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And now we come to the fourth figure among our group of penitents. We have no difficulty in deciding who she is, though when I say that it is *Blessed Mary*, the critics may interrupt and ask questions, and say, 'Which Mary is it?' To them at the present time we give no other answer than that 'It is this one.' And may we not call her *Blessed Mary*? Yes, that is what George Herbert calls her:

When blessed Mary wiped her Saviour's feet
Whose precepts she had trampled on before.

Some of us will remember, too, some lines written about her by a sixteen-year-old girl, named Christina Rossetti:

She came in deep repentance,
And knelt down at His feet
Who can change the sorrow into joy,
The bitter into sweet.

She had cast away her jewels
And her rich attire,
And her breast was filled with a holy shame,
And her heart with a holy fire.

Her tears were more precious
Than her precious pearls—
Her tears that fell upon His feet
As she wiped them with her curls.

Trembling betwixt hope and fear,
She sought the King of Heaven,
Forsook the evil of her ways,
Loved much, and was forgiven.

I wonder what Mary, the Blessed, will say when she comes to the choir or the place where they sing? That will depend, partly, upon the Church with which she is affiliated. If she is a Primitive Methodist she will sing:

My Jesus, I love thee, I know thou art mine.

A very lovely song too, in the judgment of all true penitents; but if the music and the words do not fit our traditions, we might ask her to lead our devotions and lift our thoughts by singing:

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

*Little by Little.*¹

'And the Lord thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee.'—Dt 7²².

THE other day I read about a working man in India who never, all his life, had a bigger wage than fourpence a day. That isn't much, is it? You wouldn't get much of a bag of sweets for that; and he had a home to keep, and a wife and family to clothe and feed, and all out of that poor fourpence a day. And yet, do you know that when he died he left twenty-five thousand pounds that he had saved. Well, to begin with, I think that he was a very foolish fellow. On to the end he was just a working man (that may have been all right), who lived in the same little house (that may have been all right), and slaved as hard as when he had only his fourpence wages (that may have been all

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

right). But, if my paper was correct, he made his wife slave too, which, I think, was a pity, and gave his children nothing more than when they had been very poor, which sounds to me as if it were rather a shame. What was the use of all that money lying doing nothing? What is the good of anything, unless you use it? You have got rows and rows of books you never read. You used to love them long ago, when you were very wee. But they are baby books, and you don't care about them now. And there they stand and only gather dust and are no use to you at all. Why not give them away to other children who would love them? I would keep some of them just for the old times' sake. I think that Dad would miss them, if you gave them all away. For sometimes he looks at them even yet, and they bring back to him the old days long ago when Somebody was very small, and always early, early in the morning, as soon as it was light, there used to come the pattering of little feet, and then the door handle turned so very cautiously,

and a small head peeped in, and a wee figure stole into the bed, climbed up so carefully and lost its balance and fell on the top of him, and a small fist pulled at his hair, and a wee voice breathed in his ear, 'Wake up, Daddy, and I'll read to you'; and then you sat and read the pictures, for you were too wee to read the writing, and for the thousandth time told all about Flopsy and Mopsy and Cottontail and Peter, and the other lovely rabbits in the Potter books. Yes, I think Dad would like some of them kept. But why not give the rest away to some child who has got no books and who has never been out in the country, and has never seen a rabbit bobbing off to its hole, with its little white tail showing. What's the use of them to you? And she would love them just as you did once and read them over and over and over again. Or what's the good of a bat if you never play cricket; or of golf-sticks if you never golf; or of that brain of yours if you never use it, never learn your lessons really, but just pretend; or of your life at all, if your days are just heaping themselves up, and no one is the better or the happier for them, if you are making no use of them? I think that man was an old silly. What is the good of having things if you allow them to rust, and make no use of them at all?

And yet it was a wonderful thing he did. To have only fourpence a day and have to keep a family on that, and yet heap up twenty-five thousand pounds. How was it done? How? By little and little, there was no other way: by saving a farthing to-day, and another to-morrow, that for a start. And after a whole week he would have less than twopence. And then one of his girls would go and tear her bonnie sari—the bright-coloured clothes they wear out there—and all that he had saved would have to go to get another, and he would need to start again from the very beginning. It must have been slow work, heaping up, now a farthing, now a halfpenny, now nothing at all. It took him years and years and years to save the first five pounds. But after that it grew quicker and easier. He bought a little house and sold it for ten pounds, and then he got a bit of land, and sold it later for twenty pounds, and so, little by little, but faster and faster after the first while, it grew, and grew, and grew.

That's how most things grow, little by little. You remember when you started spelling how you thought that you would never learn whether the

'e' or 'i' comes first. Have you got it yet? Quick now. Is it 'piece' or is it 'peice'? Of course, you say, I know, I'm not a baby now! And then, in reading, when you started weren't the words in 'ough' the limit? However could any one remember them; that 'enough' is 'enuff,' but that 'though' isn't 'thuff' but 'tho,' and 'plough' isn't 'pluff' or 'plo' but 'plow.' Wasn't it all real muddly? And later when you saw the pages on pages of irregular verbs in Latin, it did look so hopeless; and yet ten to-day and ten to-morrow, little by little, you did get them up, till now you can do without thinking, even the real teasers like 'cado' and 'caedo' and 'cedo' without one slip. Little by little, that's how most things grow. And so it is with far the biggest and the hardest thing of all. What are you going to be? A taxi-driver! I know, I sometimes think that I would like that too. A car conductor! Well, it would be nice to make that little ting of his whenever you chose. But do you know what Mother hopes that you are going to be? No, she won't tell, you say. Well, come near and I'll whisper it. She wants you to grow up like Jesus Christ. But how, you say? Well, it is going to be a business to make this tousley, grubby, grumpy little person, all fists and temper, into that. But, little by little, we can manage it. And there's no other way. This time let some one else go off with Father, even if it is your turn, that's one farthing saved: this time bite your lips, and get up, and don't cry, even though it does hurt. Good, that's another farthing put away. So, little by little, you must learn the way of it. Sometimes you'll have bad days like the one for that Indian man when his girl tore her sari, and all his savings had to go to get another, and he had to start again. Sometimes you'll drop the ball you have been winding slowly, and it will all unroll again. Sometimes you'll forget, and blaze up into a temper, just as you used to do, and be as far away from Christ as at the start. Oh yes, the other side will often score. But it's a poor team that crumples up because the other lot have got ahead. A good side plays the harder after that. And so must you. Begin again: start off once more; and by and by, little by little, it will grow easier and easier, and things will really move faster and faster now, and one day if you keep on at it long enough, that tousley, angry, sulky little person will have really grown like Jesus Christ, and have no sulks or temper any more.

