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necessarily be, yet it may help us to form some idea of how the human will may at each point of decision be under no compulsion but able to exercise a free choice, while all the time, in so far as it runs counter to the will of God, it can be

effectively held in check. Moreover, we shall be in full accord with the best Christian thought if we go further and say that the human will is in bondage so long as it strives against God. Only when surrendered is it truly free.

In the Study.

Virginitus Puerisque.

A Word.

BY THE REVEREND T. GREENER GARDNER, MATLOCK.

'And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.'—Jn 1¹⁴ (R.V.).

ONE of the very good things my schoolmaster did for me was to interest me in words and their meaning. He gave me pages of words and their derivations to learn, and oftentimes instead of asking questions about them, he would talk about some of those words and their meaning in such a fascinating manner that I envied his knowledge and forgot much of the drudgery. Some of us looked forward to the talks of the master, and are very thankful that he insisted that we should learn so many words and their derivation.

Since those schooldays, I have been very interested in words, and this interest was much aroused the other day when one of my friends sent me a card on which was printed this verse :

God wove a web of loveliness
Of clouds and stars and birds,
But made not anything at all
More beautiful than words.

When I read that verse I began to think about quite a number of wonderful words and the pictures they brought to my mind. I thought of 'God,' of 'Love,' of 'Father,' of 'Mother,' and a host of others, most of them just small Anglo-Saxon words, but so full of wondrous meaning that I could not tell you all about them in the small space I have for this talk.

Then suddenly my mind ran off to a passage in the Gospel according to St. John—'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.'

When you are a little older you will probably learn a great deal about the 'Logos,' which is the Greek way of speaking about the 'Word.'

The Greeks had a splendid idea about a word—their thought of a word as being the expression of a living person. A word was speech with a living personality behind it, so that when you read in the Gospel of St. John 'In the beginning was the Word,' you can be quite sure that the writer was endeavouring to say as well as he could, that God had sent Jesus to earth to be the expression of His own heart and mind. Thus in Jesus we know something of the infinite mind and the infinite love of God. Jesus, the living expression of God's thought of men, came to the earth so that men might know God. We love God because we believe that when we know something about Jesus we know something about God Himself.

I think John's manner of telling us about the coming of Jesus is just wonderful. The story of Jesus coming to be cradled in a manger is a very beautiful story, but I think this one of 'The Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us' is also very beautiful, for it means that we may know the love of God expressed in the life of His Son Jesus Christ.

There is something here for all of us to learn; we are to try to be a living expression of the thought of God—A Word of God.

In one of his letters John said that God was love. Jesus came to express God's love for men, and we are to try to copy Jesus. If we do this we may be quite assured that we shall make this earth a much happier place than it is.

What a great honour is ours—to be like Jesus, an expression of the thought of God.

'The Growlery.'

BY THE REVEREND P. N. BUSHILL, B.A.,
ORPINGTON.

'I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.'—Ph 4¹¹.

In a book called *Bleak House*, by Charles Dickens, a book which I am sure you will enjoy reading when you are a little older, there is the story of a

man who lived in a very big house—'Bleak House,' in fact, was its name. It was one of those lovely old mansions, though plainer and bleaker than most, with all kinds of rooms and passages and staircases: a lovely place for Hide and Seek! In that house, however, there was one room the name of which I had never heard before; it was a small room, and quite private, only the gentleman himself used it, and it was called 'The Growlery.' I have heard of Drawing-Room, Dining-Room, Lounge, Breakfast-Room, Pantry—but Growlery, never! Any time when he felt a little cross with himself, or with any one else, he used to go into that room, shut himself up, and growl and growl to his heart's content. Now there are a lot of new houses being built in England, and I think it would be a good thing if a law were passed that in future every house should have a Growlery; so that when people have something to complain of they should not be allowed to spoil other people's enjoyment and bring clouds of distress over everybody in the house, but should just go into the Growlery, and there grumble away for as long as they like without doing anybody any harm at all. Don't you think it would be a good plan? And don't you think that room would be used a good deal?

Yes, boys and girls have their grumbles, I know, though I don't suppose any in these days have quite the same excuse as had this poor boy who many years ago wrote a letter from school to his parents, and the letter found its way into an old number of the *Spectator*. This is what he wrote:

'I wright to tell you I am very retched, and my chilblains is worse again. I have not made any progress, and I do not think I shall. I am very sorry to be such an expence. I do not think this schule is any good. I hope Matilda's cold is better. I am glad she is not at schule. The piece of beef I send you is off the beef we had on Sunday, but on other days it is more stringy. There are black beades in the kitchen, and sometimes they cook them in the dinner, which can't be holsome when you are not strong!'

