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language of the Sufi. Here is a comment which may help the reader to understand the Ode :

“ ‘ I fancied that I loved Him,’ said Bāyazīd (the Sufi), “ but on consideration I saw that His love preceded mine.” Junayd (another Sufi) defined love as the substitution of the qualities of the Beloved for the qualities of the lover’ (Nicholson, *Mystics of Islam*, p. 112).

There can be no hesitation in affirming that in the *Odes of Solomon*, and in the third Ode especially, the intercourse between God and the soul is expressed as being between the Lover and the Beloved.

Now when we turn to the actual text of the Ode from which the foregoing translation is taken, remarking also that the Syriac is probably the original of the Ode, we find the writer using in his language of love the very root form (*rahm*) which we have in the *Ḳoran* : when he says that ‘ I love the Beloved,’ he uses the form *rahima*, for which the Arabic is *er-rahim* ; with the article transferred from the termination of the Syriac to the beginning of the Arabic word, we are entitled to say that the

language of the *Ḳoran* at this point is Syriac and not Arabic.

Now what of the noun-agent ? The Odist says, ‘ with the Lord Most High and *Merciful* there is no grudging.’ The word is again almost exactly the same as in the Arabic, *M rahmana* of the former answering to the *er-rahmana* of the latter ; but it is clear, from the constant use of the word for ‘ love ’ in the Ode, that the rendering ‘ merciful ’ is too weak ; it should be the ‘ Loving ’ : our text now says :

‘ The Most High and Loving ’ :

and the *Ḳoran* says the very same thing, if, without changing the text, we may modify the current commentary. In that case, too, we shall be entitled to infer that

LOVE IS THE LORD OF THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT.

‘ The very God ! think, Abib, dost thou think ?  
So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too.’

‘ We always are thinking of it,’ said the disciples of Junayd. ‘ We are beginning to think of it,’ responded the devout Moslem.

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## In the Study.

### *Virginibus Puerisque.*

**Suffer and Serve.**

BY ARTHUR J. MEE, M.A., B.SC., NEWPORT,  
ESSEX.

‘ Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.’—Mt 20<sup>27</sup>.

I WONDER how many of you boys and girls have mottoes. Not many, I suppose. Now, if you had been living a few hundred years ago I expect you would have had a motto, especially if you came from an old family, for in those days almost every one had some phrase or other which they associated with their family arms. Many of these are still to be found on the coats-of-arms of ladies and gentlemen, and with the crests of schools and other institutions.

I was very much struck by the motto of a school that I visited recently. In the hall of the school there was a beautiful war memorial screen upon which appeared the names of the old boys of the school who lost their lives in that terrible war about which you probably remember nothing. Above the screen were the school arms, very nicely

painted, with the motto underneath, and the motto was this, just the three words, ‘ Suffer and Serve.’ This seemed to be just the very thing to put above that memorial screen, for had not the boys there mentioned suffered in the service of their country ? Then I began to wonder how it was that the school got this motto. I found on inquiry that the school was a very old one. It was, in fact, founded over three hundred years ago, and it still bears the name of its foundress, Dame Joyce Frankland. The story of the founding of the school is bound up with the story of the motto, so in telling you the one I shall be telling you the other.

The school is on the road from London to Cambridge. Now, in the olden days, when students wanted to go to Cambridge, they had only one way of getting there. There were no trains, or motor-cars, and the only way of travelling a distance was to cover it on horseback. One day the son of Dame Joyce Frankland started out from London to Cambridge, but when he came to the spot where the school now stands, he met with a very serious accident. His horse stumbled, and the

young man was thrown from its back and was killed on the spot. He was going to Caius College at Cambridge, so his grief-stricken mother wrote to the Master of the College, and asked what she could do to provide some memorial of her son. The Master of the College replied that the best memorial that she could possibly raise would be to found a school on the spot where her son lost his life, and in that way she would be able to send to the University not one son, but hundreds. She carried out his suggestion, and the school now stands as a great memorial to that boy. Hundreds of boys have been educated at it and have gone up to Cambridge. Her motto, 'Suffer and Serve,' was taken from this incident, for out of her suffering, she served the rest of humanity.

I think this is a very nice story, and particularly so because it is absolutely true.

