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In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

What taking Pains can do.[1]

'Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.'—2 Co 5[17].

You all know what an elephant is like, don't you? Perhaps you have seen one: anyway, you have heaps of pictures of them in your school books or in some Eastern tales, with men perched up on top of them, shooting at tigers that are leaping at them with a snarl. An elephant is a huge beast—oh yes, much taller than daddy—with legs as thick as pillars, and a wise brain almost as clever as a man's, and a trunk so sensitive that it can pick up a needle from the ground with it, and yet so strong that it can pull down a tree with it. It could snatch you up and swing you to its back, and think nothing about it. But an elephant wasn't always like that, so wise men say: at first it was quite different. All things, of course, when they are young are not a bit like what they are when they grow up. There is mother, for example. Perhaps you have a photograph of her when she was small, and you can't stop laughing every time you see it. She's quite wee, and how funny she looks, with a long pigtail hanging down her back, and such prim bows in her hair, and such queer clothes! You wouldn't have known that it is mother, yet it is. But I don't mean only that, but that at first even a grown-up elephant wasn't one bit like what grown-up elephants are now. They were quite small, just about the size of some kinds of donkeys, so a great professor man who knows about these things says, and its legs were quite thin, and its brain wasn't very clever, and as for its trunk, it had no trunk, only its nose, and it was quite a short and rather snubby one. So, you see, it has changed altogether, has become another kind of creature. Well, that's good news for some of us, isn't it? For we are pretty tired of ourselves, and don't want to go on being what we are. We would like to be different, quite different, not horrid and ratty, and all arms and feet, and temper and passion, but good-humoured enough to take knocks without flying into a rage over it; not apt to keep things to ourselves, but generous little beggars who of course go halves, and would hate not to share. You don't like being cross and mean, and you try not to be it; yet that, perhaps, is what you are, and there it is. A toad mayn't like being a toad, may think it would be fine to be a lion, yet a toad is what it is; 'And I,' you say, 'am a bad-tempered, horrid little beast, and I can't help it!' Oh, but you can! We can become new creatures, altogether different from what we are. Here is a wise creature that did it, so, you see, there can be no mistake. So, as I tell you, that's good news. But how are we to manage? How did the elephant? Just by taking pains. And it took lots of pains, millions of years of it, for all I know. Anyway it was a long, slow, plucky business. Yet it stuck it out, and in the end it managed it. At first, and for a long, long time indeed, it didn't seem much use. You and I would have said that it would never come to anything, quite a small creature there among huge brutes that could swallow it up, and none too clever at the start. But it said, 'I'm not over-smart, nor extra strong, nor big, but I can try, can keep on taking pains'; and, doing that, it made itself into the great wise animal that it is now. Well, you and I could take pains too. And there's no end to what that could do for us. There was once a man in Parliament who got up to make his first speech, and did so badly that everybody laughed at him, and he had to sit down; but, said he, 'You will listen to me some day.' And they did, because he became one of the two best speakers in the place. Just because he took pains. There is a man whose name everybody knows to-day, who, when he was a boy, had a most dreadful stutter, so that his folk said, 'Whatever will we do with him?' 'I'm going to be a speaker like my father,' the boy said; and he took pains and tried, and tried, and kept on trying, till his stammer was quite conquered, and now he is one of the finest speakers in the world. All because he took pains. Or, you know Stevenson's *Treasure Island*? What? You don't! Oh, but that's not fair! Tell daddy that I said so; or better, isn't your birthday coming near? Then, there's your chance to get a splendid story all about the sea and ships and pirates, and a wonderful island and the treasure hidden on it. Well, Stevenson when he was at

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

school, yes, and long after it, couldn't write much, and couldn't spell at all; but he stuck in, and tried and tried, and kept on trying, and in the end he wrote some of the most glorious of stories. All because, like the elephant, he took pains. And what about you? Perhaps at school you are rather slow, can't take in that new kind of sum about pipes running in, and others running out; or you are getting all tied up over the Greek verb, it's the passive that is doing it, I'll be bound, those horrid aorist imperatives and things; or it's analysis that gets you every time, or in Latin you never can remember about time how long, or, in or at a town; anyway you're not over-quick, and sometimes the master loses patience, and says you're a perfect donkey. Well, the next time that happens say to yourself (but mind you be very, very careful, you can hardly be too careful, to say it low, under your breath, or you'll get into trouble; and, if you forget and speak too loud and catch it, don't blame me, because I told you), say to yourself under your breath, 'I may be like a donkey now, but wait you until I'm finished and I'll show you; the elephant was as small as a donkey once, and yet look at it now!'

And so with other things, with that old temper, with your grumpiness; stick in, take pains, keep trying, and you'd wonder what you'll manage in the end. Take pains, but at what? Why, at using what you have, of course. Look what the elephant did! It started with ordinary teeth, and it made for itself in time those huge ivory tusks that are feet long, and sometimes weigh 75 lb. It started with an ordinary kind of nose, and it made out of that its wonderful trunk, with which it can do almost anything. The first men thought they could make something out of their clumsy forefeet, and now we have the hand, that marvellous thing so clever in a thousand ways, that writes, that makes music, that builds, that does for us almost everything. The bird set out upon another line, and it has got its wonderful wings, can dip and soar far, far more cleverly than any airman can. But the elephant believed in its nose! At first it was quite dumpy; 'But wait you,' said the elephant, and it has really made its marvellous trunk. Kipling, of course, tells us in *Just So Stories*—(What! you don't know them either! Well, that would be a good idea to suggest to mother for your birthday). Kipling says that it was a crocodile in the Limpopo River that got hold of the nose of a young baby elephant, and pulled it so hard that wee Mr. Elephant cried out, "Led go!" talking like you with a cold, for you see its nose was being held quite hard, 'Led go, you are hurtig me!' It was that pull that made it long, says Kipling. But that's not true. At least you don't need to believe it all, unless you like. It was by taking pains it did it, for itself. And you haven't got much brains! well, use the little you have and it will grow. And you're not a bit unselfish! then be unselfish when you can, in this little thing, and then in that, and it will become easier and easier and easier. The elephant had only a snub nose once, but it made a clever trunk of it. And when the Lord Christ looks at you, though He sees only a rowdy tempery cross little chap, 'I can make a real big strong man out of this,' He says; 'I am sure of it, if only I can get him to take pains and try.'

