

# The Ekklesia Reader

Fall 2014



*Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.*

*Philippians 4:8*



# Table of Contents

Mission and Vision	6
Introduction in Defense of Everything Else, <i>G.K. Chesterton</i>	8
Leaf by Niggle, <i>J.R.R. Tolkien</i>	11
Gaudí X Gaudí, <i>Antonio G. Funes, Josep Liz, Pere Vivas</i>	23
Wise Blood, <i>Flannery O'Connor</i>	25
Immanence, <i>Evelyn Underhill</i>	33
Proslogion, <i>St. Anselm</i>	35
A Grief Observed, <i>C.S. Lewis</i>	40
Tattoos on the Heart, <i>Gregory Boyle</i>	44
For the Life of the World, <i>Alexander Schmemmann</i>	52
The Weight of Glory, <i>C.S. Lewis</i>	54



## Mission Statement

The Claremont Ekklesia exists to bring Christianity into dialogue with the academic community at the Claremont Colleges.

## Vision Statement

This journal is driven by the conviction that the Christian Gospel speaks to all of life. Born of this conviction, the vision of the Claremont Ekklesia is two-fold.

First, we hope to demonstrate that Christian faith and a vigorous intellectual life can be pursued together, each challenging and enriching the other. In the marketplace of ideas that is the modern academy, we believe the Christian narrative stands as an intellectually viable understanding of the world.

Second, we aim to use Christianity as a lens to critically examine and explore a broad range of subjects through **academic scholarship**, **personal narrative** and **creative expression**. Drawing on the contributions of Christian thinkers of the past two millennia, we seek to bring the riches of a still vibrant intellectual tradition to bear on the questions and problems facing our world today.

Our hope is that bringing Christianity into dialogue with the creative learning of these colleges will stimulate discussion in a way that is relevant and engaging. As members of a variety of denominations, we hope this journal reflects both the unity and diversity found within the Christian faith. Although we consider ourselves Christians, and anchor our faith in the Lordship of Jesus Christ, we all bring slightly different perspectives to the discussion. None of us approaches this dialogue with certainty or objectivity--rather, we are committed to a humble search for understanding, and we warmly invite you to join us in this endeavor.

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*

*Ephesians 3:20-21*



# Intro in Defense of Everything Else

*G.K Chesterton*

Introduced by Amira Athanasios, Scripps '15

G. K. Chesterton was an apologist deeply devoted to an academic pursuit of Christianity. His writings are marked by paradox, wit, and an undeniable charm. He has contributed to just about every subject, but is particularly well known for his love of artistic expression.

The following essay serves as the introduction to Chesterton's great work, *Orthodoxy*. He describes his book as being arranged upon 'the positive principle of a riddle and its answer.' In this way, Chesterton explains his Christian faith not as a truth to be proven, but a journey to embark upon. He, therefore, speaks of imagination and wanderlust not as important, but as vital to the Christian narrative: with life felt first as a story, there must be a story-teller.

The only possible excuse for this book is that it is an answer to a challenge. Even a bad shot is dignified when he accepts a duel. When some time ago I published a series of hasty but sincere papers, under the name of "Heretics," several critics for whose intellect I have a warm respect (I may mention specially Mr. G.S. Street) said that it was all very well for me to tell everybody to affirm his cosmic theory, but that I had carefully avoided supporting my precepts with example. "I will begin to worry about my philosophy," said Mr. Street, "when Mr. Chesterton has given us his." It was perhaps an incautious suggestion to make to a person only too ready to write books upon the feeblest provocation. But after all, though Mr. Street has inspired and created this book, he need not read it. If he does read it, he will find that in its pages I have attempted in a vague and personal way, in a set of mental pictures rather than in a series of deductions, to state the philosophy in which I have come to believe. I will not call it my philosophy; for I did not make it. God and humanity made it; and it made me.

I have often had a fancy for writing a romance about an English yachtsman who slightly miscalculated his course and discovered England under the impression that it was a new island in the South Seas. I always find, however, that I am either too busy or too lazy to write this fine work, so I may as well give it away for the purposes of philosophical illustration. There will probably be a general impression that the man who landed (armed to the teeth and talking by signs) to plant the British flag on that barbaric temple which turned out to be the Pavilion at Brighton, felt rather a fool. I am not here concerned to deny that he looked a fool. But if you imagine that he felt a fool, or at any rate that the sense of folly was his sole or his dominant emotion, then you have not studied with sufficient delicacy the rich romantic nature of the hero of this tale. His mistake was really a most enviable mistake; and he knew it, if he was the man I take him for. What could be more delightful than to have in the same few minutes all the fascinating terrors of going abroad combined with all the humane security of coming home again? What could be better than to have all the fun of discovering South Africa without the disgusting necessity of landing there? What could be more glorious than to brace one's self up to discover New South Wales and then realize, with a gush of happy tears, that it was really old South Wales. This at least seems to me the main problem for philosophers, and is in a manner the main problem of this book. How can we contrive to be at once astonished at the world and yet at

home in it? How can this queer cosmic town, with its many-legged citizens, with its monstrous and ancient lamps, how can this world give us at once the fascination of a strange town and the comfort and honour of being our own town? To show that a faith or a philosophy is true from every standpoint would be too big an undertaking even for a much bigger book than this; it is necessary to follow one path of argument; and this is the path that I here propose to follow. I wish to set forth my faith as particularly answering this double spiritual need, the need for that mixture of the familiar and the unfamiliar which Christendom has rightly named romance. For the very word "romance" has in it the mystery and ancient meaning of Rome. Any one setting out to dispute anything ought always to begin by saying what he does not dispute. Beyond stating what he proposes to prove he should always state what he does not propose to prove. The thing I do not propose to prove, the thing I propose to take as common ground between myself and any average reader, is this desirability of an active and imaginative life, picturesque and full of a poetical curiosity, a life such as western man at any rate always seems to have desired. If a man says that extinction is better than existence or blank existence better than variety and adventure, then he is not one of the ordinary people to whom I am talking. If a man prefers nothing I can give him nothing. But nearly all people I have ever met in this western society in which I live would agree to the general proposition that we need this life of practical romance; the combination of something that is strange with something that is secure. We need so to view the world as to combine an idea of wonder and an idea of welcome. We need to be happy in this wonderland without once being merely comfortable. It is *this* achievement of my creed that I shall chiefly pursue in these pages.

But I have a peculiar reason for mentioning the man in a yacht, who discovered England. For I am that man in a yacht. I discovered England. I do not see how this book can avoid being egotistical; and I do not quite see (to tell the truth) how it can avoid being dull. Dullness will, however, free me from the charge which I most lament; the charge of being flippant. Mere light sophistry is the thing that I happen to despise most of all things, and it is perhaps a wholesome fact that this is the thing of which I am generally accused. I know nothing so contemptible as a mere paradox; a mere ingenious defence of the indefensible. If it were true (as has been said) that Mr. Bernard Shaw lived upon paradox, then he ought to be a mere common millionaire; for a man of his mental activity could invent a sophistry every six minutes. It is as easy as lying; because it is lying. The truth is, of course, that Mr. Shaw is cruelly hampered by the fact that he cannot tell any lie unless he thinks it is the truth. I find myself under the same intolerable bondage. I never in my life said anything merely because I thought it funny; though, of course, I have had ordinary human vain-glory, and may have thought it funny because I had said it. It is one thing to describe an interview with a gorgon or a griffin, a creature who does not exist. It is another thing to discover that the rhinoceros does exist and then take pleasure in the fact that he looks as if he didn't. One searches for truth, but it may be that one pursues instinctively the more extraordinary truths. And I offer this book with the heartiest sentiments to all the jolly people who hate what I write, and regard it (very justly, for all I know), as a piece of poor clowning or a single tiresome joke.

For if this book is a joke it is a joke against me. I am the man who with the utmost daring discovered what had been discovered before. If there is an element of farce in what follows, the farce is at my own expense; for this book explains how I fancied I was the first to set foot in Brighton and then found I was the last. It recounts my elephantine adventures in pursuit of the

obvious. No one can think my case more ludicrous than I think it myself; no reader can accuse me here of trying to make a fool of him: I am the fool of this story, and no rebel shall hurl me from my throne. I freely confess all the idiotic ambitions of the end of the nineteenth century. I did, like all other solemn little boys, try to be in advance of the age. Like them I tried to be some ten minutes in advance of the truth. And I found that I was eighteen hundred years behind it. I did strain my voice with a painfully juvenile exaggeration in uttering my truths. And I was punished in the fittest and funniest way, for I have kept my truths: but I have discovered, not that they were not truths, but simply that they were not mine. When I fancied that I stood alone I was really in the ridiculous position of being backed up by all Christendom. It may be, Heaven forgive me, that I did try to be original; but I only succeeded in inventing all by myself an inferior copy of the existing traditions of civilized religion. The man from the yacht thought he was the first to find England; I thought I was the first to find Europe. I did try to found a heresy of my own; and when I had put the last touches to it, I discovered that it was orthodoxy. It may be that somebody will be entertained by the account of this happy fiasco. It might amuse a friend or an enemy to read how I gradually learnt from the truth of some stray legend or from the falsehood of some dominant philosophy, things that I might have learnt from my catechism—if I had ever learnt it. There may or may not be some entertainment in reading how I found at last in an anarchist club or a Babylonian temple what I might have found in the nearest parish church. If any one is entertained by learning how the flowers of the field or the phrases in an omnibus, the accidents of politics or the pains of youth came together in a certain order to produce a certain conviction of Christian orthodoxy, he may possibly read this book. But there is in everything a reasonable division of labour. I have written the book, and nothing on earth would induce me to read it.

I add one purely pedantic note which comes, as a note naturally should, at the beginning of the book. These essays are concerned only to discuss the actual fact that the central Christian theology (sufficiently summarized in the Apostles' Creed) is the best root of energy and sound ethics. They are not intended to discuss the very fascinating but quite different question of what is the present seat of authority for the proclamation of that creed. When the word "orthodoxy" is used here it means the Apostles' Creed, as understood by everybody calling himself Christian until a very short time ago and the general historic conduct of those who held such a creed. I have been forced by mere space to confine myself to what I have got from this creed; I do not touch the matter much disputed among modern Christians, of where we ourselves got it. This is not an ecclesiastical treatise but a sort of slovenly autobiography. But if any one wants my opinions about the actual nature of the authority, Mr. G.S. Street has only to throw me another challenge, and I will write him another book.

# Leaf by Niggle

*J.R.R. Tolkien*

Introduced by Danny Nasry, Pomona '13

J.R.R. Tolkien is esteemed in the world of fantasy for his virtuosity in creating new worlds steeped in theological themes. *Leaf by Niggle* is more subtle than his major works, though it is just as endearing and meaningful. The story follows a man named Niggle, a painter in a town that gives little regard to the arts, preferring instead what is practical and efficient. Often, Niggle himself isn't sure how much to value his art. He ends up half-begrudgingly helping people, feeling that the urgency of others' needs eclipses his heart-need to paint; yet, when the materials required for making his paintings are needed in more "pressing" capacities, he feels he must devote them to his art. Everything feels like an interruption or an obstacle to Niggle's perpetually unfinished work, but what is he to do? This angst colors his life a beleaguered blue.

Niggle's oddly unsettled relationship with his life's work is at once an eccentric picture and an all too common encapsulation of the human condition. There is no doubt, though, that the ensuing journey which Tolkien weaves for little Niggle is outright rare, especially in the strength of its whimsy. In it is hope that even our feeble efforts, the fruit of weakly good intentions and clouded motivations, are the sort of things not beyond redemption; indeed, they may be the very medium through which we grow into right relationship with ourselves and with others. In the end, the fact that this story could bubble up out of a human being leaves us feeling so warmly confident that the way God redeems our self-prolonged mediocrity will be brilliant to the point of terror.

There was once a little man called Niggle, who had a long journey to make. He did not want to go, indeed the whole idea was distasteful to him; but he could not get out of it. He knew he would have to start sometime, but he did not hurry with his preparations.

Niggle was a painter. Not a very successful one, partly because he had many other things to do. Most of these things he thought were a nuisance; but he did them fairly well, when he could not get out of them: which (in his opinion) was far too often. The laws in his country were rather strict. There were other hindrances, too. For one thing, he was sometimes just idle, and did nothing at all. For another, he was kindhearted, in a way. You know the sort of kind heart: it made him uncomfortable more often than it made him do anything; and even when he did anything, it did not prevent him from grumbling, losing his temper and swearing (mostly to himself). All the same, it did land him in a good many odd jobs for his neighbour, Mr Parish, a man with a lame leg. Occasionally he even helped other people from further off, if they came and asked him to. Also, now and again, he remembered his journey, and began to pack a few things in an ineffectual way: at such times he did not paint very much.

He had a number of pictures on hand; most of them were too large and ambitious for his skill. He was the sort of painter who can paint leaves better than trees. He used to spend a long time on a single leaf, trying to catch its shape, and its sheen, and the glistening of dewdrops on its edges. Yet he wanted to paint a whole tree, with all of its leaves in the same style, and all of them different.

There was one picture in particular which bothered him. It had begun with a leaf caught in the wind, and it became a tree; and the tree grew, sending out innumerable branches, and thrusting out the most fantastic roots. Strange birds came and settled on the twigs and had to be attended to. Then all round the Tree, and behind it, through the gaps in the leaves and boughs, a country began to open out; and there were glimpses of a forest marching over the land, and of mountains tipped with snow. Niggle lost interest in his other pictures; or else he took them and tacked them on to the edges of his great picture. Soon the canvas became so large that he had to get a ladder, and he ran up and down it, putting in a touch here, and rubbing out a patch there. When people came to call, he seemed polite enough, though he fiddled a little with the pencils on his desk. He listened to what they said, but underneath he was thinking all the time about his big canvas, in the tall shed that had been built for it out in his garden (on a plot where once he had grown potatoes).

He could not get rid of his kind heart. 'I wish I was more strong-minded' he sometimes said to himself, meaning that he wished other people's troubles did not make him feel uncomfortable. But for a long time he was not seriously perturbed. 'At any rate, I shall get this one picture done, my real picture, before I have to go on that wretched journey,' he used to say. Yet he was beginning to see that he could not put off his start indefinitely. The picture would have to stop just growing and get finished.