When I think of that motto, which I have decided to take as my own, I think of One whom it suited admirably. You all know how Jesus, while He was here on earth, suffered for us. It was Jesus who said that He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

Now, will you join with me in making this motto yours? What a tremendous difference it would make if we all did what we could to help others, even though we suffered a little!

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### Looping the Loop.

BY THE REVEREND T. CROUTHER GORDON,  
D.F.C., B.D., DALMUIR.

'Made himself of no reputation.'—Ph 2<sup>7</sup>.

I saw B. C. Hucks, one of the first airmen in the world, looping the loop. This was before the War, and thousands of people gathered together to watch him. I did not know that some day I would loop the loop myself. But nowadays it is a common thing for an airman to do this, and if you boys and girls watch a machine in the air for a while, you will notice it looping the loop. This means that it describes a complete circle. I used to be frightened, when the plane was right upside down, lest the pilot would fall out, but in a perfect loop there is no such danger. It is just the same principle as when you swing a milk can round your shoulder. The milk never comes out if you do it the right way, does it?

Well, the loop is still a popular stunt. It gives one a thrill, and it is a lovely sight to see it well done. But how is it done? Ah, that's the point! The first precaution the pilot takes is to gather

speed for a good start. Sometimes he will put the plane into a dive. Perhaps, as in stronger engines, he will just open the throttle full. But what he must have is a good start, so that he will reach the top of the loop. It is useless without a good start. Your father and mother have known the same about you. You will never reach the top without a good start, and so they have fed you, and watched you, and now they are just going to send you off. They have told you about Jesus, and taught you what is right. Will you reach the top of the circle? A good beginning is half the loop!

And you will reach the top, boys and girls, if you do what the pilot does. He takes the joy-stick, which guides the plane, and he pulls it into his heart. Thus he comes round in a beautiful loop, as safe as the bank. Think of all the guidance you have got. The warnings and the love and the wisdom to guide you through life are in your hands. But have you taken them to your hearts?

Your mother has placed the Bible in your hand. Think of how it can guide you through the skies of life. But have you taken it into your heart? The love of Jesus is placed within your grasp, but this is not enough. You must pull Him right into your heart.

Take him as Pilot by your side,  
And all is well, whate'er betide.

Now, is it not rather a curious fact, boys and girls, that a pilot is not considered much worth until he loops the loop, and yet, when he does, he describes the letter 'O.' The letter 'O' means 'Nothing.' When the pilot makes himself into Nothing, he becomes a real stunt pilot.

What a lesson! No man makes anything of life until he makes himself nothing. Jesus made Himself of no reputation, and thus became the greatest man in the world. To become great at anything we must forget ourselves. David Livingstone never thought of himself. It means turning ourselves upside down, of course, but then we come right side up in the end.

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### The Christian Bear.

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

#### The School of Life.

'For what is your life?'—Ja 4<sup>14</sup>.

What is our conception of the world in which we live? What reaction do the facts of life have upon us? Do we rebel, or are we entirely content? Probably few would be able to say, at first, 'All is for the best in the best of all possible worlds,'

though at last they may be able to think that. On the other hand, few would subscribe to the view held by some that this world is 'a vale of tears.' Those of us who have thought most deeply will probably agree in describing life as a school of character, intended to produce personality.

In every school so much depends on the government of the school, on the character of those who are behind it, and over it, as well as on the material of the scholars who attend it, let us try to discern certain leading principles that control the working of this school.

1. The first feature is the fatherliness (not merely the Fatherhood) of God. All religions are a search for God. There are many different conceptions of God. The Archbishop of Canterbury recently said that the first task of the Lambeth Conference was to explore this doctrine, as it is 'largely owing to partial and unworthy conceptions of God that materialism is able to commend itself.'

Surprising as it seems at first, St. Paul implied on Mars Hill that all men are worshipping the same God, though many are doing it ignorantly and mistakenly. The Muslims have many and impressive names for God, but among all these one searches in vain for the title 'Father.' Among the Jews how exceptional it is to find God addressed as 'Father.' One of the chief attractions in our Christian services is the singing of the Jewish psalms, in which that race has produced the finest flower of their literature, and yet how very, very seldom in those psalms is God appealed to as 'Father.'