What is it?[1]

'But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.'—Lk 2^{19}.

Some ten years ago a great chemist was at work in London. He was busy that day with a kind of sand that had been sent to him all the way from New Zealand to examine. And suddenly he came on something he had never seen before. There it was, and yet he, with all his knowledge, didn't know it, couldn't think what it could be: he looked up his books, and there was none of them that had a word about anything at all like this. It was a new thing. But what was it? And what could it do? He didn't know. 'But I'll find out,' he said; and he put it carefully away grain by grain in a glass tube, and sealed it up. But just then the War came; and he got dreadfully busy, had to think about a hundred things and all of them at once. And so he forgot all about the glass tube, and there it lay on some dusty shelf, perhaps, for eight whole years.

But some time ago two wise men in Denmark came on the track of a wonderful thing. They saw clear traces of it, though they had never seen it by itself, but always mixed with something else. But they became quite sure that if they could find it alone, they would have discovered a new element; that is, you know, one of the things out of which the world and things in it are built up, as music is made out of notes, or as jam is just fruit and sugar and water, and some stones, perhaps. 'We have found a new element,' they said, 'that has always been in

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the world, but nobody has seen it yet.' And with that the chemist in London began to think; but what was that I had in that glass tube of mine so many years ago? And the more he thought, the more he wondered; and at last he set to work and had a look for it and found it, and there it was, a new element. 'What is this in this tube, I wonder?' he had said, looking at it eagerly: and after all these years he found out what it was.

But mother and dad have had something at home in your house just about as long: ten, eleven, twelve years, isn't it? Something that is quite new, and often they look at it, and ask themselves, 'I wonder what kind of a thing this is going to be? Will it be good or bad? Will it do harm or will it help? Is it like dynamite that blows things to bits, or like chloroform that makes things easier and better? I wonder what it really is?' they ask. Well, they will soon know now. For the thing is you: and you are getting on, and growing up. They have waited years and years, but they will soon see now what kind of man or woman you are going to be.

There was once a woman who had a baby. She lived in a little Highland village called Nazareth; and sometimes, as women will, she would take her baby on her lap, and hold its small pink feet, as it lay there gooing and crumpling up its fists as babies do, and she would ask herself, 'I wonder where these little feet will carry my wee son.' Well, we all know now. For they took Him up the hill at Calvary to die for you and me. All that was in that little fellow lying there. And there was a day when Mary was tremendously proud. She had been teaching her baby boy to speak. The first word that mothers teach us here is 'DADA': it is so easy to say. And over yonder in that land they used to teach first 'ABBA'—which just means dada—for it, too, is a very easy word. And one day, when Joseph came in hot and tired from the workshop, the wee man said 'ABBA,' and Joseph's face lit up with pleasure, and Mary was real proud because her baby had begun to talk. And now He has taught all the world to go to God and say to Him too, 'Abba, Father.' 'What will become of this baby of mine?' so Mary used to wonder. And now we know.

But at that very time over in the little town of Kerioth there was another mother who had a baby: and she too was very proud of him, and she too would sit looking at him, wondering what he would grow to be. And he was Judas, that wee man, Judas who betrayed his Lord and did the deed of shame. All that was in that little one.

'What's in this tube,' the chemist said, holding it up and looking at it; 'something new and something wonderful, but what?' And sometimes, when you are asleep, mother and father look at you, and think and pray and ask, 'What will become of them when they grow up?' And often when you are cross and grumpy and grabby they grow unhappy and afraid: and then again when you are unselfish and good-humoured and straight they grow cheery again. Of course they will do their best to help you, but they can't manage for you. They will try to give you a good start, but you must do the rest yourself. You know about the Gulf Stream, don't you? Well, wise men have been trying to discover where exactly it goes. They throw bottles into it, each of them with a message that, if they are found, they are to be sent back telling just where they were picked up. Lots of them get lost, of course. But three of them were returned lately. One came from the Azores, away down in the sunshine and the blue seas yonder: another was found at the Orkneys drifting about in the grey waters there: and one came back from the North Cape away up near the Arctic, with the ice freezing it in. At the beginning they all started off together, and yet by and by they drifted from each other, further and further and still further, till all these long miles lay between them, and they had reached places so very different. And boys and girls brought up together can have very, very different kinds of lives. In the New Testament we hear of two bairns who had the same nurse and played together every day: and often that woman looking at her boys romping and tumbling over one another would say to herself, 'What will they grow to be, these two?' Well, one of them became Herod, haughty and proud and cruel, while the other was Manaen who gave himself to Jesus Christ and put his life to big unselfish uses. 'What's in this tube?' said the chemist; 'something new, but what? What will it do and be, evil or good, a help or a nuisance?'

It is for you to say. For you are not a bottle that must go bobbing along where the waves and the winds and the currents send it. You have a will with which to choose, and feet to set down firmly and stand up on. And you can say, 'I can't, perhaps, be clever, for I wasn't made like that; and I mayn't, perhaps, grow rich, nor does that greatly matter: but one thing I can be and will:

I can be clean and true, and unselfish and straight.' Ah! if that is what is in the tube, then what a splendid thing it is that is in the world, for you will help us and make things far better! And that, no doubt of it, is what God meant that you should do.

The Christian Year.

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION.

The Christ of the Past.

'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday.'—Heb 13^{8}.