One day, Niggle stood a little way off from his picture and considered it with unusual attention and detachment. He could not make up his mind what he thought about it, and wished he had some friend who would tell him what to think. Actually it seemed to him wholly unsatisfactory, and yet very lovely, the only really beautiful picture in the world. What he would have liked at that moment would have been to see himself walk in, and slap him on the back and say (with obvious sincerity): 'Absolutely magnificent! I see exactly what you are getting at. Do get on with it, and don't bother about anything else! We will arrange for a public pension, so that you need not.'

However, there was no public pension. And one thing he could see: it would need some concentration, some work, hard uninterrupted work, to finish the picture, even at its present size. He rolled up his sleeves, and began to concentrate. He tried for several days not to bother about other things. But there came a tremendous crop of interruptions. Things went wrong in his house; he had to go and serve on a jury in the town; a distant friend felt ill; Mr Parish was laid up with lumbago; and visitors kept on coming. It was springtime, and they wanted a free tea in the country: Niggle lived in a pleasant little house, miles away from the town. He cursed them in his heart, but he could not deny that he had invited them himself, away back in the winter, when he had not thought it an 'interruption' to visit the shops and have tea with acquaintances in the town. He tried to harden his heart; but it was not a success. There were many things that he had not the face to say no to, whether he thought them duties or not; and there were some things he was compelled to do, whatever he thought. Some of his visitors hinted that his garden was rather neglected, and that he might get a visit from an Inspector. Very few of them knew about his picture, of course; but if they had known, it would not have made much difference. I doubt if they would have thought that it mattered much. I dare say it was not really a very good picture, though it may have had some good passages. The Tree, at any rate, was curious. Quite unique in its way. So was Niggle; though he was also a very ordinary and rather silly little man.

At length Niggle's time became really precious. His acquaintances in the distant town began to remember that the little man had got to make a troublesome journey, and some began to

calculate how long at the latest he could put off starting. They wondered who would take his house, and if the garden would be better kept.

The autumn came, very wet and windy. The little painter was in his shed. He was up on the ladder, trying to catch the gleam of the westerling sun on the peak of a snow-mountain, which he had glimpsed just to the left of the leafy tip of one of the Tree's branches. He knew that he would have to be leaving soon: perhaps early next year. He could only just get the picture finished, and only so so, at that: there were some corners where he would not have time now to do more than hint at what he wanted.

There was a knock on the door. 'Come in!' he said sharply, and climbed down the ladder. He stood on the floor twiddling his brush. It was his neighbour, Parish: his only real neighbour, all other folk lived a long way off. Still, he did not like the man very much: partly because he was so often in trouble and in need of help; and also because he did not care about painting, but was very critical about gardening. When Parish looked at Niggle's garden (which was often) he saw mostly weeds; and when he looked at Niggle's pictures (which was seldom) he saw only green and grey patches and black lines, which seemed to him nonsensical. He did not mind mentioning the weeds (a neighbourly duty), but he refrained from giving any opinion of the pictures. He thought this was very kind, and he did not realise that, even if it was kind, it was not kind enough. Help with the weeds (and perhaps praise for the pictures) would have been better.

'Well, Parish, what is it?' said Niggle.

'I oughtn't to interrupt you, I know,' said Parish (without a glance at the picture). 'You are very busy, I'm sure.'

Niggle had meant to say something like that himself, but he had missed his chance. All he said was: 'Yes.'

'But I have no one else to turn to,' said Parish.

'Quite so,' said Niggle with a sigh: one of those sighs that are a private comment, but which are not made quite inaudible. 'What can I do for you?'

'My wife has been ill for some days, and I am getting worried,' said Parish. 'And the wind has blown half the tiles off my roof, and water is pouring into the bedroom. I think I ought to get the doctor. And the builders, too, only they take so long to come. I was wondering if you had any wood and canvas you could spare, just to patch me up and see me through for a day or two.' Now he did look at the picture.

'Dear, dear!' said Niggle. 'You are unlucky. I hope it is no more than a cold that your wife has got. I'll come round presently, and help you move the patient downstairs.'

'Thank you very much,' said Parish, rather coolly. 'But it is not a cold, it is a fever. I should not have bothered you for a cold. And my wife is in bed downstairs already. I can't get up and down with trays, not with my leg. But I see you are busy. Sorry to have troubled you. I had rather hoped you might have been able to spare the time to go for the doctor, seeing how I'm placed; and the builder too, if you really have no canvas you can spare.'

'Of course,' said Niggle; though other words were in his heart, which at the moment was merely soft without feeling at all kind. 'I could go. I'll go, if you are really worried.'

'I am worried, very worried. I wish I was not lame,' said Parish.

So Niggle went. You see, it was awkward. Parish was his neighbour, and everyone else a long way off. Niggle had a bicycle, and Parish had not, and could not ride one. Parish had a lame leg, a genuine lame leg which gave him a good deal of pain: that had to be remembered, as well as his sour expression and whining voice. Of course, Niggle had a picture and barely time to finish it. But it seemed that this was a thing that Parish had to reckon with and not Niggle. Parish,

however, did not reckon with pictures; and Niggle could not alter that. ‘Curse it!’ he said to himself, as he got out his bicycle.

It was wet and windy, and daylight was waning. ‘No more work for me today!’ thought Niggle, and all the time that he was riding, he was either swearing to himself, or imagining the strokes of his brush on the mountain, and on the spray of leaves beside it, that he had first imagined in the spring. His fingers twitched on the handlebars. Now he was out of the shed, he saw exactly the way in which to treat that shining spray which framed the distant vision of the mountain. But he had a sinking feeling in his heart, a sort of fear that he would never now get a chance to try it out.

Niggle found the doctor, and he left a note at the builder’s. The office was shut, and the builder had gone home to his fireside. Niggle got soaked to the skin, and caught a chill himself. The doctor did not set out as promptly as Niggle had done. He arrived next day, which was quite convenient for him, as by that time there were two patients to deal with, in neighbouring houses. Niggle was in bed, with a high temperature, and marvellous patterns of leaves and involved branches forming in his head and on the ceiling. It did not comfort him to learn that Mrs Parish had only had a cold, and was getting up. He turned his face to the wall and buried himself in leaves.

He remained in bed some time. The wind went on blowing. It took away a good many more of Parish’s tiles, and some of Niggle’s as well: his own roof began to leak. The builder did not come. Niggle did not care; not for a day or two. Then he crawled out to look for some food (Niggle had no wife). Parish did not come round: the rain had got into his leg and made it ache; and his wife was busy mopping up water, and wondering if ‘that Mr Niggle’ had forgotten to call at the builder’s. Had she seen any chance of borrowing anything useful, she would have sent Parish round, leg or no leg; but she did not, so Niggle was left to himself.

At the end of a week or so Niggle tottered out to his shed again. He tried to climb the ladder, but it made his head giddy. He sat and looked at the picture, but there were no patterns of leaves or visions of mountains in his mind that day. He could have painted a far-off view of a sandy desert, but he had not the energy.

Next day he felt a good deal better. He climbed the ladder, and began to paint. He had just begun to get into it again, when there came a knock on the door.

‘Damn!’ said Niggle. But he might just as well have said ‘Come in!’ politely, for the door opened all the same. This time a very tall man came in, a total stranger.

‘This is a private studio,’ said Niggle. ‘I am busy. Go away!’

‘I am an Inspector of Houses,’ said the man, holding up his appointment-card, so that Niggle on his ladder could see it.

‘Oh!’ he said.

‘Your neighbour’s house is not satisfactory at all,’ said the Inspector.

‘I know,’ said Niggle. ‘I took a note to the builder’s a long time ago, but they have never come. Then I have been ill.’

‘I see,’ said the Inspector. ‘But you are not ill now.’

‘But I’m not a builder. Parish ought to make a complaint to the Town Council, and get help from the Emergency Service.’

‘They are busy with worse damage than any up here,’ said the Inspector. ‘There has been a flood in the valley, and many families are homeless. You should have helped your neighbour to make temporary repairs and prevent the damage from getting more costly to mend than necessary. That is the law. There is plenty of material here: canvas, wood, waterproof paint.’

‘Where?’ asked Niggle indignantly.

‘There!’ said the Inspector, pointing to the picture.

‘My picture!’ exclaimed Niggle.

‘I dare say it is,’ said the Inspector. ‘But houses come first. That is the law.’

‘But I can’t...’ Niggle said no more, for at that moment another man came in. Very much like the Inspector he was, almost his double: tall, dressed all in black.

‘Come along!’ he said. ‘I am the Driver.’

Niggle stumbled down from the ladder. His fever seemed to have come on again, and his head was swimming; he felt cold all over.

‘Driver? Driver?’ he chattered. ‘Driver of what?’

‘You, and your carriage,’ said the man. ‘The carriage was ordered long ago. It has come at last. It’s waiting. You start today on your journey, you know.’

‘There now!’ said the Inspector. ‘You’ll have to go; but it’s a bad way to start on your journey, leaving your jobs undone. Still, we can at least make some use of this canvas now.’

‘Oh dear!’ said poor Niggle, beginning to weep. ‘And it’s not even finished!’

‘Not finished!’ said the Driver. ‘Well, it’s finished with, as far as you’re concerned, at any rate. Come along!’

Niggle went, quite quietly. The Driver gave him no time to pack, saying that he ought to have done that before, and they would miss the train; so all Niggle could do was to grab a little bag in the hall. He found that it contained only a paint-box and a small book of his own sketches: neither food nor clothes. They caught the train all right. Niggle was feeling very tired and sleepy; he was hardly aware of what was going on when they bundled him into his compartment. He did not care much: he had forgotten where he was supposed to be going, or what he was going for. The train ran almost at once into a dark tunnel.

Niggle woke up in a very large, dim railway station. A Porter went along the platform shouting, but he was not shouting the name of the place; he was shouting *Niggle!*

Niggle got out in a hurry, and found that he had left his little bag behind. He turned back, but the train had gone away.

‘Ah, there you are!’ said the Porter. ‘This way! What! No luggage? You will have to go to the Workhouse.’

Niggle felt very ill, and fainted on the platform. They put him in an ambulance and took him to the Workhouse Infirmary.

He did not like the treatment at all. The medicine they gave him was bitter. The officials and attendants were unfriendly, silent, and strict; and he never saw anyone else, except a very severe doctor, who visited him occasionally. It was more like being in a prison than in a hospital. He had to work hard, at stated hours: at digging, carpentry, and painting bare boards all one plain colour. He was never allowed outside, and the windows all looked inwards. They kept him in the dark for hours at a stretch, ‘to do some thinking,’ they said. He lost count of time. He did not even begin to feel better, not if that could be judged by whether he felt any pleasure in doing anything. He did not, not even in getting into bed.

At first, during the first century or so (I am merely giving his impressions), he used to worry aimlessly about the past. One thing he kept on repeating to himself, as he lay in the dark: ‘I wish I had called on Parish the first morning after the high winds began. I meant to. The first loose tiles would have been easy to fix. Then Mrs Parish might never have caught cold. Then I should not have caught cold either. Then I should have had a week longer.’ But in time he forgot what it was that he had wanted a week longer for. If he worried at all after that, it was about his

jobs in the hospital. He planned them out, thinking how quickly he could stop that board creaking, or rehang that door, or mend that table-leg. Probably he really became rather useful, though no one ever told him so. But that, of course, cannot have been the reason why they kept the poor little man so long. They may have been waiting for him to get better, and judging 'better' by some odd medical standard of their own.

At any rate, poor Niggle got no pleasure out of life, not what he had been used to call pleasure. He was certainly not amused. But it could not be denied that he began to have a feeling of—well satisfaction: bread rather than jam. He could take up a task the moment one bell rang, and lay it aside promptly the moment the next one went, all tidy and ready to be continued at the right time. He got through quite a lot in a day, now; he finished small things off neatly. He had no 'time of his own' (except alone in his bed-cell), and yet he was becoming master of his time; he began to know just what he could do with it. There was no sense of rush. He was quieter inside now, and at resting-time he could really rest.

Then suddenly they changed all his hours; they hardly let him go to bed at all; they took him off carpentry altogether and kept him at plain digging, day after day. He took it fairly well. It was a long while before he even began to grope in the back of his mind for the curses that he had practically forgotten. He went on digging, till his back seemed broken, his hands were raw, and he felt that he could not manage another spadeful. Nobody thanked him. But the doctor came and looked at him.

'Knock off!' he said. 'Complete rest—in the dark.'

Niggle was lying in the dark, resting completely; so that, as he had not been either feeling or thinking at all, he might have been lying there for hours or for years, as far as he could tell. But now he heard Voices: not voices that he had ever heard before. There seemed to be a Medical Board, or perhaps a Court of Inquiry, going on close at hand, in an adjoining room with the door open, possibly, though he could not see any light.

'Now the Niggle case,' said a Voice, a severe voice, more severe than the doctor's.

'What was the matter with him?' said a Second Voice, a voice that you might have called gentle, though it was not soft—it was a voice of authority, and sounded at once hopeful and sad. 'What was the matter with Niggle? His heart was in the right place.'

'Yes, but it did not function properly,' said the First Voice. 'And his head was not screwed on tight enough: he hardly ever thought at all. Look at the time he wasted, not even amusing himself! He never got ready for his journey. He was moderately well-off, and yet he arrived here almost destitute, and had to be put in the paupers' wing. A bad case, I am afraid. I think he should stay some time yet.'

'It would not do him any harm, perhaps,' said the Second Voice. 'But, of course, he is only a little man. He was never meant to be anything very much; and he was never very strong. Let us look at the Records. Yes. There are some favourable points, you know.'

'Perhaps,' said the First Voice; 'but very few that will really bear examination.'

'Well,' said the Second Voice, 'there are these. He was a painter by nature. In a minor way, of course; still, a Leaf by Niggle has a charm of its own. He took a great deal of pains with leaves, just for their own sake. But he never thought that that made him important. There is no note in the Records of his pretending, even to himself, that it excused his neglect of things ordered by the law.'

'Then he should not have neglected so many,' said the First Voice.

'All the same, he did answer a good many Calls.'

‘A small percentage, mostly of the easier sort, and he called those Interruptions. The Records are full of the word, together with a lot of complaints and silly imprecations.’

‘True; but they looked like interruptions to him, of course, poor little man. And there is this: he never expected any Return, as so many of his sort call it. There is the Parish case, the one that came in later. He was Niggle’s neighbour, never did a stroke for him, and seldom showed any gratitude at all. But there is no note in the Records that Niggle expected Parish’s gratitude; he does not seem to have thought about it.’