Here lies the most important background of our religion. We must never believe anything about God which contradicts His Fatherliness. When we were young we were taught certain doctrines about eternal punishment, and certain crude presentments of the Atonement. We must reject any teaching which is inconsistent with the perfect love of a perfect Father. But none must make the mistake of confusing love with weakness or mere fondness.

2. The second feature is the sufficiency of Jesus Christ. We need more than an abstract conception of God. We are of the earth and earthy. We need a concrete embodiment of God's character, a manifestation on earth of God's ways, a human mirror of God's outlook, a revelation of God Himself—in short, an Incarnation. To provide this was the supreme object and mission of Jesus Christ. The world knew something of God before He came; each religion had contributed its share; each had been a partial revelation. Jesus came

to complete the revelation, and so effectually has He done this that since He came it has become impossible to think of God in other terms than in terms of Jesus Christ. Not only did He profess to mirror God, thus fulfilling the mission committed to Him, but our hearts, our instincts, our experiences acknowledge the validity of His claim, and add 'Amen' when He says, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' When once we have got to know Jesus Christ as the supreme creative personality, we find it impossible to think of God apart from Him. We feel clear that God is like Jesus Christ, and that anything else would be a lesser God. In Him there is an attractive, radiant adequacy for all our needs. It follows that it is all-important to know Him better and better. Let us count each week, each day, as lost in which we do not progress in this knowledge. Study the New Testament, various 'Lives of Christ,' available religious books, always with this end in view, to get to know Him better. And always and ever we shall find Him passing us on to the Father.

3. What has been said would be incomplete without a proper conception of the dignity of manhood. We cannot help being immensely impressed by the profound respect and reverence for man Jesus always manifested. We find ourselves sometimes in a rough crowd, and may feel a difficulty in realizing that in each man, woman, boy, and girl around us there is the Divine image, the spark of Godhead. Yet Jesus never hesitated. He always treated all alike with marked respect; always appealed to the highest in each; always tried to draw out the latent Godhead.

These three great principles kept clear before us will solve most problems, and make life glad and profitable. And, after all, this is merely the 'old, old story, of Jesus and His love.' It is merely the summary of all we have been led to believe; the summary of what we sing in our 'Glorias'; and when we cry, 'Teach us to know the Father, Son,' etc., this is what the Holy Spirit who is the Teacher in this school teaches us.<sup>1</sup>

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SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE EASTER.

**The Last Dilemma.**

'Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.'—I Ti 2<sup>6</sup>.

Our Lord's life is like a sublime piece of music through which, as a *motif*, there runs one steady

<sup>1</sup> D. S. Guy, in *The Christian World Pulpit*, cxviii, 65.

haunting refrain. It is always there, and most there when unnoticed. That refrain may be expressed in these words: 'If only men would believe in Me! If only men would accept Me as Lord and King!'

We know that this was Christ's passion and prayer. A personal faith was the one claim He made upon men, all men. Wherever He found such faith, He rejoiced openly. Wherever it was lacking, He could do nothing. And we remember with what peculiar joy He hailed any exhibition of human faith, especially if it came from unexpected and unlikely quarters. On the other hand, we remember how it hurt, worse than the thrust of a knife, when the people who should have welcomed Him as a friend and ally treated Him with doubt and scorn. Thus, from first to last, Christ's dream was to awaken and command faith—faith in His message and Himself. If only He could win their faith! That is the refrain that runs through His life and ministry.

This, indeed, was such a ruling passion in His heart that He had been tempted to use less worthy means to secure it. That bitter scene in the desert is sufficient proof of this.

1. He is now on the Cross. We do not grasp some of the deeper meanings of this scene, if we do not remember that the same refrain runs through it. 'If men would only believe.' We dwell too much on the pain of the Cross. Our Lord's greatest pain was not physical, but mental and spiritual. From the angle of mere pain, many a martyr has suffered as much. But no one has ever suffered the spiritual agony of Jesus when He gave Himself a ransom for many.

'They that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple.' It is not for us to judge the morals of a past age by the morals of our own. Therefore we must accept without undue comment the remark in our records that they mocked and giped at Him on His throne of a cross. It is easy for us, reared in gentler days only made possible by Jesus, to gasp at their depravity and barbarism. But if we live in a changed world to-day, with purer mercy, the credit is not ours. The credit belongs eternally to that silent Figure on the Cross. For, in deeper ways than we know, His death has been the *life* of the world.

