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In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

Daddy and You.¹

'His father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.'—Lk 15²⁰.

ONCE on a day a friend of mine was going a long journey, fourteen or fifteen hours of it, and near the start a wee lass and her mother got into the carriage, and kept everybody cheery all the way. She was a merry little soul, and there were heaps of things to interest her. Sometimes she looked out of the window at the houses flashing past, and boys and girls going to school, and cows standing in the pools lazily flicking their tails, at this and that, never the same for two seconds together—a wonderful film, far better than a picture house, for it is real. And then there were the pictures in the papers to be studied. And like the kind little mother that she was, she had brought her dolly with her for a holiday and had to see about it every now and then. It was a happy day. But every quarter of an hour or so her face grew very grave, and in a sad wee voice she asked her Mummie, 'Whatever will my Daddy be doing without me?' I really don't know. I'm sure it was a horrid day for Daddy, seemed very long and very dreary. When he came home in the middle of it the house would be so dreadfully empty. And it would be far, far worse at night—how still and quiet it all was; no noise of little feet, no rush of a wild wee lass to meet him, no pouring out how Dolly had been just fearfully ill, but she was better now and sleeping quietly, and the Doctor thought it was all right; no games and romps. Daddy would find it very dull and very lonesome, I'm afraid, without his little 'Me.'

And here is Christ telling us about another Father, whose silly boy got tired of home, and flung away, and thought for a bit he was having a great time of it. And though he never thought of his Father even once, all the time he was away His Father missed him dreadfully and could not get him out of His mind. He had to push on with His work, of course, but every now and then He just had to slip out, and have a long look up the road and down the road to see if the boy might be coming back at last. But there was never a

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

sign of him, and with a sigh the Father turned away again, but in a very little He was out once more. He might be coming now, you see. That Father wasn't having a nice day without His boy felt lonely and unhappy.

And you know that He is your Father too, and that His name, of course, is God. And, says Christ, every time that you are cross and selfish or sulky He feels that you have gone away and left Him, and He misses you just terribly, though He is the great God and you are only little you, can't get you out of His mind, wishes and wishes you were back again. And I think that you should remember that, don't you?—and that when you are peevish and grabby and pouting you too should ask yourself, 'But whatever is my Daddy doing without me?' and that you should get up and run straight home to Him, and love Him who loves you so very much.

I'm sure that when that little lass gets back her Daddy will be at the station, that he won't forget the day, but will be certain to be there however busy he may be; that he'll be so excited he'll be down long before the time, that if the train is late he'll get quite fidgety about it, and that when at last it really puffs in and stops, he'll hold such eager arms out to his little girl, and will keep fast grip of her hand to make sure she is really home, and will be happier by far than he had been all the long, long time she was away.

And God, too, is watching and waiting for you, has been waiting a long time. Hasn't your train, too, got late? And aren't you, too, going to run to Him, and put your arms about His neck, and take His hand, and keep beside Him—very close to Him—and let Him see you love Him and are happiest when you are with Him and He is with you. Why not be done with the sulks and the selfishness and run to Him at once? For 'whatever is your Daddy doing without you?'

The Cock and the Trumpet.²

'At midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning.'—Mk 13³⁵.

There is a little town in the north of England which has a quaint coat-of-arms. It is a drawing

² By the Reverend Cecil Nicholson, Darwin.

of a cock and a trumpet. Under the drawing the motto is '*Timere vel mutare sperno*,' from which by a slight adaptation is derived the motto of one of our noble families, 'I scorn to fear a change.' There is also a popular rendering of the motto, suggested by the drawing, and not far wrong in meaning. It is 'While I live I crow.' It is about that I want to speak to you.

There are people who don't quite like the sound of this. They think it sounds like boasting. They think the cock is a boaster because he crows. I should rather think that the hen is a boaster, because she cackles when she has laid an egg. Just because she has done her daily duty she makes a noise and calls attention to it. That is boasting. The cock's crow isn't like that. It is a ringing cry of joy and energy, and life and hope. It is one of the grand things of the world.