Losing the Taste for Heavenly Things.¹

'We remember . . . the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: but now . . . there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.'—Nu 11^{6, 8}.

The Bible often calls us to 'taste and see' how good God is. It speaks of 'tasting the heavenly food.' How do we taste anything? It is a matter of the palate, which is the hard upper roof of our mouth. We put things against that with our tongue and taste to see if it is good. If it is not we say it is 'unpalatable,' that is, our palate does not like it.

Now, although the palate is a hard thing, it is very delicate. We can train it until its judgment is very fine; we can waste and spoil it until its judgment is very bad. Our taste may become very coarse, and our palate dull until it takes very strong flavours to make it feel at all. That is what had happened to the people of Israel.

In the desert God gave them manna. At first they liked it, but soon they found it unpalatable, insipid, that is, it had no taste. They began to grumble and say, 'We remember the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick, and now there is nothing before us but this manna!'

Something had ruined their palates so that food from Heaven had no taste for them. What was it? It was the spicy, highly flavoured food they had eaten in Egypt. They had been slaves there with hard work and long hours, but their task-masters were wise enough to give them 'tasty' food, hot, full-flavoured feeding, and they had liked it. Now they were free men, they forgot all the hardships of slavery, their strained muscles and weary bodies and the crack of the whip. They only remembered the hot spicy food; and the food which God gave them was not inviting. They said it had no taste!

It had a taste. It tasted like honey, and I think most of you would much prefer that to leeks and onions and garlick. The truth is, they had lost the power to taste. Their palates had become dull, and wholesome food couldn't waken any feeling in them.

This often happens. People who live out in India get fond of hot Indian dishes, curries and things that burn the mouth. Then they come home and must have the same sort of thing. They must have everything covered with pepper and deluged with mustard, and sometimes they are very peppery

¹ By the Reverend Stuart Robertson, M.A., Glasgow.

and mustardy themselves. They have ruined both their palate and their temper.

People who are always drinking whisky and brandy lose their taste for tea and milk and wholesome things like these. They are insipid. Sometimes indulgent mothers let their children ruin their palates by too many sweets and too much pastry and cakes. They don't like plain bread and butter, and they 'just hate milk-puddings'! which are ten times as good for them. At Christmas time we all enjoy turkey and stuffing and mince-pies, and when it is all over, it seems a dreadful come-down to plain food again. 'We remember the stuffing and the mince-pies and the plum pudding; and now there is nothing before us but this rice.' So we think, just like the Israelites.

The mind has its palate as well as the body. It, too, can be trained, and then we say, 'So and so has good taste in books and music and pictures.' It can also be degraded. If one keeps on tickling it with sensational stories and vulgar tunes, one loses the taste for good books and good music. That is a very big price to pay for 'Nick Carter' and 'Paddlin' Madeleine Home'! The great music becomes a closed book, and the great books you can't read. Beethoven and Mozart are tiresome; not enough comic stuff on the saxophone, no banjos, no hiccoughing syncopation, no jazz effects!

Dickens and Scott are dull: no revolvers, no wonderful crooks, no sleuth-detectives that sniff the air and at once give the villain's age and address! Alas! we remember Nick Carter and Raffles and Club-Foot, and the thrills they gave us, and now there is nothing before us but this—David Copperfield and Jeanie Deans!

Boys and girls, a little of these is all very well. I like detective stories, but I don't feed on them. I read them once and never again; but the great books I keep and read over and over again. I like pastries, but I know man lives by bread. It is a sad thing to feed one's mind on trash until one has lost the taste for what is best.

It is saddest of all when the palate of the soul is destroyed, so that wickedness is interesting and goodness is dull. There are books and newspapers which can do us this mischief. Their subjects are evil and their news is nasty. There are pleasures that are hot-tasted and destroy the taste for all that is noble. Even innocent pleasures, if we have too much of them, can have this effect, so that after a diet of cinemas, church is dull, and after a week

of nothing but amusement, the worship of God is tedious. It is possible to feed on what the Bible calls 'the pleasures of sin, for a season,' so that the Bread of Heaven, which is Jesus Christ, is insipid.

So the Bible says, 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report . . . think on these things.' Feed your soul on the highest and best so that its taste shall be good; so that you shall not prefer cheap sensations to deep emotions, and thrills to the satisfaction of a good conscience; so that you will never be found saying, 'We remember the thrills and excitements of sin, and now there is nothing before us but this Christ.'

The Christian Year.

ROGATION SUNDAY.

The Energy of Prayer.

'And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer.'—Mk 9²⁹.

Most men find themselves at different times in two sharply contrasted moods towards prayer. In one mood prayer is our easy, inevitable, and most natural speech. When a man is walking with God it is his irresistible impulse to speak with Him. Or when we are in the depths of sorrow or of shame, prayer is our almost involuntary cry.

But in the other mood prayer becomes a mystery and an effort. The difficulties seem so dark and insuperable that our very breath is caught when we attempt to pray. So many petitions seem to remain unanswered. The reign of law in the universe seems so absolute that the mind cannot reach any certainty that an answer to prayer is even a possibility. The most deadening and disheartening barrier lies in the moral difficulty. Why should a man require to pray to a loving and merciful God? A man that is a father does not wait till the child who is lying on a bed of pain cries out for his sympathy and his healing. Why should prayer on the part of man be the indispensable condition of the working of God? Is prayer an energy for God?