One of these gibes, now historic, must have struck Jesus worse than a blow. The chief priests—men of privilege, but not above the level of the other jesters—cried out: 'Let Christ, the king of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may

see and believe.' 'That we may believe.' It is His own old refrain echoed mockingly. When Jesus heard it, we can imagine that He shut His eyes and pictured Himself for a moment back in the desert. He could readily recall the scene of agony: it was graven on His soul. Once more, in vision, He was at the threshold of His work, with the door swinging open. He was beating out its aims and objects for God and Himself. Satan whispered in His ear: 'That pinnacle, Jesus! Climb it, and throw yourself from the top. God will surely hold you up.' The point and appeal of that old temptation had lain here, that it offered Him straightaway a world that believed in Him and His claims. If He could start with the people's faith, what might He not do? The agony of the temptation lay in this, that, though it was the lower road, it seemed to lead more immediately to the high goal. It chimed in with His own dreams—a world that believed in Him, and a world that He could therefore redeem. At that moment in the desert, He wondered if any means that could bring the world to God might not be justified. He would have done anything—almost anything—to win their belief.

'Let Christ, the king of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.' As these words reached His ears, they were more than a cruel taunt. They suggested in a flashing temptation, a last glorious possibility. Here in this dramatic moment, surrounded by these gaping crowds, He was offered a unique chance. If by God's great power He now chose to avail Himself of the resources of Almighty God, He might use this occasion to win an unimpeachable belief. But would it be unimpeachable? Would they believe if He worked this last dramatic dénouement?

2. This presents us with Christ's last dilemma. On the one hand, we have His own conviction that He actually possessed all the power of God. We may deny that He had this power; but we cannot deny that He believed He had it. Even in the court-room before Pilate He stated that He could call down, if need be, all the hosts of God to His service. He was conscious of God's peculiar power within Him in ways that we cannot grasp. If, as He Himself trusted, Christ could really 'command' God and could effect by God's power what we foolishly call a miracle—a name that only cloaks our ignorance of unseen things—this was a dramatic moment. Suppose that He came down from the Cross. 'That we may believe,' they had said. Would they have believed? The only conceivable motive that might have influenced Christ's heart

was His desire to convince the world. Would He have convinced the world?

(1) In the first place, the priests would not have believed. Neither would we. They and we might have believed that Jesus was a man of magic and could do marvellous things: but His descent from the Cross would not have helped either them or us one whit to believe in His essential message, that God is love. It would have proved that God is *power*! But we knew that already. The whole visible world is a testimony to that. But nothing of Christ's essential message about God's heart and God's redemption could have been proved by any display of magical force. Indeed, it would have been the reverse. He would have dazzled the people. But no juggler's trick would ever induce any sane man to believe in the real message of the heart of God. There is only one thing in this world that can prove and establish love. And that is sacrifice. As He hung there on the Cross He was proving it now. To descend would have been to disprove it. Long ago, in speaking to the people, Jesus had answered His own dilemma. He had been telling them a story of a rich man and a poor man called Lazarus. In the story, Jesus tells how this rich man besought Abraham to send a messenger to earth to warn the man's brothers, lest they should come to an end like his. Send some one that they may be forewarned in time, and may repent and believe. And Abraham said unto him: 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.'

(2) Miracles do not establish truth. That is why Jesus never wrought them except for sheer mercy's sake. All the miracles in the world would not have proved Him to be the messenger of God's love. It is pitiable to see how some people quote the miracles of Jesus as if they proved that He is the messenger of God's truth. The miracles do not prove Him: He proves the miracles.

(3) Jesus had settled this precise temptation for Himself years ago. He had settled it in the desert. In His own extreme agony, He had settled that He must win the world by ordinary means—by reason, by argument, by pleading, by teaching, by service. He had emptied Himself of all other power, and He stood forth declaring the simple message of God's love. But more! He actually believed that He could prove God's love best by His own sacrifice. If, therefore, He used God's power to astonish and dazzle men, His sacrifice would be a plain farce. Having once put Himself in the hands of men, He must leave Himself there. So He settled His last dilemma.