I think we must admit that he certainly had very good reason for his grumbles, and I do hope the door of his Growlery was open just a little so that others also may have heard them. Judging by his spelling I should imagine that he was quite right in saying that the school was not much good!

But sometimes we whine and grumble at everything! How different is the picture of the 'Queen of the Gypsies,' who, although not possessing very

much, was so happy and contented that she would not change places with anybody, no, not even the Queen herself! God was so good to her, she said, and she really had everything she wanted.

No, surely the best thing is not to have a Growlery at all. When you come to think of it, what a lot of good things we have! What a number of toys! What a number of friends! A good home, parents who care for us—what a happy life we really have! There is no need for a Growlery at all. St. Paul planned his house without one. I think he must have had a special sun-room instead, for his life was ever full of joy and content. He certainly at times was poor, even hungry, but what does he say? 'I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.' And another writer of long ago, in a letter to the Jews, reminds us that if we have Jesus in our hearts we have everything we need: 'Be content,' he says, 'with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'

After all, there is no need for a Growlery in our house!

The Christian Year.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The Father's Love for the Son.

'The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.'—*Jn* 10¹¹.

'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.'—*Jn* 10¹⁷.

The earlier verses of this chapter treat of the credentials and life-task of the Good Shepherd. And here we find Christ doing what in this Gospel He does so often—letting in a beam of light on the relations that obtained, during His earthly life, between the Son and the Father. It is true that perfect fellowship was such as to remain in great measure, both then and now, an incommunicable secret of Jesus' own heart. In the poorest, meanest life that breathes there rise and move such experiences as no human words can ever recapture or describe. 'They pass where words are not.' And more than all, in the case of Jesus, there were deep, untold intimacies of communion between the Heart above and the heart below which broke from language and escaped, too full for sound.

'The Father loveth me,' Jesus says. Why? 'Because I lay down my life.' So note, first, that in His dying Jesus Christ is free. That is the thought filling His whole mind at this time. When His hour came, the hour of lonely pain and sorrow,

He met its coming willingly. The flock was in danger ; for its deliverance the Good Shepherd had appeared ; so, duly, the ransom-life was paid.

It was His own act and deed. When it was open to Him to choose otherwise, He chose thus, going to Calvary in sacrifice that kept back nothing. Why does Jesus speak so pointedly of this ? Why does He come back to it again and yet again ? It is because the truth, surely, is one as to which misconception is very easy. Men have misconceived it in two ways. Either they deny it, or they accept it simply as a thing of course ; and which is worse it is difficult to say. To deny it is the equivalent of saying that Christ died because circumstances made Him their plaything, because every way of escape was closed. Well, if this is the truth about Jesus Christ, it makes it unmeaning to speak any longer of salvation as ours, through what He has done ; but, more than that, it implies that, if He was only the puppet of blind, merciless fate, much more are we. Then again, if to reject the voluntary character of Jesus' death is to deny His power, to take that character as merely self-evident is to deny a greater thing still—it is to deny His love. For it is in the *choice* of a redeeming death that the mighty passion of His love is seen.

It is this feature, the sovereign freedom of it, that gives the death of Jesus a place of its own in history. It distinguishes it even from the whole multitude of believers, who have perished rather than betray their trust. In the figurative language of this chapter these shepherds lost their lives as they were struggling with the wolf. They did not wish for death, but the call of duty made it a necessity. Here then we come upon a deep gulf that stretches between Jesus and the holiest and bravest of the saints. It is not a gulf of separation, but it is a gulf of real distinction. 'To every man upon this earth, death cometh soon or late,' the poem sings ; but to Jesus Christ death came otherwise than to us. Here as elsewhere, here supremely, He was not victim, He was victor over circumstance. And when at last He bowed His head, it was not because the foe was too strong, but because such was the Father's will, and the Father's will was His. And yet we know that in this world nothing happens without a reason. What, then, was the reason operating here if not that physical compulsion which is at work elsewhere ? Why, as to that, the best explanation of the whole matter is the simplest and the oldest, that Jesus died because He chose, and He chose because the souls of men were dear to Him.

Note, secondly, *how Jesus clung to God's love in the*

darkness. His calm assured sense of the Father's love, one feels, is almost startling ; outward appearances were so utterly against it. The shame and suffering yet to come, the agony and death, the dim foreboding of desolation which was crueller torment than them all—this was in Christ's mind as He spoke, and He shrank from it. No doubt moments came when He all but longed for the Cross to arrive more quickly, and a triumphant vision of its completed harvest gladdened Him ; but alongside of that went a shrinking and a haunting fear. 'Like the pellucid waters of the Rhine and the turbid stream of the Moselle, that flow side by side over a long space, neither of them blending discernibly with the other, so the shrinking and the desire were contemporaneous in Christ's mind.' And yet, as here and in other scenes, Jesus was able to look up, out of the very midnight of feeling, and grasp the faithful, unchanging love of God. So far from the Cross acting like an obscuring screen to hide the Father's love, it brought it always nearer, as if with telescopic power. That is the meaning of the amazing word with which the text begins. 'Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life.'

