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schools into our Church, and the revival of hymn-singing into public worship. Canon Ollard, in his learned and exhaustive essay on Confirmation, published last year, points out that from the Evangelicals 'came the first attempts to reform in the practice of confirmation in the nineteenth century.'<sup>1</sup> They also popularized the practice of open-air preaching, and in modern days of using laymen in the services of the Church, and women workers and deaconesses. Another novelty was the holding of services in unconsecrated buildings and theatres, due, in the first instance, to the influence of Anthony Ashley Cooper, Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury—an innovation described by Tait, then Bishop of London, as 'one of the best works that had been undertaken since he entered upon his office, and which led to the opening of cathedrals and other large churches to evening congregations.'<sup>2</sup>

We have had our great bishops, men like the late Dr. Ryle of Liverpool, and his successor, Dr. Chavasse, who has resigned his see, but happily is still with us, and the late Dr. Watts-Ditchfield,

<sup>1</sup> *Confirmation*, by various Writers, vol. i. p. 219 (S.P.C.K., London).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Life of Archbishop Tait*, third edition, vol. i. p. 257.

Bishop of Chelmsford, and saints such as Frances Ridley Havergal, William Pennefather, Bishop Handley Carr Glyn Moule, and Harry Grey, to single out merely a few from the very many who could be mentioned.

What about the future? Voices cry that our prospects in the Church of England look dark and gloomy. The alterations about to be made in the Prayer Book, though it would be truer to say that they will be additions, for we know that the old services will remain intact, may render our position untenable in our Church. Speaking for ourselves, we do not share that view; we have far more to fear from the dangers within than from those without. Provided that we live Christ, and preach Christ, and that the teaching of the Cross with all the amazing love and glory of Divine self-sacrifice bites deep into our inmost souls, the splendid history of Evangelicalism is not well-nigh run. Great days are in store for us. Meanwhile the words of Archbishop Benson, on being told of the possibility of an Evangelical secession, apply with as much force to the Anglican Church of to-day as to the period in which they were first uttered, 'Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.'

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## In the Study.

### *Virginibus Puerisque.*

#### Seeing in the Dark.<sup>1</sup>

'I will make darkness light before them.'—Is 42<sup>16</sup>.

ARE you one of those little souls that don't like the dark, who feel shuddery and eerie and just a wee bit frightened in it? And so you hate going to bed! You hang about, you put off, you make all kinds of excuses, you climb on Mother's knee, you ask a question and another—you have all kinds of tricks for gaining just a little longer time. And the real reason is that it's so friendly and safe in the bright room with all the others; and out in the passage, and going up the stair, it's so dark and lonesome, and your heart goes pit-a-pat, and you keep keeking back across your shoulder, for you feel something might jump out at you, and grab at you, and you feel all shivery inside. Once in the

<sup>1</sup> By the Reverend A. J. Gossip, M.A., Aberdeen.

bedroom with the light lit, it's all right. But when it's out again, before you go to sleep, all kinds of fears come trooping back into your head. What's that? It's only a board creaking in the floor! No, nobody is treading on it. It's a way they have, that's all. And then you lie quite still, with your head covered. There is something: you can hear it plain and clear. Why, little silly, that's only your own eyelashes brushing against the sheets! In the dark, when everything is quiet, they can make such a noise! There's no need to be frightened. And half of you knows that and isn't a bit frightened, is big and grown up and brave, and talks down to the other bit of you that is timid and scarey and near calling out for some one.

Well, it seems clever men are learning to see in the night. They use a thing like a kind of wireless. If, before one end of it, there are people sitting in a room quite dark, then at the other end you can see what they do, can watch them yawning,

and nodding, and taking out a cigarette, and then a match, and lighting it; can see it all, though if you were in the room itself you would see only the red glow of the cigarette, and nothing more but blackness. They're teaching us how to see in the dark.

And if you could see in your bedroom, alone there in the night with your heart in your mouth, what would you see? Nothing at all. Because there's nothing there, except the bed and the chairs, and the dressing-table, and the other things, and you. It's stupid to be frightened about nothing!

And yet there is some one there. We'll never see Him, even with this queer new kind of wireless. Yet God is there, is always there, watching, and taking care of you, and loving you. Isn't it silly to be scared when you know that? If you were certain Dad was in the room, you wouldn't mind the dark. You wouldn't see him, and you mightn't hear him; but if you knew that he was there, you couldn't be frightened. For, of course, Dad would take care of you. And who takes care of Dad? Why God, of course. And if He's there with you, why then there's nothing to be frightened at; and He is.

There are some people who can see Him. Once a man in the Psalms was just dreadfully ill, and they thought that he might die; or some one that he loved was ill, his little lassie it may be, and people thought that that some one might die. And yet the man wasn't afraid. 'For thou art with me,' he said, looking up into God's face, and kind of snuggling happily up against Him. Yes; and there was another man in another Psalm who was in a city where every one was dreadfully frightened. For nearer and nearer came the line of fires where the enemy was burning farmhouses and villages; and in a little while these armies would be coiled chokingly round the little city's walls. And what will we do then? the others cried, gazing with terror in their eyes. But this man kept quite cool. 'God is very near,' he said, and took hold of His hand, quite unafraid. And once every one was streaming away from Jesus Christ, and leaving Him alone. 'No,' He said, 'not alone, for the Father is with Me.' 'Where?' asked the others, staring about them. They could see Nobody! Yet God was there. Yes, whenever there is a little one afraid in the dark, or at grips with a temptation, or with a hard bit of life to live, you mayn't see Him, and mayn't hear Him, and mayn't know that God is with you, but He is, quite near, the dear God who takes care of us.