‘Yes, that is a point,’ said the First Voice; ‘but rather small. I think you will find Niggle often merely forgot. Things he had to do for Parish he put out of his mind as a nuisance he had done with.’ ‘Still, there is this last report,’ said the Second Voice, ‘that wet bicycle-ride. I rather lay stress on that. It seems plain that this was a genuine sacrifice: Niggle guessed that he was throwing away his last chance with his picture, and he guessed, too, that Parish was worrying unnecessarily.’

‘I think you put it too strongly,’ said the First Voice. ‘But you have the last word. It is your task, of course, to put the best interpretation on the facts. Sometimes they will bear it. What do you propose?’

‘I think it is a case for a little gentle treatment now,’ said the Second Voice.

Niggle thought that he had never heard anything so generous as that Voice. It made Gentle Treatment sound like a load of rich gifts, and a summons to a King’s feast. Then suddenly Niggle felt ashamed. To hear that he was considered a case for Gentle Treatment overwhelmed him, and made him blush in the dark. It was like being publicly praised, when you and all the audience knew that the praise was not deserved. Niggle hid his blushes in the rough blanket.

There was a silence. Then the First Voice spoke to Niggle, quite close. ‘You have been listening,’ it said.

‘Yes,’ said Niggle.

‘Well, what have you to say?’

‘Could you tell me about Parish?’ said Niggle. ‘I should like to see him again. I hope he is not very ill? Can you cure his leg? It used to give him a wretched time. And please don’t worry about him and me. He was a very good neighbour, and let me have excellent potatoes, very cheap, which saved me a lot of time.’

‘Did he?’ said the First Voice. ‘I am glad to hear it.’

There was another silence. Niggle heard the Voices receding. ‘Well, I agree,’ he heard the First Voice say in the distance. ‘Let him go on to the next stage. Tomorrow, if you like.’

Niggle woke up to find that his blinds were drawn, and his little cell was full of sunshine. He got up, and found that some comfortable clothes had been put out for him, not hospital uniform. After breakfast the doctor treated his sore hands, putting some salve on them that healed them at once. He gave Niggle some good advice, and a bottle of tonic (in case he needed it). In the middle of the morning they gave Niggle a biscuit and a glass of wine; and then they gave him a ticket.

‘You can go to the railway station now,’ said the doctor. ‘The Porter will look after you. Goodbye.’

Niggle slipped out of the main door, and blinked a little. The sun was very bright. Also he had expected to walk out into a large town, to match the size of the station; but he did not. He was on the top of a hill, green, bare, swept by a keen invigorating wind. Nobody else was about. Away down under the hill he could see the roof of the station shining.

He walked downhill to the station briskly, but without hurry. The Porter spotted him at once.

‘This way!’ he said, and led Niggle to a bay, in which there was a very pleasant little local train standing: one coach, and a small engine, both very bright, clean, and newly painted. It looked as if this was their first run. Even the track that lay in front of the engine looked new: the rails shone, the chairs were painted green, and the sleepers gave off a delicious smell of fresh tar in the warm sunshine. The coach was empty.

‘Where does this train go, Porter?’ asked Niggle.

‘I don’t think they have fixed its name yet,’ said the Porter. ‘But you’ll find it all right.’ He shut the door.

The train moved off at once. Niggle lay back in his seat. The little engine puffed along in a deep cutting with high green banks, roofed with blue sky. It did not seem very long before the engine gave a whistle, the brakes were put on, and the train stopped. There was no station, and no signboard, only a flight of steps up the green embankment. At the top of the steps there was a wicket-gate in a trim hedge. By the gate stood his bicycle; at least, it looked like his, and there was a yellow label tied to the bars with NIGGLE written on it in large black letters.

Niggle pushed open the gate, jumped on the bicycle, and went bowling downhill in the spring sunshine. Before long he found that the path on which he had started had disappeared, and the bicycle was rolling along over a marvellous turf. It was green and close; and yet he could see every blade distinctly. He seemed to remember having seen or dreamed of that sweep of grass somewhere or other. The curves of the land were familiar somehow. Yes: the ground was becoming level, as it should, and now, of course, it was beginning to rise again. A great green shadow came between him and the sun. Niggle looked up, and fell off his bicycle.

Before him stood the Tree, his Tree, finished. If you could say that of a Tree that was alive, its leaves opening, its branches growing and bending in the wind that Niggle had so often felt or guesses, and had so often failed to catch. He gazed at the Tree, and slowly he lifted his arms and opened them wide.

‘It’s a gift!’ he said. He was referring to his art, and also to the result; but he was using the word quite literally.

He went on looking at the Tree. All the leaves he had ever laboured at were there, as he had imagined them rather than as he had made them; and there were others that had only budded in his mind, and many that might have budded, if only he had had time. Nothing was written on them, they were just exquisite leaves, yet they were dated as clear as a calendar. Some of the most beautiful—and the most characteristic, the most perfect examples of the Niggle style—were seen to have been produced in collaboration with Mr Parish: there was no other way of putting it.

The birds were building in the Tree. Astonishing birds: how they sang! They were mating, hatching, growing wings, and flying away singing into the Forest even while he looked at them. For now he saw that the Forest was there too, opening out on either side, and marching away into the distance. The Mountains were glimmering far away.

After a time Niggle turned towards the Forest. Not because he was tired of the Tree, but he seemed to have got it all clear in his mind now, and was aware of it, and of its growth, even when he was not looking at it. As he walked away, he discovered an odd thing: the Forest, of course, was a distant Forest, yet he could approach it, even enter it, without its losing that particular charm. He had never before been able to walk into the distance without turning it into mere surroundings. It really added a considerable attraction to walking in the country, because,

as you walked, new distances opened out; so that you now had double, treble, and quadruple distances, doubly, trebly, and quadruply enchanting. You could go on and on, and have a whole country in a garden, or in a picture (if you preferred to call it that). You could go on and on, but not perhaps for ever. There were the Mountains in the background. They did get nearer, very slowly. They did not seem to belong to the picture, or only as a link to something else, a glimpse through the trees of something different, a further stage: another picture.

Niggle walked about, but he was not merely pottering. He was looking round carefully. The Tree was finished, though not finished with—‘Just the other way about to what it used to be,’ he thought—but in the Forest there were a number of inconclusive regions, that still needed work and thought. Nothing needed altering any longer, nothing was wrong, as far as it had gone, but it needed continuing up to a definite point. Niggle saw the point precisely, in each case.

He sat down under a very beautiful distant tree—a variation of the Great Tree, but quite individual, or it would be with a little more attention—and he considered where to begin work, and where to end it, and how much time was required. He could not quite work out his scheme.

‘Of course!’ he said. ‘What I need is Parish. There are lots of things about earth, plants, and trees that he knows and I don’t. This place cannot be left just as my private park. I need help and advice: I ought to have got it sooner.’

He got up and walked to the place where he had decided to begin work. He took off his coat. Then, down in a little sheltered hollow hidden from a further view, he saw a man looking round rather bewildered. He was leaning on a spade, but plainly did not know what to do. Niggle hailed him. ‘Parish!’ he called.

Parish shouldered his spade and came up to him. He still limped a little. They did not speak, just nodded as they used to do, passing in the lane, but now they walked about together, arm in arm. Without talking, Niggle and Parish agreed exactly where to make the small house and garden, which seemed to be required.

As they worked together, it became plain that Niggle was now the better of the two at ordering his time and getting things done. Oddly enough, it was Niggle who became most absorbed in building and gardening, while Parish often wandered about looking at trees, and especially at the Tree.

One day Niggle was busy planting a quickset hedge, and Parish was lying on the grass near by, looking attentively at a beautiful and shapely little yellow flower growing in the green turf. Niggle had put a lot of them among the roots of his Tree long ago. Suddenly parish looked up: his face was glistening in the sun, and he was smiling.

‘This is grand!’ he said. ‘I oughtn’t to be here, really. Thank you for putting in a word for me.’

‘Nonsense,’ said Niggle. ‘I don’t remember what I said, but anyway it was not nearly enough.’

‘Oh yes, it was,’ said Parish. ‘It got me out a lot sooner. That Second Voice, you know: he had me sent here; he said you had asked to see me. I owe it to you.’

‘No. You owe it to the Second Voice,’ said Niggle. ‘We both do.’

They went on living and working together: I do not know how long. It is no use denying that at first they occasionally disagreed, especially when they got tired. For at first they did sometimes get tired. They found that they had both been provided with tonics. Each bottle had the same label: *A few drops to be taken in water from the Spring, before resting.*

They found the Spring in the heart of the Forest; only once long ago had Niggle imagined it, but he had never drawn it. Now he perceived that it was the source of the lake that glimmered,

far away and the nourishment of all that grew in the country. The few drops made the water astringent, rather bitter, but invigorating; and it cleared the head. After drinking they rested alone; and then they got up again and things went on merrily. At such times Niggle would think of wonderful new flowers and plants, and Parish always knew exactly how to set them and where they would do best. Long before the tonics were finished they had ceased to need them. Parish lost his limp.

As their work drew to an end they allowed themselves more and more time for walking about, looking at the trees, and the flowers, and the lights and shapes, and the lie of the land. Sometimes they sang together; but Niggle found that he was now beginning to turn his eyes, more and more often, towards the Mountains.

The time came when the house in the hollow, the garden, the grass, the forest, the lake, and all the country was nearly complete, in its own proper fashion. The Great Tree was in full blossom.

‘We shall finish this evening,’ said Parish one day. ‘After that we will go for a really long walk.’

They set out next day, and they walked until they came right through the distances to the Edge. It was not visible, of course: there was no line, or fence, or wall; but they knew that they had come to the margin of that country. They saw a man, he looked like a shepherd; he was walking towards them, down the grass-slopes that led up into the Mountains.

‘Do you want a guide?’ he asked. ‘Do you want to go on?’

For a moment a shadow fell between Niggle and Parish, for Niggle knew that he did now want to go on, and (in a sense) ought to go on; but Parish did not want to go on, and was not yet ready to go.

‘I must wait for my wife,’ said Parish to Niggle. ‘She’d be lonely. I rather gathered that they would send her after me, some time or other, when she was ready, and when I had got things ready for her. The house is finished now, as well as we could make it; but I should like to show it to her. She’ll be able to make it better, I expect: more homely. I hope she’ll like this country, too.’ He turned to the shepherd. ‘Are you a guide?’ he asked. ‘Could you tell me the name of this country?’

‘Don’t you know?’ said the man. ‘It is Niggle’s Country. It is Niggle’s Picture, or most of it: a little of it is now Parish’s Garden.’ ‘Niggle’s Picture!’ said Parish in astonishment. ‘Did you think of all this, Niggle? I never knew you were so clever. Why didn’t you tell me?’

‘He tried to tell you long ago,’ said the man, ‘but you would not look. He had only got canvas and paint in those days, and you wanted to mend your roof with them. This is what you and your wife used to call Niggle’s Nonsense, or That Daubing.’

‘But it did not look like this then, not *real*,’ said Parish.

‘No, it was only a glimpse then,’ said the man; ‘but you might have caught the glimpse, if you had ever thought it worth while to try.’

‘I did not give you much chance,’ said Niggle. ‘I never tried to explain. I used to call you Old Earthgrubber. But what does it matter? We have lived and worked together now. Things might have been different, but they could not have been better. All the same, I am afraid I shall have to be going on. We shall meet again, I expect: there must be many more things we can do together. Goodbye!’ He shook Parish’s hand warmly: a good, firm, honest hand it seemed. He turned and looked back for a moment. The blossom on the Great Tree was shining like flame. All the birds were flying in the air and singing. Then he smiled and nodded to Parish and went off with the shepherd.

He was going to learn about sheep, and the high pasturages, and look at a wider sky, and walk ever further and further towards the Mountains, always uphill. Beyond that I cannot guess what became of him. Even little Niggle in his old home could glimpse the Mountains far away, and they got into the borders of his picture; but what they are really like, and what lies beyond them only those can say who have climbed them.

‘I think he was a silly little man,’ said Councillor Tompkins. ‘Worthless, in fact; no use to Society at all.’

‘Oh, I don’t know,’ said Atkins, who was nobody of importance, just a schoolmaster. ‘I am not so sure; it depends on what you mean by use.’

‘No practical or economic use,’ said Tompkins. ‘I dare say he could have been made into a serviceable cog of some sort, if you schoolmasters knew your business. But you don’t, and so we get useless people of his sort. If I ran this country I should put him and his like to some job that they’re fit for, washing dishes in a communal kitchen or something, and I should see that they did it properly. Or I would put them away. I should have put him away long ago.’

‘Put him away? You mean you’d have made him start on the journey before his time?’

‘Yes, if you must use that meaningless old expression. Push him through the tunnel into the great Rubbish Heap: that’s what I mean.’

‘Then you don’t think painting is worth anything, not worth preserving, or improving, or even making use of?’

‘Of course, painting has uses,’ said Tompkins. ‘But you couldn’t make use of his painting. There is plenty of scope for bold young men not afraid of new ideas and new methods. None for this old-fashioned stuff. Private daydreaming. He could not have designed a telling poster to save his life. Always fiddling with leaves and flowers. I asked him why, once. He said he thought they were pretty! Can you believe it? He said pretty! “What, digestive and genital organs of plants?” I said to him; and he had nothing to answer. Silly footler.’

‘Footler,’ sighed Atkins. ‘Yes, poor little man, he never finished anything. Ah well, his canvases have been put to “better uses”, since he went. But I am not so sure, Tompkins. You remember that large one, the one they used to patch the damaged house next door to his, after the gales and floods? I found a corner of it torn off, lying in a field. It was damaged, but legible: a mountain-peak and a spray of leaves. I can’t get it out of my mind.’

‘Out of your what?’ said Tompkins.

‘Who are you two talking about?’ said Perkins, intervening in the cause of peace: Atkins had flushed rather red.

‘The name’s not worth repeating,’ said Tompkins. ‘I don’t know why we are talking about him at all. He did not live in town.’

‘No,’ said Atkins; ‘but you had your eye on his house, all the same. That is why you used to go and call, and sneer at him while drinking his tea. Well, you’ve got his house now, as well as the one in town, so you need not grudge him his name. We were talking about Niggle, if you want to know, Perkins.’

‘Oh, poor little Niggle!’ said Perkins. ‘Never knew he painted.’

That was probably the last time Niggle’s name ever came up in conversation. However, Atkins preserved the odd corner. Most of it crumbled; but one beautiful leaf remained intact. Atkins had it framed. Later he left it to the Town Museum, and for a long time while ‘Leaf: by Niggle’ hung there in a recess, and was noticed by a few eyes. But eventually the Museum was burnt down, and the leaf, and Niggle, were entirely forgotten in his old country.