In one aspect the experience of Jesus Christ, most of all in His atoning passion, is something we can never share. But, in another aspect, which too often escapes our notice, His experience is something meant to be shared by every Christian. And one point at which we may enter into that fellowship is in holding fast the love of God when He bids us suffer. Trust Christ's reading of life. Trust His thought of God. Why, that is the very meaning of faith.

Again, we see here *how God values self-sacrifice*. Much of the Bible, as we know, is a record of God's view of selfishness, in all its myriad forms. But in human life there is present much more than selfishness ; there has always been, for the Holy Spirit has been always here. This patience and kindness and compassion—what does God think of them ? 'Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life'—in these words we have the answer. There we learn how goodness appears to God. For it was as if the Father perceived a new reason for loving Christ in His acceptance of the Cross. He had loved Him before, 'ere the worlds began to be' ; but that ineffable love was magnified and enriched now, as Christ prepared to die, and the great full heart of God overflowed at the sight of His wondrous sacrifice for a world of sin. Do we not have an illustration here of the value God places on self-sacrifice ? A great many

things which men covet, or pride themselves on having, enjoy but a low estimate in heaven. If we only go up high enough, the biggest palace in the world is nothing but a speck; and if we put ourselves in thought beside God, it is marvellous how things like money or power shrink and dwindle. Nothing shows great at that altitude but love. The disposition to stoop in mercy to the weak, the dignity that expresses itself in service, the pity that takes the outcast to its heart, the patience never wearied by refusals; it is this, this most of all, that bulks large in the sight of God.

Lastly, note that *the surrendered life is restored*. 'I lay down my life, that I may take it again.' For the sacrifice made by Jesus was not the casting away of a precious thing for ever; it was a stage, rather, in its perfect realization. He died to rise to a completer life, and to raise the world along with Him. And just as a diver sinks beneath the waves, to rise again to the upper air bearing the gems he went to seek, so Jesus Christ came back from death, not empty-handed, not alone, but bringing many sons unto glory. There is a principle here for us also. What we give up to God is restored to us more richly. If we give our life away—if we give it to Christ and for His sake to the world—it will come back rich and blessed, and crowned with God's love for ever.¹

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The Soul's Loneliness.

'Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.'—Jn 16³².

Our Lord's life was essentially a lonely one. And this spiritual loneliness was all the more severe as, with His true humanity, He clung to every human tie with purest affection, only surrendering it when His divinest duties claimed His devotion. But His purposes, teachings, actions, were too self-forgetful, too divine, to be understood by the self-seeking multitudes that thronged His footsteps. All classes alike misconceived and misrepresented Him. Closely on the defection of the religious and social leaders of the nation followed that of the people at large, whose faith began to die away, and whose early enthusiasms subsided into a cold indifference, or else changed into active hostility. One by one, every class in Palestine declared against Christ, and smaller and smaller grew the numbers of His personal adherents, till at

last only a few specially chosen disciples clung to Him with a wavering, bewildered devotion; for even those that knew Him best failed to understand Him. And yet each new defection, however deeply it stung His heart, served only to throw Him back more fully on the fellowship of the Father, and the perfect consciousness of that fellowship, which was only deepened by the gathering loneliness around, enabled Him to declare with spiritual calmness, 'Behold, the hour cometh, yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone, and yet I am not alone because the Father is with me.'

This spiritual solitariness, this power of standing alone, is at seasons a spiritual necessity in the lives of such as follow the Lord. Let us study how some prominent types of character yield themselves to, or else seek to evade, this necessity of life in God.

First, there are the men of strong self-reliant temper, who resolve to act alone. If they are thinkers, in the field of thought they can isolate themselves from disturbing influences, and, carrying out their task without the fear of consequence or the paralysing effects of doubt, can pass from the old familiar error to the new truth that dislodges it without a single symptom of human weakness. If they are men of action, in the field of action their resolves are forthwith carried into effect, and, waiting for no man's support, provided they be men of integrity, they take the line that conscience dictates, and making no concession to themselves, they allow of none to the feelings and weaknesses of others. So far removed from common infirmity, they naturally fail to call forth the sympathy of their fellows, and, however much they may compel the respect of men, they cannot command their love. Accordingly such men, though a power in the world, are only a second-rate power, and fail to receive from their fellows the highest which they have to give.