How is it that wise men are helping us to see in the dark, like pussies? Well, I don't understand it. But a man who thinks he does, says it is like this. You know a piano has gruff notes at one end, and shrill notes at the other. But there are gruffer notes than the gruffest on the piano, and shriller notes than the highest we have there. There is no room for them in the piano, but they are just as really real as the notes that we can strike and sound. And so light is made up of a lot of rays—red and blue and other colours that, all mixed together, make up light. But while in a rainbow we can see the blue rays and the red rays, and some others, there are rays in it that we can't see, just as there are notes, real notes, that we can't sound on a piano. And what they are doing is to open our eyes a little wider so that we can use another ray we never used before. And that's how men are beginning to learn to see in the dark. Well, in the Bible there's a man who once asked God to do just that. 'Open mine eyes,' he said, 'that I, who can see all the usual things already, may see even more, things that are really there, though I don't notice them.' And, if we ask Him, God will open our eyes too, till we know He is there; and, knowing that, will never need to be afraid again.

### The Little Brown Nest.<sup>1</sup>

#### A PARABLE FOR EASTER-TIDE.

High in the fork of an old apple tree a little brown nest had been built by a pair of grey thrushes. The nest was very proud of herself and loved the old apple tree that held her so tightly and kept her so safely even when the great storm winds blew. She was proud of the birds that had built her with so much skill and so much care, and had made her so strong on the outside that the rain could not get in nor the winds blow through, and had made her so soft on the inside that the tenderest of baby birds would never be hurt or even bruised, however the storms might beat the trees and sway them to and fro.

One by one the grey thrush laid three eggs, eggs so blue that they looked as though the shells were made out of the floor of heaven. 'Keep my eggs safe,' whispered the wise mother thrush, 'and one day you will have a most glad surprise.' After that the little brown nest was more proud of herself than ever, and always she was saying: 'I must be snug and warm and strong, and keep safe these

<sup>1</sup> By the Reverend William J. May, Ilkeston.

eggs the mother thrush has trusted me with, and some day there will be a glad surprise. I wonder what ?'

But the bleak east wind heard the little nest talking to herself, and he laughed in his savage way. 'Surprise,' he laughed, 'there will be a surprise, there surely will, but there will be no gladness about it.' And he laughed again with a laugh that was a roar so loud that the little brown nest shook with fear and was afraid that she would be thrown down to the ground. Only the grey apple tree held her tightly. 'You must really be more careful,' the nest told the east wind, 'for I have something very precious that I am keeping here—jewel-boxes, the thrushes called them—and if you throw me down they will be broken.' The east wind laughed more loudly than ever. He knew that the little brown nest need have no fear, for she was too firmly fixed in the fork of the tree for any one to be able to throw her down. But he roared and blew with all his strength, hoping to make her afraid.

The east wind had to move on at last, and the little brown nest was happy again, for the grey thrush sat on the three blue eggs that were blue as the floor of heaven, and whispered to the nest of the great surprise that would come some day. 'Some day soon,' the grey thrush said.

The sun shone brightly and the south winds blew softly, and the grey thrush perched on a bough near the nest and sang lilting songs of spring-time loveliness and summer glory, and the grey old apple tree forgot that she was old and had seen many springs, and wore a spring-time dress all pink and white as she had done when she was very young. And one morning the thing most wonderful of which the grey thrush had been telling really happened. For the jewel-cases that were blue as the floor of heaven were empty, and there were three baby birds for the little brown nest to keep warm and to guard from the wind and the rain.

Oh, but the little birds were lots of trouble. All day long the happy grey thrushes were flying here and searching there, and looking for food for the hungry birds, and all day long the little birds were crying: 'We're hungry. We're very hungry. We're so very hungry we don't know what to do!' And all day long the wee brown nest had to keep the birds warm and guard them from the wind and the rain.

The days went by, and every day the birds were a little bigger than they were the day before, and

their feathers began to grow, and they did not cry as much as they had done when they were younger. Soon they had grown so big that there was scarcely room for them all in the little brown nest. When they moved they squeezed each other's wings and trod upon one another's toes. At last a day came when the biggest of them could look over the edge of the nest when he stood on tiptoe. He could see the little green world of the apple tree and the blue sky that is like the floor of heaven. He wanted to go out into it, but he was afraid to leave the nest. One day he really did flutter off, and got as far as the branch below the fork of the tree. He had found his wings, and soon he learned to fly farther and farther away, and only now and then did he find his way back to the little brown nest. Sometimes the little nest was sad, missing the bird that had flown away. 'I still have the other two,' she told herself. But they grew only a little less slowly, and before many more days had come and gone they also had found their wings and learned to fly, and the little brown nest that had guarded and protected them saw them no more.

Once again the east wind blew across the orchard and found the little brown nest in the fork of the old apple tree, empty and cold. Once more he laughed in his savage way. 'Was I not right?' he said, 'the surprise came as the thrushes said. But what have you to show for it? Some bits of broken eggshell, blue as the floor of heaven, lying on the ground, and you are empty and deserted. And for all your sacrifice and care that is all you have to show.' The little brown nest laughed happily to herself. 'You do not know,' she said, 'You do not know the wonderful secret that is mine. Listen!' Far above them in the highest crown of the apple tree the thrushes' song rang out in a chorus so sweet and loud that men stopped their work and their talk to listen and to praise. 'That was my surprise,' the little brown nest said, 'the broken eggshells were only the jewel-cases, as the thrushes said; those birds are the jewels, and they are mine, though I share their music with the world.'

Hushed and quieted, the bleak east wind went on his way and said not another word.

There's an empty nest,  
And grief unguessed,  
And a lonely heart—no more?  
There's a bird a-sing,  
On a buoyant wing,  
Soaring to Heaven's door.

## The Christian Year.

SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE EASTER.

### Joy and Sacrifice.

'Looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.'—He 12<sup>2</sup> (R. V.).