‘It is proving very useful indeed,’ said the Second Voice. ‘As a holiday, and a refreshment. It is splendid for convalescence; and not only for that, for many it is the best introduction to the Mountains. It works wonders in some cases. I am sending more and more there. They seldom have to come back.’

‘No, that is so,’ said the First Voice. ‘I think we shall have to give the region a name. What do you propose?’

‘The Porter settled that some time ago,’ said the Second Voice. ‘*Train for Niggle’s Parish in the bay*: he has shouted that for a long while now. Niggle’s Parish. I sent a message to both of them to tell them.’

‘What did they say?’

‘They both laughed. Laughed—the Mountains rang with it!’

# Gaudí X Gaudí

*Texts selected by Antonio G. Funes, Josep Liz, Pere Vivas*

Introduced by Janice Choi, Pomona '17

Antoni Gaudí was a salient figure of Catalan *Modernista* architecture, and his nature-influenced designs served as elegant, iconoclastic solutions to demands of soundness and innovation. A closer examination of Gaudí's life and work reveal an art practice greatly informed by his Roman Catholic faith. Though a prolific man of strong opinions, Gaudí never recorded his thoughts on paper. *Gaudí x Gaudí* is a compilation of the architect's philosophies and perspectives, selected from the records and works of his friends and disciples. His ideas range from technical notes on building materials, to more didactic and theologically implicative statements about his creative process; these give substance to the notion that art and aesthetics may carry a metaphysical significance, inextricable from the nature of the Christian God and His vision for creation. The discussion of beauty, then, is a challenging one, and Gaudí's brilliant yet forward manifestation of faith through art may prompt readers to consider the nature of beauty and all of its consequences.

## **Electric Light and Sunlight**

Everybody should make use of electric light. Lack of light does not help worship. The amount of light should be just right, not too much or too little, since having too much or too little light can both cause blindness. ... An abundance of electric light always runs the risk of being pretentious since, however bright it may be, if we compare it with sunlight it becomes laughable.

## **The Beings of Creation**

Beauty is the resplendence of truth. Seeing as art is beauty, without truth there is no art. To find the truth one should know well the beings of creation.



## **Mosaics**

Nothing exists that is not useable, that does not serve for something, that does not have a price.

## **The Wisdom of Angels**

The wisdom of angels consists of seeing the questions of metaphysical space directly, without the need to consider the flat, earthly dimensions. I have asked different theologians about this and they all assure me that this is possible.

### The Roman Soldier

The model of the Roman soldier for the slaughtering of the Innocents has six toes on each foot. The sculptor Lorenç Matamala wanted to hide it but Gaudí shouted angrily to him, “No! No! On the contrary. It must be well seen. It is an anomaly, just like killing children is an anomaly.”



### Words and Heaven

These inscriptions will be like a helicoidal band that will climb up the towers. Everyone who reads it, even the sceptics, will be singing a hymn to the Holy Trinity as they are discovering the contents: on reading it, the “Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus...” leads the gaze to the sky.

### The Facade of the Passion

There may be someone who finds this facade too extravagant, but I wanted it to frighten, and to achieve this I shall not skimp on the chiaroscuro, the projecting elements and the empty spaces, all resulting in a gloomier effect. Moreover, I am prepared to sacrifice the construction itself, to break arches or cut columns in order to give the idea of how bloody sacrifice is.



# Wise Blood

*Flannery O'Connor*

Introduced by Colin Eckstein, Pomona '17

"I think that [Christianity] is a totalitarian belief," declares atheist philosopher Christopher Hitchens. "It is the wish to be a slave. It is the desire that there be an unalterable, unchallengeable tyrannical authority who can convict you of thought crime while you are asleep. Who can subject you—who must indeed subject you—to total surveillance around the clock every waking and sleeping minute of your life . . ."

In her novel *Wise Blood*, Flannery O'Connor paints a lurid picture of this condemnatory, despotic God. It is the God of her childhood: O'Connor, a 1950s Catholic woman, pens this critique of the domineering and graceless brand of patriarchal Protestantism she had encountered in her Southern upbringing. Chapter 1 introduces Hazel Motes, the grandson of a turn-and-burn preacher from a backwater American town. Haze is haunted by his childhood perception of Jesus—Christ's omnipresence is perceived as moral surveillance, and His love a "cleansing fire" that brings sinners to their knees. O'Connor's depictions of human interaction are tense and uncomfortable. In order to bare their ugly hearts and minds to the reader, she strips her characters of all mock civility. She has "unmasked" them in a fundamental way that disturbs us only because we have become so accustomed to deceptive social niceties.

Hazel Motes sat at a forward angle on the green plush train seat, looking one minute at the window as if he might want to jump out of it, and the next down the aisle at the other end of the car. The train was racing through tree tops that fell away at intervals and showed the sun standing, very red, on the edge of the farthest woods. Nearer, the plowed fields curved and faded and the few hogs nosing in the furrows looked like large spotted stones. Mrs. Wally Bee Hitchcock, who was facing Motes in the section, said that she thought the early evening like this was the prettiest time of day and she asked him if he didn't think so too. She was a fat woman with pink collars and cuffs and pear-shaped legs that slanted off the train seat and didn't reach the floor.

He looked at her a second and, without answering, leaned forward and stared down the length of the car again. She turned to see what was back there but all she saw was a child peering around one of the sections and, farther up at the end of the car, the porter opening the closet where the sheets were kept.

"I guess you're going home," she said, turning back to him again. He didn't look, to her, much over twenty, but he had a stiff black broad-brimmed hat on his lap, a hat that an elderly country preacher would wear. His suit was a glaring blue and the price tag was still stapled on the sleeve of it.

He didn't answer her or move his eyes from whatever he was looking at. The sack at his feet was an army duffel bag and she decided that he had been in the army and had been released and that now he was going home. She wanted to get close enough to see what the suit had cost him but she found herself squinting instead at his eyes, trying almost to look into them. They were the color of pecan shells and set in deep sockets. The outline of a skull under his skin was plain and insistent.

She felt irked and wrenched her attention loose and squinted at the price tag. The suit had cost him \$11. 98. She felt that that placed him and looked at his face again as if she were fortified against it now. He had a nose like a shrike's bill and a long vertical crease on either side of his mouth; his hair looked as if it had been permanently flattened under the heavy hat, but his eyes were what held her attention longest. Their settings were so deep that they seemed, to her, almost like passages leading somewhere and she leaned halfway across the space that separated the two seats trying to see into them. He turned toward the window suddenly and then almost as quickly turned back again to where his stare had been fixed.

What he was looking at was the porter. When he had first got on the train, the porter had been standing between the two cars--a thick-figured man with a round yellow bald head. Haze had stopped and the porter's eyes had turned toward him and away, indicating which car he was to go into. When he didn't go, the porter said, "To the left, " irritably, "to the left, " and Haze had moved on.

"Well, " Mrs. Hitchcock said, "there's no place like home. "

He gave her a glance and saw the flat of her face, reddish under a cap of fox - colored hair. She had got on two stops back. He had never seen her before that. "I got to go see the porter, " he said. He got up and went toward the end of the car where the porter had begun making up a berth. He stopped beside him and leaned on a seat arm but the porter didn't look at him. He was pulling a wall of the section farther out.

"How long does it take you to make one up?"

"Seven minutes, " the porter said, not looking at him.

Haze sat down on the seat arm. He said, "I'm from Eastrod. "

"That isn't on this line, " the porter said. "You on the wrong train. "

"Going to the city, " Haze said. "I said I was raised in Eastrod. "

The porter didn't say anything.

"Eastrod, " Haze said, louder.

The porter jerked the shade down. "You want your berth made up now, or what you standing there for?" he asked.

"Eastrod, " Haze said. "Near Melsy. "

The porter wrenched one side of the seat flat. "I'm from Chicago, " he said. He wrenched the other side down. When he bent over, the back of his neck came out in three bulges.

"Yeah, I bet you are, " Haze said with a leer.

"Your feet in the middle of the aisle. Somebody going to want to get by you, " the porter said, turning suddenly and brushing past.

Haze got up and hung there a few seconds. He looked as if he were held by a rope caught in the middle of his back and attached to the train ceiling. He watched the porter move in a fine controlled lurch down the aisle and disappear at the other end of the car. He knew him to be a Parrum nigger from Eastrod. He went back to his section and folded into a slouched position and settled one foot on a pipe that ran under the window. Eastrod filled his head and then went out beyond and filled the space that stretched from the train across the empty darkening fields. He saw the two houses and the rust-colored road and the few Negro shacks and the one barn and the stall with the red and white CCC snuff ad peeling across the side of it.

"Are you going home?" Mrs. Hitchcock asked.

He looked at her sourly and gripped the black hat by the brim. "No, I ain't " he said in a sharp high nasal Tennessee voice.

Mrs. Hitchcock said neither was she. She told him she had been a Miss Weatherman before she married and that she was going to Florida to visit her married daughter, Sarah Lucile. She said it seemed like she had never had time to take a trip that far off. The way things happened, one thing after another, it seemed like time went by so fast you couldn't tell if you were young or old.

He thought he could tell her she was old if she asked him. He stopped listening to her after a while. The porter passed back up the aisle and didn't look at him. Mrs. Hitchcock lost her train of talk. "I guess you're on your way to visit somebody?" she asked.

"Going to Taulkinham, " he said and ground himself into the seat and looked at the window. "Don't know nobody there, but I'm going to do some things.

"I'm going to do some things I never have done before, " he said and gave her a sidelong glance and curled his mouth slightly.

She said she knew an Albert Sparks from Taulkinham. She said he was her sister-in-law's brother-in-law and that he...

"I ain't from Taulkinham, " he said. "I said I'm going there, that's all. " Mrs. Hitchcock began to talk again but he cut her short and said, "That porter was raised in the same place where I was raised but he says he's from Chicago. "

Mrs. Hitchcock said she knew a man who lived in Chi...

"You might as well go one place as another, " he said. "That's all I know. "

Mrs. Hitchcock said well that time flies. She said she hadn't seen her sister's children in five years and she didn't know if she'd know them if she saw them. There were three of them, Roy, Bubber, and John Wesley. John Wesley was six years old and he had written her a letter, dear Mamma-doll. They called her Mammadoll and her husband Papa-doll...

"I reckon you think you been redeemed, " he said.

Mrs. Hitchcock snatched at her collar.

"I reckon you think you been redeemed, " he repeated.

She blushed. After a second she said yes, life was an inspiration and then she said she was hungry and asked him if he didn't want to go into the diner. He put on the fierce black hat and followed her out of the car.

The dining car was full and people were waiting to get in it. He and Mrs. Hitchcock stood in line for a half-hour, rocking in the narrow passageway and every few minutes flattening themselves against the side to let a trickle of people through. Mrs. Hitchcock talked to the woman on the side of her. Hazel Motes looked at the wall. Mrs. Hitchcock told the woman about her sister's husband who was with the City Water Works in Toolafalls, Alabama, and the lady told about a cousin who had cancer of the throat. Finally they got almost up to the entrance of the diner and could see inside it. There was a steward beckoning people to places and handing out menus. He was a white man with greased black hair and a greased black look to his suit. He moved like a crow, darting from table to table. He motioned for two people and the line moved up so that Haze and Mrs. Hitchcock and the lady she was talking to were ready to go next. In a minute two more people left. The steward beckoned and Mrs. Hitchcock and the woman walked in and Haze followed them. The man stopped him and said, "Only two, " and pushed him back to the doorway.

Haze's face turned an ugly red. He tried to get behind the next person and then he tried to get through the line to go back to the car he had come from but there were too many people bunched in the opening. He had to stand there while everyone around looked at him. No one left for a while. Finally a woman at the far end of the car got up and the steward jerked his hand.

Haze hesitated and saw the hand jerk again. He lurched up the aisle, falling against two tables on the way and getting his hand wet in somebody's colee. The steward placed him with three youngish women dressed like parrots.

Their hands were resting on the table, red-speared at the tips. He sat down and wiped his hand on the tablecloth. He didn't take off his hat. The women had finished eating and were smoking cigarettes. They stopped talking when he sat down. He pointed to the first thing on the menu and the steward, standing over him, said, "Write it down, sonny" and winked at one of the women; she made a noise in her nose. He wrote it down and the steward went away with it. He sat and looked in front of him, glum and intense, at the neck of the woman across from him. At intervals her hand holding the cigarette would pass the spot on her neck; it would go out of his sight and then it would pass again, going back down to the table; in a second a straight line of smoke would blow in his face. After it had blown at him three or four times, he looked at her. She had a bold game-hen expression and small eyes pointed directly on him.

"If you've been redeemed," he said, "I wouldn't want to be." Then he turned his head to the window. He saw his pale reflection with the dark empty space outside coming through it. A boxcar roared past, chopping the empty space in two, and one of the women laughed.

"Do you think I believe in Jesus?" he said, leaning toward her and speaking almost as if he were breathless. "Well I wouldn't even if He existed. Even if He was on this train."

"Who said you had to?" she asked in a poisonous Eastern voice.

He drew back.

The waiter brought his dinner. He began eating slowly at first, then faster as the women concentrated on watching the muscles that stood out on his jaw when he chewed. He was eating something spotted with eggs and livers. He finished that and drank his coffee and then pulled his money out. The steward saw him but he wouldn't come total the bill. Every time he passed the table, he would wink at the women and stare at Haze. Mrs. Hitchcock and the lady had already finished and gone. Finally the man came and added up the bill. Haze shoved the money at him and then pushed past him out of the car.

For a while he stood between two train cars where there was fresh air of a sort and made a cigarette. Then the porter passed between the two cars. "Hey you Parrum," he called.

The porter didn't stop.

Haze followed him into the car. All the berths were made up. The man in the station in Melsy had sold him a berth because he said he would have to sit up all night in the coaches; he had sold him an upper one. Haze went to it and pulled his sack down and went into the men's room and got ready for the night. He was too full and he wanted to hurry and get in the berth and lie down. He thought he would lie there and look out the window and watch how the country went by a train at night. A sign said to get the porter to let you into the uppers. He stuck his sack up into his berth and then went to look for the porter. He didn't find him at one end of the car and he started back to the other. Going around the corner he ran into something heavy and pink; it gasped and muttered, "Clumsy!" It was Mrs. Hitchcock in a pink wrapper, with her hair in knots around her head. She looked at him with her eyes squinted nearly shut. The knobs framed her face like dark toadstools. She tried to get past him and he tried to let her but they were both moving the same way each time. Her face became purplish except for little white marks over it that didn't heat up. She drew herself stiff and stopped and said, "What is the matter with you?" He slipped past her and dashed down the aisle and ran into the porter so that the porter fell down.