The old world is ever changing. The sun will burn itself out, and the stars will all disappear. 'They all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.' In the midst of all this waste and wear and change Jesus lives ever the same—lived yesterday, lives now, and hears every sob of every child of His; shall live to wipe the last tear, to ease the pillow under the last aching head, to triumph over the last grave that shall be dug; for 'he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' Our business is to try to find out what Jesus Christ was yesterday, the day He lived among men, what He was and did, and that may comfort us to-day.

What was Christ yesterday? We have but little difficulty in finding out. We have four pictures of Him, made at different times, by various hands. These pictures are the four Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles may be called a fifth, for it shows us the gospel in action. Let us glance at these pictures; they are instructive, and together they may furnish us what we want to know on the subject in hand. They represent Him in His working garb. They show Him in His glorified robes on the Mount of Transfiguration, and they let us see Him in His risen majesty. From the Gospels we learn three facts.

In the first place, He was a Revealer; in the second place, He was a Saviour; and in the third place, He was a Master.

1. He was a *Revealer*.

(1) He revealed men primarily to themselves. When He said to Peter one day, 'Thou art a rock,' Peter was far from being a rock. Impetuous, headstrong, always itching to say something and do something, never being able to keep out or keep still, rushing in where angels fear to tread—that was Peter. Yet our Lord turned to him, and said, 'Thou art a rock.' The Lord revealed the truth of the man.

There was that woman at the well in Samaria where our Lord stayed to rest Himself. After her conversation with Him she went back to the village, and said to her friends, 'Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did!' He brought the truth out.

There was Nicodemus, the ruler, the member of Congress of his day, who came to Jesus in the night, to ask Him about life. The Lord revealed his need of a new birth.

And there was Zacchæus, the little man to whom no one paid very much attention. He climbed up into a tree to see Christ. Why? Because there was something about our Lord that revealed men to themselves and brought them to the truth.

(2) Then He was a Revealer of God to men. Men had had peculiar notions about God. Every tribe, every country, every group of people had a god, more than one god. They had a god of the storm, a god of the rain, a god of the sun and of the moon, a god of the ocean, a god of strength and of illness, many, many gods of disease—peculiar ideas of God! Even in our Old Testament we find the record of how the God of the Hebrews differed from the gods of other tribes. But when Jesus came He taught men how to think about God, and He never said any of the things about Him that they had heard before. And—marvel of marvels!—our Lord taught the people by showing them pictures and telling them stories. The picture of the prodigal son, do you know why that is in the Bible? It is not so much to tell us about the son as it is to give us a picture of the father, rushing out of the house and down the road to welcome home the boy who had gone away.

And what do we find that He said about God? Well, He certainly reveals Him as a God who is interested in and cares for us. That was very new in men's thoughts about God; Someone who was interested and cared so much that He gave all that was dearest to Him for us. It was a wonderful picture of God, a God who suffered because He loved so much. Have you ever loved someone so dearly that you have suffered, that your heart ached because of your love? That is what Christ taught us about God.

2. Not only was He a Revealer, He was a *Saviour*.

He saved men from themselves. What is the worst enemy of life? It is not something outside. It would be rather comforting if we could feel there was someone we could blame for our ill-temper, wouldn't it? It would be rather comforting if we could always say, 'So-and-so got me all wrought up to-day.' Yes, but it is not true! That thing does not happen unless there is something in us that is permissive. Christ saves men from themselves.

How? He won them by this wonderful picture of love; and when they came into contact with this object of their love they realized that there was something between them and Him, something that kept them apart; there was a wedge thrust in, and that wedge is called Sin. Now Christ was a Saviour because He brought men and God together by getting rid of the wedge, removing the spot, taking out the blot, doing away with the blemish. He washed it all out, and brought the two together in understanding, sympathizing, co-operating love.

3. He gave men a *Master*. We all of us want to be controlled. You talk about freedom, you talk about liberty, you talk about wanting to do the thing that you want to do. It is not true; that is not what you want most. You want somebody by the very invested right of his nature to rule over you, because he can and must rule over you, throughout your life, and you are never happy until you find that master. Why, the war revealed it to us! The happiest people were the men and women who gave up their lives to service in the war. Have you ever known such waves of joy rolling over this country, in every little village and in every great city, because people were united in one great purpose and mastered by a controlling devotion to one great cause? Their lives were swept for the moment out of the littleness and the pettiness of their own selfish interests, and they gave themselves up to a cause. They were mastered by the ideal of the war. That showed the real nature of life.

Christ furnishes such mastery. He is the Master of men. Wherever He walked, whomsoever He touched, upon whom He even looked, He said, 'Come! Come with me'; and He said, 'Go! Go into all the world, and make learners of me.' Ah yes, what a Master He was, and they found it in Him by natural right![1]

[1] H. R. Weir.

WHITSUNDAY.

Dreams and Visions.

'Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.'—Jl 2^{28}.

Dreams and visions. What are they the result of? They are the result of the spirit of God coming upon the world. That means a quickening of faculty, an enlargement of horizon, a broadening of hope, and the excitement of this great Divine visitation passes over young and old alike. It is the annexation of a new universe; it may be taken as a just and accurate description of the effect of a true religion upon a man's life. Religion does not narrow life, but broadens it into infinity. When a man opens his soul to the spirit of God, when he lives by faith and not by sight, when he is truly and deeply religious, he has entered into a heritage of spiritual vision, and lives a larger life because he has a wider horizon to gaze upon.

Youth is the period of visions. In the clear light of life's early days we see with piercing distinctness, because the faculty of the vision is fresh in us. What gives youth its power is that there is a noble inconsiderateness in its temper, which brings vision and action into closer relation than usually happens in later life. For youth, to see is to act, to believe is to affirm, to know is to do. The one key to a noble life is to see clearly, and then to act in absolute obedience to the highest vision. The visions of youth then become the dreams of age.