3. The sublimity of His sacrifice is shown in one little incident of that last hour. As they prepared Him for His cross, they brought Him a drink of myrrh and wine. This represented a type of rough mercy. The drink acted as a kind of mild anæsthetic, and helped to drug the pain. We read that when He had tasted it, He refused to drink. Why? Because He had already accepted another cup. He had taken it into His hands in the Garden of Pain. The Father's cup! And He now resolved, in the majesty of His sacrifice, to give Himself with an unclouded soul into the arms of God. 'It is finished.' And He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.<sup>1</sup>

#### EASTER DAY.

##### The Resurrection of Faith.

'Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni.'—Jn 20<sup>16</sup>.

This is the story of a discovery that has meant more to the world than any other event in its history—the discovery that Jesus lives. The discovery was made by a woman whose wounded mind Christ had healed and brought to peace. We owe all honour to her for this discovery: for she made it by a venture in faith and love—by following the heart, the intuitions, rather than the reason; and, like many other pioneers, she found far more than she dreamed when she went out to seek. Mr. Chesterton says of her and her companions: 'In varying ways they realized the new wonder; but even they hardly realized that the world had died in the night. What they were looking at was the first day of a new creation with a new heaven and a new earth.'

1. First think of how she made the discovery. She had gone to the grave that morning with her young faith in ruins. Whatever ideas had begun to cluster around the person of Jesus for her and for the disciples, ideas of His Lordship and His kinship to God, Calvary had laid them in the dust. She just did not know what to think about Him now. With His death, life had lost its spring, its inspiration, its motive for going on. She had lost her best friend. It was what we would call the loss of faith. The same kind of thing happens among ourselves. Sometimes it happens through a great sorrow. Some one is taken who was the centre of the joy and happiness of life, and the face of God seems hidden. Sometimes it happens after a period of intellectual unsettlement. Sometimes it comes through a bitter experience—the betrayal

<sup>1</sup> J. Black, *The Dilemmas of Jesus*, 200.

by a friend, it may be ; or a shock which destroys our confidence in life. In all these cases, of course, it may be said that the faith that could thus be shattered was not very deep or very securely founded. To the man who has seen Jesus, and known Him for what He is, there is nothing that can shift his anchorage. That is just the point here : Mary had not seen Jesus for what He really is. For her, at this moment, He was the dearest friend she had ever known or could know—One who had saved her very soul. But Calvary had destroyed Him. He was at the mercy of death. He was among the mortals. She did not realize His infinite value, His indestructible love and friendship. And all she could utter was this moaning cry, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.'

But here is a thing to be noted. She did not yield to her despair. Nothing that had happened could stem her love or her gratitude. She could not go back, as some have done, to plunge into the world again, and forget. The colour of life had faded, and nothing could restore it. That is always what happens when once we have met with Christ. Nothing can ever take His place again. If He has come to us, and then we have lost the sense of His influence, there is always a sense of emptiness : there has passed away a glory from the earth.

There are needs that life creates which He alone can meet, wounds that He alone can heal. The farther we go with Him the more we find He leads us into a world in which we cannot live without Him—a fact which is part of the problem of civilization to-day. We have gone so far in submitting to His Spirit that we must either go farther or find it impossible to carry on at all.

For oh ! the Master is so fair,  
His smile so sweet to banished men,  
That they who meet Him unaware  
Can never turn to earth again.

But Mary did not give up seeking. Though it was only a grave, as she imagined, that held Him now, she sought the grave. Though her love and loyalty could find no other expression than to anoint His body, weep beside His tomb, and nurse His memory—that she could do. And she had her reward—as love and loyalty always have. For she heard at length a voice that said to her, 'Mary.' And, knowing in a flash that it was He, there quickly came the response, 'Master.' There are those who tell us that the yearnings and cravings that set us seeking for a personal fellowship with God are all illusion ; that they come from our-

selves ; and that all prayer feeds on is our own emotions. In a story of Mr. H. G. Wells a distraught man who has found no real satisfaction in life goes to a doctor. The doctor tries various keys to his problem, makes various suggestions. 'You have never,' he asks, 'turned to the idea of God?' There is a pause. 'I can't believe in a God.'—'But this loneliness, this craving for companionship?' 'We have all been through that,' says the other ; 'we have all in our time lain very still in the darkness with our souls crying out for the fellowship with God, demanding some sign, some personal response. The faintest feeling of assurance would have satisfied us.'—'And you have never had any response?' 'It faded : it always does.'—'I wonder,' Wells goes on, 'how many people there are nowadays who have passed through this experience of ineffectual invocation, this appeal to the fading shadow of the vanished God. I can believe that over all things there is righteousness, but righteousness is not mercy, nor comfort, nor friendliness, nor any of such dear and intimate things.'