1. In the first place, *prayer makes us more deeply conscious of God.* In the rush and stress of life, and never more than in these days when the song of speed is on every man's tongue, we tend to lose a sure and clear consciousness of God. It is not that men disbelieve in God. Never was faith in God

and a submission to the authority of Christ so unquestioning as to-day. But in this busy and engrossing world, when the mind is filled every morning with all the news of the ends of the earth, and the interest of the heart is held, as the eyes are held by a drama on the stage, God falls out of men's thoughts. If men will not sometimes think of God, He will become merely a name to them. It is in prayer that we have the sure consciousness of God. Even although a man may kneel with a haze over his mind and a chill upon his spirit, he will not kneel in vain. Sailors have called out of the mist and fog as their vessel has approached some hidden shore. They did not know how far off the cliffs were which were marked upon their chart. Still they called, and as the responding 'hail' came back, they knew that eyes were watching and hearts were beating for them. In the same way men become sure of God when they pray to Him.

2. In the second place, *prayer brings us into sympathy with the mind of God.* It is a sad commonplace that there are evils unnoticed, wrongs unremedied, poor unpitied and unhelped, miserable, uncomforted, not because men do not know, but because they do not sympathize. Their eyes look out daily on scenes of poverty and of pain. Their ears are filled with the cries of those who suffer. But they do not seem to see or to hear, because their hearts have not been touched to sympathy. Travellers in Africa all dwell on the callous way in which a band of bearers look upon one of their number who is carrying his load in utter exhaustion. They will leave him behind them on the trail, well aware that next day his bones will be bleaching in the sun. They will obey any command to care for him with a sulky discontent. They will meet the order to carry him almost with rebellion.

All the great leaders in the philanthropies and redemptions have been men of prayer. As they have continued in prayer they have come to learn the mind of Christ. They have begun to think His thoughts. They have become one with Him in spirit. He has lived and breathed within them. As the tide of sympathy with the mind of God has risen in their soul while they prayed, they were endued with the power of God.

3. In the third place, *prayer surrenders us to the energy of God.* In surrender we open our whole being to God as a flower opens itself to the sun, and we are filled, up to our measure, with His Divine energy.

There is a strange deep saying of the Old Testament, in which a psalmist charges the Hebrew people with limiting the Holy One of Israel. We limit God when we think meanly of Him and teach men an impoverished doctrine of His grace. We limit God when we will not keep His commandments and do His will. We limit God by every act of rebellion which blocks His way. But there is one way in which we limit God most effectually of all. That way is by our prayerlessness. Because we are not surrendered to God in prayer, the might of His energy does not pass into us. Every faculty a man has, every talent God has given him, every fibre of his heart, and every cell in his brain, may be energized by the energy of God. 'He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.' Men whom others have despised, teachers whom the strong have scorned, humble and lowly and unlearned men and women have done great things for God, because they have been so surrendered to Him that His energy has been a swift dynamic in every faculty of body and of soul.

4. In the fourth place, *prayer works on the will of God*. No error has done more to paralyse our faith in prayer and to make the prayer of faith a wistful observance than the strange conception that God is fixed and inexorable law. But God is not law. God is will.

The orderliness of Nature does not prevent us, with our will-power of free spirit, from initiating movements which, by means of the strict working of the laws, will produce results that we desire. If a bowler sends down a straight ball it will hit the wicket, according to the laws of Nature. But the batsman, by the free action of his will, can initiate a new movement, a new chain of (what we call) cause and effect. By the laws of Nature the ball will hit the wicket, and yet, by the laws of Nature, it will be prevented from hitting the wicket through the free, creative action of will. Each one of us, a thousand times a day, causes something to happen which Nature would not have brought about if we had not determined it. And if we can do it, it is quite certain that God can do it a great deal better. If we have prayed for some physical result—supposing it has been real and true prayer—we have not simply dictated to Him our desires; we have united ourselves to Him to want what He wants. And it is perfectly clear that we shall not persuade Him to do something that He doesn't want. So

the only question is whether the result that we should like is what He wants. *What He wants is always spiritual*, to draw men to Himself in love; anything else in heaven or earth or under the earth is of value only as a means to that end. If, in any physical matter for which we have prayed, He knows that the manipulation of the laws of Nature will help towards that spiritual purpose, then it is something that His love is longing to do; and our prayer, our voluntary union with Him, has placed our will in conjunction with His on the matter, and His power is set free to work. His omniscience knows, and our ignorance does not know, whether a given physical event will help to work out His spiritual purposes or not. So that 'Thy will be done' must, of course, be the condition attaching to any prayer. That is the same as wanting what He wants; and nothing else is true prayer.

The conception that lies behind much of the seemingly wise writing of many clever men is that God has no other laws than those we know, and no higher methods than those we use. But God is a sovereign will with infinite resources. God's will as an eternal purpose in Christ cannot be finally thwarted.

And yet God's will, as Jesus tells us in the prayer He taught us to pray, is not always done. A man can resist His Holy Ghost. As a man can thwart and check the will of God, so also can he move that will and work on it to his blessing and his help. As he brings his desires and his will to bear on the will of God, he moves God, and alters His method and His ways. The issue is often seen in what men call miracles. But there are no miracles with God. Yet the answers to a human prayer are signs and wonders which seem to interrupt the course of Nature, to divide the seas in their beds, and to keep the sun from going down.¹

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY.

Round our Restlessness His Rest.

'My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.'—Ex 33¹⁴.