"You got to let me into the berth, Parrum," he said.

The porter picked himself up and went lurching down the aisle and after a minute he came lurching back again, stone-faced, with the ladder. Haze stood watching him while he put the ladder up; then he started up it. Halfway up, he turned and said, "I remember you. Your father was a nigger named Cash Parrum. You can't go back there neither, nor anybody else, not if they wanted to. "

"I'm from Chicago, " the porter said in an irritated voice. "My name is not Parrum."

"Cash is dead, " Haze said. "He got the cholera from a Pig-"

The porter's mouth jerked down and he said, "My father was a railroad man. "

Haze laughed. The porter jerked the ladder off suddenly with a wrench of his arm that sent the boy clutching at the blanket into the berth. He lay on his stomach for a few minutes and didn't move. After a while he turned and found the light and looked around him. There was no window. He was closed up in the thing except for a little space over the curtain. The top of the berth was low and curved over. He lay down and noticed that the curved top looked as if it were not quite closed; it looked as if it were closing. He lay there for a while, not moving. There was something in his throat like a sponge with an egg taste; he didn't want to turn over for fear it would move. He wanted the light off. He reached up without turning and felt for the button and snapped it and the darkness sank down on him and then faded a little with light from the aisle that came in through the foot of space not closed. He wanted it all dark, he didn't want it diluted. He heard the porter's footsteps coming down the aisle, soft into the rug, coming steadily down, brushing against the green curtains and fading up the other way out of hearing. Then after a while when he was almost asleep, he thought he heard them again coming back. His curtains stirred and the footsteps faded.

In his half-sleep he thought where he was lying was like a coffin. The first coffin he had seen with someone in it was his grandfather's. They had left it propped open with a stick of kindling the night it had sat in the house with the old man in it, and Haze had watched from a distance, thinking: he ain't going to let them shut it on him; when the time comes, his elbow is going to shoot into the crack. His grandfather had been a circuit preacher, a waspish old man who had ridden over three counties with Jesus hidden in his head like a stinger. When it was time to bury him, they shut the top of his box down and he didn't make a move. Haze had had two younger brothers; one died in infancy and was put in a small box. The other fell in front of a mowing machine when he was seven. His box was about half the size of an ordinary one, and when they shut it, Haze ran and opened it up again. They said it was because he was heartbroken to part with his brother, but it was not; it was because he had thought, what if he had been in it and they had shut it on him.

He was asleep now and he dreamed he was at his father's burying again. He saw him humped over on his hands and knees in his coffin, being carried that way to the graveyard. "If I keep my can in the air, " he heard the old man say, "nobody can shut nothing on me," but when they got his box to the hole, they let it drop down with a thud and his father flattened out like anybody else. The train jolted and stirred him half-awake again and he thought, there must have been twenty-five people in Eastrod then, three Motes. Now there were no more Motes, no more Ashfields, no more Blasengames, Feys, Jacksons... Or Parrums--even niggers wouldn't have it. Turning in the road, he saw in the dark the store boarded and the barn leaning and the smaller house half carted away, the porch gone and no floor in the hall.

It had not been that way when he was eighteen years old and had left it. Then there had been ten people there and he had not noticed that it had got smaller from his father's time. He had left it when he was eighteen years old because the army had called him. He had thought at first

he would shoot his foot and not go. He was going to be a preacher like his grandfather and a preacher can always do without a foot. A preacher's power is in his neck and tongue and arm. His grandfather had traveled three counties in a Ford automobile.

Every fourth Saturday he had driven into Eastrod as if he were just in time to save them all from Hell, and he was shouting before he had the car door open. People gathered around his Ford because he seemed to dare them to. He would climb up on the nose of it and preach from there and sometimes he would climb onto the top of it and shout down at them. They were like stones! he would shout. But Jesus had died to redeem them! Jesus was so soul-hungry that He had died, one death for all, but He would have died every soul's death for one! Did they understand that? Did they understand that for each stone soul, He would have died ten million deaths, had His arms and legs stretched on the cross and nailed ten million times for one of them? (The old man would point to his grandson, Haze. He had a particular disrespect for him because his own face was repeated almost exactly in the child's and seemed to mock him.) Did they know that even for that boy there, for that mean sinful unthinking boy standing there with his dirty hands clenching and unclenching at his sides, Jesus would die ten million deaths before He would let him lose his soul? He would chase him over the waters of sin! Did they doubt Jesus could walk on the waters of sin? That boy had been redeemed and Jesus wasn't going to leave him ever. Jesus would never let him forget he was redeemed. What did the sinner think there was to be gained? Jesus would have him in the end. The boy didn't need to hear it. There was already a deep black wordless conviction in him that the way to avoid Jesus was to avoid sin. He knew by the time he was twelve years old that he was going to be a preacher. Later he saw Jesus move from tree to tree in the back of his mind, a wild ragged figure motioning him to turn around and come off into the dark where he was not sure of his footing, where he might be walking on the water and not know it and then suddenly know it and drown. Where he wanted to stay was in Eastrod with his two eyes open, and his hands always handling the familiar thing, his feet on the known track, and his tongue not too loose. When he was eighteen and the army called him, he saw the war as a trick to lead him into temptation, and he would have shot his foot except that he trusted himself to get back in a few months, uncorrupted. He had a strong confidence in his power to resist evil; it was something he had inherited, like his face, from his grandfather. He thought that if the government wasn't through with him in four months, he would leave anyway. He had thought, then when he was eighteen years old, that he would give them exactly four months of his time. He was gone four years; he didn't get back, even for a visit.

The only things from Eastrod he took into the army with him were a black Bible and a pair of silver-rimmed spectacles that had belonged to his mother. He had gone to a country school where he had learned to read and write but that it was wiser not to; the Bible was the only book he read. He didn't read it often but when he did he wore his mother's glasses. They tired his eyes so that after a short time he was always obliged to stop. He meant to tell anyone in the army who invited him to sin that he was from Eastrod, Tennessee, and that he meant to get back there and stay back there, that he was going to be a preacher of the gospel and that he wasn't going to have his soul damned by the government or by any foreign place it sent him to.

After a few weeks in the camp, when he had some friends--they were not actually friends but he had to live with them--he was offered the chance he had been waiting for; the invitation. He took his mother's glasses out of his pocket and put them on. Then he told them he wouldn't go with them for a million dollars and a feather bed to lie on; he said he was from Eastrod, Tennessee, and that he was not going to have his soul damned by the government or any foreign place they... But his voice cracked and he didn't finish. He only stared at them, trying to steel his

face. His friends told him that nobody was interested in his goddam soul unless it was the priest and he managed to answer that no priest taking orders from no pope was going to tamper with his soul. They told him he didn't have any soul and left for their brothel.

He took a long time to believe them because he wanted to believe them. All he wanted was to believe them and get rid of it once and for all, and he saw the opportunity here to get rid of it without corruption, to be converted to nothing instead of to evil. The army sent him halfway around the world and forgot him. He was wounded and they remembered him long enough to take the shrapnel out of his chest-- they said they took it out but they never showed it to him and he felt it still in there, rusted, and poisoning him--and then they sent him to another desert and forgot him again. He had all the time he could want to study his soul in and assure himself that it was not there. When he was thoroughly convinced, he saw that this was something that he had always known. The misery he had was a longing for home; it had nothing to do with Jesus.

When the army finally let him go, he was pleased to think that he was still uncorrupted. All he wanted was to get back to Eastrod, Tennessee. The black Bible and his mother's glasses were still in the bottom of his duffel bag. He didn't read any book now but he kept the Bible because it had come from home. He kept the glasses in case his vision should ever become dim.

When the army had released him two days before in a city about three hundred miles north of where he wanted to be, he had gone immediately to the railroad station there and bought a ticket to Melsy, the nearest railroad stop to Eastrod. Then since he had to wait four hours for the train, he went into a dark dry-goods store near the station. It was a thin cardboard-smelling store that got darker as it got deeper. He went deep into it and was sold a blue suit and a dark hat. He had his army suit put in a paper sack and he stuffed it into a trashbox on the corner. Once outside in the light, the new suit turned glare-blue and the lines of the hat seemed to stiffen fiercely.

He was in Melsy at five o'clock in the afternoon and he caught a ride on a cotton- seed truck that took him more than half the distance to Eastrod. He walked the rest of the way and got there at nine o'clock at night, when it had just got dark. The house was as dark as the night and open to it and though he saw that the fence around it had partly fallen and that weeds were growing through the porch floor, he didn't realize all at once that it was only a shell, that there was nothing here but the skeleton of a house. He twisted an envelope and struck a match to it and went through all the empty rooms, upstairs and down. When the envelope burnt out, he lit another one and went through them all again. That night he slept on the floor in the kitchen, and a board fell on his head out of the roof and cut his face.

There was nothing left in the house but the chifforobe in the kitchen. His mother had always slept in the kitchen and had her walnut chifforobe in there. She had given thirty dollars for it and hadn't bought herself anything else big again. Whoever had got everything else, had left that. He opened all the drawers. There were two lengths of wrapping cord in the top one and nothing in the others. He was surprised nobody had come and stolen a chifforobe like that. He took the wrapping cord and tied it around the legs and through the floor boards and left a piece of paper in each of the drawers: This shiffer-robe belongs to Hazel Motes. Do not steal it or you will be hunted down and killed. He thought about the chifforobe in his half-sleep and decided his mother would rest easier in her grave, knowing it was guarded. If she came looking any time at night, she would see. He wondered if she walked at night and came there ever. She would come with that look on her face, un-rested and looking; the same look he had seen through the crack of her coffin. He had seen her face through the crack when they were shutting the top on her. He was sixteen then. He had seen the shadow that came down over her face and pulled her mouth

down as if she wasn't any more satisfied dead than alive, as if she were going to spring up and shove the lid back and fly out and satisfy herself: but they shut it. She might have been going to fly out of there, she might have been going to spring. He saw her in his sleep, terrible, like a huge bat, dart from the closing, fly out of there, but it was falling dark on top of her, closing down all the time. From inside he saw it closing, coming closer closer down and cutting off the light and the room. He opened his eyes and saw it closing and he sprang up between the crack and wedged his head and shoulders through it and hung there, dizzy, with the dim light of the train slowly showing the rug below. He hung there over the top of the berth curtain and saw the porter at the other end of the car, a white shape in the darkness, standing there watching him and not moving.

"I'm sick" he called. "I can't be closed up in this thing. Get me out"

The porter stood watching him and didn't move.

"Jesus, " Haze said, "Jesus."

The porter didn't move. "Jesus been a long time gone, " he said in a sour triumphant voice.

# Immanence

*Evelyn Underhill*

Introduced by Stephen Colón, Pitzer '15

There is something ironic about taking the transcendent, intentionally inimitable experience of art and bottling it for public consumption only after a process of measured categorization has picked out the artist's supposed meaning. Certainly, works of art are artifacts from the heart of their creators, and as such are littered with meaning and messages from their birthplace in the artist's conscience. And surely, many works of art have qualities about which description is possible and even useful—I can offer tales of history and anthropology, for instance, to contextualize an art piece when sharing it and thereby magnify the experience of the observer.

But if the point of art is to bring the one who experiences it—refined critic or not—to a stirring appreciation of something “more,” then the worst possible misappropriation of art is to make it something with an explicit meaning.

Scripture, I think, is what happens when God makes art for our consumption. There is meaning in scripture—meaning that is quite beautiful; meaning that makes me tear up while I utter prayers of gratitude for God's mercy. But it would be quite the mistake to think this meaning is something which can be fully explained in an essay for an antiquities class or on a chart in the back of a study Bible. It is not possible to imitate the full effect of scripture with a wholly expository method, and it is counter-intuitive to take something as populist as scripture and reserve it for the theologian.

In a time when her contemporaries were preoccupied with the Holy as something distant from the present and articulated best in paragraphs of written discourse, Evelyn Underhill used *Immanence* to play medium between divine and mortal, reminding her audience that the transcendent is most evident in the tangible, and spiritual experiences are best known on the outside of stained glass windows. Like a lemon sorbet cleans the connoisseur's palate between tastings, my hope is that *Immanence* will invite our Christian community to step back from its scaffolding of scripture with polished theologies and step into a mystical experience of appreciation for the work of a loving God interacting regularly with the real world around us.

I COME in the little things,  
 Saith the Lord:  
 Not borne on morning wings  
 Of majesty, but I have set My Feet  
 Amidst the delicate and bladed wheat 5  
 That springs triumphant in the furrowed sod.  
 There do I dwell, in weakness and in power;  
 Not broken or divided, saith our God!  
 In your strait garden plot I come to flower:  
 About your porch My Vine 10

Meek, fruitful, doth entwine;  
 Waits, at the threshold, Love's appointed hour.

I come in the little things,  
 Saith the Lord:  
 Yea! on the glancing wings 15  
 Of eager birds, the softly pattering feet  
 Of furred and gentle beasts, I come to meet  
 Your hard and wayward heart. In brown bright eyes  
 That peep from out the brake, I stand confest.  
 On every nest 20  
 Where feathery Patience is content to brood  
 And leaves her pleasure for the high emprise  
 Of motherhood—  
 There doth My Godhead rest.

I come in the little things, 25  
 Saith the Lord:  
 My starry wings  
 I do forsake,  
 Love's highway of humility to take:  
 Meekly I fit My stature to your need. 30  
 In beggar's part  
 About your gates I shall not cease to plead—  
 As man, to speak with man—  
 Till by such art  
 I shall achieve My Immemorial Plan, 35  
 Pass the low lintel of the human heart.

# Proslogion

*St. Anselm*

Introduced by Amira Athanasios, Scripps '15

Anselm of Canterbury has had great influence over western theology, and is most well-known for penning his ontological argument for the existence of God. He is also famous for the quote, “Fides quaerens intellectum,” or faith seeks understanding. The beginning of *Proslogion* is a perfect example of this very concept; before beginning his argument, Anselm shares how he arrived at such an argument. Anselm’s introduction to his ontological argument for that-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought gives great insight into the importance of theology, why theology is necessary for the Christian faith, and what it means to, as a Christian, do theology.

