



On Weekly Reading of Gospel

The Gospel is read in the church at every service, at every service we are standing around this word of God and we always think that that makes us God's own people, and yet a great deal more is required of us if we wish to be this people of God and the people who can claim that that divine word belongs to it. The Bible was born in a human community, the Gospel was born within the Church. Both the community of Israel and the Church of God were there before Scriptures were elaborated. It is from within this community that knowledge of God, love of God, vision of His greatness, vision of His incredible beauty, vision also of the condition and destiny of the becoming and the vocation of man sprang. It is the community that brings forth a witness of something which is known to it, which is its life, which is its love and its joy. The people of the Bible are not the people who read it, are not the people who keep it faithfully in their hands and proclaim it. The true people of God, the true people of the Bible, the true people of the Gospel should be such a community that could write the Holy Book, proclaim it within its experience, bring it forth, give birth to it. Short of being such a community we do not truly belong either to the Gospel or to the people of God.

Often we console ourselves thinking that we are the worshipping community where the word of God is declared, where it is preached, the community that somehow aims at living the word. And yet when we look around we see that what is made manifest gives the lie to our claim; if we were the community which from within, from the depth of its own experience had brought forth the divine word, those who hear us repeat it, proclaim and preach it would have a double revelation; on one hand of the thing declared, on the other hand the fact that these things have become flesh and blood, that they have become reality of human life and the community which would preach the divine word would be a proof that this divine word is true. Is that what we see? Can we say that the community which we are, small or big, is a community which in itself is a proof of the message which we bring, the good news that Christ brought into the world? Is it not still true and perhaps more now that it was in the early days, that the word of God is mocked and reviled because of us? Here is the rebirth to which we are called, we have a Book which has been brought forth from the very depth of human experience of God, a Book in which God indeed speaks through a community that could witness the truth of the word. We must become again such a community, we must learn to live according to God's own word, to the revelation of His will; we must learn to be such people whose life coincides with the word of the Gospel. As long as the Gospel remains a law outside us, as long as the Gospel is the divine will different or opposed to our will – we are not the community of the Gospel; we are aiming at becoming it, perhaps, at best, but we are not yet a community capable of revealing the good news to the word. Christ said that the word He has preached is not an arbitrary command of God, it is the revelation of what true humanity is, it is a revelation to us and to others of how a truly human being should feel and think and will and live. As long as we do not feel that way and think that way and live that way – it is not that we are disobeying God's law, it is not that we are destroying our true self, we are not human in a true sense, in the vocational sense of this word. And so the renewal of the Church begins within each of us. The reform of the church when it touches ways of praying, when it affects outer constitution is not a return to the sources. There is only one well of light of which streams the water of eternal life – it is the Gospel itself which is a revelation to each and all of us of what human being is and what human relationships are.

Let us then take earnestly this witness of the Gospel, realising that when the judgment comes it is not God with a law, different or alien from us, who will judge us. We will see what we should have been, what we



might have been and what we have not chosen to be. There will be sadness, there will be tears indeed, not because God will curse and reject us, but because, seeing the beauty of our calling, we will see how far short of it we have fallen. Let us then in the time left to us, and it does not take years, it takes a moment that transforms a life, let us turn to the Gospel itself, let us learn from Christ Himself what we are, what we can be and if we have any doubt we can, let us remember Christ's own words when Peter said: "Who then can be saved?" Christ said: "This is impossible to men, but to God all things are possible." Let us go forth in this hope and in this joy and in this certitude. Amen.