It comforts us, lesser men and women, to discover that even Moses had his tremors. But how well he understood the cure for them! He carried them immediately to God. Those labours that transcended his skill, those disappointments that saddened his spirit, those uncertainties that hung over his head like baffling clouds—he spread them

¹ W. M. Clow, *The Secret of the Lord*, 294.

before his Lord. And, talking with Him, he was again Moses of the shining face and the untroubled heart. For God would say to him: 'My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.'

The promise is old and new; lofty and near; universal and particular. Innumerable multitudes have leaned on it, and it has not failed under their weight. But we must learn to comprehend its preciousness one by one. It is not for the crowd; it is for the separate heart, and for the single and solitary life.

1. God's assurance carries a hint of two unescapable elements, two deeply inwoven features, of our human nature.

The *compulsion to journey is one*. We are impelled on and ever on. We cannot remain stationary, any more than the Israelites and their leader could linger in the hot and waterless deserts. Circumstances are our goads and drivers, hurrying us from childhood to youth and manhood and age, from health to sickness, from gladness to grief, or, contrariwise, from winter and its gloom to summer with its warmth. And, besides circumstances, there is that within ourselves which will not let us continue in one stay—the coveting to have more, which is a poor motive; or the passion to know more, which is a worthier quest; or the longing to be more, which is better still. Is there any one absolutely satisfied?

But, in closest alliance with this compulsion, is the other characteristic—the hunger for rest. A craving for home haunted the pilgrims across the tiresome and peril-haunted wilderness—home with its security, its fixedness, and its quiet. So it is with us. If our circumstances change, and if in ourselves aspirations are planted that incite us unceasingly onward, we covet a stillness, a strength, and a repose which are independent of the whirl and strain. We open a poet of to-day, and we find him, in the roar of London, thirsting for the Lake Isle of Innisfree, where 'peace comes dropping slow.'

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
 I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by
 the shore;
 While I stand on the roadway, or on the pave-
 ments grey,
 I hear it in the deep heart's core.

2. Now, God's assurance shows us how the twin elements in our nature are reconciled.

He told Moses, long ago, of the satisfaction for

both of the soul's needs; and the ancient word is yet truer for you and me, to whom Jehovah and Jesus are One and the Same. 'My presence shall go with thee,' God said then and says still, 'and I will give thee rest.' Thus, at once, we have the guarantee of a limitless progress and of a perfect peace.

Let us consider what happens when we are led first into His friendship. *My presence*—that signifies, in the hour when 'the great transaction's done,' the Sin-bearer, the Good Physician, the Lord who sees no iniquity in those for whom Christ died; and this Presence, recognized, welcomed, is the fountain of profoundest rest. We wanted to have, and His treasure makes us rich beyond the dreams of avarice. We wanted to know, and His wisdom leads us into marvellous light. We wanted to be, and His grace cures our hopeless evil and lifts us into new life. The weary journey of our seeking hearts has ended, and ended most delightfully. But as surely another journey has begun. For who that has been brought to God in Jesus Christ does not feel himself on the verge and brink of unspeakable possibilities? He cannot fold his hands and go to sleep. The mightiest transports move him, thrill him, urge him forward.

Yes, and let us consider what happens as the friendship is confirmed and increased. God's presence goes with us step after step and mile after mile; and our journey prospers, and our rest gains in its completeness. You may put it in this way: The more progress, the more peace. The longer I study God, and the nearer I press to Him in ardency of desire and meditation and prayer, I am not fatigued, I am exhilarated; the air is fresher and the prospect finer, and my soul walks and does not faint. Or you may turn the phrase round, and say: The more peace, the more progress. The simpler is my reliance on Christ and on the God whom Christ discloses, the more unquestioning my reception of Him to be my Wisdom for righteousness and for sanctification and for redemption, the farther I am certain to travel in the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom, in the beauty of holiness, and in the fulfilment of the Father's will. Thus it comes about that the journey intensifies the rest, and the rest helps and promotes the journey. The two act and react on each other; and both of them are very good.

3. Furthermore, God's assurance prophesies a goal in which both features of our nature will have their highest manifestation.

We seek a city which we cannot fail to reach, since we are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Its rest is more triumphant than that of the saintliest now and here.

But is the journeying finished then, and over for ever? Will the compulsion be unfelt any longer—the compulsion to forget things behind and to reach forth to things before? We cannot think so. 'The Lamb shall feed them'—there is the rest which is supreme. But 'the Lamb shall lead them to living fountains of waters'—there is the progress under the teaching and guiding Presence which goes on still. The thinker of the *Colloquia Peripatetica* did not care for Lessing's famous saying: 'If the Almighty, holding in His right hand "Truth" and in His left "the search after Truth," deigned to offer me the one I should prefer, I would, with all humility but without hesitation, request "the search after Truth."' No, John Duncan protested, that is the maxim of revolt. That is the pride in the unimpeded exercise of human faculty.

It may be that Lessing was only preferring an intelligent discovery of truth to a blind reception of it; yet there is force in the protest of the Scottish scholar and saint. But in the future Christ will make over to us both the right-hand and the left-hand gifts, both the Truth and the search after Truth which is ampler and vaster. One sight of Him, when He receives us to Himself, will expand and hallow and enrich our souls inconceivably; and then to live with Him in the house not made with hands will be an unending education and a perennial growth. There will be the eternal journey; and, joined with it, there will be the eternal rest.¹

WHITSUNDAY.

The Permanence of Love.

'Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away.'—1 Co 13⁸ (R.V.).

This Christian chapter of 1 Corinthians falls quite naturally into three sections. In the first the Apostle declares that without love all other gifts are worthless. In the second he describes the

¹ A. Smellie, *Out of the Desert a Gift*, 137.

various qualities of love. In the third he asserts the supremacy of love over all other gifts because love is permanent and abiding. This third section begins with our text.

