

ciated with the Anglican Reformers of the sixteenth century. It is more than possible that the Mission Field will be the first to solve many of our modern problems. Certainly the recent declaration of the Bishop of Madras was of the greatest significance.

### The Human Element

Several recent railway disasters, especially the one in England, have called fresh attention to the fact that it is the human element that counts. When the General Superintendent of the Midland Railway in England was interviewed he said it would be found that "the human element had failed," and, although the full explanation is not exactly as the Superintendent suggested, the principle is essentially true. In all the work of the world, it is the man that counts. Personality is the supreme power, and no system can be better than the men who work it. It is the same everywhere, from early days at school to the life and work of manhood. Whatever may be the system, the man makes the difference. Personality also counts in business. There are some men who fail wherever they are put, and there are others who transform everything into success. Nowhere does this human element count for more than in the work of the Church. Whatever we may say about Divine grace and the necessity of a spiritual dynamic, nothing can make up for ineffectiveness. There may be goodness, and even diligence, but something more is required. It would be an interesting question to discuss, "Why good people fail." In most cases the fault lies in the human element.

### Beneath the Surface

It would be well if those who are inclined to think that the story of the Fall in Genesis is a myth or an allegory would take heed to the words of Bishop Ryle, the Dean of Westminster, in endeavouring to go deep enough to find the spiritual significance of the story, for this would put them in a very much better position for deciding as to the Divine character and inspiration of the narrative. It is one of the most grievous evils attending the methods of modern critical study that so many seem to neglect those parts of the Bible about which they feel doubtful, thereby missing the Divine truths that underlie the narratives. The Bishop's words are all the more important because of the position he holds in the realm of critical scholarship. This is how he treats the story of the Fall:—

The more closely we look into it, the more true to the facts of nature and of experience do we find this picture that is drawn of the primitive phase of man's life. We hear the voice of God walking in the garden, and we are afraid; we seek to hide ourselves, we have done wrong, and we know it. It was the movement of the first instinct—that faculty of conscience which condemned the wrong use of freedom, that step which meant a fall, as it were, into the abyss below. "Conscience makes cowards of us," said Shakespeare; and what Shakespeare said . . . had been told in the simple words, in the simple outline, of the old Israelite story, so precious to us, that was written more than two thousand years before. And when we read the writings of great men who knew human nature, we cannot fail to see, in terrible outline, the perennial agonies of guilty conscience. Conscience points man towards his Creator, the Personal Spirit Supreme of the universe.

If only men would thus get below the surface and try to discover the fundamental principles for which the story stands, they would soon arrive at the conviction of its Divine authority and inspiration. When we "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" the Word of God we readily obtain the best possible proofs of its character and power.

## THE GOD OF THE VALLEYS

Our lives are made up of hills and valleys. We are not always standing upon the lofty summits of spiritual delight, nor always in the cloudless enjoyment of the presence of God. There are depths as well as heights, valleys as well as hill-tops, in the Christian's life. Under the Israelitish economy there was a special order of priests whose privilege it was to draw near to God, and minister to Him in connection with holy things. These, and the Levites, were set apart for Jehovah's service. The rest of the tribes consisted of just ordinary people, who had their everyday avocations to attend to, "common people," as they were called (Lev. 4:27) in contrast to the priests. The Christian combines in himself the functions of both these classes. Every believer is a priest (Rev. 1:6), and as such may with boldness enter the place of His presence (Heb. 10:19). But he is also one of the "common people" in that he has to do with secular things as well as with what is more distinctly the service of God. There are seasons when we are able to leave earthly things behind, and be entirely occupied with the things of God. We dwell in thought upon the love of Christ, and all that His love has wrought in order to make us His very own, and we turn to God as the Source and Spring of all our blessing, the One Whose deep love moved Him to give His Son for us, and we worship Him. By the Spirit of His Son sent forth into our hearts, we cry "Abba, Father." We know He has made us His Sons, and that He loves us with a love that can only be measured by His love to Jesus (John 17:23). In the joy of that blessed relationship we draw near to Him. Our hearts range through the length and breadth of all that He has purposed for us, and we delight to think that we are destined to be conformed to the image of His Son, to be co-heirs with Christ, to dwell with Him for ever. These are sunny hill-tops, indeed. These are the "high places" where our souls delight to walk. But we cannot always be there. There are daily tasks to be performed, the daily bread to be won in shop or office, factory or field. Then there are the duties of the home, family responsibilities to be attended to, a thousand things that claim our care. As God's "priests" we have to do with the holy things of the mountain tops; as "common people" we have to do with the ordinary affairs of life. These latter are the "valleys" of the Christian's pathway.