That is a very common kind of experience. But are we looking for some kind of emotion? Or are we looking, as we ought to look, for some clear word of duty? for some constraint of conscience? for some light upon the way of life? for some sense of the glory of Jesus to touch our souls? The experience of Mary is the experience of thousands. It is the sense of having in Christ a personal friend—the assurance in Him of a love that cares and understands—the conviction, that deepens with every fresh response of faith and duty, that God has to do with us, and that we have to do with Him, and that somehow His hand is on the tiller of our life. Mary found Jesus the personal Saviour, living, radiant, abiding for ever. And why? *Because He was seeking her.* That is the real explanation of our longings. These prayers are all of His inspiration. These aspirations are all of His kindling. Perhaps we seek too anxiously. We do not wait enough. When Mary was quiet enough to listen, and had ceased from the torrent of her own entreaties, she found that in one whom she supposed to be the gardener *He* had been with her all the while.

2. What does this discovery mean in the region of personal religion? It meant two things to Mary. In the first place, it meant that death made no difference to her intimate friendship with Jesus. The gulf was bridged. His spirit had the power of immediate contact with hers. *Jesus lives.* Time and space, which limit our intercourse with one

another, have no power to limit our vital contact with Christ. That is the simplest way to put it. No one in his sane senses would ever take up the position that in the case of our friends death makes no difference. It makes an appalling difference to our human friendships. But the claim of the New Testament, and the message of the Resurrection are that it is otherwise with Jesus. He lives, and in His living personality He has access to our souls. Space and time and circumstances cannot limit His presence.

Thomas Hardy did not believe in this kind of immortality for any one. For him, the only immortality is that by which people live in the memories and in the love of those they leave behind. According to him we live a shadowy existence so long as people remember us and keep in their hearts some love for us like the afterglow of the setting sun; and then we die, because we are really dead already! But does any such conception as that explain the power of Jesus? Does memory explain the thousands upon thousands who claim that in their hearts, in some language that was clearer than speech, they have heard Him call them by name, and have been compelled to turn round about from some way of sin or despair or doubt, and acknowledge Him 'Master'? The fact is, that in His case death has made no difference to His intimate power with men, to the reality of His friendship. It makes no difference to His power to judge us. That Man on the Cross throws a very startling light into our souls—a light so real that there are people who dare not think about Him at all. And He challenges us; He is challenging us in this generation. His message is valid for to-day. One by one, His startling ideas as to the way in which nations ought to live and men ought to treat their fellows, are finding their way into our legislation, our industrial management, our international settlements. There is a curious immediacy about the words of Jesus, as if they were spoken straight into our hearts. We find ourselves taken into a world where He stands beside us and says to us, 'Mary' or 'Thomas' or 'John' or 'David.'

The other thing that leaps out of this story is that He has to do with us each one individually. There is a line in the *Dies Iræ* that always brought tears to the eyes of Samuel Johnson as it called up the picture of Christ by the well-side:

Seeking me, Thou sat'st there weary.

It is the same to-day. The centuries vanish in mist when we stand before the gaze of these pene-

trating eyes. It is the power of love, which is always personal. He knows us each one, and makes us feel that He knows us. He calls us by name, and His message is that we are infinitely worth while to Him—that our loss is His loss, and that our love is part of His heaven. He calls each one of us into His world—that higher world in which He lives victoriously; that world in which love is the law of life, and service is the key to happiness; where to do the right, seek the truth, and think for others as for ourselves, is the hallmark of the citizen; that world which is both here and yonder, and is the Father's house. His friendship is the door into that higher world for which God made us. And if we feel afraid of the difficulty or the cost or the weakness of our will, listen to His words: 'All power is given unto me in heaven, and in earth, and *I am with you alway.*'<sup>1</sup>

#### FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

##### A Spring Idyll.

'Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.'—Ca 2<sup>11-13</sup>.