1. In the opening sentence of this section the Apostle seems to be continuing the thought of the previous verse, carrying the daring of his claims for love to a point higher still. 'Love,' he says, 'never faileth.' Dr. T. C. Edwards, indeed, says that the thought in this clause is suggested by that word 'endureth' in the preceding sentence. And, taken by itself, the little phrase would serve for another touch in the picture of the qualities of love. It adds the final and finishing touch of splendour to it—'love never faileth.' The word translated, 'faileth' means literally to 'fall to the ground.' Love never 'falls out'; love never 'falls to the ground.' The picture the word summons up is that of a company of soldiers marching through the heat in some tropic land. And as the weary miles lengthen out and as the heat intensifies, exhausted Nature reveals itself, and one after another faints and falls by the way—until at last out of all the company only one is left doggedly, patiently marching on. 'Love never falls out.' Friends, acquaintances, one-time comrades may by degrees drop away, worn out by disappointment—but love holds on, love never faileth.

That is always one of the characteristics of real love—it lasts. The best love of all is the love of God in Christ. That is the pattern, the ideal love. And this is one of the marks of the Divine love—it never fails. 'Having loved His own which were in the world,' says one of the Evangelists, 'He loved them unto the end.'

But we will make a vast mistake if we think that word 'end' refers simply to the end of our Lord's earthly life. He loved them on through death. He loved them when death was passed. He loves them still. 'He loved them unto the end!' That is true, but the end is never reached. 'I am persuaded,' wrote St. Paul, 'that neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' We are creatures of this time-world and can only think in the categories of space and time; we cannot help using finite words when we attempt to describe infinite things. And when we use such phrases as loving 'to the end,' 'to the finish,' 'to the very last,' we

really mean loving through time and into eternity—just keeping on loving, loving all along.

That is certainly true of the love of God in Christ. And it is true of human love in so far as it partakes of the nature of this holy *ἀγάπη* of which the Apostle speaks in this chapter. That is the difference—at any rate one of the differences—between *ἔρως*, the love of passion, and *ἀγάπη*, this sacred and holy love which is born of God. The love of passion dies, but this sacred and holy love endures.

That is how God loves. Death makes no difference to Him. 'I *am* the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob.' The happy, friendly, loving relationship continues through the eternal years. Those friends of God had long disappeared from these earthly scenes, but God had them still in His keeping—they were still the objects of His love. And all true love is of God, and possesses that eternal quality which belongs to the Divine love itself. 'Love never faileth.' Beyond death as on this side of death, in eternity as in time, love goes on loving, loving all along. How, in face of a statement like this, can any one have a doubt about the possibility of recognition in the eternal world? Scripture never seeks to prove it, it simply takes it for granted. But a sentence like this quite clearly implies it. For love is a personal relation, and it is a reciprocal relation. As the philosopher would say, it implies subject and object. It would be foolish to talk about such a personal thing as love if there, as here, we did not exist as persons. The fact of love ought to banish all hesitations and doubts on this point. For love is not temporal, it is eternal. Most of us have dear ones on the other side; we haven't ceased to love them, and they have not ceased to love us. Love never faileth. It was a true instinct that made Charles Kingsley wish to have those three Latin words engraved on the stone which marked the place where he and his wife lay buried, 'Amavimus, Amamus, Amabimus'—'We have loved, we love, we shall love.' We *shall* love! For love never faileth.

2. Now it was this very quality of eternity, inherent in love, that made it so vastly superior to those other gifts by which the Corinthians set such store. The Corinthians made a great fuss about the gift of tongues, and the gift of prophecy, and the gift of knowledge. They were proud and puffed up if they possessed the one or the other. They set little or no store by love. For they were jealous of one another, and they envied one another,

and they divided themselves into factions, with the result—to use the Apostle's own vivid phrase—that they bit and well-nigh devoured one another. Love was a sort of Cinderella in Corinth, disregarded, ignored, and neglected. And yet the Apostle declares that tongues and prophecy and knowledge are nothing compared to love. For the word 'temporary' was written across the gifts on which they prided themselves so much. But love was eternal. He illustrates and enforces the superiority of love in a series of contrasts.

First of all, he contrasts it with *prophecy*. Now prophecy was a gift which the Apostle highly valued. For it was a gift that contributed to the edification of the Church. That is almost the last word he says in the chapter succeeding this one in which he discusses the worship of the Church. 'Wherefore, my brethren,' he says, 'desire earnestly to prophesy.' Prophecy, then, was a great and precious gift. And yet it is nothing compared to love—for 'whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away'—'done away' in the sense of 'being brought to an end.' Now, in what sense will *prophecies* be done away? Well, it is quite obvious that *prophecies* in the sense of *foretellings* are 'done away' when they are fulfilled. The Old Testament, for example, is full of prophecies that have been 'done away.' In Isaiah and Jeremiah you will find *prophecies* of judgment and doom. They were 'done away' by their fulfilment in the Exile. In the second Isaiah you will find glowing prophecies of restoration: they were 'done away' by their fulfilment in the Return.

And even when prophecy is interpreted in the sense of preaching—there will come a time when it shall be 'done away.' It is a great thing to be a preacher. It is the greatest calling in the world. But even the preacher's work will be done away. In its very nature it is transient and temporary. Preaching presupposes an unconverted world. But we read of a time coming when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea: when it shall be no longer necessary for a man to teach his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all shall know Him from the least to the greatest of them.

'Whether there be tongues,' the Apostle goes on to say, 'they shall cease.' The gift of tongues was a gift of ecstatic speech. The Apostle did not rate it very highly for the simple reason that the speech was unintelligible to the ordinary Christian, and

did not therefore minister to his edification. The Corinthians, on the contrary, were inordinately proud of this particular gift. They rated it above prophecy. It was more startling, and therefore attracted more attention, and perhaps brought its possessor more glory. But of this gift, too, the Apostle says that it is temporary, 'Whether there be tongues, they shall cease.' This particular gift of tongues was just a sign for the unbelieving—to constrain their attention to the Church and its message. When the Church had become sufficiently strong to command attention without these adventitious aids, they simply ceased.