And, besides, if this self-reliance is after all only a constitutional or acquired strength of character, when the battle of life becomes too severe and their spirit fails them, their failure, since they have no spiritual succour to fall back upon, can only end in despair, unless they are able to cast themselves on the only sure and eternal refuge of the heart of man, and find in Him their everlasting stay and strength.

Over against this self-reliant class, we have the men who are all but wholly dependent on human sympathy, and whose hearts, full of affection, shrink from solitude. Such dependence on the sympathy of others may be combined with high

¹ H. R. Mackintosh, *Life on God's Plan*, 171.

intellectual gifts and culture. But however great the intellectual powers, the affectionate mind cannot endure to be alone, and must in all its efforts have the company of some sympathetic heart. The influence that such a man wields over his fellows is all but incalculable, and this influence is won by his profound and loving knowledge of the human heart.

And yet this combination of high gifts and excessive dependence on the sympathy of others is not infrequently accompanied with moral feebleness; for where can a man so highly gifted find the sympathy which the man of coarser mould can find so readily? Who will respond to his lofty aims and unworldly aspirations? He paints a piteous scene of need, of wrong, or injustice: the world weeps, but the need is not relieved, the wrong is not righted, and the injustice is unredressed. He summons to the work of God and man the numbers that hang upon his lips; but he might as well be crying in the wilderness for all the result that follows. And so, with no power to stand alone, he is yet left alone and without a single active sympathizer. If then, such a man shrinks from the solitude and loneliness that a true and divine life and conduct must entail, is it strange that his thoughts take one direction, as did Balaam in the Old Testament, and his conduct another; that his outer life is shaped by the worldly customs he inwardly reprobates, and, because he cannot find a friend to be his companion on the narrow way, he is led to join those who have taken the broad way; that his will grows steadily weaker, and his supplications for peace breathe more and more of a passionate despair, as the vision of God fades out of sight?

The dangers to which men of this class are exposed are not limited to minds of the highly intellectual type. There are times and seasons in the life of every man when he must stand alone, or forfeit his higher nature: alone he must go into the wilderness, alone take the path of duty or truth, not only uncheered by friends or kinsfolk, but even with the voice of men against him: alone he must face his trials, alone endure and overcome his agony. And alas only tribulation and anguish can be the lot of the man who cannot at such seasons declare with our Lord: 'Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.'

We must face our temptations alone: the whole work of building up the Christian character is a work truly solitary—a work in which we can admit no man to a partnership in our responsibilities. The suppression of unjustifiable anger, wrong

desires, and uncharitable thoughts, the conquest of evil habits, the ready confession of evil done, the preparation for coming strife, are tasks on which the human soul can safely enter with no presence but the presence of its God. Here the affection, even of those who know and love us best, may only prove a hindrance: their well-meant efforts may serve only to reconcile us to our self-indulgence, to cheat us of our sorrow, to lead us into a dangerous forbearance with our sins, to beguile us into pleasant thoughts about ourselves, when in the reality of things we should be lying in prostrate shame before our God.

The secret of all true strength lies in being alone with God. Why is our life so weak, so unworthy? Why is there such an unspiritual complacency about our Christianity? Just because we give ourselves no leisure to be alone with God: because, living in the presence of no higher beings than ourselves, our souls reflect only the commonplace tone of the society we frequent. No wonder that we now fear the censure of men we despise more than the condemnation of the conscience we profess to reverence. No wonder that, through dread of the flippant sneer or the empty laugh, we withhold our witness against the profane jest, the heartless slander, or the unclean tale, and deny the Lord that hath redeemed us. How are we to be delivered from the manifold petty slaveries which we daily endure, and yet scorn ourselves for enduring? There is only one way, and that is for us to meet our God face to face; if we would live a true life, we must betake ourselves to the solitude of this presence continually.

Mark how our Lord prepared for all great occasions in His life by spending the preceding night in prayer: how in Gethsemane He wrestled with strong crying and tears, but, in the judgment hall on the morrow, His was the only unruffled soul in that great tragedy. How the solitude of God's presence fills a man with might, and sends him forth, strong in the strength of a divine companionship, to undertake unpopular tasks in the home, in the social circle, and in the Church, and do, with fearless quietude, things that all men evade or depreciate. And as he addresses himself to his life's work, or to each individual duty as it arises, how glorious beyond all imagining is the assurance God gives him 'to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world.'