The measure of a man is the measure of his vision. Man is pre-eminently the creature who sees. Other creatures can look in stolid silence on the stars, but no other can watch them with intelligent curiosity and read their secret. What are the chief visions by which men live? They are four—the vision of the Mind, which is the vision of Progress; of the Moral Nature, which is the vision of Duty; of the Heart, which is the vision of Love; of the Soul, which is the vision of Faith. It is by these visions that men live. To keep these visions through youth and manhood is to live nobly, and for such as do this the visions of youth become the dreams of age, and life rounds itself off into noble music and Divine completion.

1. *The Vision of the Mind* which is the vision of Progress. It is plain that Joel, in writing these words, felt himself at the end of an era. He sums up the evils of his time; he discounts its glory; he foresees its retributions; and he says there is nigh

at hand 'a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, as the dawn spread upon the mountains.' We are familiar with this prophecy. The merest glance at history convinces us that time moves in cycles. There is a period of growth, followed by a time of splendour and then by a rapid decline.

Have we come to-day to such a period of decline? We have had our dreams and our visions, and now the visions are clouded, the dreams are bitter. Age and youth alike are disillusioned and cynical. The chapter headings of 'International Aspects of Unemployment'—reviewed this month—are typical of the problems of to-day and the way in which they are being faced. 'A Sick Civilization' is the title of one, sub-divided into (*a*) 'War's sequelæ,' (*b*) 'Uneconomic peace,' (*c*) 'Monetary flux,' and the title of the last chapter is 'Cerebral Decay.' Over all our minds is a paralysis of fear.

How are we to be redeemed from it? By the one supreme thought, that the spirit of God still moves among the nations. 'I will pour out my spirit on all flesh' is a promise not for one age alone, but for every age till the Divine Will is perfectly wrought in the making of man. Things happen from time to time that seem a retardation of progress; humanity, afraid of itself and its destinies, retreats when every lofty voice calls to it to advance; civilization itself seems often to move upon a circle, repeating old follies in new forms; but nevertheless the Eternal Spirit of Life and Progress works tireless through all.

2. *The Vision of Duty.* Is there one of us who has not felt promptings which we know are noble, and which lead to nobility of conduct? And the highest wisdom of life is to live by those visions. A life spent in the pursuit not of pleasures but of duties is evermore its own exceeding great reward. And not least among its rewards is this, that it leads to tranquil and satisfied old age. Men have regretted many things when they have come to the end of life; but no man ever yet regretted a duty bravely done.

It is in the days of youth that the vision of Duty is most clearly seen. It is then that the verdict of the moral nature is felt to be most authoritative. And is it not true also that youth is fruitful with moral dilemmas which can be solved only by strict obedience to the moral vision? How easy to prefer pleasure to duty! But woe to you if you yield, for it is death! Fight on in stubborn obedience to right, even when right seems the means by which a wrong is wrought on you, and you will overcome. Follow that vision of Duty, for be assured it is Divine, and

He that ever following her commands,
On, with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward and prevailed,
Shall find the toppling crags of duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.

3. Take, again, *the Vision of the Heart,* the dream of the reality of pure and noble love in the world. Cherish the dream, for there is none that fades so easily. It is one of the commonest temptations of youth to discount this vision with a cheap and shallow cynicism. But there are old men who have gone to the grave dreaming of this love. It has kept its radiance to the last, and its fine gold has not become dim, nor its freshness faded. But these men were the men who in youth saw the vision, and followed it; and that was why in age they dreamed dreams still and saw a Paradise

Where love once leal has never ceased,
And dear eyes never lose their shine;
And there shall be a marriage feast
Where Christ shall once more make the wine.

4. Highest of all is the fourth vision, *the Vision of the Soul,* which is the vision of Faith. Faith in what? Faith in God, in Christ, in the spiritual world which lies around this little life. In the early dawn of life, when the vision of the soul is fresh, we see these invisible refuges of the soul as great realities. To the keen and unsophisticated sense of the child, God, and Christ, and the spiritual world are real and near. We hear, as Wordsworth heard, the murmur of the sea that brought us hither; we cry as Browning cried to that 'Pale Form,' so dimly seen, deep-eyed, the Christ, who moves our souls and calls for our obedient love. And there are many moments of acute vision, which by God's great mercy happen to us, when we gain heart-moving glimpses of Christ, when He steps out of some often read verse before us in the Divine charm of His love; when some hymn interprets and reveals Him for an instant, and our souls go out to Him. And there are hours in life too, when the reality of a

spiritual world is made almost visible to us; when at the grave we have exchanged beauty for ashes, when in prayer we have seemed to find an answering voice, when in silence we have felt the mystery of unseen presences, and our hearts have leapt up in the passion of conscious immortality. Oh, cherish these visions, follow those inherent intuitions of the soul. Faint as they are, they are true; and they will grow stronger as we follow them, and in the struggle of life they will be the masterlight of all our seeing, and in the eventide of life will shine like a benignant sunset on the path that slopes to rest.[1]

Trinity Sunday.

Wanted—Volunteers!

'Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.'—Is 6^{8}.

1. As has often been pointed out, there is no Trinitarian reference in this text. We no longer understand the words 'Who will go for us' as part of a colloquy between the Persons of the Godhead. As the Bishop of Durham says, when Isaiah in his ecstasy 'heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' we may be sure that he took from the words no other impression than that which would have been familiar to the men of his generation. The Jewish Scriptures not infrequently disclose the belief that Jehovah presided over a number of Divine beings other than Himself, with whom He took counsel, and through whom He acted. Thus the prophet Micah is said to have heard the Lord discuss with 'the host of heaven' the means by which Ahab should be 'enticed' to destruction; and the Book of Job opens with a scene in the heavenly court 'when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.'[2]

But though there is no conscious Trinitarianism in this text it contains a fitting lesson for Trinity Sunday. For in it there is a great deal implied as to the Divine nature. We see that there is that in the Godhead which can appeal to the spirit of man and hold fellowship with him. The thick veil, which shrouds the enigma of existence, is for a moment lifted in the Temple, when God calls, and Isaiah answers His call; and that which we are permitted to see points to a still greater apocalypse of Godhead, when the response to the Divine vocation shall be rendered, not by one whose way must lie through repentance and purgation to a partial vision and a temporary witness, but freely, fully, and finally by Him who was at the same time God and man.