In a few simple but masterly touches, betokening the eye and hand of a true poet, we have here a most graphic picture of opening spring in Palestine. The very spirit of the spring glows, and its life throbs in it. Eye and ear, smell and taste, are alike appealed to by the beauties and the melodies, the perfumes and the fruits, with which they conceive the senses as being greeted.

The first thing which strikes us about the spring is the marvellous *revival of life* which it brings.

In the magic agency which at this moment moves in Nature, and turns inanimate matter into growing forms of life, we see a manifestation of the same mysterious power which quickened Jesus in the grave, and raised Him from the dead as a pledge of life to all united to Him.

The Bible has no idea of a force in Nature operating apart from God. It is He who 'sends forth his spirit, and renews the face of the earth.' It is He who 'causes the bud of the tender herb to spring forth.' It is He that 'causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man, that he may bring forth food out of the earth.'

It is characteristic of the greatest of the poets—such as Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Words-

<sup>1</sup> J. Reid, *In Touch with Christ*, 69.

worth, Tennyson—that they are given to treat the moods and aspects of external Nature as pictures and reflections of man's internal states and feelings, as when Shakespeare speaks, for example, of 'the winter of our discontent.' To the seeing eye, indeed, all Nature is a sacrament, the outward and visible sign of an inward, spiritual grace. Hence the words so appropriate to the wonderful revival now going on in the external world are not less appropriate to the springtime which Christ's presence makes in the souls and lives of men. When He comes to any heart, to any home, to any community, in a sense deeper than the merely natural sense—'the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth.'

It was so at His first advent. A wintry, dead, and decaying world it was into which He came at His incarnation. Even among the chosen people, religion, with the great majority, had become an empty form from which the life had fled, a mere shroud for the dead. The heathen world, even under the civilization of Greece and Rome, was in a still worse case. Faith in the old divinities was gone. A spirit of scepticism pervaded society. 'In Rome every vice flaunted itself with revolting cynicism,' says Renan. But Christ's coming to that old, decrepit, dying world changed winter, and wintry death and darkness, into spring. It was the influx of a new life into humanity, quickening and reviving it, lifting it to a higher level, clothing it with new grace and vigour.

It is so, even now, in the hearts and lives into which He comes. Take the products and aspects of the spring in the words before us as mirroring and representing the spring-time which Jesus makes in the souls of men.

1. 'The winter is past.' It is cold, bleak, dreary winter in the heart where Jesus is not :

How like a winter hath Thine absence been  
From me, the pleasure of the fleeting year !  
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen,  
What old December's bareness everywhere !

For summer and his pleasures wait on Thee,  
And, Thou away, the very birds are mute,  
Or, if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer  
That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.

If it feels like winter to those who miss Him only for a little, how must it be with those who live without Him habitually. A traveller who had visited the icy solitudes of the Alps says : 'The whole scene seemed an awful, pale realm of mystery and death, placed far away in a sphere beyond

human interests and feelings ; and even the sunset, instead of making it more warm or familiar, imparted to it a weird, deathlike splendour, which scarcely seemed of earth.' Never before, he says, did he realize the weight of meaning in the apparently simple words of the Psalmist : 'He scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes ; he casteth forth his ice like morsels : who can stand before his cold ?' As he looks over those fields of ice, the traveller feels, 'How dreadful is this place !' How terrible to dwell in such a place for ever ! And yet perhaps it is no unfit image of the wintry desolation of the soul that puts Christ away, and deliberately chooses to live without Him.

2. 'The flowers appear on the earth.' All who visit Palestine unite in telling us that, though in many ways a blight has fallen on the country, the land there in spring is covered with innumerable wild flowers, which make it like an immense flower garden. Under the rays of a warm Eastern sun the fields glow with scarlet, yellow, and blue. Similarly the result of Christ's advent to the soul and of the influence of His spirit is the forth-putting of a beauty and splendour, of which the fairest earthly things are but faint reflections. His beauty is reproduced in His disciples—'The glory thou hast given me I have given them.'