Let us take Christ's presence with us into the wilderness of temptation, shelter our weakness under His might, confess to Him all the awful experiences of that season when we cry 'never was man tried

as I am tried': confess to Him the assaults of evil, our deep-felt weakness and defencelessness, and our resolve not to let Him go till He make us strong to overcome and crown the strife with victory. In the loneliness of our spiritual strife, let us take, above all, this strong assurance of the Master Himself that comes to us in all the fullness of His power: 'Lo! I am with thee all the days—whether of joy or sorrow, success or failure—even unto the end of the world.'¹

Our faith is in the Christ who walks
With men to-day, in street and mart;
The constant Friend who thinks and talks
With those who seek Him with the heart.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The Gift of a Joyous Outlook.

'And I will give him the morning star.'—Rev 2²⁸.

It was to good people, with no very long tradition or holy habit to support them, it was to people who were in danger of being seduced by the low world which they had left behind, or who were in danger of torture or death at the hands of that world because of their fidelity to the call of Christ, that these words were spoken in a kind of hurried whisper: 'To him that overcometh, I will give the morning star.' Such words had probably some meaning beyond their ordinary sense for those who first heard them.

And yet, as the Bible tells us elsewhere, no word of God is of private interpretation—which we take to mean that every word of God which was ever spoken to the human soul in any definite set of circumstances, remains for ever a pledge from God for every soul which can honestly lay claim to it. If there is any difficulty about such a beautiful promise as this, 'I will give him the morning star,' it is not that we do not understand it, and cannot get out of it any assistance for our spirit in our actual day. No; the difficulty will rather be that we may not feel ourselves worthy to listen to such words: we may feel, who are we to take to ourselves the comfort of words which were whispered to people who for the sake of Christ stood, every moment, face to face with death!

But it is good for us to dwell upon words which were meant in the first instance for people who were in many ways better than we are. It often results in our wishing that we were better than we are. And, indeed, that is how Christ deals with us always—He speaks to us and about us as though we were

¹ R. H. Charles, *Courage, Truth, Purity*, 160.

much better people than we are. This is the love of the Father, as St. John said, to call us sons of God.

It is not only a very blessed experience to be taken for somebody very much holier than oneself: it is also a very terrible experience. When that white-souled lily of God, Pompilia, in *The Ring and the Book*, came right up to the wicked priest Caponsacchi and asked him to save her from her evil surroundings—asked him, a wicked man, to act the part of an unusually good man—when that happened, Caponsacchi tells us that he felt the very foundations of his life rocking in a kind of earthquake. But it all came right—Caponsacchi became the man that Pompilia took him for.

1. 'I will give him the morning star.' Every word of God should take us out of this world, which, big as it is, is much too small for us. Christ here promises to every one who, for His sake, will hold fast his integrity and live in love—Christ promises the shining of the morning star: He promises a daily glimpse of heaven. It is a great thing to see the stars—really to see them, to consider them, to make plain to ourselves that there is no end to the possible glory of our circumstances. To be delivered from the provincialism of worldly and atheistic views; to bathe our head in the sense of space—what a gift of God that is! How it brings things into a proper relation to what must lie beyond! How it delivers us from the intolerable idea which is creeping back into the modern world, that, after all, we are like so many convicts working out a penal doom, and all our gaieties and arts and pursuits only a poor subterfuge for hiding from ourselves the dreadful truth that we are all the time pitiful people engaged in a kind of oakum-teasing!

2. 'I will give him the morning star.' Whatever else the words mean, they mean that Christ will give to faithful souls the confidence that the best is yet to be. Jesus Christ is the one defence and foundation of all generous and happy ways of considering and dealing with life. Christ alone can hand us back the poets. For poetry is a kind of courage—courage face to face with life. Poetry is the human soul standing up to life, the human soul refusing to be cowed by the mere bulk and stupidity of things. And faith is the red core of fire behind all that rhetoric and bravery. Poetry, idealism, faith—what are they for us modern men in these cynical and threatening days; what are they but aspects and flashes of the morning star—of that very morning star which led the wise men long ago, and leads them still, to the place where in a manger lies the Holy Child?

3. 'I will give him the morning star.' There is something in a promise like this which should commend it to many who might be offended by any stronger or more confident word. Christ promises faithful souls, not everything, but the prospect of everything. They may not live to see the perfect day, but for believing souls the day has as good as come when its star has appeared.

There are many of us to-day who do not feel that we have a right to ask from God any unusual reward. We do not ask to be spared the general conflict and hardness of human experience. We have no wish to be delivered by any magic from the severe demand of life. We are ready to share the common hope and pathos, to tread step by step the human way, and to feel in many an hour how dim indeed are all our lights. We don't mind the journey at all if God will only keep up within us the glorious sense that it is indeed a journey, a pilgrimage, an appointed progress towards something which will justify everything.