2. Our text then brings God and men together. For it shows two things—first that God has need of men and calls them, and second that they themselves must respond to the call. He will have volunteers, not forced labour.

(1) '*Whom shall I send?*' Here is the Almighty waiting for a human instrument. The mere statement of such a possibility touches the soul with awe. The Father of our spirits has imposed upon Himself a limitation which makes Him dependent upon His children. There is Divine work which tarries until the appointed soul arrives.

God has never done any great thing in human history until He has found some man big enough to handle the job. Earth's chosen heroes have always been men who have stood alone. Count them o'er, and they tower like tall trees above the forest of humanity: Noah, Abram, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Isaiah; events paused till they appeared, each to do the work for which he was called. The salvation of the Gentiles waited for Paul. The Reformation waited for Luther. The English revival waited for Wesley. The Salvation Army waited for Booth. Nationalism waited for Lincoln, and every great cause waits till some man answers the call.

There is a significant thing about this call that Isaiah heard. It was not specific; his name was not mentioned. No great imperative spoke out of the smoke, and said, 'Here, Isaiah, you go.' It was the general, eternal call that he heard. Many people still wait for the lightning flash, the thunderbolt.

(2) '*Send me.*' The call was one for volunteers. It was not conscription. And Isaiah volunteered. 'Then I said, Here am I; send me.'

Wanted Volunteers
To do their best for twoscore years!
A ready soldier, here I stand,
Primed for thy command
With burnished sword.
If this be faith, O Lord
Help Thou mine unbelief
And be my battle brief.[3]

It is the volunteers who count; the great achieve-

[1] W. J. Dawson, *The Reproach of Christ*, 242.
[2] H. H. Henson, *The Creed in the Pulpit*, 268.
[3] Robert Louis Stevenson.

ments of humanity have always been the work of volunteers, they have been the expression of men's innermost natures. No really great thing has ever been achieved in response to material incentives.

We read that the night when Wilberforce first denounced West Indian slavery in Parliament, he left the House of Commons an outcast and a pariah, with all the great country houses closed against him. We know that when Henry Ward Beecher identified himself with the same cause of negro emancipation, he became one of the best-hated men in the country, risking violence and worse. Men cannot be coerced into such action, or encouraged to make such stands, by offers of gold or promotion; they come forward voluntarily or not at all, in free obedience to an inner, higher law. It was the same with the men, so diversely gifted, Mazzini and Garibaldi, who made a free and United Italy possible. There was not a trace of self-seeking in their activities, they did not weigh their sufferings against the possibilities of personal advancement—you can't create liberators and heroes by an appeal to their egoism; they would have died a hundred times over to realize their dream of their nation's unity and independence.

Think of the romance of missions—Morrison undertaking single-handed to carry the gospel into China, Judson preaching the Cross in Burmah, William Carey setting out upon the conquest of India, Livingstone devoting his life to the Dark Continent, and so on to this day. We recognize the spirit in which they went forth—the same spirit that filled Paul with fiery and unresting energy, that seized hold of those great Irish missionaries in the sixth and seventh centuries, and impelled them to evangelize the wild regions of Central Europe.[1] It is not the spirit of those who work for pay, but the spirit of volunteers.

'Then I said, Here am I.' Isaiah not only volunteered, but he volunteered without delay. And so it is that we men and women are to be standing at attention, waiting to receive our commissions. We are to have our loins girt and our lamps burning. We are to be 'shod with the readiness of the gospel of peace.' For we never know when some purpose of the Lord is ripening, when a human instrument will be wanted and a new commission given. 'At such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.' And therefore it is our wisdom to be always ready, listening for the ennobling summons of the Lord. 'How soon can you be ready for the Soudan?' Gordon was asked. 'I am ready now,' he answered.

And what are our commissions likely to be? For the vast majority of us they are likely to be quite ordinary errands. The essential things in human life are spiritual vitalities, and these are carried in the simplest ministries. Apparently commonplace fidelities are laden with heaven's grace. The crying needs of the world are elemental, and they are to be met by the elemental satisfaction of faith, and hope, and love. To be the minister of these graces is to be the fellow-labourer of God.

The Lord wants reapers: oh, mount up,
  Before night comes, and says, 'Too late!'
Stay not for taking scrip or cup,
  The Master hungers while ye wait;
'Tis from these heights alone your eyes
  The advancing spears of day can see,
That o'er the eastern hill tops rise,
  To break your long captivity.[2]

[1] J. Warschauer, *Challenge and Cheer*, 65.

[2] James Russell Lowell.

First Sunday after Trinity.

The Silent Years.

'Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature' (R.V.m. 'age').—Lk 2^{52}.

Of the many years spent in Nazareth, during which Jesus passed from infancy to childhood, from childhood to youth, and from youth to manhood, the Evangelic narrative has left us but the briefest notice. Of His childhood; that He 'grew and waxed strong in spirit filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him'; of His youth, besides the account of His questioning the Rabbis in the Temple the year before He attained Jewish majority—that He 'was subject to his parents,' and that He 'increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.' Considering what loving care watched over Jewish child-life, tenderly marking by not fewer than eight designations the various stages of its development, and the deep interest naturally attaching to the early life of the Messiah, that silence, in contrast with the absurdities of the Apocryphal Gospels, teaches us once more, and most impressively, that the Gospels furnish a history of the Saviour, not a biography of Jesus of Nazareth.