Now arises a question of supreme importance. Is our God the God of the valleys as well as of the hills (1 Kings 20:28)? The Syrians of 901 B.C. said He was not. The enemy of to-day says He is not. We are told that "business is business, and Christianity is Christianity," by which is meant that the two things must be kept entirely separate, as if our lives were built up in two water-tight compartments, and as if the God Whom we know as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in Whose purposes of eternal love we rejoice, has nothing to do with our business, nor with the way we conduct it. But is this so? Let us turn to the Scripture already referred to. The Israelites had just won a great victory over the Syrians. The latter could not understand why their vastly superior force should have met with such a defeat. The only explanation that they could think of was that Israel's God was God of the hills. "Let us fight against them in the plain," said they, "and surely we shall be stronger than they" (ver. 23). Now, of course, it is true that our God is the God of the hills, and maybe He has given us many a wonderful victory, as such. One of Satan's great objects is to deprive God's people of the enjoyment of their spiritual and heavenly blessings. He would occupy

our minds exclusively with earthly things. Many Christians, it is to be feared, know little of God as the God of the hills. They know something of His goodness and providential care in connection with the things of this life, but to speak to them of His holy love, His eternal counsels, all that He has purposed for Christ's glory, and for us, in and through Him, is to speak to them a strange and unfamiliar language. The enemy has succeeded in blinding them to the highest and best of what is theirs to enjoy. They have never really won the victory over the Syrians on the hills. There are those, however, who by God's grace have done so. They have appropriated in the energy of faith that heavenly land, and now they seek help of God that by means of the whole armour described in Ephesians 6:13-17 they may in no wise be deprived of the fruits of the victory.

But is there not for such a very real danger in an opposite direction? What says the enemy, the Syrian of the twentieth century? If he has failed to gain the victory in connection with the high and holy things of God, he will attack us on the plains, in connection with ordinary affairs. "The Lord is God of the hills," he says, "but He is not God of the valleys." And the awful fact is that some Christians are ready to believe, and repeat as truth to others, this saying of the Syrian foe! He would persuade us to shut God out of our business life! "Business is business," he declares. Of course. But is business for the Christian the same thing as business for the worldling? Are his aims the same? Are his principles identical? Will not his methods be affected by his Christianity? Because a thing is "generally done," is the Christian to do it? Because certain questionable transactions are "usual," is the Christian to sanction them? What must be the condition of soul of him who would hesitate for a moment to give a whole-hearted reply in the negative to these questions? Yet cases are known where Christian men, who seem to be quite at home on the hill-tops amid the wonderful things of God, and can talk most intelligently as to His purposes and counsels, have excused themselves for lack of strict integrity in commercial life with the plea that "business is business!" It is the ancient Syrian lie revived: "The Lord is . . . not God of the valleys." But He is, and He expects that we should acknowledge Him as such, and transact our affairs in His fear, and glorify Him in connection with our everyday lives, by shunning every aim and method, every practice and line of conduct that His holy eye could not rest upon with approval.

What an unspeakable comfort it is to know that God is the God of the valleys as well as of the hills, and that we may speak freely to Him not only about His great and wonderful things, but about our own little, ordinary matters. What a relief to be able to consult Him in difficulty, to be supported by the assurance of His gracious care in times of stress, to put everything into His wise and loving hands when the burden seems greater than we can bear! What a loss is theirs who know not God as the God of the valleys! How great is the blessing missed by those who do not walk with Him in their everyday business life!

Be it ours, then, not only to walk with God upon our high places as did Habakkuk of old (ch. 3:19), but to walk with Him also in the valleys. Some of the greatest victories recorded in Scripture were valley victories. The valley of Jalon was the scene of Joshua's conquest of the five kings of the Amorites. The valley of Elah was the scene of David's triumph over the Philistine champion. And in connection with the valleys of our lives the greatest victories are to be won. And God is there to help us win them, for He is the God of the valleys as well as of the hills.