Our Lord Jesus Christ knew the cock's crow. He heard it and remembered it, and spoke about it. 'Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning.' He knew there was something to listen for in the crowing of the cock. Let me tell you of some things we may hear, some ways in which we may read the motto: 'While I live I crow.'

This is the first: '*While I live I sing in the night.*' The time of night Jesus means by cock-crowing is just after midnight, just when the night is darkest and deepest. Suddenly there rings out of the stillness the shrill cry of the cock. I don't know, really, why cocks wake up at midnight to crow, but what they seem to say is this: 'Oh, ye men and women, and boys and girls, it is all very dark and very still, and you all lie as if you were dead, but I'm alive, alive, and I call to tell you so. While I live I sing in the night.'

That's the kind of voice we need: the voice that can sing in the night. Many people can shout and sing when the day is with us and when all is going well, but we need words of hope and cheer when nights are dark, and ways are hidden and things seem to be dead. We want boys and girls who can learn to be cheerful and hopeful when others are in despair, who can smile, as Mrs. Wiggs would say, when the clouds are thick enough to cut. We praise the cock because he sings in the night.

The second is this: '*While I live I hail the morning.*' The cock crows also at dawn. He has the best right to do so. Those who are cheerful in the

dark can best be happy in the light. What do we hear the cock cry in the morning? It is like this: 'Cock-a-doodle-do! Oh, ye hens and men, and boys and girls! Here I am again, alive yet, and look, the sun is shining and morning has come. Rouse up, ye sleepy hens, and catch the early worm. Rouse up, ye boys and girls, for food and fun, and school and play. Life is worth living. It is beautiful and glorious and glad. I sing the praise of the morning.'

How beautiful that morning canticle! Can't we sing one? Our Father has brought us through the night to a new day. Shall we not sing for the beauty of the light and the gladness of the morning?

This is the third: '*While I live I speak to my brother.*' There is another thing about the cocks in the night-time. They call to one another. You lie awake some night. Suddenly the silence is broken. It is the cry of a cock not far away. Then you hear another farther away, then another, and another, until from the far distance you hear just the faintest call. The cock near you answers again, there are other calls. Then again there is silence. The cocks have been speaking to their brothers.

That is grand, and we should be like that. Why does God give us voices? It is so that we may speak to one another. He wants us to laugh and sing to one another. God does not mean us to be lonely and silent and sad. He wants us to speak words of hope, words of love, words of joy. Just as the cock crows in the night and in the morning, so in all the nights and mornings of our life, God wants us to speak and sing to one another and to Him until that day when we chant our clear canticles and sing our great Amens in the company of the angels who sing about His throne.

The Christian Year.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

When the Doors are Shut.

'When the doors were shut.'—Jn 20¹⁹.

'When the doors were shut,' there was a blessed deprivation and negative, and there was a far more blessed appropriation, enfranchisement, and positive. For then the adversaries were compelled to stay outside, and the Friend of friends was welcomed within.

1. They were Jews who were excluded from the

Upper Room, men bitterly opposed to Christ and His adherents. Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood. It is against tendencies, habits, currents of opinion and custom and life.

Unbelief must be shut outside our doors. Sadducees and Pharisees, the teachers in high place and the people who looked up to them, were without a living faith. A speculative infidelity, a dogmatic and avowed scepticism, can have no attractions for us, who have yielded Christ the assent of the mind and the consent of the heart. But is faith woven into the very texture of our existence, until He is clung to and boasted of at every minute of every day? Can we say, as Edward Payson said, 'I have done nothing myself. I have not fought, but Christ has fought for me. I have not run, but Christ has carried me. I have not worked, but Christ has wrought in me. Christ has done all'?

Formalism must be shut outside. The Jews were pedants and precisians in worship. Not a sacrifice was omitted, not a punctilio of ritual, not a farthing of the Temple tax. But no soul leaped and quivered under the careful observance. It was 'icily regular.' It was 'splendidly null.' We may remember the family altar. We are never willingly absent from the meeting of the congregation. We give, not ungenerously, to the ventures and enterprises of God's Kingdom. But does the vital Wind blow through our religion?