1. 'For the joy that was set before him.' This verse stands alone in the New Testament. At first sight it seems to attribute self-regarding motives to the supreme act of pure self-sacrificing love. Surely, we may protest, our Blessed Lord was not thinking of Himself when He hung upon the Cross. He did not console Himself by thinking of His return to heaven in triumph. He drank the bitter cup to the dregs in pure love for mankind, for us men and for our salvation.

Yes, that is true. But in the Epistle to the Hebrews, above all others, we need never be afraid that the note of heroism will be lowered. There is much more in this mention of 'joy' than meets the eye. Let us consider what the inspired writer meant when he speaks of joy as the motive of the Passion of Christ.

The great Indian poet and prophet, Tagore, whose writings are an inspiration to thousands in this country, speaks of joy—God's own joy—as the motive and cause of the creation of the world. Joy, he says, belongs inseparably to the act of creation. It is at once the motive of creation, and the experience which accompanies every creative act. This is profoundly true. Joy, for us, is the sense of active co-operation with the laws of God's world. It is, always, the glad feeling that we are, for the time at least, in harmony with the mind of God, that we are, in however small a degree, thinking God's thoughts after Him, and doing what He wishes to see being done. Joy is the spontaneous elevation of mind which rewards all good work.

And are we to suppose that the most glorious of all achievements, the redemption of mankind by the perfect Man, who alone could redeem it, gave no joy to its author? Must it not have been a joy transcending all other joys when our Redeemer felt that He could say to His Father, 'I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do,' or when at the moment of death He uttered the single triumphant word *τετέλεσται*, 'It is finished'?

2. Joy is very different from pleasure. In the text Christ is spoken of as the example of perfect

faith; and His perfect faith is shown in perfect endurance. The writer has before his eyes the picture of a long-distance foot-race. The heroes of old, of whom he has been speaking, have run their race, but they look to us, from the spectator's seats, to show the same endurance. Not without us can they be made perfect; their work is incomplete unless we carry it on. Therefore, he says, let us not disappoint them, but let us cast off the wraps in which we wait the signal to start, and let us run our race with enduring courage. For, see! There is Jesus, who ran the course before us, visible in glory at the goal. He endured to the end, for the joy that was set before Him—the joy of the deed, the joy of painful endurance, for the sake of a victory that was worth all the pain.

Such a joy is far indeed from what we call pleasure. But is it not the truth that every really creative act, every worthy achievement, brings us as much pain as pleasure? In hard physical exertion the muscles are weary, the lungs pant, the heart labours. And if our work is intellectual, what pleasure is there in feeling all our nerves on edge, with waves of irritation and depression surging through us? But no great work can be done without paying this price. And still the joy is there—joy that makes all worth while.

'We can only,' says George Eliot in *Romola*, 'have the highest happiness, such as goes along with being a great man, by having wide thoughts and much feeling for the rest of the world; and this sort of happiness often brings so much pain with it that we can only tell it from pain by its being what we would choose before everything else, because our souls see it is good.'

3. Perhaps the deepest lesson of the Passion is that the acceptance of pain enters into the experience of God Himself. Homer spoke of his gods as they 'who lead an easy life'; we know that God does not lead an easy life. The harmony of the Divine life is a harmony which has overcome the harshest discords. The greater the work the greater the pain, and the greater the joy. If we can once get this truth firmly into our minds, that the perfect spiritual life is an experience in which pleasure and pain are both included, and taken up together into a higher realization, that which we call joy, it will alter our whole attitude towards the troubles of this world. There is no other way of understanding them; there is no other way of conquering them; and there is no other way of helping others to bear them. Hear the words which follow in this chapter. 'All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet

afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness.'

For every true disciple, and much more for our Divine Captain Himself, the bitterest sorrow—that which is hardest to transmute into joy—is the sin and folly of mankind. This is indicated in the verse which follows the text, but it is unfortunately mistranslated in the Authorized Version. In the R.V. it reads, 'Consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against *themselves*,' not 'against himself.' The contradiction, the gainsaying of sinners against their own souls, was the bitterest grief that Christ had to endure.

This is a thought to touch the conscience of the most hardened sinner. It is also a strengthening thought when we are tempted to be 'weary and faint in our minds' at the desperate wickedness and folly which we see going on around us. The Cross of Christ can bear even that burden. Sin is sin, and for ever hateful; the wicked, when they die, will go to their own place, like Judas; but for those that love God, all things, even the crimes of the wicked, will work together for good; and those who have run their race with patience, sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, looking unto Jesus, the Captain and Perfecter of faith, will enter into the joy of their Lord, in whose presence is the fullness of joy. 'These things have I spoken unto you (our Lord said), that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.'<sup>1</sup>

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#### EASTER SUNDAY.

##### The Gospel of the Resurrection.

'The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour.'—Ac 5<sup>30, 31</sup>.

The resurrection of Christ is the most challenging fact of history. It is a miracle of such tremendous quality that all the other miracles of the Gospel story pale beside it into insignificance. Time was when a preacher on Easter morning would have given himself to build up arguments for the truth of the Resurrection. And, indeed, there are many arguments which could be brought forward. There is the argument of the New Testament book. You cannot account for this book except by the fact of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. And there is the argument of the New Testament men. You cannot account for Peter and Paul—the

difference between the men they were and the men they became—except by way of a miracle, and that miracle is the miracle of Christ risen. Their whole life and personality became what they were because their hearts were kindled by the vision of the risen Christ, as flame is caught from flame.

But there is not so much need to-day to argue for the Resurrection. The outlook of thinking men has widened. Scientific men used to argue against it. They used to close up the universe against the possibility of God and deny any value to spiritual experience outside their own explanation. They have given up this line of argument to-day. Life is far too wonderful a thing for any man to reduce it to a system and cry to faith, 'Hands off!'