'To him that overcometh' is given this grace of the morning star, this happy sense that all will yet be well. How true that is! Is there anything that revives the soul within us like a faithful deed done, a faithful blow struck, or a temptation faithfully trampled under foot? Is there anything that makes this world God's world like the shedding of one drop of our blood for the faith that such it is? Why, in such a moment we feel, by an indestructible connexion between our actions and God's recognition, that the spirit, for the sake of which we have done our deed, the spirit which there and then triumphed in us, is the spirit which is behind everything, and will not for ever be withstood.

And, on the other hand, is there anything which depresses and darkens the soul like a good deed refused, a temptation yielded to, a low suggestion entertained and acted upon? In trampling out our own light, we have for the moment blotted out the stars; and the dear morning star—the sense of the sacredness of our personal life and of all lives—withdraws behind some friendly cloud, and, for the time being, our spirit stands forlorn in a world of empty and senseless space.

But even in such a dark moment pause and listen; and, such is the patience and nearness of Christ, we will hear, in the silence and collapse of our own interior life, this old whisper and encouragement of the Eternal Spirit: 'To him that overcometh, I will give *again* the morning star'; and if in our heart of hearts we set ourselves once more to the high obedience, the morning star will once more appear for us, and life will resume for us its

sacredness, and our souls will recover the energy and daring which they have who, in this world, see the Face of God.¹

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The Divided Self.

'The kingdom of God is within you.'—Lk 17²¹.

Mr. Emil Davies has recently recorded the fact that the number of people who went out of their minds during the four years of the War was markedly lower than the average. At first sight that seems a staggering thing to say. When we think of the men who went out of their minds from shell-shock—and these were all included—it is staggering to find that, in spite of all this, fewer people went out of their minds during that time of extraordinary strain and physical hardship and danger than in times of peace.

Really, we should not be so surprised. During the War those who believed in it were given a purpose—a purpose which was to them so glorious, so satisfying, that they were willing to put their life into it. It created in such people the possibility of going all out for one thing. Curiously enough, war even harmonized many of our bad impulses; everything in a sense could be given if you believed in the War—the passion of love for your country and the passion of hate for the enemy, the passion of idealism and the lust for destruction. Even drunkenness and vice became permissible, everything became permissible with a certain type of person for whom the War unified their whole being for a while. It did so perhaps until doubts began to creep in, until the imagination was shocked at the horrors of war. But certainly for a considerable time the whole of many a person's life was gathered up into one purpose which was recognized by him as great and sufficient.

Other people in other times have known that same unity with themselves. The supreme instance was our Lord, and the most joyful of all figures in human history was His most perfect disciple, St. Francis of Assisi. In these two there is the same sense that with all they had to endure, with all they had to suffer, with all the tragedies, failures, and agonies of their lives, even with the Garden of Gethsemane and crucifixion of Christ, even with the heartbreak and blindness and death of St. Francis of Assisi, there was in them a peace which the world cannot give. It was for the same reason. They also had one complete and unifying purpose. Our Lord was here to show us God; St. Francis

¹ J. A. Hutton, *Loyalty: The Approach to Faith*, 302.

was here to show us Christ, which was the same thing. It was the purpose of God for them. They saw it, they accepted it, and gave themselves up to it entirely. And they achieved perfect joy because there was no conflict in their hearts. As a man in 1914 could go all out for war, so these went all out for love, and there was no conflict, nothing held back, nothing repressed, nothing restrained.

Now let us look at ourselves. Our unhappiness does not arise out of anything that happens to us. It is not what happens to us that decides whether we have peace and joy in our lives. As long as there is conflict in our minds we must always be defeated—on one side or the other. When we are deciding on aim or on action there is conflict between health, perhaps, and our work; between our own interests and some finer desire for the interests of other people; between the baser things we would like sometimes to do and our own self-respect. Whichever side of us wins, the good side or the bad, something has been repressed, something has been neglected or put on one side; and that part suffers. Therefore while we may be in a sense happy, we have not that joy which is untouched by circumstance. Our Lord said, 'Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.' What the world gives, it can take away, and the fear that it will be taken haunts us. But the joy Christ knew is something which is beyond the reach of circumstance, something which the world cannot take away.