Worldliness, too, must be shut outside. The townfolk of Jerusalem were intensely secular. Only at rare intervals had they any glimpse of the land of far distances. The opportunities and the ambitions of the present absorbed them. Can we, Western Christians of the twentieth century, afford to judge them severely? Profit and loss, material possibilities and monetary gains, wield a masterful influence over us; and grace and truth, the spiritual and the everlasting, are pushed into dimness and distance. The Interpreter, we read, had Christian 'into a private room, and bid his man open a door; the which when he had done, Christian saw the picture of a grave person hung up against the wall, and this was the fashion of it. It had eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hand, the law of truth was written upon his lips, *the world was behind his back.*' It should be our picture; but is it?

And *unbrotherliness* must be shut outside. If the Jews were united in antagonism to Christ, they

were honeycombed by animosities among themselves. Sect wrangled against sect. They were preparing for the melancholy end, when, inside the Holy City, the victims of the strife of factions outnumbered those who fell under the swords of the legions. Our differences are not so cruel. Our controversies are more decorous. But are we free from heart-burnings? Is there a private quarrel which conscience tells us should be healed? And the breaches of Christ's Church—do they distress us, and send us to our knees in confession and prayer?

Yes, and every *preoccupation* must be shut outside. His contemporaries did not fairly and honestly study Jesus Christ. Their crowded histories, like the Bethlehem inn, had no room for Him. The pity is that a similar carefulness about many things not only keeps sinners from their Saviour, but prevents saints from knowing their Master. We have so much to do in the externalities of His service, words to speak, appointments to keep, errands to run, that we are without leisure to cultivate communion with Himself.

2. 'When the doors were shut, came Jesus,' the Friend of friends. And with the odour of the ointment of His Presence the room was filled.

To close the doors on the intruders is *to make sure of Christ's salvation*. Standing there, what did He do? 'He showed them his hands and his side.' In His wounds they read something more than the guarantee that He was the same Jesus who had died; they read the charter and certificate of their own redemption. 'Praise be to Thy name,' cried one in the Welsh Revival, 'for the prints of the nails, four windows to see Thy love!' When the usurpers go, we are free to consider Him who laid down His life for us. In the unblemished hands and feet pierced on our behalf, and in the scar of the spear, our faith has the pledge that the burden of guilt is lifted away, that the new day has dawned, and that all is well.

To close the doors on the distractions and defilements is, moreover, *to enter Christ's peace*. As He stood in the midst of them, what did He say? 'Peace be unto you!' Let us turn from whatever hinders, and He will not stop short with forgiving us; 'Still there's more to follow.' The assurance of the love of God; the intimacies of the children in the home; a conscience which has ceased to accuse, and a heart which is satisfied; release from depression, and deliverance from temptation,

and fruitage from affliction—this is our Lord's peace.

And to close the doors is *to be qualified for Christ's work*. What other thing did He tell His companions? 'As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.' It was good to be recipients of His bounty, but better to be givers after His pattern. Those men were to prolong His mission and to distribute His grace. We also wish to be His apostles. Well, we must live beside His truth, and must converse with Himself, till we are robed in His holiness and set on fire with His zeal. Thus we shall be equipped in mind and in spirit to travel forth as His ambassadors.

To 'lock the door and bar them out, the turmoil, tedium, gad-about,' is, in short, *to be filled into Christ's fullness*. What more had He for those favoured souls? 'He breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' It is our chief necessity, the infilling of the Holy Ghost. His illumination, so that the Bible shall have endless significance and worth. His sensitiveness, so that sin's stealthiest approach shall be detected, and its most plausible disguises exposed. His consecration, so that, like Henry Martyn, we shall burn out for God with a flame as of phosphorus. His authority, so that in Christ's name we shall bind or loose, and in His name do many mighty works. Church and world are crying aloud for Christians whom the Spirit of God possesses, and from whom He flows in an unhampered flood of benediction. And, when the doors are shut, the Lord Jesus Christ comes, to breathe the Spirit into us.¹

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The Rest of Fulfilment.