On His return to Nazareth from Jerusalem as a 'Son of the Law,' a recognized member of the com-

munity able to take His place with the adults in the synagogue service, a curtain immediately descends on His life. Until He emerges from the seclusion of the village to enter on His great work eighteen years after, nothing more is known about Him beyond the simple and natural statement of St. Luke, that He 'increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.' The years from twelve to thirty represent a period of priceless value in the life of a man. During that time the soul awakens into life, the mind develops,[1] opinions are formed, and convictions established. Whatever these mean to him they settle his future career, and probably his destiny. In the village of Nazareth life would be circumscribed by very narrow limits for an ordinary Jew. He would learn something of the world, mingle occasionally with its stream of profit, exchange the common gossip of the day with his neighbours, and visit his relations. His religious duties would keep him within the movements of the community, his business instincts take him to the adjacent towns, and his desire for pleasure to the Galilean lake. There is nothing in all these processes of human nature to account for the most perfect figure of all time, the One who stands immeasurably superior to all mankind.

Of these years we know three facts.

1. *They were years of obscurity.*—He lived within twenty miles of the busy scenes of the northern towns, near the trade routes of the caravans from the Eastern lands to the Western Sea, yet not a single word in the Gospels explains how the silent years in Nazareth were spent; nothing is said by His contemporaries to indicate that He was known before He left His village home for His baptism in the river Jordan. There is no evidence of any rumour about an extraordinary Person residing in Nazareth. The meagre references of the people in His village and district who did know something about Him show their astonishment at the remarkable powers He displayed. His own family were surprised and not altogether pleased with the sensation He caused; it was a notoriety out of keeping with the reputation they were content to enjoy. They had evidently seen nothing in His life to indicate that these marvels were to be expected. He was not even considered the most religious member of the family. For was it not James who had gained a reputation for rigid religious observance? For thirty years Jesus had lived with His family, and they had observed nothing more unusual than a constant readiness to help.

Jesus never sought fame—the fame which men love. They will risk life itself, they will face the cannon which pour forth destruction into the midst of them, to win renown, and 'fly victorious in the mouths of men.' This passion to win fame is not so grovellingly ignoble as that love of money which is a root of all kinds of evil.

Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears,
And slits the thin-spun life.

It is infinitely difficult for men to rid themselves of this passion, although in age after age the greatest have been among the saddest of mankind. *Omnia fui, et nihil expedit,* sighed the Roman Emperor who had risen from lowliness to the topmost summit of earthly grandeur. 'All my life long I have been prosperous in peace and victorious in war, feared by my enemies, loved and honoured by my friends,' wrote Abdalrahman the Magnificent, in his private diary. 'Amid all this wealth and glory I have counted the days of my life which I could call happy. They amount to fourteen.'

'I never spent such tedious hours in all my life,' exclaimed Napoleon I., as he flung into the corners of the room the superb coronation robes which he had worn when the Pope of Rome, in the Cathedral of Nôtre Dame, had placed the crown of St. Louis on the brows of him who had, a few years before, been the poor struggling sub-lieutenant of artillery. 'Right well know I that Fame is half-disfame'—such are the words which Tennyson puts into the mouth of the mighty Merlin:

'Sweet were the days when I was all unknown,
But when my name was lifted up, the storm
Brake on the mountain and I cared not for it.
Right well know I that Fame is half-disfame,
. . . . . .
The cackle of the unborn about the grave,
I cared not for it.'

And so the 'Emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of emptiness, all is emptiness' of the richest, wisest, and most splendid of earthly kings has been sound-

[1] G. Robinson Lees, *The Life of Christ,* 39.

ing through the centuries; and with that verdict of disillusionment comes the old wise lesson, 'Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not, saith the Lord.' Jesus gave to the lesson of this world-wide experience His seal of confirmation by His unknown years at Nazareth; and thus, by example as by His words, He says to us: 'Come unto me . . . for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.'

2. *They were years of toil.*—Jesus was content to stay in the ranks of common toilers. His reputed father was a carpenter, and He continued in the same trade. He did not strive to enter the law, which was the most influential profession among the Jews. He did not hunt around for some more rapid way of making money, but contentedly toiled on. There is a great deal said in these days about 'getting on in the world,' by which it is meant that young men should get off the farms and out of the trades into the professions and offices, and that everybody should get rich. Success is an emphatic word in our vocabulary. Now, it is undoubtedly true that every one should endeavour to develop his powers to the fullest measure in useful service, and this noble ambition should especially inspire the young. But this cry of 'getting on in the world' generally sets up false ideals and hopes, and works great harm. And worse still, it sets up a false standard of manhood. It measures worth by wealth, and attainment by position. But the truth is that men in getting up in this sense often get down. The true standard of manhood is something immeasurably better than wealth and something that every one can attain. 'I believe,' says Charles Kingsley, 'that a man might be, as a tailor or as a carpenter, every inch of him a saint, a scholar, and a gentleman.' A saint, a scholar, and a gentleman: these are the qualities that constitute a true man, and every man, whatever his station in life, can have them. Jesus was as truly a saint, a scholar, and a gentleman while making ploughs and ox-yokes as while preaching the Sermon on the Mount.

There has been a tendency in all ages to despise manual labour, and look down on those who live by it. All trade and mechanic work was to the ancient world despicable, a thing to be left to slaves, or those but a little above them. So it was in the days of the Roman Empire; so it was even among our Teutonic forefathers. A 'base mechanic' was quite an ordinary description in the days of Queen Elizabeth for the mass of the people, and to this day it is considered an immense disparagement to call a man 'a mere tradesman.' The Jews alone among the nations rose to a wiser standpoint, though even among them we find such haughty sentences as: 'How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough . . . whose talk is of bullocks?' But the lot of artisans was infinitely raised among the Jews by the fact that the greatest Rabbis were taught that it was well to be able to maintain themselves by a trade. What sublimer lesson could Jesus have taught to mankind than by spending thirty unknown years as the humble Carpenter of Nazareth? How fundamentally did He thus rectify the judgments of man's feeble and erring day! How did He thus illustrate the truth that 'all honest labour is an honour to the labourer'! How did He further demonstrate by this example, that man has no essential dignity except that which comes from his inherent nature as created in the image of God!