After I had published, at the pressing entreaties of several of my brethren, a certain short tract [the Monologion] as an example of meditation on the meaning of faith from the point of view of one seeking, through silent reasoning within himself, things he knows not—reflecting that this was made up of a connected chain of many arguments, I began to wonder if perhaps it might be possible to find one single argument that for its proof required no other save itself, and that by itself would suffice to prove that God really exists, that He is the supreme good needing no other and is He whom all things have need of for their being and well-being, and also to prove whatever we believe about the Divine Being. But as often and as diligently as I turned my thoughts to this, sometimes it seemed to me that I had almost reached what I was seeking, sometimes it eluded my acutest thinking completely, so that finally, in desperation, I was about to give up what I was looking for as something impossible to find. However, when I had decided to put aside this idea altogether, lest by uselessly occupying my mind it might prevent other ideas with which I could make some progress, then, in spite of my unwillingness and my resistance to it, it began to force itself upon me more and more pressingly. So it was that one day when I was quite worn out with resisting its importunacy, there came to me, in the very conflict of my thoughts, what I had despaired of finding, so that I eagerly grasped the notion which in my distraction I had been rejecting.

Judging, then, that what had given me such joy to discover would afford pleasure, if it were written down, to anyone who might read it, I have written the following short tract dealing with this question as well as several others, from the point of view of one trying to raise his mind to contemplate God and seeking to understand what he believes. In my opinion, neither this tract nor the other I mentioned before deserves to be called a book or to carry its author’s name, and yet I did not think they should be sent forth without some title (by which, so to speak, they might invite those into whose hands they should come, to read them); so I have given to each its title, the first being called *An Example of Meditation on the Meaning of Faith* [Monologion], and the sequel *Faith in Quest of Understanding* [Proslogion].

## 1. A rousing of the mind to the contemplation of God

Come now, insignificant man, fly for a moment from your affairs, escape for a little while from the tumult of your thoughts. Put aside now your weighty cares and leave your wearisome toils. Abandon yourself for a little to God and rest for a little in Him. Enter into the inner chamber of your soul, shut out everything save God and what can be of help in your quest for Him and

having locked the door seek Him out [Matt. 6: 6]. Speak now, my whole heart, speak now to God: 'I seek Your countenance, O Lord, Your countenance I seek' [Ps. 26: 8].

Come then, Lord my God, teach my heart where and how to seek You, where and how to find You. Lord, if You are not present here, where, since You are absent, shall I look for You? On the other hand, if You are everywhere why then, since You are present, do I not see You? But surely You dwell in 'light inaccessible' [1 Tim. 6: 16]. And where is this inaccessible light, or how can I approach the inaccessible light? Or who shall lead me and take me into it that I may see You in it? Again, by what signs, under what aspect, shall I seek You? Never have I seen You, Lord my God, I do not know Your face. What shall he do, most high Lord, what shall this exile do, far away from You as he is? What shall Your servant do, tormented by love of You and yet cast off 'far from Your face' [Ps. 31: 22]? He yearns to see You and Your countenance is too far away from him. He desires to come close to You, and Your dwelling place is inaccessible; he longs to find You and does not know where You are; he is eager to seek You out and he does not know Your countenance. Lord, You are my God and my Lord, and never have I seen You. You have created me and re-created me and You have given me all the good things I possess, and still I do not know You. In fine, I was made in order to see You, and I have not yet accomplished what I was made for.

How wretched man's lot is when he has lost that for which he was made! Oh how hard and cruel was that Fall! Alas, what has man lost and what has he found? What did he lose and what remains to him? He lost the blessedness for which he was made, and he found the misery for which he was not made. That without which nothing is happy has gone from him and that which by itself is nothing but misery remains to him. Once 'man ate the bread of angels' [Ps. 77: 25], for which now he hungers; now he eats 'the bread of sorrow' [Ps. 126: 2], which then he knew nothing of. Alas the common grief of mankind, alas the universal lamentation of the children of Adam! He groaned with fullness; we sigh with hunger. He was prosperous; we go begging. He in his happiness had possessions and in his misery abandoned them; we in our unhappiness go without and miserably do we yearn and, alas, we remain empty. Why, since it was easy for him, did he not keep for us that which we lack so much? Why did he deprive us of light and surround us with darkness? Why did he take life away from us and inflict death upon us? Poor wretches that we are, whence have we been expelled and whither are we driven? Whence have we been cast down and whither buried? From our homeland into exile; from the vision of God into our present blindness; from the joy of immortality into the bitterness and horror of death. Oh wretched change from so great a good to so great an evil! What a grievous loss, a grievous sorrow, utterly grievous!

Alas, unfortunate that I am, one of the miserable children of Eve, separated from God. What have I undertaken? What have I actually done? Where was I going? Where have I come to? To what was I aspiring? For what do I yearn? 'I sought goodness' [Ps. 121: 9] and, lo, 'there is confusion' [Jer. 14: 19]. I yearned for God, and I was in my own way. I sought peace within myself and 'I have found tribulation and sadness' in my heart of hearts [Ps. 114: 3]. I wished to laugh from out the happiness of my soul, and 'the sobbing of my heart' [Ps. 37: 9] makes me cry out. I hoped for gladness and, lo, my sighs come thick and fast.

And You, 'O Lord, how long' [Ps. 6: 4]? How long, Lord, will You be unmindful of us? 'How long will You turn Your countenance' from us [Ps. 12: 1]? When will You look upon us and hear us [Ps. 12: 4]? When will You enlighten our eyes and show 'Your countenance' to us [Ps. 79: 4]? When will You give Yourself again to us? Look upon us, Lord; hear us, enlighten us, show Yourself to us. Give Yourself to us that it may be well with us, for without You it goes so

ill for us. Have pity upon our efforts and our strivings towards You, for we can avail nothing without You. You call to us, ‘so help us’ [Ps. 78: 9]. I beseech You, Lord, let me not go sighing hopelessly, but make me breathe hopefully again. My heart is made bitter by its desolation; I beseech You, Lord, sweeten it by Your consolation. I set out hungry to look for You; I beseech You, Lord, do not let me depart from You fasting. I came to You as one famished; do not let me go without food. Poor, I have come to one who is rich. Unfortunate, I have come to one who is merciful. Do not let me return scorned and empty-handed. And if now I sigh before I eat [Job 3: 4], give me to eat after my sighs. Lord, bowed down as I am, I can only look downwards; raise me up that I may look upwards. ‘My sins are heaped up over my head’; they cover me over and ‘like a heavy load’ crush me down [Ps. 37: 5]. Save me, disburden me, ‘lest their pit close its mouth over me’ [Ps. 68: 16]. Let me discern Your light whether it be from afar or from the depths. Teach me to seek You, and reveal Yourself to me as I seek, because I can neither seek You if You do not teach me how, nor find You unless You reveal Yourself. Let me seek You in desiring You; let me desire You in seeking You; let me find You in loving You; let me love You in finding You.

I acknowledge, Lord, and I give thanks that You have created Your image in me, so that I may remember You, think of You, love You. But this image is so effaced and worn away by vice, so darkened by the smoke of sin, that it cannot do what it was made to do unless You renew it and reform it. I do not try, Lord, to attain Your lofty heights, because my understanding is in no way equal to it. But I do desire to understand Your truth a little, that truth that my heart believes and loves. For I do not seek to understand so that I may believe; but I believe so that I may understand. For I believe this also, that ‘unless I believe, I shall not understand’ [Isa. 7: 9].

## 2. That God truly exists

Well then, Lord, You who give understanding to faith, grant me that I may understand, as much as You see fit, that You exist as we believe You to exist, and that You are what we believe You to be. Now we believe that You are something than which nothing greater can be thought. Or can it be that a thing of such a nature does not exist, since ‘the Fool has said in his heart, there is no God’ [Ps. 13: 1; 52: 1]? But surely, when this same Fool hears what I am speaking about, namely, ‘something-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought’, he understands what he hears, and what he understands is in his mind, even if he does not understand that it actually exists. For it is one thing for an object to exist in the mind, and another thing to understand that an object actually exists. Thus, when a painter plans beforehand what he is going to execute, he has [the picture] in his mind, but he does not yet think that it actually exists because he has not yet executed it. However, when he has actually painted it, then he both has it in his mind and understands that it exists because he has now made it. Even the Fool, then, is forced to agree that something-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought exists in the mind, since he understands this when he hears it, and whatever is understood is in the mind. And surely that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought cannot exist in the mind alone. For if it exists solely in the mind, it can be thought to exist in reality also, which is greater. If then that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought exists in the mind alone, this same that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought is that-than-which-a-greater-can-be-thought. But this is obviously impossible. Therefore there is absolutely no doubt that something-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought exists both in the mind and in reality.

### 3. That God cannot be thought not to exist

And certainly this being so truly exists that it cannot be even thought not to exist. For something can be thought to exist that cannot be thought not to exist, and this is greater than that which can be thought not to exist. Hence, if that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought can be thought not to exist, then that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought is not the same as that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought, which is absurd. Something-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought exists so truly then, that it cannot be even thought not to exist.

And You, Lord our God, are this being. You exist so truly, Lord my God, that You cannot even be thought not to exist. And this is as it should be, for if some intelligence could think of something better than You, the creature would be above its Creator and would judge its Creator—and that is completely absurd. In fact, everything else there is, except You alone, can be thought of as not existing. You alone, then, of all things most truly exist and therefore of all things possess existence to the highest degree; for anything else does not exist as truly, and so possesses existence to a lesser degree. Why then did ‘the Fool say in his heart, there is no God’ [Ps. 13: 1; 52: 1] when it is so evident to any rational mind that You of all things exist to the highest degree? Why indeed, unless because he was stupid and a fool?

### 4. How ‘the Fool said in his heart’ what cannot be thought

How indeed has he ‘said in his heart’ what he could not think; or how could he not think what he ‘said in his heart’, since to ‘say in one’s heart’ and to ‘think’ are the same? But if he really (indeed, since he really) both thought because he ‘said in his heart’ and did not ‘say in his heart’ because he could not think, there is not only one sense in which something is ‘said in one’s heart’ or thought. For in one sense a thing is thought when the word signifying it is thought; in another sense when the very object which the thing is is understood. In the first sense, then, God can be thought not to exist, but not at all in the second sense. No one, indeed, understanding what God is can think that God does not exist, even though he may say these words in his heart either without any [objective] signification or with some peculiar signification. For God is that-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought. Whoever really understands this understands clearly that this same being so exists that not even in thought can it not exist. Thus whoever understands that God exists in such a way cannot think of Him as not existing.

I give thanks, good Lord, I give thanks to You, since what I believed before through Your free gift I now so understand through Your illumination, that if I did not want to believe that You existed, I should nevertheless be unable not to understand it.

### 5. That God is whatever it is better to be than not to be and that, existing through Himself alone, He makes all other beings from nothing

What then are You, Lord God, You than whom nothing greater can be thought? But what are You save that supreme being, existing through Yourself alone, who made everything else from nothing? For whatever is not this is less than that which can be thought of; but this cannot be thought about You. What goodness, then, could be wanting to the supreme good, through which every good exists? Thus You are just, truthful, happy, and whatever it is better to be than not to be—for it is better to be just rather than unjust, and happy rather than unhappy.



# A Grief Observed

C.S. Lewis

Introduced by Daniel Jin, Pomona '17

Unbeknown to many, C.S. Lewis was much more than the author of the widely loved *Chronicles of Narnia* or prominent scholar and philosopher at Oxford and Cambridge University. He was also a prolific writer of Christian apologetic literature, among which *A Grief Observed* holds a special place written during his life's defining "mad midnight moment". Published under a pseudonym, *A Grief Observed* is C.S. Lewis's revelatory account of his disillusionment following the death of his wife, Joy Davidman, who is known to the reader as "H.". This first chapter begins his initial thoughts, concise and unabashedly honest, on the fundamental issues of life and death, suffering and separation, and a shifted perception of God in the midst of loss.

No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear. I am not afraid, but the sensation is like being afraid. The same fluttering in the stomach, the same restlessness, the yawning. I keep on swallowing.

At other times it feels like being mildly drunk, or concussed. There is a sort of invisible blanket between the world and me. I find it hard to take in what anyone says. Or perhaps, hard to want to take it in. It is so uninteresting. Yet I want the others to be about me. I dread the moments when the house is empty. If only they would talk to one another and not me.

There are moments, most unexpectedly, when something inside me tries to assure me that I don't really mind so much, not so very much, after all. Love is not the whole of a man's life. I was happy before I ever met H. I've plenty of what are called 'resources.' People get over these things. Come, I shan't do so badly. One is ashamed to listen to this choice but it seems for a little to be making out a good case. Then comes a sudden jab of red-hot memory and all this 'commonsense' vanishes like an ant in the mouth of a furnace.

On the rebound one passes into tears and pathos. Maudlin tears. I almost prefer the moments of agony. These are at least clean and honest. But the bath of self-pity, the wallow, the loathsome sticky-sweet pleasure of indulging it—that disgusts me. And even while I'm doing it I know it leads me to misrepresent H. herself. Give that mood its head and in a few minutes I shall have substituted for the real woman a mere doll to be blubbered over. Thank God the memory of her is still too strong (will it always be too strong?) to let me get away with it.

For H. wasn't like that at all. Her mind was lithe and quick and muscular as a leopard. Passion, tenderness, and pain were all equally unable to disarm it. It scented the first whiff of cant or slush; then sprang, and knocked you over before you knew what was happening. How many bubble of mine she pricked! I soon learned not to talk rot to her unless I did it for the sheer pleasure—and there's another red-hot jab—of being exposed and laughed at. I was never less silly than as H.'s lover.

And no one ever told me about the laziness of grief. Except at my job—where the machine seems to run on as much as usual—I loathe the slightest effort. Not only writing but even reading a letter is too much. Even shaving. What does it matter now whether my cheek is rough or smooth? They say an unhappy man wants distractions—something to take him out of himself. Only as a dog-tired man wants an extra blanket on a cold night; he'd rather lie there

shivering than get up and find one. It's easy to see why the lonely become untidy, finally, dirty, and disgusting.

Meanwhile, where is God? This is one of the most disquieting symptoms. When you are happy, so happy that you have no sense of needing Him, so happy that you are tempted to feel His claims upon you as an interruption, if you remember yourself and turn to him with gratitude and praise, you will be –or so it feels –welcomed with open arms. But go to Him when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your face, and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside. After that, silence. You may as well turn away. The longer you wait, the more emphatic the silence will become. There are no lights in the windows. It might be an empty house. Was it ever inhabited? It seemed to once. And that seeming was as strong as this. What can this mean? Why is He so present a commander in our time of prosperity and so very absent a help in time of trouble?