'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'—Mt 11²⁸.

For all of us, I suppose, this sentence has associations so rich and varied that there is no chance of getting to the heart of them. At the end of all our meditation something will remain over unsaid and unsayable, just because the words themselves have such deep meaning for us. All that we want to do now is to try to get some fresh aspect of them, to find some ray of light which they shed and to separate it from the rest.

1. The first and most important task is to understand the nature of the gift which is promised.

¹ A. Smellie, *Out of the Desert a Gift*, 11.

Rest is a great word, and like all great words it covers a very wide field. It is as a matter of fact the simple words which stretch out to wide horizons. The long complicated words have precise meanings; their boundaries are very obvious.

We may be quite sure that when the Master uses the word rest He does not stop short at the obvious and surface meaning. His simplicities have a point which penetrates deep down into the heart of things. So when He speaks of rest He is not thinking merely of tired bodies which need repose. It is rest of soul which Christ is promising here—that dimly discerned end which our personalities are intent on discovering for themselves.

Jesus was in closest touch always with men and women in their ordinary everyday wants, and words like these spring out of His sensitiveness for their disappointments and failures. Jesus never invented needs. It was just the ordinary wants of men that He claimed to be able to meet.

Beneath the surface of all life's restlessness and hurry, beneath the many-coloured pageant of the days, there is this ceaseless search for an object. Every life is seeking satisfaction; trying now one thing, now another, measuring itself against the world it lives in, urged on all the time by an imperious instinct to seek until it finds 'the pearl of great price' for which it is ready to throw all its other gains into the scale. In that restless search for satisfaction many lives move vainly on the surface of things, many blunder and mistake, some are tossed about on the tempests of passion, others follow will-o'-the-wisps far into the night, while others still battle with huge disappointments and seem to grasp the prize only to have it torn from their hands, and still they go on seeking. But the one thing which never ceases is the movement of life towards satisfaction.

Now, is it not this spirit of seeking which Jesus promises to answer? What is rest of soul but the satisfaction of this instinct? Jesus has no easy specific to offer against the cares and anxieties, the disappointments and sorrows of life. What He does promise is to meet the soul on its journey of discovery, to gird it with courage for its trial, and to guide it securely to the end. That is the quality of His rest.

2. The second point we note is that Jesus promised His rest to the weary and heavy laden, to men and women who are bowed down beneath the weight of life. That is quite characteristic of His

way of doing things. Jesus always takes His gifts first to those who need them the most. But do not let us make any mistake about His promise; it is not offered to men and women such as these, as a kind of compensation for the ills which they have to endure. It was not that He offered His rest in exchange for the things which they had lost. His rest includes all that they had ever lost. It is the greatest gift of all, the fulfilment of all the starved and disappointed instincts of human life.

The answer of Jesus to disappointed and dispirited people is not to say, 'All those desires and hopes which have been baffled are of no account. Come, creep into this quietude where their restless voices shall be heard no longer.' He does not sing a spiritual lullaby to the tired brain and heart. That is not His answer. It is the answer which a religion like Buddhism gives, whose only salvation is the abandonment of desire, and whose rest is the great silence in which all the hope and passion of life is stilled.

The answer of Jesus is the assurance that all life's deepest instincts are true, that the hopes and desires that men carry with them are not lures but lamps, and that beyond all apparent disappointment there is fulfilment.

Man at his noblest must refuse any lesser gift. If out of the struggle of life nothing is to come, let us tread the path to the end without illusions. But if there is something great to issue from the conflict, let us see it, let the assurance of it brace nerve and sinew and heart. That is the spirit of man at its noblest, and nothing less than the answer to that demand is the rest which Christ gives.

3. And now, finally, that this idea of what rest means is true becomes all the clearer when we consider the conditions which Christ attached to it. For He did attach conditions. His promises do not float dreamily through still air from a sunlit sky. They are prefaced by a challenge which in this case is a threefold one: 'Come unto me.' 'Learn of me.' 'Take my yoke upon you.' That threefold summons is an ascending series, Come, learn, and take the yoke. A strange recipe for rest! Yet it is the only recipe for the rest we have described. Man can only find rest by obeying the highest law known to him. He may sometimes think to find it by easing the demands of life and by living on a lower level of comfort, but it cannot be done. The heart on which no great demand is made, is beset by restlessness.