3. 'The time of the singing of birds is come.' Nothing is more characteristic of the spring-time than the burst of exuberant song with which the birds greet the advent of the genial warmth—an exuberance which has its counterpart in the spiritual realm. For while Christ renews the spirit and beautifies the character with His own grace, He fills the heart with joy. One of the most prominent and striking traits of the early Christians, as described in the opening chapters of the Acts, was their irrepressible joy. On the hills in Switzerland, the Alpine horn which the shepherds carry is sometimes put to a somewhat singular use—a nobler than common use. When the sun has set in the valleys far below, leaving them in shadow and gloom, his golden rays still linger and glow on the higher summits, and the shepherd who dwells farther up takes his horn, and expresses his gratitude for the blessed light that still glows around him by calling through it the words, 'Praise the Lord !' And the other shepherds within hearing hasten from their huts, seize their horns and repeat the words, 'Praise the Lord !' The beautiful custom lasts often for a quarter of an hour, during which the voice of praise is echoed and re-echoed from summit to summit. If for the common light of evening the Alpine shepherds feel and express such

gratitude, how glad and grateful we should be for a light more blessed than ever fell on sea or land.

4. 'The voice of the turtle is heard in the land.' The reference is to the turtle-dove, which in winter migrates from Palestine to more southern climes. It is one of the migratory birds referred to by Jeremiah, as knowing their appointed time (Jer 8<sup>7</sup>). It returns in the early spring, when its gentle cooing voice in wood and copse announces that spring has come, just as the cuckoo note does with us. And its voice is the voice of love. If there is one word which more than another embodies the essence of the Christian spirit it is love.

5. 'The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.' The soul animated with the life and love of Christ not only 'buds and blossoms with all beautiful affections,' but, like the fig-tree and the vine, brings forth fruit. 'The fruit of the spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.' And not only fruit but perfume. 'The vines with the tender grape give a good smell.' One of the characteristics of the spring is the fragrance which from multitudinous young growths and from the opening buds and flowers pervades the air. Akin to this in the spiritual world is the influence which goes forth from every good man's life and character.

And now two closing thoughts suggested by our subject.

First, spring is the great season of opportunity, and its opportunities missed and disregarded bring a fruitless autumn—fruitless except in malign growths. In like manner life brings to each of us spiritual opportunities, and our whole future depends on the use we make of them.

But the spring season suggests another thought—a solemn and impressive one. It is sad to think how often the fair promise of the spring is not realized in autumn. Of the multitudinous blossoms that make the trees one blaze of beauty at this season, how many never reach perfection nor result in fruit? How many who give fair promise in early life are blighted prematurely by the frost of worldliness or temptation or indifference, and their spring promise is not fulfilled?

The uncertainty and changefulness of April weather is proverbial. In this climate of ours winter departs reluctantly, and often steals back again to chill the land and check growth, and darken it with cloud. There are some southern climes where they have no winter, where it is spring or summer all the year. Such will the life of heaven be—a perpetual spring, or rather an eternal summer, with no winter frost to wither it or check its fruitfulness, and no storms to disturb its peace. May the quickening breath of the Almighty give us even now a spiritual spring-time, and so prepare us for that eternal summer.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Heron, *A Large Place*, 44.

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## Recent Foreign Theology.

### Varia.

DR. JOSEPH RYBINSKI, a Roman Catholic scholar, has written an interesting and scholarly book on *The Angel of Jahwe*.<sup>1</sup> It has long been recognized that this angel sometimes seems to be identified with Jahweh, and sometimes to be sharply distinguished from Him. For those who accept the historicity of the patriarchal narratives and the unity and inspiration of Scripture, especially as these are interpreted by the Roman Catholic Church, questions of the Incarnation, the Trinity, the pre-existence of Christ and the appearance of the Logos within the Old Testament period

<sup>1</sup> *Der Mal'akh Jahwe* (Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, Paderborn; pp. 123).

are immediately raised. Many Protestant scholars regard 'the angel' as a later interpolation, prefixed to an original 'Jahweh' at a time when older and sensuous conceptions of deity were being superseded by more spiritual conceptions. Rybinski presents all the relevant passages in the Old Testament and the New Testament and deals very fairly, if not always convincingly, with the explanations of them offered by Protestant scholars. Besides taking the LXX and the Vulgate into account, he also examines the teaching relative to the angel of the Lord to be found in the pre-Augustinian Fathers, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas. His conclusion is that the angel is never to be identified with Jahweh, but is always a created angel; in passages which seem to support the