What we ought to be concerned about most of all, then, to-day, is not the truth of the Resurrection fact, but the meaning of it. What tremendous power was it that lay behind it? What was it that was happening there in that sealed tomb from which Christ came forth at last, glorious in His risen life? The answer the Bible gives us, in phrase after phrase, is just this. It was a creative act of God. It was a new revelation of the living power of the living God. That, it says to us, is the kind of God with whom we have to do. We had learned something about Him before. We had learned that He is a God of righteousness, of purity, of truth—of righteousness and truth so unbending that Christ went to His Cross rather than yield one iota before the forces of the world. And we had learned that He is a God of love. That is the message of Calvary. But when Christ rose again we learned this, that this Spirit of righteousness and love is also the secret of power, able to unlock the gates of death, and turn the forces of Nature into an instrument of His Will. This is the final solution of the discussion we have been having these last years about might and right. Now we get it clear. They are both one in God. Might is right, and right is might, when you strike the fountain-head. In the last resort, love and righteousness are the only might, the only omnipotence. A spirit like that of Jesus holds the key to every prison-house of sin and suffering. He taps the resources of God by which every stronghold of evil which has mocked our puny science with its impassive walls is at last overthrown. When He steps into the world, a spiritual factor comes into play which changes the whole situation. Having dominion over sin through His fellowship with God, He had found the secret of dominion over disease and death. For when evil had done its worst and

<sup>1</sup> W. R. Inge, in *Lenten Sermons*, 95.

its storm and passion had gathered all its forces—social, military, political, ecclesiastical—to put Him to death, the Spirit of love and righteousness laid hold of that broken body in a stone-walled tomb and became triumphant and glorious in the risen Christ. ‘Whom, therefore, they slew and hanged on a tree. Him God raised from the dead and exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour.’

Life would begin to blaze for us with all kinds of wonders if only we took time to steep our souls in such a vision of God as we find in the Resurrection of Jesus. Listen to the apostles as they look death in the face. Listen to what they say of it because they had seen the glory of God in the face of the risen Christ. He hath abolished death—made it of no account. For them there was no such thing any more. If they had gone to one of our churchyards to-day, or to the battlefields of Flanders, with all their ‘teeming crosses, row on row,’ what would they have said of it? Would they not have said what one of our mystics said of a certain city cemetery, when a friend remarked to him how full it was becoming, ‘Full,’ he said, ‘it is the emptiest place in all England!’ He hath abolished death.

But that did not nearly exhaust the meaning of the Resurrection for these disciples. They were more interested in life than in death. There is a kind of faith in the Resurrection which turns this life into a mere vestibule to eternity, a corridor to heaven. That was not the way in which the apostles looked at it. The Resurrection had a meaning for life, and it is this. It meant the possibility of a new life here and now, a risen life, a new quality of being. They saw how the Spirit of God had come forth into this broken body and had changed it and made of it somehow—all marred and wounded as it was—a vehicle of His Spirit. And they said to themselves: If this is the God with whom we have to do, this new creating God, who lives in the risen Christ, what manner of men is it not possible for us to be, what manner of life is it not possible for us to live, and what manner of things is it not possible for us to do, with such a Prince and Saviour! The world began to palpitate with all kinds of victorious possibilities. Life became romantic with adventure.

There are three great new hopes which rise from this Resurrection fact and meet us in our world to-day.

1. The first is a new hope for *the individual*, the hope of resurrection to a new quality of life. As the Spirit of God came into that wounded and broken body of Christ, cannot the Spirit of God come

into our lives, all stained and broken as they are, and raise them to a new quality of being—make of them, indeed, a new creation?

Is it so strange after all? Is it so incredible? The genius of Michael Angelo can take a block of marble out of a scrap-heap, spoiled by a bungler and cast aside, and turn it into a masterpiece, working the very disfigurement into his design? Will the genius of God do less for men than that? Can He not take this nature of ours with all the stuff of daily toil and traffic, and make of it the medium of a finer life, a life radiant with power and peace, springing from man’s inner fount of being, where Christ is enthroned as Prince and welcomed as Saviour. It is this new life, Christ-governed and Christ-created, for which the world is looking to us to-day.

2. In the second place, there is a message of hope for *the Church*. We remember what happened at Pentecost? Pentecost was the corresponding miracle in the Church to that which happened when God raised Christ from the dead. It was a resurrection. What was it that had happened? The Spirit which rose in Jesus had made of that humble company the vehicle of His life. The dominant note in their minds was an overwhelming and all-subduing consciousness of Christ as Lord, raising their whole nature to its highest level, in a response of victorious energies.

All that is possible again. It is the eternal possibility of such a God abroad in such a world as this. It is for that resurrection we are waiting. Meanwhile let us cast away all depressions and lift up hearts of hope. Let us take a new look at God, as He is revealed in the risen Christ, and the same response of faith will be awakened; for the faith which makes us mighty is no artificial creation of our own resolve. It is the natural response to the vision of God we see in the risen Jesus.

3. But can we not go even further and say that there is a message here of hope *for society*, for the social order, in which man is bound to man and nation to nation? Look back through history and what do you see? You see the Spirit of God, who is the Spirit of life, seeking some means of expression like an artist seeking paint and canvas. You see Him make man out of the clay to bear His image. You see Him take a race of slaves and nurse them into freedom and independence that they might reveal His mind and will to the world. You see Him coming into the world in Christ, revealing Himself and His glory in that life and death. You see Him taking new form for His

Spirit in the glorified body of the risen Christ. You see Him gathering the Church and kindling there the flame divine upon the altar of men's committed lives. Is it conceivable that it should all end there? Is it conceivable that the process should end before the whole social order in which man lives with man and nation with nation becomes a body for the Spirit of God? What does the Resurrection say to us looking on such a world as this? Does it not say that there is Power, power of infinite love and grace, able to enter this world and make it beautiful? There is power of love and goodwill, power of truth and brotherhood, by which society may be lifted out of its hatreds and conflicts into the ways of righteousness and peace. When we are at the end of our own resources we are only at the beginning of our resources in Him who was raised from the dead and exalted to become a Prince and a Saviour.<sup>1</sup>

#### FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

##### How to keep in the Way.

'This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.'—Jn 15<sup>12</sup>.