One of the great things that modern psychology has revealed to us is the existence of conflict in ourselves, and the danger of repression. We have certain instincts or impulses which we want to satisfy; and as we grow up we realize either that they are wrong, or that most people think them wrong, and it is difficult to decide which we ourselves really think. Either we decide to disregard our own moral standard, or the moral standard of the world, openly; or we decide not to do the thing we want to and we try to forget it, and put it away. The most dangerous thing is when we think the thing is so wrong that our self-respect will not allow us to believe that we even want to do it, and pretend to ourselves that we do not want to do it. We thrust it away out of sight and there it creates some 'complex,' some trouble, some nervous strain. In any case there is in our mind a discord. Why? Because we have a desire somewhere to be splendid people, to have the highest of moral standards, and, however little we regard that desire in us, it is there. There is something in every individual which makes him want to be in perfect control of his own being. We are, in fact,

the children of God and we cannot deny our divine inheritance without pain. It is indeed also true, and we all know it, that we cannot deny our animal inheritance without pain; but equally we cannot deny our divine inheritance, and that is what many forget.

Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely Nurse doth all she can
To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

She tries to make us forget—that which we call 'Nature,' and always mean by it our animal nature—she tries to make us 'forget the glories we have known and that imperial palace whence we came'; but she cannot. And therefore there is in us continual strife, and not only strife, but defeat.

For the sake of argument let us turn this the other way round. If we could absolutely crush out the good, and give ourselves up to everything we desire, could we then be free from conflict? Perhaps we could. But is it possible to do this? The desire for something better is resurgent and we believe that, if it were possible to crush out the Divine in us, we would also have crushed out our capacity for joy. However much we seek to unify our nature for evil, there is always something that cries out for good in us, and that, being always defeated, will always make us unhappy.

Where is our victory found? To deny God, or, if we like to use untheological terms, to deny the highest ideal of which we are capable, is to suffer continual defeat. For we can never attain to peace or joy by such denial—never! But to give ourselves to God is to give ourselves to Life, for God is the source and author of Life. To surrender ourselves to Him, so that all our strength, our energies, our desires become unified in a flight towards life, towards God, this is to know joy, and that joy no man taketh away from us. It is something which is above the reach of circumstance. It is something which no tragedy can take from us, because our nature is now at one. As William James puts it, it is then that a 'self

hitherto divided, and consciously wrong, inferior, and unhappy becomes unified and consciously right, superior, and happy.'

But we say, 'I have to deny myself certain things that are evil.' There is a point we can reach at which we are not aware of denial and repression, nor do we practise them. Berguer writes of one supreme Example in which every particle was in flight towards Life (he uses the psychological term). That was Christ; and we may know that joy here on earth. This is not a thing one learns suddenly—even the most sudden conversion is only a stage in a long and slow spiritual growth. Yet it is true that if we give the whole of our being to God, to be used for a purpose we recognize as great, then we know a joy which no man takes from us. It is—to quote the language of that glorious collect of Ascension Day—'With Christ to ascend, and with Him continually to dwell.' It is to know what He meant when He said, 'The kingdom of heaven is within you.' For indeed this is the kingdom of heaven. We ascend with Christ into heaven and it is our prayer that we may with Him continually dwell.¹

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION.

Christ Present.

'I leave the world.'—Jn 16²⁸.

'I am with you alway.'—Mt 28²⁰.

'When I feel age creeping on me,' so said one who had done good service to his generation, 'when I feel age creeping on me, and know that I must soon die—I hope it is not wrong to say it—but I cannot bear to leave the world with all the misery in it.' These broken, emphatic words have a ring of genuineness. To some they may appear to savour of self-confidence, but the life's work which the speaker had done makes them, from his lips, simply truthful and natural. 'I cannot bear to leave the world with all the misery in it.'

No such saying is recorded of our Lord. He dwells with calm joy on His return to the Father. There is of course a sufficient answer to the contrast which has been suggested. It lies in the exultant words of St. Paul: 'He ascended far above all heavens that he might fill all things.' He ascended, not that He might leave, but that He might *fill*. He departed, having obtained eternal redemption for us. He could depart in a different frame from that of His servants who leave the world. It seems a trivial, hardly a reverent comparison to compare

¹ A. Maude Royden, *Here and Hereafter*, 3.

Him with them, but it is worth making, in order to bring out the greatness of the contrast. We carry out our little schemes, found our societies, pass our Acts of Parliament, or, at best, influence for good the shifting, transitory opinion of the day. He departed, having obtained eternal redemption for us, not a thing to be superseded by the lapse of ages, but to be worked out by and through the ages, to grow in significance as it is growing to-day. He left the world with all the misery in it, but He left something else.

