brought up from a remote village and set down all in a moment in the midst

of some brilliant court? How out of place he would feel, how unhomelike it would appear, how ill at ease he would be; ay, and what an unburdening there would be in his heart, if amongst the strange splendour he detected beneath the crown and above the robes, sitting on the throne, one whom he had known in the far-off hamlet, and who there had taken part with him in all the ignoble toils and narrow interests of that rustic scene. Jesus said, 'I go to prepare a place for you,' and when I lift up my eyes to those far-off realities which overwhelm me, when I try to think about them, I say, I am not dazzled by the splendour, I am not oppressed by the perpetuity of it, I do not faint at the thought of unlike conditions, for I shall be the same and I will be with Him.¹

Thou who didst stoop below
To drain the cup of woe,
Wearing the form of frail mortality;
Thy blessed labours done,
Thy crown of victory won,
Hast passed from earth, passed to Thy home on high.

Our eyes behold Thee not,
Yet hast Thou not forgot
Those who have placed their hope, their trust in Thee;
Before Thy Father's face
Thou hast prepared a place,
That where Thou art there they may also be.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Rooted.

'Rooted in him.'—Col 2⁷.

There is a great deal of interest in Christ at the present time. It is doubtful if in all the history of Christianity since the very earliest days there has ever been so much; but there is a danger in that very interest. Things which are widespread are apt to be superficial, and *that* is just where the danger lies. The interest is largely superficial, emotional, intellectual, but there is not much *will* in it. Christ is made as attractive as possible, and as little as possible is demanded of those who would follow Him.

But that is not the Christ that we know in the Gospels. The Christ to whom we owe nothing but

¹ Alexander Maclaren.

admiration is ineffective; He does not go deep enough. If we are to receive from Christ what He came to give us we must do more than look upon Him from the outside and admire Him. We must be ourselves 'rooted in him.'

What does it mean? It means more than admiring Him. It means living by Him. It means more even than believing Him. It means—to use the words of the New Testament—'believing *on* him,' that is to say, trusting ourselves to Him. It means living by Him. It means making Him our life, our hope, our all. It is what Paul means when he says, 'to me to live is Christ.'

How often Christ speaks of 'abiding' in Him. In the 15th chapter of John the word occurs again and again, and it occurs more frequently in the original than it does in our translation. Instead of 'abide' our translators have sometimes rendered the word 'continue.' For instance, in the 9th verse, 'as the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.' That is the same word as is translated 'abide' twice in the next verse. 'If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.' Then again in the very next verse the same word is translated 'remain.' 'These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you.' If they had translated the word every time by 'abide' we should have seen far more clearly the tremendous emphasis that Christ puts upon the necessity of our being *part* of Him. Instead of looking upon Him and admiring Him from a distance we must belong to Him. We must suffer when He suffers; we must rejoice when He rejoices; we must draw our nourishment from Him, and so be able to do the work which He has given us to do. We must be rooted in Him.

There are three uses of a root.

1. First of all *it is necessary for the life of a plant*. Cut the plant off from its root and it dies. And as with the plant so with you and me—the soil is Christ; we have to throw our roots deep down into Him. Cut off from the soil the plant certainly perishes, and we perish also if we are cut off from Christ. Of course we can have a bodily life without Him. A man may be perfectly vigorous of body who has no more of Christ in Him than an ox. And we may have a social life without Him. But we shall not have a spiritual life unless we are rooted in Christ, and if we have not a

spiritual life the social and bodily life do not count for much.

We see this most clearly when we think of death. And by this Christ does not mean the death of the body. You remember what He said to Martha after the death of Lazarus? 'I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, *even though he have died*, yet shall he be alive.' What He meant was that although Lazarus had died bodily, he was yet spiritually alive. Then He went on to say, 'Whosoever is alive, and believeth in me, shall never die.'

So in order to be alive, we must believe in Him. We must be united *to* Him. We must be rooted *in* Him; for that is the first use of the root—it is necessary for the life of the plant.

2. But the root is of use to the plant in another way. *It carries nourishment to it.*

And just in the same way we must be rooted in Christ if we are to live a healthy spiritual life. We are far too satisfied with being simply alive in Christ. We think if we can be sure that we have been born again we need not trouble ourselves any more. But that is a very poor idea of what Christ can do for us, and it is a very mistaken idea of what He expects of us. Who is content with a rose-bush that is simply alive? We expect it to produce roses. It is a tremendous blessing to know that we have passed from death unto life. But how can we even know that, if we are just alive and nothing more? John says, 'We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the

brethren.' That is the rose-bush bearing roses. John is not satisfied with saying that we tolerate one another, or that we just manage to live with one another. He says the proof of our having passed from death unto life is that we love, *love* one another. And there is not a stronger word that he could use than that.

And we can only love by being rooted in Christ. We draw our nourishment from Him. And drawing our nourishment we grow in love.

3. The third and last use of the root is to *keep the plant in its place*. Trees are not easily blown down. When a tree is easily blown down you will notice that its roots run along the surface of the ground and do not go deep down into it. Trees have to be kept in their place, and the roots do that for them.

And we cannot leave Christ. We are rooted in Him and abide there. We may be tossed by tempests like a tree, sorrow or pain may come upon us, but as long as we are rooted in Christ these things are only blessings to us. We may not feel them so at the moment any more than the tree when it is being tossed by the wind may feel that it is all for its good, but, afterwards, we find that suffering and sorrow bring forth the fruits of righteousness in them that are exercised thereby.

When Thou dost dwell in me
And I in Thee
Then Thine own life through me doth flow
And in Thyself I live and grow.

The 'Two Natures' of our Lord.

BY THE REVEREND W. J. FARLEY, B.D., CASTLEROCK, CO. LONDONDERRY.

'Christ is no single term, but in that name which is one is the signification both of Godhead and manhood. Wherefore Christ is called man, and Christ is called God, and Christ is both God and man, and Christ is One.'—ATHANASIUS.

THE Incarnation of our Lord has been defined as the meeting of Human and Divine. The word 'incarnation' is not found in the Scriptures, though the thought is there. Incarnation is entrance into flesh, and the term, like its Greek equivalent, was suggested by the opening words of Jn 1¹⁴. The problem of the Person of Christ is a great mystery.

We cannot do more than attempt to set down a few thoughts on some aspects of the discussion.

(a) THE WITNESS OF THE N.T.

There are no traces of controversy in the N.T. concerning the Person of Christ. What we find is a development of thought about Him. The disciples of Jesus began with experience, and they went on to theory. They knew Him as One who went in and out amongst them, living a truly