1. The devotion to Christ, so glowing and fervent in men so different as Simeon and Pusey, has been transformed to-day into an intellectual interest and admiration of Christ as the most perfect human character rather than as a personal Saviour. And the new human interest in the Jesus of History has led many to look to Him as an Example rather than as their Redeemer to whom they owed everything. And so, many hardly know how to respond to such a direction as, 'Abide in my love.' And yet our Lord evidently attaches great importance to it. Happily He tells us how we may do it. 'As I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love, [so] if ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love.' And again, 'This is my commandment, That ye love one another.'

As we reflect we see how reasonable it is. We only learn an art or a virtue by practising it. If I wish to have some sense of an artist's power in painting, I must have some knowledge of drawing and colour, and the more I practise the fuller my appreciation. And so, if I am to know what love is, I must be a lover. There is no other way. The selfish son can never realize the unselfishness of his mother, nor the selfish wife the love of her husband. It is not possible. So Christ is only stating a universal law when He says: 'If ye keep

<sup>1</sup> J. Reid, *The Victory of God*, 12.

my commandments, which are expressed in love, ye will abide in my love.' Judas never abode in Christ's love because he was governed by self-interest, always seeking his own ends. St. John, on the other hand, realized it more than any other because he had such a warm love for other people. And so the saints, like St. Francis of Assisi, St. François de Sales, St. Vincent de Paul, John Wesley, Bishop Patteson, who were all wonderful lovers of mankind, had also a remarkable sense of Christ's love for them. As they increased in loving, so their sense of being loved developed. It is this which explains such difficult expressions as 'Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us,' which means, 'Give us a sense of forgiveness because we know by experience what forgiving means.' So again: 'He that loveth his brother abideth in the light'—*i.e.* he sees love; whilst on the other hand, 'He that loveth not abideth in death.' Again: 'He that loveth not knoweth not God'—*i.e.* has no experience of God. And why? for 'God is Love.' Or again: 'We have passed out of death into life because we love the brethren.' Love in action opens out all the faculties that can perceive Divine love.

It may perhaps be clearer if, taking for granted that our Lord is perfect love, a supposition none can deny, we believe Him to be radiating this love in every direction. He wants every one to believe in it. As the Bible says: 'It is over all His creatures.' He is ever seeking to transfer His thought of it to our minds. But transference of thought, as we now know, is limited by the nature of the person to whom it would transfer itself.

2. Let us inquire what this love of others means, and how it shows itself. Our Lord explains it for us in the words that follow. They are gathered out of His own experience, and show the way in which He loved, for He is our Example. 'This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.'

(1) *Breadth*.—There was *no narrowness* in His love. The general principles are gathered from such teaching as, 'If ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?' 'Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbour unto him that fell among thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said, Go, and do thou likewise.' These show that His love was as wide as humanity itself. It made no distinction. Rich, poor, Samaritan, Roman, Jew, all came within the embrace of His love. They were all neighbours, all the children of His Father, all cared for.

St. Francis embracing the leper, Bishop Patteson with his arms around his beloved Melanesian boys, Mary Slessor bursting with affection for her African sisters, are not isolated pictures. They have learnt to love the whole world, poor and rich, ignorant and wise, educated and uneducated. Do we ask what thank have they? They have learnt by experience the width of Christ's love and know in their own love to others what a Lover He is to themselves.

(2) *Self-sacrifice*.—Perhaps no words have been more frequently quoted or emblazoned on memorial tablets and monuments than those quoted here: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' If they seem impossible to us who read them, they were judged possible and actual for those thousands, whom we commemorate in all lands, who left home and everything that they might bring liberty to those who were oppressed. Yes, but war is a call. How can we feel the same emotion now it is over? How can we recover the same high purpose and be stirred by the same spirit of self-sacrifice? There is only one way, and that is by regarding the world as Christ did. To Him it represented the same features of oppression and high-handed tyranny that we saw in Belgium. 'I am come,' He said, 'to change all that, to proclaim deliverance to the captives and liberty to them that are bruised. I am come to give the oil of joy for ashes and the spirit of praise for the garment of heaviness.' And so He called His friends about Him and told them to go out everywhere and tell of their freedom. Liberty was His gospel.

Still the appeal goes forth. From the dark continent of Africa there comes the cry for deliverance from the bondage of fear. And from India there is even a louder and more imperative cry from the twenty millions of child widows who, from no fault of their own, are made the despised drudges, of their families. But, besides all this, there are nearer needs than those which are so evident in heathen lands. There are the slaves of drink, lust, and convention — men and women who are bound by fetters more galling and more difficult to break than the chains found in the slave gang; they, too, are waiting deliverance, and it rests upon those who know the love of Christ and believe in His power to take their part in giving them freedom. If we make an effort to do this, Christ's love, as He sees our endeavour, presses out to us.

(3) *Friendship*.—'I have called you friends.' It is not only pity for the condition of the world

that leads man to follow Christ in His great adventure, but the sense of friendship. 'We are doing this for our friends'—that was the spirit of the war. To love as our Lord did is to help forward personally or through others the education and development of all those whom He has emancipated. There is no greater work than this, and none that inspires more joy. The consequences we leave in His hands whose school it is. 'I may not see the results,' said General Armstrong, who did more to educate and uplift the negroes of the Southern States than any other; 'but the fun of life is in action, not results.'