I tried to put some of these thoughts to C. this afternoon. He reminded me that the same thing seems to have happened to Christ: 'Why has thou forsaken me?' I know. Does that make it easier to understand?

Not that I am (I think) in much danger of ceasing to believe in God. The real danger is of coming to believe such dreadful things about Him. The conclusion I dread is not 'So there's no God after all,' but 'So this is what God's really like. Deceive yourself no longer.'

Our elders submitted and said, 'Thy will be done.' How often had bitter resentment been stifled through the sheer terror and an act of love –yes, in every sense, an act –put on to hide the operation?

Of course it's easy enough to say that God seems absent in our greatest need because He *is* absent –non-existent. But then why does He seem so present when, to put it frankly, we don't ask for Him?

One thing, however, marriage has done for me. I can never again believe that religion is manufactured out of our unconscious, starved desires and is a substitute for sex. For those few years H. and I feasted on love, every mode of it –solemn and merry, romantic and realistic, sometimes as dramatic as a thunderstorm, sometimes as comfortable and unemphatic as putting on your soft slippers. No cranny of heart or body remains unsatisfied. If God were a substitute for love we ought to have lost all interest in Him. Who'd bother about substitutes when he has the thing itself? But that isn't what happens. We both knew we wanted something besides one another –quite a different kind of something, a quite different kind of want. You might as well say that when lovers have one another they will never want to read, or eat –or breathe.

After the death of a friend, years ago, I had for some time a most vivid feeling of certainty about his continued life; even his enhanced life. I have begged to be given even one hundredth part of the same assurance about H. There is no answer. Only the locked door, the iron curtain, the vacuum, absolute zero. 'Them as asks don't get.' I was a fool to ask. For now, even if that assurance came I should distrust it. I should think it a self-hypnosis induced by my own prayers.

At any rate I must keep clear of the spiritualists. I promised H. I would. She knew something of those circles.

Keeping promises to the dead, or to anyone else, is very well. But I begin to see that 'respect for the wishes of the dead' is a trap. Yesterday I stopped myself only in time from saying about some trifle 'H. wouldn't have liked that.' This is unfair to the others. I should soon be using 'what H. would have liked' as an instrument of domestic tyranny, with her supposed likings becoming a thinner and thinner disguise for my own.

I cannot talk to the children about her. The moment I try, there appears on their faces neither grief, nor love, nor fear, nor pity, but the most fatal of all non-conductors, embarrassment. They look as if I were committing an indecency. They are longing for me to stop. I felt just the same after my own mother's death when my father mentioned her. I can't blame them. It's the way boys are.

I sometimes think that shame, mere awkward, senseless shame, does as much toward preventing good acts and straightforward happiness as any of our vices can do. And not only in boyhood.

Or are the boys right? What would H. herself think of this terrible little notebook to which I come back and back? Are these jottings morbid? I once read the sentence 'I lay awake all night with toothache, thinking about toothache and about lying awake' That's true to life. Part of every misery is, so to speak, the misery's shadow or reflection: the fact that you don't merely suffer but have to keep on thinking about the fact that you suffer. I not only live each endless day in grief, but life each day thinking about living each day in grief. Do these notes merely aggravate that side of it? Merely confirm the monotonous, tread-mill march of the mind round one subject? But what am I to do? I must have some drug, and reading isn't a strong enough drug now. By writing it all down (all?—no: one thought in a hundred) I believe I get a little outside it. That's how I'd defend it to H. But ten to one she'd see a hole in the defense.

It isn't only the boys either. An odd byproduct of my loss is that I'm aware of being an embarrassment to everyone I meet. At work, at the club, in the street, I see people, as they approach me, trying to make up their minds whether they'll 'say something about it' or not. I hate it if they do, and if they don't. some funk it altogether. R. has been avoiding me for a week. I like best the well brought-up young men, almost boys, who walk up to me as if I were a dentist, turn very red, get it over, and then edge away to the bar as quickly as they decently can. Perhaps the bereaved ought to be isolated in special settlements like lepers.

To some I'm worse than an embarrassment. I am a death's head. Whenever I meet a happily married pair I can feel them both thinking, 'One or other of us must someday be as he is now.'

At first I was very afraid of going to places where H. and I had been happy —our favourite pub, our favourite wood. But I decided to do it at once —like sending a pilot up again as soon as possible after he's had a crash. Unexpectedly, it makes no difference. Her absence is no more emphatic in those places than anywhere else. It's not local at all. I suppose that if one were forbidden all salt one wouldn't notice it much more in any one food than in another. Eating in general would be different, every day, at every meal. It is like that. The act of living is different all through. Her absence is like the sky, spread over everything.

But no, that is not quite accurate. There is one place where her absence comes locally home to me, and it is a place I can't avoid. I mean my own body. It had such a different importance while it was the body of H.'s lover. Now it's like an empty house. But don't let me deceive myself. This body would become important to me again, and pretty quickly, if I thought there was anything wrong with it.

Cancer, and cancer, and cancer. My mother, my father, my wife. I wonder who is next in the queue.

Yet H. herself, dying of it, and well knowing the fact, said that she had lost a great deal of her old horror at it. When the reality came, the name and the idea were in some degree disarmed. And up to a point I very nearly understood. This is important. One never meets just Cancer, or War, or Unhappiness (or Happiness). One only meets each hour or moment that comes. All

manner of ups and downs. Many bad spots in our best times, many good ones in our worst. One never gets the total impact of what we can call 'the thing itself.' But we call it wrongly. The thing itself is simply all these ups and downs: the rest is a name or an idea.

It is incredible how much happiness, even how much gaiety, we sometimes had together after all hope was gone. How long, how tranquilly, how nourishingly, we talked together that last night!

And yet, not quite together. There's a limit to the 'one flesh.' You can't really share someone else's weakness, or rear or pain. What you feel may be bad. It might conceivably be as bad as what the other felt, though I should distrust anyone who claimed it was. But it would still be quite different. When I speak of fear, I mean the merely animal fear, the recoil of the organism from its destruction; the smothery feeling; the sense of being a rat in a trap. It can't be transferred. The mind can sympathize; the body, less. In one way the bodies of lovers can do it least. All their love passages have trained them to have, not identical, but complementary, correlative, even opposite, feelings about one another.

We both knew this. I had my miseries, not hers; she had hers, not mine. The end of hers would be the coming-of-age of mine. We were setting out on different roads. This cold truth, this terrible traffic regulation ('You, Madam, to the right –you, Sir, to the left') is just the beginning of the separation which is death itself.

And this separation, I suppose, waits for all. I have been thinking of H. and myself as peculiarly unfortunate in being torn apart. But presumably all lovers are. She once said to me, 'Even if we both died at exactly the same moment, as we lie here side by side, it would be just as much separation as the one you're so afraid of.' Of course she didn't *know*, any more than I do. But she was near death; near enough to make a good shot. She used to quote 'Alone into the Alone.' She said it felt like that. And how immensely improbably that it should be otherwise! Time and space and body were the very things that brought us together; the telephone wires by which we communicated. Cut one off, or cut both off simultaneously. Either way, mustn't the conversation stop?

Unless you assume that some other means of communication –utterly different, yet doing the same work –would be immediately substituted. But then, what conceivable point could there be in severing the old ones? Is God a clown who whips away your bowl of soup one moment in order, next moment, to replace it with another bowl of the same soup? Even nature isn't such a clown as that. She never plays exactly the same tune twice.

It is hard to have patience with people who say, 'There is no death' or 'Death doesn't matter.' There is death. And whatever matters. And whatever happens has consequences, and it and they are irrevocable and irreversible. You might as well say that birth doesn't matter. I look up at the night sky. Is anything more certain than that in all those vast times and spaces, if I were allowed to search them, I should nowhere find her face, her voice, her touch? She died. She is dead. Is the word so difficult to learn?

I have no photograph of her that's any good. I cannot even see her face distinctly in my imagination. Yet the odd face of some stranger seen in a crowd this morning may come before me in vivid perfection the moment I close my eyes tonight. No doubt, the explanation is simple enough. We have seen the faces of those we know best so variously, from so many angles, in so many lights, with so many expressions –waking, sleeping, laughing, crying, eating, talking, thinking –that all the impressions crowd into our memory together and cancel out into a mere blur. But her voice is still vivid. The remembered voice –that can turn me at any moment to a whimpering child.

# Tattoos on the Heart

*Gregory Boyle*

Introduced by Colin Eckstein, Pomona '17

Father Gregory Boyle is a Jesuit priest and the founder of Homeboy Industries, a gang-intervention program in Boyle Heights, L.A., the gang capital of the world. His shared experiences are a testament to the value of kinship and communicate without reservation that you and I are worthy of God's love.

I spent the summers of 1984 and 1985 as an associate pastor at Dolores Mission Church, the poorest parish in the Los Angeles archdiocese. In 1986 I became the pastor of the church. Originally, I was scheduled to go to Santa Clara University to run their student service program, but Bolivia changed all that. I can't explain how the poor in Bolivia evangelized me during the year of 1984-85, but they turned me inside out, and from that moment forward I only wanted to walk with them. This was a wholly selfish decision on my part. I knew that the poor had some privileged delivery system for giving me access to the gospel. Naturally, I wanted to be around this.

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God can get tiny, if we're not careful. I'm certain we all have an image of god that becomes the touchstone, the controlling principle, to which we return when we stray.

My touchstone image of God comes by way of my friend and spiritual director, Bill Crain, S.J. Years ago he took a break from his own ministry to care for his father as he died of cancer. His father had become a frail man, dependent on Bill to do everything for him. Though he was physically not what he had been, and the disease was wasting him away, his mind remained alert and lively. In the role reversal common to adult children who care for their dying parents, Bill would put his father to bed and then read him to sleep, exactly as his father had done for him in childhood. Bill would read from some novel, and his father would lie there, staring at his son, smiling. Bill was exhausted from the day's care and work and would plead with his dad, "Look, here's the idea. I read to you, you fall asleep." Bill's father would impishly apologize and dutifully close his eyes. But this wouldn't last long. Soon enough, Bill's father would pop one eye open and smile at his son. Bill would catch him and whine, "Now come on." The father would, again, oblige, until he couldn't anymore, and the other eye would open to catch a glimpse of his son. This went on and on, and after his father's death, Bill knew that this evening ritual was really a story of a father who just couldn't take his eyes off his kid. How much more so God? Anthony De Mello writes, "Behold the one beholding you, and smiling."

God would seem to be too occupied in being unable to take Her eyes off of us to spend any time raising an eyebrow in disapproval. What's true of Jesus is true for us, and so this voice breaks through the clouds and comes straight at us. "You are my Beloved, in whom I am wonderfully pleased." There is not much more "tiny" in that.

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In 1990 the television news program *60 Minutes* came to Dolores Mission Church. One of its producers had read a Sunday *Los Angeles Times Magazine* article about my work with gang

members in the housing projects. Mike Wallace, also seeing the piece, wanted to do a report. I was assured that I'd be getting "Good Mike." These were the days when the running joke was "you know you're going to have a bad day when Mike Wallace and a *60 Minutes* film crew show up at your office."

Wallace arrived at the poorest parish in Los Angeles in the stretchest of white limousines, stepped out of the car, wearing a flak jacket, covered with pockets, prepared, I suppose, for a journey into the jungle.

For all his initial insensitivity, toward the end of the visit, in a moment unrecorded, Wallace did say to me, "Can I admit something? I came here expecting monsters. But that's not what I found."

Later, in a recorded moment, we are sitting in a classroom filled with gang members, all students in our Dolores Mission Alternative School. Wallace points at me and says, "You won't turn these guys in to the police." Which seems quite silly to me at the time. I say something lame like, "I didn't take my vows to the LAPD." But then Wallace turns to a homie and grills him on this, saying over and over, "He won't turn you in, will he?" And then he asks the homie, "Why is that? Why do you think he won't turn you over to the police?" The kid just stares at Mike Wallace, shrugs, nonplussed, and says, "God...I guess."

This chapter is on God, I guess. Truth be told, the whole book is. Not much in my life makes an sense outside of God. Certainly, a place like Homeboy Industries is all folly and bad business unless the core of the endeavor seeks to imitate the kind of God one ought to believe in. In the end, I am helpless to explain why anyone would accompany those on the margins were it not for some anchored belief that the Ground of all Being thought this was a good idea.

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Willy crept up on me from the driver's side. I had just locked the office and was ready to head home at 8:00 p.m.

"Shit, Willy," I say, "Don't be doin' that."

"*Spensa, G*," He says, "My bad. It's just...well, my stomach's on *échale*. Kick me down with twenty bones, yea?"

"Dog, my wallet's on *échale*," I tell him. A "dog" is the one upon whom you can rely – the role-dog, the person who has your back. "But get in. Let's see if I can trick any funds outta the ATM."

Willy hops on board. He is a life force of braggadocio and posturing –a thoroughly good soul –but his confidence is outsize, that of a lion wanting you to know he just swallowed a man whole. A gang member, but a peripheral one at best –he wants more to regale you with his exploits than to actually be in the midst of any. In his mid-twenties, Willy is a charmer, a quintessential home con man who's apt to coax money out of your ATM if you let him. This night, I'm tired and I want to go home.

It's easier not to resist. The Food 4 Less on Fourth and Soto has the closest ATM. I tell Willy to stay in the car, in case we run into one of Willy's rivals inside.

"Stay here, dog," I tell him, "I'll be right back."

I'm not ten feet away when I hear a muffled "Hey."

It's Willy, and he's miming, "the keys," from the passenger seat of my car. He's making over-the-top, key-in-ignition *señales*.

"The radio," he mouths, as he holds a hand, cupping his ear.

I wag a finger, “No *chale*.” Then it’s my turn to mime. I hold both my hands together and enunciate exaggeratedly, “*Pray*.”

Willy sighs and levitates his eyeballs. But he’s putty. He assumes the praying hands post and looks heavenward—*cara santucha*. I proceed on my quest to the ATM but feel the need to check in on Willy only ten yards later.

I turn and find him still in the prayer position, seeming to be only half-aware that I’m looking in on him.

I return to the car, twenty dollars in hand, and get in. Something has happened here. Willy is quiet, reflective, and there is a palpable sense of peace in the vehicle. I look at Willy and say, “You prayed, didn’t you?”