This is a sufficient answer. But there are answers which, though sufficient, do not satisfy. They produce outward silence, but there is still a voice complaining in the heart. We shall all the better realize our position if we listen to it. Here is One who had virtue, wisdom, and influence enough to govern the world, even setting aside His Divine omnipotence, who might have restrained a thousand evils, and changed unspeakably the course of history; and yet—He leaves the world. We must confess at once that there is an element of mystery in the answer. The value of freedom for the development of human character is clear enough. But it is accompanied by such risk and loss, that it appears to us fitting that the Divine scheme should minimize it. If man must have free will within, let there be at any rate every influence from without to guide and uphold him. But this is exactly what does not happen. The sensible, visible presence of Jesus would have stunted the moral growth of His disciples. This may seem a hard, almost an irreverent, thing to say. What could be better and happier for a man than to hang on the words of Jesus for every thought and act? It *will* be the best and happiest thing, but in the present life it would be premature.

However, even if this view commends itself to us, there is still an element of mystery in the answer. This withdrawal of the gracious compulsion of a visible Saviour might be safe for the first disciples. But what has been the result of it on the mass of believers, who have never seen Him at all? Precisely the same difficulties face us, and precisely the same answer must be given when we consider the withdrawal of the Lord's visible presence from the Church and the world. If the individual is left, at any rate a Church is provided for him, and that Church might look for visible, unmistakable guidance. Yet it is not so. His personal directions, so far as we know them, were scanty and, humanly speaking, unsystematic, and for lack of His visible guidance, so we are ready to say, the Church was split by schisms, darkened by corruptions, and

made again and again the agent of persecution. Here again the only explanation is that freedom of development was essential, and that freedom of development could not have been had if the Lord had sat in the midst of His Church as its visible Head, while it could be had if His guidance was given through the Holy Spirit. And what we believe of the Church, we believe also of the world. This is harder still, even for an optimist. But we cannot think that Christ, leaving the world, was leaving it that it might grow worse and worse. Something of good for the human race and perhaps for other spheres of existence is to be evolved here even apart from and outside the Church. 'I leave the world' is not a sentence of rejection. This, then, is one side of the matter, one of the thoughts of the Ascension season, the necessary divinely ordained forsaking of the world, the Church, the individual, by One who had apparently come to share permanently all the fortunes of man.

But there is another side of the matter, an absolutely contradictory statement—'I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' He is with His Church and with His people. He is with them by His Spirit.

Let us examine the matter in actual experience. Here is one who is absolutely ignorant of Christ in everything, except in name. The Eternal Word fills all things, sustains the universe, but *he* sees nothing but the laws of His action. As to spiritual guidance, help, and support, he has none of them, except in an indirect way. For him Jesus has left the world. He is allowed to think so, if he chooses. But here is another whose whole soul rises up against such an assertion. The Lord is with him all the days. He sees His hand in every turn of his life. More than this, he is living a life of which Jesus is the motive and the support. He has come by grace to be absolutely dependent on Him. He is the bond-servant of Jesus Christ. How he rejoices when he feels the constraining power of

His will, his inability to think or speak or act apart from Him!

This season, then, is the Festival of the Unseen. In it we assert against detractors the power of human nature to know and live by what no eye beholds. And not merely that human nature *can* do this, but that it is the way of its perfection.

The gospel has several aspects. There is the retrospective view. Some minds are ever turning back to the past facts, the solemn, glorious, reassuring facts of the Lord's life. They live by these. There is also the expectant aspect—waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian watches, labours, occupies till his Master come. Both these are looking on things which are not seen, and eternal. But there is a third aspect which tries the spiritual sight still more; yet, when habitually attained it has more power to govern life. It is to see *now* and *here*, between the faces of the crowd, Jesus everywhere present—to feel, to live by His presence. Those who attain it can understand the words which He spoke: 'A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me.' They can follow Origen's splendid misinterpretation of St. Paul, and say that *already* they walk not by faith but by sight.¹

When Livingstone returned to Scotland after eighteen years in Africa there is no more moving story than that of his reception by the students of Glasgow University. As usual at the giving of honorary degrees they were prepared for all sorts of mischief, and a missionary would be a fine target for their humour. But when Livingstone appeared gaunt and wrinkled after twenty-seven fevers, darkened by the sun, with one arm hanging useless from a lion's bite, an unwonted awe and quiet descended upon the assembly. 'I am going back,' he said. 'Shall I tell you what sustained me amidst the toil, hardship, and loneliness of my exiled life? It was the promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end."'

¹ E. R. Bernard, *Sermons and Lectures*, 44.

Recent Foreign Theology.

Varia.

ABOUT eight years ago I had the privilege of reviewing in the pages of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES the monumental work of Dr. Titius—'Gott und

Natur'—which discussed the relation between Christian and scientific thought as regards God's relation to the universe. This French volume ¹

¹ *Dieu dans l'Univers*, par Victor Monod (Librairie Fischbacher, Paris; 1933).