(4) *Disinterestedness*.—Christ's love differs as much from ordinary love in its disinterestedness as in its friendliness and unselfishness. Immensely great as the redemption of the world was, our Lord would never sacrifice the character of His workers for it. He states His aim by saying first: 'Ye did not choose me, but I chose you'—*i.e.* 'It was not because you came flocking round me that I put you into my work, because you showed inclination, interest, or desire for my service, but because I loved you and wanted to make something of you. I appointed you that you should bear fruit and that your fruit should abide.'

With many ardent workers there is often jealousy lest those who are working under them should show gifts and powers superior to their own. Great leaders will sometimes prefer to have associated with them followers of a distinctly lower power than themselves. They are probably quite unconscious of it, but in Christ's eyes it is a fatal disparagement of their work. They have failed to catch His spirit, which ever regarded the development of His associates as His first aim.

Now this is a rough sketch of the kind of way in which Christ would have us obey His commands and so abide in His love. There is no question that in so doing we know and feel Christ's love to ourselves. The sacrifice it entails reveals His sacrifice; the patience it involves makes us realize something of His patience; the thought it demands speaks of His thoughtfulness. We know He is infinitely more to us than we are to those we try to help, and so by our very efforts we realize His relationship. And the sense of His love to us which we learn in that way reacts upon our life of service. So we get joy every way. Joy from His thought of us, and joy from the ever-increasing companionship which service reveals.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> G. H. S. Walpole, *The Undiscovered Country and the Way to It*, 134.

## SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

## Thomas.

'The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.'—Jn 20<sup>26</sup>.

There is a statue of St. Thomas by the great sculptor, Thorwaldsen. It shows a man grave and thoughtful in mien and bearing; in his hand he carries a measuring-line. Something very like that figure Thomas must have been; it makes satisfyingly complete the fragmentary segments of the character revealed in the Gospels. Certainly the measuring-line is correct. No device carried by any of the saints, as art portrays them, is more apposite than that measuring-line. In religion Thomas was a measurer, not a mystic; not a lyrical, but a logical spirit. Of him are Longfellow's lines true and exact:

We have not wings, we cannot soar;  
But we have feet to scale and climb  
By slow degrees, by more and more.

It is in the Fourth Gospel that we find the material for a character-study of Thomas. Very precious to us are those passages which the Holy Spirit moved St. John to inscribe in his Gospel, so that St. Thomas should emerge from the shadows that beset him elsewhere, and with brotherly hand and understanding heart guide and support his brethren to-day. One is the passage in which Thomas 'the doubter' volunteered for service when those of an ampler faith hung back. Another is the passage in which Thomas broke out with his frank confession of dubiety and ignorance of the doctrine of Christ. The third is the moving episode, which St. John preserves in this twentieth chapter, of St. Thomas's abrupt and tenacious doubt of the Redeemer's Resurrection life.

1. *His Loyalty and Courage.*—There is first the incident that occurred on the way to Bethany, where Lazarus had died. The apostolic band hung back. They sensed danger ahead; it might be death for themselves. Peter hung back; that robust and evangelical believer did not like the look of it. John hung back; the mystical and ecstatic believer did not feel easy about the venture into that perilous country ahead. But Thomas stood forward to go. It was Thomas, the critical disciple, who could reason out and weigh the danger most surely of them all, who advanced to his Leader

and, turning on the others, cried, 'Come along, we will die with Him.'

There is courage and cold, firm vigour in that act. There are men and women who lack the soaring faith and buoyant expression of it that others have that yet are seen in the forefront of forlorn hopes and enduring the brunt of the ding-dong war. Not for them the joy mystical, nor the trumpeting confidence of those who have no doubt at all of the manifestation of God among men; they are but feeling their way after this mysterious Nazarene. They cannot explore the resplendent titles the Church has inscribed above Him; they are puzzled by Paul; they are mazed by John; they feel at a loss almost anywhere in the New Testament except in the Sermon on the Mount, where Christ speaks 'plainly' as to men who have to foot out the miles, and climb the hills, albeit the peaks seem inaccessible. Christ as their teacher! No more. But all that is in them is in the grip of it, and into all they do they put it all!

2. *His Honesty.*—Again, let us thank St. John for revealing Thomas to us as unafraid of confessing his ignorance of the meaning of Christ's own doctrine. Christ said: I am going home to prepare a place for you, and whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know.' Thomas saith unto him, 'Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?' As like as not the others shared the ignorance of Thomas, but they had not his unfeared and straightforward mind.

Consider the good guidance and the good cheer this episode affords. He is a bold man among us who says he sees all plain in the engagement of Providence with the sons of earth. In many instances, this is our secret, unrevealed to any. But sometimes we utter it. We confess aloud that we are at a loss with God and His Christ. What is to be done? The temptation is to slur the problem for the man who speaks with Thomas's speech, to try to mollify the interrogation of Thomas with customary generalities about the woe (bereavement, failure, or other mysterious dispensations) being 'God's will,' 'the hand of God's hidden love,' or the like.

There is only one thing to do. Go down on our knees and make our complaint to Christ Himself. Challenge Him with the vexation of our soul. Behind our closed eyelids view the Son of God as He sits on the hill of Beatitudes and speaks; again, as He stoops in the Garden, shrinking from the 'cup,' and then claiming it back from the hand of God His Father; again, as He hangs upon the

Cross, crying of dereliction, and then recovering His soul as He resigns Himself to the hands of God in the dark; again, as He mounts on Olivet in the radiance of His celestial body, and says, 'Lo, I am with you alway, to the end of the world.' So set ourselves before Christ, and lay our woe or our perplexity before Him, measure by measure, mood by mood. Before we have made our count complete, a Spirit will so have come upon our spirit, that we shall say no more! A mightier thing shall have come to us than a logical plan of the problems which entangled us.