The road we so often refuse is the way, forbidding as it often appears, to the fulfilment of life. This is where the sternness and the tenderness of Christ meet together. He was stern and tender because the life which God made and the laws which govern it are stern and tender too. There is in God's great love fulfilment for the needs of every life, but because God's purpose is so high, the way towards that rest is not easy; it is the way of truth to be learned and the yoke to be carried. But because it is Love's purpose the very greatness of it means that the yoke is easy and the burden is light.¹

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Ever Fuller Joy.

'That your joy may be full.'—1 Jn 1⁴.

'Your joy no man taketh from you.'—Jn 16²².

Our capacity for joy is an original endowment of our nature. But there are various kinds of joy or happiness. There is the joy that arises from the physical life, there is the joy that springs from the intellectual life, and there is the joy that has its source in the spiritual life.

1. First of all, there is the joy that belongs to our physical life, as our natural birthright. Now this joy is a possession that we share in common with the lower animals. Such joy is freshest and fullest in our earliest years, and gradually loses in intensity as we advance into middle age, and, if we come to threescore years and ten, or older, our physical strength becomes, but too often, in the words of the Psalmist, 'labour and sorrow.' It is thus manifest that this joy cannot be the joy mentioned by St. John, a joy which is such that the world cannot give, and the world can never take away.

2. Nor can the joy be that which springs from the intellectual life. The pleasure, which is derived from such a life, is indeed more equable and lasting than that which springs from the physical life. Even unto old age it furnishes unfailing sources of joy—that is, provided the intellectual powers last, and that knowledge is pursued for its own sake and not for the pleasure which the acquisition of knowledge yields: for the one condition of our obtaining the highest joys of the intellectual life, as of the physical, is that we do not pursue them.

This principle, that we obtain the physical and other joys of life just in the measure in which we do

¹ S. M. Berry, *The Crucible of Experience*, 147.

not make such joys our aim, is aptly defined by Bishop Boyd Carpenter, in his Bampton Lectures, as 'the Law of Indirectness.' John Stuart Mill in his *Autobiography* (ch. v.) gives expression to this law as follows: 'Those only are happy . . . who have their minds fixed upon some other object than their own happiness; on the happiness of others, on the improvement of mankind, even on some art or pursuit, followed not as a means, but as itself an ideal end. Aiming thus at something else, they find happiness by the way.'

In the intellectual and moral spheres the same law holds: that if we would be happy, we must not make happiness our aim.

But, however noble be the objects to which we consecrate our life, such as home, kindred, country, learning, science, art, poetry, or music—all these, sooner or later, cease to furnish the spring of joy that God intended should arise unfailingly in the hearts of all His children. Let us quote in illustration of this fact two short poems. The first is from Shelley. This most spontaneous of our lyric poets, having lost all faith in God, gave himself up wholly to poetry and the worship of Nature, and for many years he appeared to have found in them what he sought. But at last they ceased to satisfy, and the following stanzas express the dissatisfaction that filled him:

O world! O life! O time!
On whose last steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
No more—Oh, never more!

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight;
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more—Oh, never more!

Now let us contrast this wail of despair with the glad utterance of the unknown writer, who, in face of the worst woes that life inflicts, can express his faith and hope in a veritable pæan of triumphant joy:

In the hour of death, after this life's whim,
When the heart beats low, and the eyes grow dim,
And pain has exhausted every limb—
The lover of the Lord shall trust in Him,

When the will has forgotten the lifelong aim,
And the mind can only disgrace its fame,
And the man is uncertain of his own name—
The power of the Lord shall fill this frame.

For even the purest delight may pall,
And power must fail, and pride must fall,
And the love of the dearest friends grow small—
But the glory of the Lord is all in all.

This latter poem might be fairly taken as representing the mental attitude of St. Paul in the closing years of his life, whose joy grew fuller as his outward lot grew darker. It is true also of every man so far as he follows in the footsteps of Christ.