In viewing the youth of Jesus, we must not see Him, even in His outward life, as a mere tradesman tied to the workshop at Nazareth. His intelligence and keen human sympathy carried Him far beyond that narrow environment, and led Him to view the wide outlook of the world. But, on the other hand, it were unseemly and untrue to think of Him as detached from stated occupation, such as was of immediate use. There was a place for labour in the experience of Jesus, and even a necessity that He should share this one among the ordinary burdens of His fellow-men. His career as a student of Hebrew letters was early closed; now He must study the world in a view both wide and long; and this is a study that is never helped by idleness of the hands. At no stage of His life that was preparatory to His ministry can we imagine Jesus to have been either unable or disinclined to do the ordinary work of a man. So it was that He entered on that course of life which led to His being known for many years as the Carpenter of Nazareth; and the place of His early outlook was enlarged to be the place of that wider outlook in which He walked to His ministry.

If I could hold within my hand
  The hammer Jesus swung,
Not all the gold in all the land,
Nor jewels countless as the sand,
  All in the balance flung,
Could weigh the value of that thing
Round which His fingers once did cling.

If I could have the table He
Once made in Nazareth,
Not all the pearls in all the sea,
Nor crowns of kings or kings to be
As long as men have breath,
Could buy that thing of wood He made
The Lord of lords who learned a trade.

Yea, but His hammer still is shown
By honest hands that toil,
And round His table men sit down;
And all are equals, with a crown
Nor gold nor pearls can soil;
The shop at Nazareth was bare—
But Brotherhood was builded there.[1]

3. *They were years of poverty.*—Poverty is the normal lot of the vast majority of mankind. There was nothing squalid, nothing degrading in this poverty. It was the modest competence, earned by manly toil, which suffices to provide all that men truly need, though not all that they passionately desire. It was the poverty which is content with food and raiment. Men, by myriads, strive passionately for wealth.[2]

They strive and agonize for gold; they toil and moil, and cheat and steal, and oppress, and poison, and ruin their brethren to get money; they sell their souls, they turn their whole lives into a degradation and a lie, because of the false glamour of riches. The old song says rightly:

The gods from above the mad labour behold,
And pity mankind who would perish for gold.

Yet, after all, it is but the very few who, with all their passionate endeavours, attain to riches. The Dives who is clad in purple and fine linen, and fares sumptuously every day, is but one out of every hundred thousand; and very often his earthly wealth tends only to dehumanize his heart. The lesson of Christ's poverty has helped myriads of the humble to say, with brave Martin Luther, 'My God, I thank Thee that Thou hast made me poor and a beggar upon earth.' And as the wise king had prayed: 'Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me'; so Christ, by the example of these long, silent years of poverty, gave deeper emphasis to His own teaching: 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.' In the workshop at Nazareth, faithful in that which was little, Christ revealed to mankind where to seek and how to enjoy the true riches. By long example He added force to His own precept: 'Be not anxious for the morrow, for the morrow will be anxious for the things of itself.' 'Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?'

[1] Charles M. Sheldon.

[2] F. W. Farrar, *The Life of Lives*, 128.

Second Sunday after Trinity.

The Quest for God.

'Oh that I knew where I might find him!'—Job 23[3].

Job's cry for speech with God may be regarded as the cry of the human soul after God, 'Oh that I knew where I might find him!' His cry is for God. It goes straight to the mark, right over all lower things. We should not have been surprised if he had cried for relief from his troubles, but that was not what his heart was set upon. His heart was set on God. His case was extreme, and none but God could answer it. His friends would not believe in his goodness. They believed only in God's justice. He believes in God's justice as firmly as they do, and to that justice he at last appeals. Impatient of their well-meaning attempts to comfort him, he gets at length wearied out, and in effect says to them, 'Be done with your moralizing, I am sick of it: enough of this wrangling, let me go direct to God, and He will put my character in its true light.' He felt he had come to a crisis in his life, when none but God could avail. And so, brushing aside all the methods suggested by his miserable comforters he sends his cry direct to the throne—a cry of intense earnestness, the cry of one who knows his distress and seeks the only sure refuge. Give me God and I have enough. He is my refuge from attacks, and my portion in poverty. Let me lose all, says Job, only let me find Him. 'Oh that I knew where I might find him!'

Now, when Job uttered this cry, he unconsciously struck the keynote of universal desire. It has found

an echo in every age and every land. It may be truly said, 'There is no speech nor language where its voice is not heard; its sound has gone out through all the earth, and its words to the end of the world.' Even in the grey dawn of time we see human hands stretched out to heaven in quest of God, and all along the dark and tangled path of history the search has gone on. Every pagan system, every heathen temple, every graven image, every blood-stained altar has been but the cry of the soul after God. Men have always been conscious of God. St. Paul's words to the Athenians on Mars Hill are a true reading of history, and a true reading of human nature—that all men are so constituted that they should seek the Lord if haply they might feel after Him and find Him. It is the explanation of the altar with the inscription 'To the unknown God.' Even when men have no definite knowledge of God they are forced by the very needs of their nature, driven by inner necessity, to reach out after Him. Man is a religious being. He feels himself related to a power above him, and knows himself a spirit longing for fellowship with the Divine. It is as truly in response to the hunger of his soul as seeking food is to the hunger of his body. All the religions of the world that have been, and that are, bear witness that Job's longing is, in some form or other, universal; and many forms of unbelief are only more pathetic witnesses to the same fact.