Suppose we give a wider meaning to the phrase and interpret it of languages in general (though, of course, that interpretation was not in the Apostle's mind), it still remains true. 'Whether there be tongues, they shall cease.' 'Tongues' are all the while 'ceasing.' Living languages become dead languages, and some pass clean out of the knowledge of men. F. W. Robertson puts the question: Suppose a man had known fifty languages in the days of St. Paul, how many—or rather how few—would be of use now? On Pentecost the assembled people heard the Apostles speak in their own language—Parthians and Medes and Elamites and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judæa and Cappadocia, in Pontus and in Asia. All these dialects are obsolete to-day. 'Whether there be tongues, they shall cease.' Nothing, indeed, in the history of the world is more striking than the temporary character of 'tongues.' The language in which Paul wrote this letter—that Greek language which was the Corinthian's native speech—it has 'ceased.' Latin, the language of Imperial Rome, the official language of the world—as a spoken language it has 'ceased.' Indeed, the phenomenon of a 'ceasing' language is one that can be witnessed within the limits of these islands of ours. The Gaelic language is losing its hold in Scotland. One of the religious problems of our day is caused by the disappearance of the Welsh language from the mining valleys and the industrial towns of South Wales.

'Whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away.' There were those in Corinth who prided themselves on their 'knowledge.' They felt they had an insight into the mysteries of the faith which was not given to others. They were the 'intellectuals' of the Church, the people who considered themselves above the rest in intelligence, and who rather looked down upon them in con-

sequence. They, too, were neglecting the permanent for the temporary—for whether there be knowledge, it shall be 'done away.' 'Done away,' the Apostle means in the sense of being superseded and made obsolete. Knowledge is progressive. There is no such thing as a stock of knowledge, fixed, defined, and complete—so that when once a man mastered it he could feel that he knew all there was to be known. Knowledge is a growing, expanding, developing thing—so that the learned man of one day may be completely behind the times the next. There is scarcely need to illustrate the truth of this, it is so perfectly obvious.

Think of geography. It is not a bit of use producing a map of Europe ten years of age—almost every national boundary has been altered in the meantime. Or think of science. Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, all of them are superseded and out of date. Henry Drummond mentions a striking fact about the medical library in Edinburgh. When Sir James Simpson, the discoverer of chloroform, died, he was succeeded by his nephew. The new Professor was asked by the librarian to go through the library and pick out those books on his subject which were no longer needed. And his reply to the librarian was this: 'Take every textbook that is more than ten years old and put it down in the cellar.'

And as it is in the realm of secular knowledge, so is it also in the realm of *religious* knowledge. The learned theologian of a generation ago would find himself hopelessly out of date to-day. For in the interval the critic and the historian have been at work. They have given us a new view of the Bible; they have given us a new conception of the environment in which Jesus lived; they have given us a new apologetic in face of the new science. And not only is our knowledge of the facts connected with our religion a progressive thing, but our apprehension of religious truth is a growing thing too. We grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We get truer and larger views of God.

There is no disparagement of prophecy and tongues and knowledge. They are good things in themselves. Their only fault is that they are temporary. It is strange how people pride themselves on transient and temporary things still. On wealth, *e.g.*, though we know quite well that as we brought nothing into this world, so we can carry nothing out. On fame—though we know quite well that the judgments of earth do not carry with

them the judgments of heaven, and that there are 'first who shall be last, and last who shall be first.' On social position—though we all come at last to a coffin and six feet of earth. There is nothing wrong in these things, but we ought not to give our strength to them for the simple reason that they do not last. 'Love not the world,' said John, 'neither the things that are in the world'; not because it is sinful, but 'because the world passeth away and the lusts thereof.' Nothing deserves the homage and devotion of the immortal soul except something which is itself immortal. That is why love is supreme above all other gifts. Love never faileth. Love is imperishable. It is never outgrown. It never becomes obsolete. It is never done away with. It is as much at home in heaven, as it is here upon the earth.

To love God, to love one another—that is to know God and to be born of Him. That is to share His eternal life. That is to carry within ourselves the pledge and promise of immortality—for love never faileth. Love is the supreme gift—for love is never lost. The love you gave and give your loved ones within the veil is not lost. They receive it and respond to it, and one day it will reunite you in blessed fellowship. The love you give your fellows is not lost. It will meet you again. 'Inasmuch,' Jesus will say, 'as you did it to one of these least, ye did it unto me.' The love you give to God is not lost. It binds you to Him in gracious bonds that neither life nor death can sever. Wealth, position, fame—all these things pass. But the man who is rich in love is rich to all eternity. Therefore with all your getting in this mortal life get the loving heart.¹

TRINITY SUNDAY.

The Day of the Spirit.

'For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.'—I Jn 5⁷.

We have become accustomed now to the idea of the progressiveness of God's revelation. Let us then think of one God, whose will it is progressively to reveal Himself to man. There is not much He can say at a time, for men are not wise and their knowledge grows from less to more. He must speak to them at sundry times, and in divers manners, and in varying forms and fashions.

Is it too much to suggest that if the one God

¹ J. D. Jones, *The Greatest of These*, 179.

willed to reveal Himself progressively to men He would do so in the order of the Trinitarian formula, first as a Father, then as a Son, and then as the Holy Ghost? In other words, His first revelation would be of Himself as the Creator, as the Living and Righteous One. Then we would expect that He might reveal Himself in terms of human life. He would show us what human life ought to be if it were in accordance with His will, and, finally, we might expect that He would cause man to understand that He is an immanent Spirit, indwelling all things, co-operating with man in the accomplishment of purposes that are mutually desirable.

This is indeed the method of the Bible. In the first part of it, which we call the Old Testament, the revelation is of God as the Creator. 'In the beginning, God.' That is its first great word as it has come down to us, and slowly, as the centuries pass, more and more content is put into that word. Slowly does God appear to men, not merely as their Creator, but as the Righteous One. With ever-deepening fullness and richness and glory this content is expressed, until the first book, as it closes, leaves men with the word 'Father' trembling upon their lips, though as yet they dare not utter it.