3. The comparison of these two ideals has brought us to the third division of our subject—the joy that has its source in the spiritual life. Here, as in the spheres of the physical and intellectual life, the same Law of Indirectness holds: these joys are only attainable on condition that we do not make them our object.

Now it is quite clear that, if our life is to grow richer in joy, it must grow richer also in desire; for, as we have seen in the lower spheres of human activity, a man's capacity for joy is conditioned by the number and depth of his desires; for joy comes on the fulfilment of desire. And so also it is in the spiritual life. In the spiritual life we have not to implant the higher desires within our hearts: these desires are either actually or potentially already there, being implanted by God Himself. It is our task to remove obstructions to their growth and to give them free play, and in so doing we become fellow-workers with God. We are simply to do the first task He calls us to in the right spirit. The reward of doing one such task is the increased power for fulfilling another of a kindred nature. And so the work of spiritual transformation advances, and more and more truly the supreme aim of such a man is fixed on the doing of God's will, and not on joy or reward in any form—not even on a blessed immortality save in so far as immortality is necessary to the adequate fulfilment of God's will by His children.

But though joy is not, and indeed cannot be, the aim of the faithful man, it must follow sooner or later. Wherever true joy, physical or spiritual, exists, there youth exists.

And so it is that as we grow older in years we are growing younger in spirit, and entering more and more into the true life of God's children, which is

an ever fresh and eternal youth. It is from this standpoint that we might explain the old saying: 'Those whom the gods love die young'—the true reason being that God's children can never grow old. And thus it comes that, in the case of such, physical death is in the most true sense the gate to that larger life in which our recovered youth discloses a still loftier spirit of adventure, more soaring expectations, more unfathomable trusts, quicker wonder and enthusiasms, in which aspiration is ever culminating in achievement, activity ever issuing in joy, hope ever springing up inextinguishably, and love is becoming, in ever larger measure, lord for evermore.¹

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The Song of the Flowing Tide.

'Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever.—Rev 1⁶.⁹ (R.V.).

This is a song of the flowing tide. *Unto Him!*—there had been days when the glory and dominion had ebbed away from Him,

retreating to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

He had popularity: it left Him. He had friendship: it forsook Him and fled. He had, as men might see it, prospects, for the common people heard Him gladly, and even their rulers could not afford to be indifferent to Him; but what were His prospects when He set His face towards Jerusalem, in the last journey, when He gathered His little company for the supper of farewell, when He went down in the moonlight into the garden of His agony? All the power and glory and dominion had ebbed away: they were out of sight in the last great ebb-tide of the Cross, when so much had gone from Him that He had nothing more to give. Turning from that to this, the soul is thrilled into astonishment by the mere force of contrast. *Unto Him!*—the tide has turned: the things that had departed are beginning to return. *Unto Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever!*—the course of time is restoring now the things which it had seemed to take away. The ebb-tide was but for an hour, a dark and fearful hour; but the

flowing tide shall pour its conquering fullness from time into eternity.

1. The present tense in the first verb has a message of its own, for the Revised Version is correct in translating 'Unto him that loveth,' not 'loved.' 'Loved' is true in its own place: 'having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.' Some of them had found in the love of Christ Jesus a sunlight brighter than that which lay down the hills of Galilee, a new wine of the Kingdom richer than the cup which they drank together on the night in which He was betrayed. The Incarnation was the unveiling of love. And the marvellous Life was the pattern of love. And the Cross was the supreme proof of love, the touchstone of its worth and faithfulness. And the Resurrection was the triumph of love, the assurance that in its seemingly unequal conflict with the powers of darkness it was really strong with the strength of God. But the end of that historic and redeeming sequence was only the beginning of another continuing reality, eternal in the heavens. Mrs. Browning says that:

Love strikes one hour—Love. Those never loved
Who dream that they loved *once*.