It is as though I were told by one of whom I asked my path over the hills and far away, 'There is a map of sorts of that country, but you shall have to make your own survey'; while another said, 'I have been there, and I will go with you.' That wayfarer is Christ. Nay, He is more than that! He is what He avowed Himself to Thomas: *Himself the Way*.

3. *His Doubt*.—On Easter Day, when Jesus appeared to the disciples, Thomas was not with his colleagues; during the week they sought him out, and told him what had occurred. Thomas, however, bluntly replied: 'Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.' That was the kind of man Thomas was. His was the logical type of mind. He wanted hard facts. But it is often forgotten that neither did the others believe without evidence. How did Mary Magdalene believe? Did she believe without convincing evidence? No. On her way to the grave in the early morning, Mary, like the other women, expected to find our Lord's body; then, when she found that the tomb was empty, she assumed that the body had been removed; and Mary did not believe that Jesus had risen until she recognized something familiar in the tone of His voice. Again, take the case of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Did they believe without convincing evidence? No. On the road they took Jesus to be a stranger; not even His discourse on prophecy was enough to open their eyes; and the Lord rebuked them for their unbelief. Again, take the case of the ten disciples. Did they accept the testimony of others? No. They dismissed the women's story as an 'idle tale.'

But, true though that is, there were two special hindrances to Thomas's belief in the reappearing of his Lord.

(1) The first was that mind of his that desired connected reasonings, visible and traceable as

are the veins and muscles of the organized body. When he was told that Jesus Christ had gone forth from that tight tomb, his mind stiffened and drew back as a man might on the verge of a fluent quagmire. 'Risen?' he asked: 'from what, as what, to what?' He ran the question through all the categories by which his mind was regulated, and found none fit it.

Many a mind in our own day is set in this mould, and Easter for them is obscured and blocked by the incredibility of a dead body's rising from the swathed and frigid grave. But this is to miss nine-tenths of the evidence. It is to remain deaf and blind to St. Paul's corroboration of the chief complaint; for, said he, 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.' It is to pass by that resurrection of the Apostles' confidence, their resurgent zeal and triumphant activity, which leap up like flaming wings at the point where the narrative has sunk to ashes. It blinks the unmistakable statements that the Lord Christ appeared in such a form that the environment of space and matter was somehow transcended. 'The reality of which His resurrection assures us is not that of this life, but of another life transcending this.'

But let it be said again, the reality of this Resurrection is something other than can be resolved by a machine that registers the weight of a man's body, or by a measuring-line, of which one end is laid in a grave and the other extended into the immaterial realm. The fire of Pentecost fuses such a machine and leaves its register incapable. Life can only be explained by life; the life that so surged in Peter and the Eleven, that they emerged from their renegade disloyalty and cowardice to fill the city square with the trumpets of a new kingdom, has one explanation, and one only, and that is a Life of God which could not be holden of death.

(2) Thomas hindered himself in the belief in the reappearing of his Lord by forsaking the company of his fellow-disciples in the time of silence and seeming dereliction; and because he so forsook their patient and mutual assembly, the revelation of the risen Christ passed him by.

There is a message here from the experience of St. Thomas of old! If the doubter hies him from the company in which he formerly met with Christ, he turns his back on the way by which Christ returns! Abide by the Company! However uninspired it may now appear, however arid its forms and ceremonies, however savourless the hymns, however vacant its homilies. But let a man put himself under orders to maintain his place in the muster,

above all, to drive through his hard and inflexible thoughts with the ploughshare of prayer, and, as the minister who leads the worship prays, say, 'This is *my* prayer; I insist that it is my prayer!' Remember what Francis of Sales says in one place of 'spiritual dryness': 'Blessed Angela de Foligno says that the prayer which is most acceptable to God is that which we make by force and constraint, the prayer to which we apply ourselves not for any relish we find in it, nor by inclination, but purely to please God; to which our will carries us against our inclinations, violently forcing its way through the midst of the dryness and repugnance which oppose it.'<sup>1</sup>

### THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

#### The Lamb of God.

'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.'—Jn 1<sup>29</sup>.

For many years before John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judæa the term 'Lamb' had been widely used in Jewish circles as a description of the promised and expected Messiah; it is found, not only in the Old Testament, but also in other Jewish books; and from these books it passed into the New Testament. First, John the Baptist applied it to Christ; secondly, St. Peter used it, not only in his speech at Jerusalem, but also in his first Epistle, where he calls Jesus 'the Lamb without blemish and without spot'; thirdly, John the Seer uses it twenty-nine times in his Revelation; and, putting all these passages together, and comparing them carefully with each other, we find that the term 'lamb' symbolizes, not meekness and gentleness, but three entirely different ideas. First, it was a symbol of power; secondly, it was a symbol of knowledge; and, thirdly, it was a symbol of sacrifice.

1. *The Lamb as a Symbol of Power.*—In the past, scholars have generally hesitated between two kindred ideas. Some, for example Dean Alford, thought that John was referring to Isaiah's famous description of the suffering servant, 'He is led as a lamb to the slaughter.' In this passage the leading idea is that the Messiah—or, perhaps, as some scholars think, the Jewish nation—will be a meek and gentle sufferer; and John, therefore, meant to indicate that, just as the lamb is led meekly to the slaughter, so Jesus, submitting to the will of God, would allow Himself to be crucified. Others,

however, for example Marcus Dods, hold a slightly different opinion. John, they say, was thinking about the Old Testament sacrificial system; he was thinking either of the paschal lamb or of the lamb offered daily at the morning and evening sacrifice; and John, therefore, they think, was teaching the doctrine that, just as the lamb in the Jewish ritual was supposed to bear the sins of the people, so our Lord, on Good Friday, bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

In *The Days of His Flesh*, David Smith combines these two ideas. John, he says, conceived of the Messiah 'as a sin-bearer, led like a lamb to the slaughter.' For two reasons, however, this interpretation is improbable. First, there is no other indication that John considered meekness a great virtue; and secondly, there is no other indication that he predicted the Crucifixion. No such ideas are found in his sermons as reported by the Synoptists. In those sermons John describes our Lord, not as a sufferer, but as a conqueror. 'He,' said John, 'has the winnowing fan in His hand. He will separate the good from the evil; He will gather the wheat into His garner, and burn the chaff with unquenchable fire; He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire.' In all these phrases the leading conception is power; and that is also the leading conception in the title 'Lamb of God.' By calling Jesus the Lamb of God, John meant, first and foremost, that Jesus would possess Divine power.