The second part of the Bible, that which we call the New Testament, focuses its attention upon a man—the man Christ Jesus, a veritable man, the most man-like person who has yet lived upon the earth, the kind of man whom all men desire to be, and to whom all men dimly aspire.

This is the second part of the book—the book of the Son, the book of the Living Word.

But the Bible does not end there. It is, indeed, incomplete. Before it closes, it makes clear to us a third manifestation of God in the power of the Spirit. The New Testament speaks of the coming of God's Spirit. The Church is the vehicle of the Spirit, and individual Christians live by the power of the Spirit.

These personages whom we see, as it were, for a few moments in the light of these pages, are men and women who believed themselves to be inspired with a living Spirit, and they are seen going out into the world to capture it for Christ. Then the curtain falls, and the book leaves you believing in the dispensation of the Spirit.

It baffles our imagination to try and think where the world would have been to-day without Moses, without the witness of the chosen people. In

Moses' heart there was this great passionate belief, that there was but one God, and along with him humanity has marched; and all the best things that have come to the world have come in the track of that great and sublime belief that God is One.

It seems an easy thing to us to think there is but one God, but as a matter of fact it is a very hard thing. The Bible makes it clear how strenuous a task it was to preserve this faith, for the chosen people themselves slipped back over and over again into polytheism. It was the people of the Book who brought that dynamic belief out of the shadows of time, holding it aloft where other nations had failed, and saved it for the world.

And then away down the track of the centuries, after this great truth has been progressively revealed and strenuously fought for, the people are found waiting for another manifestation of the Deity. There is a feeling in their hearts that they want to see Him now in terms of human life, they want to know how life should be lived here on the earth according to His will and design.

The greatest thing that ever happened in history, absolutely the greatest, was the faith that became credible and powerful that there was a Man, who lived upon this earth, making clear to the world, at least, what a man ought to be, and, whatever theories we hold apart from Christ, we never expect to see a greater than He. The book is closed—man, if he become what we dream and hope, can only approximate to *the Man*, Jesus Christ.

Now we have the third phase of the eternal truth about God being manifested to men. These are the days of the Spirit.

Take the books of the philosophers, for instance. The old materialism is dead—one may say that with confidence. The effort to interpret the phenomena of life in terms of mere materialism is wounded as if to the death. There are not many men nowadays who believe that you can explain the higher by the lower, that you can explain the mind and conscience by mere matter and force. This is the day of psychology. It is the mind, the soul, that absorbs the thoughts and interests of men in our time—it is the day of the Spirit.

There is a sense in which we may say we know enough about God now. We are but tiny children on the edge of the great sea, but the vital question to-day is not the existence or non-existence of God, it is not the character of God. If men worship

at all they worship a Father! God is not demonstrable. He will never be found out absolutely. He cannot be weighed and measured, put in a crucible, or reduced to a formula. It is not that the world is wanting. There is a sense in which we may say, with bated breath and great reverence, that it is not in the Person of Christ that the real problem is centred. Men are not arguing so much about Him now.

But what the world is wanting, and for the want of which it is dying, is life lived as it ought to be lived with a God who is a Father; life lived as it ought to be lived with a Lord like Jesus Christ. It is the manifestation of the Spirit of Christ that the world is craving for.¹

Heine, in a memorable passage, says: 'Ah, my child, while I was yet a little boy, while I yet sat upon my mother's knee, I believed in God the Father, who rules up there in heaven, good and great. When I got bigger, my child, I comprehended yet a great deal more than this, and comprehended, and grew intelligent; and I believe on the Son also, on the beloved Son, who loved us and revealed love to us. Now, when I am grown up, have read much, have travelled much, my heart swells within me, and with my whole heart I believe on the Holy Ghost. The greatest miracles were of His working, and still greater miracles doth He even now work.'²

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Enterprise of the Family.

'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'—
Jos 24¹⁸.

If we were set to the task of drawing up a list of Christian axioms, one of them would be that the Christian family is one of the best gifts of earth. And that for various reasons.

Such a household is a centre of gladness; and he that develops gladness is one of the chiefest benefactors of men. There are certain homes which have a very curious effect upon a stranger. As soon as he enters them, he feels inclined to be cheerful. He cannot himself precisely say why; but he observes gradually a kind of oxygen in the air, that exhilarates him, so that, if he shall have seen life through smoke-coloured glasses before, he removes them and sees it as it is; if, indeed,

¹ F. W. Norwood, *Moods of the Soul*, 30.

² J. Kelman, *Ephemera Eternitatis*, 148.

he be not inclined to put rose-coloured spectacles in their place.

Such a household provides a unity to face life's testings. A common loyalty to God seems to develop a common loyalty to each other in the members of a house. A thoroughly united family is a very fine thing to see. And folk are certainly no weaker for life's battle, when they recognize that they do not stand alone, but that there are others with them to defend and to be defended.

Such a household is the best guarantee for true manhood and womanhood for the future. The State, no doubt, can do much; but it will never in this world take the place of the family. The ideal before us should be a state of affairs, in which it will be possible for all men to form right households, if their wills are set that way. Surely we will admit that membership of a Christian home has, under God, been our chiefest preservative from evil. The attitude towards the Most High, towards right and wrong, towards honour and duty, and towards our fellows, that imperceptible and all-important tone, formed in our early years, has been the possession which has been our rod and staff, and will be, please God, until the end.

Now it is important to regard the formation and retention of a household of such dignity and importance as that, as an *enterprise*. That is to say, it is to be an object continually held in view, and recognized as requiring foresight, understanding, patience, and will. Enterprises are not to be entered upon lightly. A man would not set out upon some great venture in his business or professional life in any haphazard spirit. We have no notion what kind of noble men there might be in this land in the next generation, if there was a development of strong, family religious life; if men and women, when joined together by God and given the lofty responsibility of a home, set themselves, with hearts made strong by faith, to the great, dignified, and splendid enterprise, suggested by these words in which will is so manifest, 'as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'

Our text contains within it instruction as to how that enterprise is to be carried to success.