And these men brought out of their contact with their Saviour's love not only a clear and indelible sense of what it had been, but the conviction that it was a reality still, a fact which might be hidden behind the veil, but could not be changed nor abolished. There was a Jesus of history, but the few short years of the history are only the revelation of an eternal reality—a Christ of faith to be rejoiced in with joy unspeakable and full of glory. He loved: that is a gospel. He loveth: that is gospel upon gospel.

2. Three fruits of this love in human lives are suggested here. And now the present tense changes to the past, because the writer deals now not so much with the absolute and unseen reality as with its results in human life, results of which experience itself can bear testimony. They may be summed up in the three words emancipation, unity, dignity.

(1) The first result of this redeeming Love in human life is *emancipation*. 'He loosed us from our sins by his blood.' There is only one letter of difference in Greek between the verbs meaning 'to loose' and 'to wash,' and the manuscripts are here divided between the two verbs. The idea of

¹ R. H. Charles, *The Adventure into the Unknown*, 91.

liberation and that of cleansing are both, of course, figures of speech ; but in either case the figure covers a great reality, a reality of experience. We may call it purification or emancipation, or use any other word to describe the indescribable ; but such a soul spoke such a word because there was a reality corresponding to it in his own life and in that of the Christian community. There are many modern minds which revolt strongly not only from the blood sacrifices of the Old Testament, but even from the blood-imagery of the New. Two things are worth remembering. One is that this strain of thought is not merely Jewish. Men know nowadays about such strange pagan rites of purification as the taurobolium. The word *tauroboliatius* has been found on many inscriptions, dating from the later paganism : the people to whom it referred had gone through this ceremony of purification before being initiated into the sacred mysteries. A pit was dug in the ground. The candidate descended into it. Strong planks were laid across, and a young ox was brought and slaughtered upon the planks so that its blood might trickle down upon the person below. However strange or even nauseating such a ceremony seems to us, it at least expresses some very deep instincts of the human race, not confined to one people or nation. There is the feeling that man has need to be cleansed and purified : there is the consciousness that such deliverance can only be wrought by loss and pain. And the second thing to remember is this—that, if men have got far past that stage, the stage alike of Jewish altars and of the pagan taurobolium, it is because they have found something better—Christ's Cross and Passion, the agony and sacrifice of the Eternal Love. Why, after all, should men so revolt from this imagery of blood ? No great thing in the world's history has ever been wrought except by blood : why should the redemption of the world be any exception ?

(2) And then there is *unity* : ' He made us to be a kingdom.' The ordinary passer-by might well be scornful of such a kingdom, running across all

realms, races and classes, in none of them powerful, in all of them despised. It was a strange medley of a kingdom, masters and slaves, fishermen and scholars, Jews and Greeks and saints of Cæsar's household, Christians trained for their Christianity by long association with the holiest hopes and ideals of the past, and converts newly gathered in out of pagan sensuality, but washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. The principle of cohesion amid all this variety is in that radiant pronoun *He*. He hath made us to be a kingdom, us who could never have been a unity without Him : it is the kingdom of those who are swayed by one faith, one love, one gratitude, distinct from the kingdoms of this world and running across them all, yet in itself one and recognizing itself to be one across all barriers of language and race.

(3) The third gift of this royal, sacrificial Love is *dignity*, for that is how we may read this last phrase—' to be priests unto his God and Father.' Perhaps the modern man does not shape his idea of dignity along the lines of priesthood. But to the Jew there was no dignity like this, and the Jew may have been right after all. The word ' priest ' enshrines one of the greatest of thoughts—that a man should have access to God ; that he should have the awful joy of worship and the solemn privilege of intercession ; that in his life and work two worlds should meet and time be made richer and nobler by its contact with eternity. It was a great conception, even when it was limited to one class and order of men—ininitely greater when the class and order disappear, as they disappear in the New Testament, and the unearthly dignity of priesthood is open to all believers. He—the Great High Priest who is gone before and who has drawn us after Him—hath made us to be priests—not one here and there but all, slaves, simple folk, unlettered and unmitred souls—to see God's face for themselves and to hold communion with Him for themselves and to make their lives a living sacrifice.¹

¹ J. M. E. Ross, *The Tree of Healing*, 263.