In order to understand the whole situation, we must remember that, in addition to the Old Testament, the Jews, in the time of Christ, read many other popular books; among these were 'The Secrets of Enoch,' 'The Testimony of Joseph,' and 'The Testimony of the Twelve Patriarchs'; and the point for us to notice is that in these books the term 'lamb' is generally used to describe, not a meek sufferer bearing the sins of others, but some great military hero or conqueror. David, who slew Goliath, is called a lamb; Judas Maccabæus, the hammer, is called a lamb; John Hyrcanus, the patriotic leader of a forlorn hope, is called a lamb; and so much was this last hero admired that many regarded him as the Messiah. We come here to a most remarkable fact. With us the lamb is a symbol of meekness. With the Jews, however, the term 'lamb' symbolized, not meekness, but power. In order to make the meaning perfectly clear, they described some of the leaders as possessing horns; Judas Maccabæus, for example, is called a lamb with a great horn; in the Book of Enoch the Maccabæan

<sup>1</sup> A. Boyd Scott, *The Twelve Take Stock of Us*, 86.

leaders are described as 'horned lambs'; and, finally, in the Book of Revelation, John calls our Lord Himself the 'Lamb with seven horns,' meaning that He is the omnipotent monarch. What, then, did John the Baptist mean when he called Jesus 'the Lamb of God'? He meant that Jesus would be the triumphant Messiah. Jesus, he says, will be far greater than David; Jesus will be a greater leader than Judas Maccabæus; Jesus will overcome all the forces of evil.

2. *The Lamb as a Symbol of Wisdom.*—In addition to possessing seven horns—the symbol of perfect power—the Lamb also possesses seven eyes. As the horn is the symbol of power, so the eye is the symbol of wisdom and knowledge; and, therefore, when St. John says that Christ possesses seven eyes, he means, not only that He is a Divine teacher, possessing a perfect knowledge of God and of His holy will, but also that He understands all the mysteries of the universe, and can even see into the future. Once more St. John is expanding an old Jewish idea. According to the prophet Isaiah, the Messiah would be filled with the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the term 'lamb' was applied by the Jews both to the prophet Samuel and to Solomon; even the woman of Samaria expected that the Messiah would be able to tell all things; and, therefore, when John the Baptist described Jesus as the Lamb of God, he probably meant to indicate that He would possess supernatural knowledge. But John the Seer, in Revelation, means much more than this. He means that the knowledge and wisdom possessed by the Lamb are exactly the same as the knowledge and wisdom possessed by God. The phrase about the seven eyes is borrowed from the Old Testament. In *Zec 4*<sup>10</sup> we read about the seven eyes of the Lord that 'run to and fro through the whole earth.' What does Zechariah mean when he says that God has seven eyes? He means that God is omniscient. What, then, does St. John mean when he says that the Lamb has seven eyes? He means that the risen and ascended Christ is omniscient.

3. *The Lamb as a Symbol of Sacrifice.*—By what means, it may be asked, did Jesus become possessed of His omnipotence and omniscience?

According to the author of the Book of Revelation, Jesus became all-powerful and all-wise, not by means of physical force, and not even by means of strenuous intellectual endeavour, but by means of His life and death of perfect love, perfect sacrifice,

perfect surrender, perfect devotion to the good of others. Love and surrender made Him all-powerful; love and surrender made Him all-wise. But what, it may be asked, does St. John mean when he says that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world? (*Rev 13*<sup>8</sup>). He means that love and self-surrender are an essential and eternal element in the nature of God the Father. On the field of human history that love was manifested specially on Good Friday; in reality it existed from the beginning. Love, he says, can manifest itself only by means of sacrifice; love can only prove its existence by the willingness to suffer for others; love, therefore, from the beginning, designed both the Incarnation and the Cross.

How does the Lamb take away Sin? To this question there is only one answer of much practical value. Let us return to the meaning of 'Lamb of God,' and note the fundamental distinction between the principles of Jesus and the principles of modern society. In modern society man seeks power by means of force and cunning; Jesus gained His power by revealing the truth about God to men, and by living and dying on their behalf. And Jesus saves us from our sins by inspiring us with His own spirit, and conforming us to His own image. As long as a man seeks power by mere force and cunning, he is an enemy both of God and of man; and only by seeking the truth and serving others is any man entitled to gain power. Truth and love are the two greatest things in the world; truth and love are what humanity needs; truth and love are the only genuine passports to power. In her sketch of Dr. James Hinton, author of *The Mystery of Pain*, Mrs. Havelock Ellis says that early in life he made a profound discovery. He discovered that he could never be happy unless he gave his mind to the search for truth and his life to the service of others. Each evening, in his study, he tried to discover the truth; each morning, on his rounds, he was serving others; and thus he became a great and good power. Let us take Dr. Hinton as an example; and what happened in his case may also happen with us. By searching for the truth, and by living for others, he, aided by the Holy Spirit, became a practical mystic; and practical mystics are the men most needed in these critical days. Dedicate thy mind to the search for truth; dedicate thy life to the service of others; and God Himself will make thee a follower of the Lamb of God.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. E. Hutton, *The Downfall of Satan*. 145.