1. First of all, there is *example*. 'As for me . . . I will serve the Lord.' Joshua gives body and sincerity to his vow by dedicating himself first, and his house afterwards. And, indeed, example is more potent than precept. Admonition must be preceded and succeeded by example. He, who

would keep his house for God, must lead as well as direct. Do you remember how, in the biography of Dr. Cairns, two of the most potent influences in his young life are recorded? They were the hearing of his father at prayer, and, in the early morning, the observance of his mother at work. No doubt, there was instruction and to spare in that house; but it was the example that bit into the boy's mind.

And the example that tells is the example that is unknown, that comes from a life directed by a determination—'as for me, I *will* serve the Lord'—the example that comes from a man that prays in secret, and goes steadily on and up the staircase of duty, uncomplaining. Do we ever imagine that a child does not observe his parents? Or that the discovery that his idols (for he worships them) may have feet of clay does not come with a strange, unnerving shock?

'Some one must teach him religion,' a man said to me once, 'that the little fellow may have a chance to get what his father has missed.' It was an eloquent, and so far worthy, testimony coming, as it did, from an agnostic. But the desire was not so very likely to be gratified. 'Some one must teach me religion, that the little fellow may get what his father has got so late,' would have been a better way of it. As for me, I will serve the Lord; and then, please God, my house.

2. There is a note of *authority*. 'As for me and my house.' There is a touch of grim resolution in these words. A child of Joshua, I take it, would have had an uncomfortable time with his father, if he proposed to disobey. One is inclined to think that some modern educationalists are a trifle astray, when they emphasize development in distinction to obedience. We shall remain old-fashioned enough to believe that soldier-like obedience, apart from satisfaction as to the reason for the act, is the first requisite in a good man. It is on these lines that God rules His world, and, I take it, that it is on these lines that He intends us to rule our families. We have something to learn from those old family ideals where children were taught to obey and to trust.

3. Further, there is the note of *service*. 'As for me and my house we will *serve*.' A home, in which work is the ideal, is the ideal home. Pity those who are in homes where play is the ideal, and are brought up to regard honest toil as menial. There would be fewer fine ladies, who are useful to nobody

on this earth, and fewer miserable males, who flit from golf-course to hunting-field and back again, if written large in every home were these words, 'as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'

Finally, there is the great qualification, 'we will serve *the Lord*.' The thought of God is to dominate the home life. Each man must settle for himself how he is to fulfil that condition.

What an enterprise a Christian household is! It requires such powers of continuance and of faith, that it is not wonderful that men often fail in their

ideals. But the greatness of the enterprise must not make us afraid of it. Rather it should inspire us to see what great things can be done in common lives. And if a man and woman shall take up this Christian burden, and at the end of life be able to say nothing, except that they played a true man's part and a true woman's part to their own, it will go hard if they hear not God's 'well done,' and if He who has sustained them be not the God of their succeeding race.¹

¹ J. R. P. Sclater, *The Enterprise of Life*, 261.

Contributions and Comments.

James iv. 5, 6.

THIS passage has long been a *crux interpretum*. The R.V. translates: 'Do you think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?' The difficulty is, of course, that the Scripture nowhere says anything in the least like this. We think at once of the many Old Testament passages which speak of Jehovah as a jealous God, but the LXX everywhere translates God's 'jealousy' by the word ζήλος, which is capable of a good as well as a bad meaning (cf., e.g., Θεοῦ ζήλω [2 Co 11²] and Gal 4¹⁷, where the distinction between an interested and a disinterested ζήλος is brought out). Here, however, the word used is φθόνος, only used twice in the LXX, and each time with an unmistakably sinister connotation. Moffatt translates: 'What, do you consider this an idle word of scripture?—"He yearns jealously for the spirit he set within us." Here τὸ πνεῦμα has become the object of the verb, and ὁ Θεός is understood as the subject; but here again φθόνος is predicated of God, and φθόνος means 'jealous envy.' Nor are we any nearer the desired haven of an Old Testament text. Windisch suggests corruption, and other commentators, old and new, emend πρὸς φθόνον to πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, 'yearns for God,' but this emendation seems to take away all point from κενῶς, and also from the contrast which follows: 'but he gives greater grace.' Perhaps we may be allowed to try a simpler emendation. In Ja 4² Erasmus, followed by most modern expositors, has emended φονεύετε, 'ye kill,' into φθονεῖτε, 'ye envy.' The suggestion I wish

to make is that we try the reverse change here (a less difficult one) and read φόνον for φθόνον, boldly translating 'The spirit that took up its abode in you (when your contentions began) is yearning for murder, but he gives greater grace.' This suggestion involves reading (with Souter) κατώκησεν for κατώκισεν, in accordance with old Latin and Syriac versions and many Greek MSS. The 'Scripture' referred to will then be Gn 4⁷: 'If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and, if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door: *and unto thee is its desire*, but thou shouldst rule over it.' On this passage Driver comments: 'The text is open to suspicion; but, as thus understood, it teaches a profound psychological truth, the danger, viz., of harbouring a sullen discontent; it is a temper which is only too likely to lead to fatal consequences, and which, therefore, as soon as it begins to show itself, should at all costs be checked.'

The advantages of the suggested emendation may be summarized as follows:

1. We have a definite and lively reference to the sense, if not the exact words, of one Old Testament text.
2. The teaching agrees with that of Jesus describing anger as potential murder, homicide in the heart.
3. Full value is given to κενῶς, which leads us to expect a strong warning.
4. The whole section becomes a unity, for we begin with 'wars and battles,' and pass on first to their motives, and then to their possible consequences.