1. In their quest after God men have gone in many directions, without finding any clear way to the living God. *Nature* told men there was a creator, but it failed to point the way to His seat. It simply said—God is, and all things were made by Him. It has many sweet voices, charming sounds, and lovely sights. But the very perfection of Nature hides the creator from us. If this world on which we dwell made us conscious of its existence by some grating noise or some jolting movement, we would be more likely to consider its Maker. But it spins at an enormous speed quietly through space.

But, even if we realize that Nature speaks to us of God, have we not a feeling that man stands outside? He is an outsider in the great world in which he dwells. He looks at the growing corn or springing flower, and he feels that these things are growing up, and drawing from the earth the power that nourishes their being. They respond to the great forces in nature, and they bring forth their fruit with a quiet and unobtrusive obedience. Like Gareth as he stood and watched the spate as it tumbled down among the rocks and cried out to himself:

> Thou dost His will,
> The Maker's, and not knowest, and I that know,
> Have strength and wit, in my good mother's hall
> Linger with vacillating obedience,
> Prison'd.

As time goes on we are always knowing more about Nature, and consequently a little more about God. In the early stages of civilization man was dominated by fear. Nature seemed to him so capricious. He could not calculate when an avalanche might come. He had no knowledge of thunder and lightning. The earthquake and the drought surprised him. This sense of uncertainty created fear. Now men understand that they are not living in a capricious world, but that they are living in an orderly world, where seed time and harvest, summer and winter, shall not cease. 'He hath given them a law which shall not be broken,' the Psalmist says. And as we realize that we are living in a world governed by law there comes a sense of security. And with the sense of security there comes a conviction that there is a faithfulness about the God of Nature. But we want more than this. Nature's message is for an innocent race. It has no sound of help to the guilty. It can give no sufficient reply to the question—'Oh that I knew where I might find him!'

2. To some extent God reveals Himself in *history*, in its epochs of advance, its awful times of decay, and in its frightful scenes that make the heart of man stand still. As Froude said, history is a voice that thunders through the ages the laws of right and wrong. A large part of the Bible itself is history, and God reveals Himself in the historical books as well as in the Psalms and Prophets. When we follow the history of the Israelites we can see the method of God's revelation of Himself to mankind, and the way in which He led them on to a fuller understanding of His ways of working in the world.

3. And in the *lives of men and women*, too, we have some vision of God. There are souls so great and pure that the hidden God seems to walk beside us and hallow the way. Heine, the German poet, confessed surprise that 'after dancing nearly half a lifetime over the waxen floors of philosophy,'

he had to come at last to sit at the feet of Uncle Tom in his Cabin to learn the meaning of the word God. Heine knew logic and philosophy: he was a poet and a wit, but intellect alone could not find God. But if God is not found in fullness either in nature, or history, or humanity, where is He found?

4. In the fullness of time He revealed Himself in *Jesus Christ*. The old question, 'Shall God indeed dwell with man on earth?' was answered when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The Divine Spirit wore our human form, used our human speech, and expressed Himself in words of beauty and works of mercy. Because He was veiled in human form there were doubters even amongst His friends. 'Show us the Father,' said Philip. To which Jesus replied, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' Had the Eternal Son not come in the flesh we would never have known God or understood about His Fatherhood. Too often God was thought of as dwelling apart from His creation, aloof and inaccessible; as one who stood outside the world, letting it go its own way. With that picture in mind it is hard to find any reality in God when His children are suffering and struggling here.

But this is a false idea of the teaching of Christianity. In the New Testament do we not find a contest in which not only men are engaged but powers above and beyond men? And in that struggle God takes the supreme part. What else does the Incarnation mean?

> O generous love! that He Who smote
> In Man, for man, the foe
> The double agony in Man,
> For man, should undergo.

In Christ God is acting. Christ is God doing things. Where in any world religion will you find that truth expressed save in the gospel of Christ? 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' And what does the Cross mean but that God is in the midst of the world's struggle bearing the cost of it in pain; and not there as the victim but as the victor? At Calvary the quest is ended. And this end of the quest is not the end of life, but its beginning, which enables us to be remade in His likeness.

The Apocryphal Gospels.

By the Reverend Alfred Plummer, D.D., formerly Master of University College, Durham.

I.

'Apocrypha,' when used of writings (ἀπόκρυφα βιβλία), may mean either 'kept in concealment,' 'hidden or stored away'; or 'of concealed origin,' 'of unknown authorship.' In the former sense it is commonly *laudatory*; in the latter not, but rather *depreciatory* or even *contemptuous*. A book may be kept in concealment for various reasons. Because it is worn out, and yet is too precious to be destroyed, as was often the case when the Scriptures were written on rolls of papyrus, which were being constantly handled in the synagogues. Or, because it is difficult to understand, and therefore unfit for general use; only the elect few being able to read it without risk of evil to themselves. Or, because it refers to a distant future, and cannot be understood by any one until the time arrives. Thus Daniel is charged: 'The vision of the evenings and mornings which hath been told is true; but thou, shut thou up the vision, for it belongeth to many days' (*i.e.* to a distant time), $8^{14.\ 26}$; and again, as a closing injunction: 'But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end' (*i.e.* the persecution under Antiochus); and 'Go, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed till the time of the end,' when they will become intelligible, $12^{4.\ 9}$. Cf. the Book of Enoch 1^{2}; the Assumption of Moses $1^{16.\ 17}$. That this 'stored up' literature was highly estimated among the Jews is evident. Ezra is supposed to have restored the Books of the O.T. which had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, after being specially inspired to dictate them to five men who were specially equipped for writing swiftly. 'So in forty days were written ninety-four Books. And it came to pass when the forty days were fulfilled, that the Most High spake unto me, saying: The twenty-four Books that thou hast written publish, that the worthy and unworthy may read; but the seventy last thou