He doesn’t look at me. He’s still and quiet. “Yeah, I did.”

I start the car.

“Well, what did God say to you?” I ask him.

“Well, first He said, ‘*Shut up and listen*.’”

“So what d’ya do?”

“Come on, G,” he says, “What am I sposed ta do? I shut up and listened.”

I begin to drive him home to the barrio. I’ve never seen Willy like this. He’s quiet and humble—no need to convince me of anything or talk me out of something else.

“So, son, tell me something,” I ask. “How do you see God?”

“God?” he says, “That’s my dog right there.”

“And God?” I ask, “How does God see you?”

Willy doesn’t answer at first. So I turn and watch as he rests his head on the recliner, staring at the ceiling of my car. A tear falls down his cheek. Heart full, eyes overflowing. “God ... thinks ... I’m ... *firme*.”

To the homies, *firme* means, “could not be one bit better.” Not only does God think we’re *firme*, it is God’s joy to have us marinate in that.

\* \* \*

The poet Kabir asks, “What is God?” Then he answers his own question: “God is the breath inside the breath.”

Willy found his way inside the breath and it was *firme*.

I came late to this understanding in my own life—helped along by the grace-filled pedagogy of the people of Dolores Mission. I was brought up and educated to give assent to certain propositions. God is love, for example. You concede “God loves us,” and yet there is this lurking sense that perhaps you aren’t fully part of the “us.” The arms of God reach to embrace, and somehow you feel yourself just outside God’s fingertips.

Then you have no choice but to consider that “God loves me,” yet you spend much of your life unable to shake off what feels like God only embracing you begrudgingly and reluctantly. I suppose, if you insist, God has to love me too. Then who can explain this next moment, when the utter fullness of God rushes in on you—when you completely know the One in whom “you move and live and have your being,” as St. Paul writes. You see, then, that it has been God’s joy to love you all along. And this is completely new.

Every time one of the Jesuits at Dolores Mission would celebrate a birthday, the same ritual would repeat itself. “You know,” one of the other Jesuits would say to me, for example, “Your birthday is Wednesday. The people are throwing a ‘surprise party’ for you on the Saturday before.” The protests are as predictable as the festivities.

“Oh come on,” I’d say, “Can’t we pass this year?”

“Look,” one of my brothers would say to me, “This party is not for you—it’s for the people.”

And so I am led into the parish hall for some bogus meeting, and I can hear the people “shushing” one another—*El Padre ya viene*. As I step in the door, lights go on, people shout, mariachis strike themselves up. I am called upon to muster up the same award-winning look of shock from last year. They know that you know. They don’t care. They don’t just love you—it’s their joy to love you.

The poet Rumi writes, “Find the real world, give it endlessly away, grow rich flinging gold to all who ask. Live at the empty heart of paradox. I’ll dance there with you—cheek to cheek.”

Dancing cumbias with the women of Dolores Mission rhymes with God’s own wild desire to dance with each one of us cheek to cheek.

Meister Eckhart says “God is greater than God.” The hope is that our sense of God will grow as expansive as our God is. Each tiny conception gets obliterated as we discover more and more the God who is always greater.

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At Camp Paige, a county detention facility near Glendora, I was getting to know fifteen-year-old Rigo, who was about to make his first communion. The Catholic volunteers had found him a white shirt and black tie. We still had some fifteen minutes before the other incarcerated youth would join us for Mass in the gym, and I’m asking Rigo the basic stuff about his family and his life. I ask about his father.

“Oh,” he says, “he’s a heroin addict and never really been in my life. Used to always beat my ass. Fact, he’s in prison right now. Barely ever lived with us.”

Then something kind of snaps in him—an image brings him to attention.

“I think I was in the fourth grade,” he begins. “I came home. Sent home in the middle of the day. Got into some *pedo* at school. Can’t remember what. When I got home, my *jefito* was there. He was hardly ever there. My dad says, ‘Why they send you home?’ And cuz my dad always beat me, I said, ‘If I tell you, promise you won’t hit me?’ He just said, ‘I’m your father. ’Course I’m not gonna hit you.’ So I told him.”

Rigo is caught short in the telling. He begins to cry, and in moments he’s wailing and rocking back and forth. I put my arm around him. He is inconsolable. When he is able to speak and barely so, he says only, “He beat me with a pipe ... with ... a pipe.”

When Rigo composes himself, I ask, “And your mom?” He points some distance from where we are to a tiny woman standing by the gym’s entrance.

“That’s her over there.” He pauses for a beat, “There’s no one like her.” Again, some slide appears in his mind, and a thought occurs.

“I’ve been locked up for more than a year and a half. She comes to see me every Sunday. You know how many buses she takes every Sunday—to see my sorry ass?”

Then quite unexpectedly he sobs with the same ferocity as before. Again, it takes him some time to reclaim breath and an ability to speak. Then he does, gasping through his tears. “Seven buses. She takes ... seven ... buses. Imagine.”

How, then, to imagine, the expansive heart of this God—greater than God—who takes seven buses, just to arrive at us. We settle sometimes for less than intimacy with God when all

God longs for is this solidarity with us. In Spanish, when you speak of your great friend, you describe the union and kinship as being *de uña y mugre*—our friendship is like the fingernail and the dirt under it. Our image of who God is and what’s on God’s mind is more tiny than it is troubled. It trips more on our puny sense of God than over conflicting creedal statements or theological considerations.

The desire of God’s heart is immeasurably larger than our imaginations can conjure. This longing of God’s to give us peace and assurance and a sense of well-being only awaits our willingness to cooperate with God’s limitless magnanimity.

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“Behold the One beholding you and smiling.” It is precisely because we have such an overactive disapproval gland ourselves that we tend to create God in our own image. It is truly hard for us to see the truth that disapproval does not seem to be part of God’s DNA. God is just too busy loving us to have any time left for disappointment.

\* \* \*

In March of 2004, Scrappy walks into our office and, I’m not proud to admit it, my heart perch of my own glass-enclosed office, I can see Scrappy talking to Marcos, the receptionist, who is also from Scrappy’s gang. He is apparently signing up to see me. I haven’t seen Scrappy in ten years, since he’s been incarcerated all that time, but even before that, I’m not sure if he’s ever set foot in my office. My heart is in some lower register. Let’s just say Scrappy and I have never been on good terms. I first met him in the summer of 1984. I was newly ordained at Dolores Mission. He was fifteen years old, and his probation officer assigned him to the church to complete his hours of community service. The chip located on his shoulder was the size of a Pontiac. “I don’t have to listen to you.” “I don’t have to do what you say.”

Some five years later, I am standing in front of a packed church, preaching at the funeral of one of Scrappy’s homeboys. “If you love Cuko and want to honor his memory,” I say to the congregation, “then you will work for peace and love your enemies.” Immediately, Scrappy stands up and moves out of his pew and into the center aisle. All eyes are on him. I stop speaking. The eternal scowl I had come to know in that summer of 1984 is fixed on me as he walks straight ahead. We stand face-to-face, he mad-dogs me with some intensity, then turns and exits the church by the side door.

Three years later, I’m riding my bike, as I would in those days, “patrolling” the projects at night. I enter Scrappy’s barrio, and there is a commotion. The homies have formed a circle and clearly two of their rank are “goin’ head up.” I break through the mob and, indeed, find Scrappy throwing down with one of his own homies. I discover later that the beef was over some jaina (girl). I stop the fight, and Scrappy reaches into the front waist of his pants and pulls out a gun that he waves around wildly. The crowd seems to be more horrified than I am. There are great gasps and pleas,

“Hey, dog, damn, put the gun away.”

“Don’t disrespect G.” Scrappy steadies the gun right at me and grunts a half laugh, “Shiiittt, I’ll shoot his ass too.”

Are you getting a sense of what our relationship was like?

So years later when I see him enter my office, it takes me a moment, but I locate my heart, hiding in Filene's basement, and Marcos intercoms me: "Scrappy's here." Then his voice gets squeaky and tentative. "Ya wanna see him?" Marcos knew enough that this would be in some doubt. "Course, send him in."

Scrappy is not a large fellow, but there is no fat in his midsize build. His hair is slicked back and his moustache is understated. He hugs me only because not to would be too awkward. We have, after all, known each other for twenty years.

He sits and wastes no time.

"Look, let's just be honest with each other and talk man to man. You know that I've never disrespected you."

I figure, why not, I'm gonna go for it. "Well, how 'bout the time you walked out on my homily at Cuko's funeral? ... or the time you pulled a cuete out on me?"

Scrappy looks genuinely perplexed by what I've just said and cocks and scrunches his face like a confused beagle.

"Yeah, well ... besides that," he says.

Then we do something we never have in our two decades of knowing each other. We laugh. But really, truly laugh—head-resting-on-my-desk laughter. We carry on until this runs its course, and then Scrappy settles into the core of his being, beyond the bravado of his chingón status in his gang.

"I have spent the last twenty years building a reputation for myself ... and now ... I regret ... that I even have one." And then in another first, he cries. But really, truly cries. He is doubled over, and the rocking seems to soothe the release of this great ache. When the wailing stops and he comes up for air, he daubs his eyes and runs his sleeve across his nose. He finally makes eye contact.

"Now what do I do? I know how to sell drugs. I know how to gangbang. I know how to shank fools in prison. I don't know how to change the oil in my car. I know how to drive, but I don't know how to park. And I don't know how to wash my clothes except in the sink of a cell."

I hire him that day, and he begins work the next morning on our graffiti crew. Scrappy discovered, as Scripture has it, "that where he is standing is holy ground." He found the narrow gate that leads to life. God's voice was not of restriction, to "shape up or ship out." Scrappy found himself in the center of vastness and right in the expansive heart of God. The sacred place toward which God had nudged Scrappy all his life is not to be arrived at, but discovered.

Scrappy did not knock on the door so God would notice him. No need for doors at all. Scrappy was already inside.

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God seems to be an unwilling participant in our efforts to pigeonhole Him. The minute we think we've arrived at the most expansive sense of who God is, "this Great, Wild God," as the poet Hafez writes, breaks through the claustrophobia of our own articulation, and things get large again. Richard Rohr writes in *Everything Belongs* that nothing of our humanity is to be discarded. God's unwieldy love, which cannot be contained by our words, wants to accept all that we are and sees our humanity as the privileged place to encounter this magnanimous love. No part of our hardwiring or our messy selves is to be disparaged. Where we stand, in all our mistakes and imperfection, is holy ground. It is where God has chosen to be intimate with us and not in any way but this. Scrappy's moment of truth was not in recognizing what a disappointment he's been all these years. It came in realizing that God had been beholding him and smiling for all this time, unable to look anywhere else. It is certainly true that you can't

judge a book by its cover, nor can you judge a book by its first chapter—even if that chapter is twenty years long. When the vastness of God meets the restriction of our own humanity, words can't hold it. The best we can do is find the moments that rhyme with this expansive heart of God.

Shortly after I was ordained, I spent a year in Cochabamba, Bolivia. It was a gracious time that changed me forever. My Spanish was quite poor, and the year was to be filled with language study and ministry. I could celebrate the Eucharist in Spanish (after a summer at Dolores Mission), but I was a slave to the missal for some time to come. Early on, I began to minister to a community named Temporal, which had been without a priest for a long time. A few weeks into my time there, I was approached by a group of health workers who asked me to celebrate Mass in Tirani. This was a Quechua community located high above Cochabamba, whose indigenous folks harvested flowers for market. It was common to see campesinos making the long trek from Tirani with a huge weight of flowers tied to their backs. Like beasts of burden, they were doubled over all the way to town.

The health workers explain that the Quechua Indians in Tirani have not seen a priest in a decade, so they ask me to celebrate the Mass in Spanish, and one of the workers would preach in Quechua. (Everyone there speaks Quechua, with only the men able to defend themselves in Spanish.) The workers pick me up at the bottom of the hill at one o'clock on a Sunday afternoon. I hop into the back of the open-air truck with the others, and we climb to the top of the mountain. Midtrek, I decide to do an inventory of the contents of my backpack. I have brought everything I need but a missalette. I have not the words. At this point in my early priesthood, I couldn't wing Mass in English. The thought of doing so in Spanish was preposterous. I do have a Spanish Bible, so I frantically flip through the pages, trying to find any passages that sound like the words of consecration. "Take this and eat."

I locate any part of the New Testament that has Jesus kicking it at a table and eating. Soon, my body is introducing me to the marvels of flop sweat—and I haven't even arrived at Tirani yet. I am red in the face and stingy hot.

We pull into a huge, open-air landing, a field cleared of all crops, and many hundreds of Quechua Indians have gathered and set themselves down around this table, our altar. I hobble and fake my way through the liturgy of the Word, aided by the health workers, who read everything in Quechua. After the gentleman preaches, it is my turn to carry the ball. I'm like someone who's been in a major car accident. I can't remember a thing.

I know only that I have a crib sheet with some notes I have made, with stolen scriptural quotations, all the while lifting the bread and wine whenever I run out of things to say. It would be hard to imagine this Mass going worse.

When it is over, I am left spent and humiliated. I am wandering adrift, trying to gather my shattered self back together again, when a female health worker walks an ancient Quechua woman up to me.

"She hasn't gone to confession in ten years."

She leaves her with me, and the *viejita* unloads a decade's worth of sins in a singsongy and rapid-fire Quechua. I just nod like a *menso* waiting for a pause that might indicate she's finished. The woman's got some *pulmones* on her and doesn't seem to need to take a breath. She goes on for about a half hour. Finally she does stop, and I manage to communicate some penance and give her my memorized absolution. She walks away, and I turn to discover that I have been abandoned. The field where we celebrated Mass has been vacated. Inexplicably, even the truck and the health workers are gone. I am alone at the top of this mountain, stuck, not only without a

ride, but in stultifying humiliation. I am convinced that a worse priest has never visited this place or walked this earth.

With my backpack snug on my shoulder and spirit deflated, I begin to make the long walk down the mountain and back to town. But before I leave the makeshift soccer field that had been our cathedral, an old Quechua campesino, seemingly out of nowhere, makes his way to me. He appears ancient, but I suspect his body has been weathered by work and the burden of an Indian's life. As he nears me, I see he is wearing tethered wool pants, with a white buttoned shirt, greatly frayed at the collar. He has a rope for a belt. His suit coat is coarse and worn. He has a fedora, toughened by the years. He is wearing huaraches, and his feet are caked with Bolivian mud. Any place that a human face can have wrinkles and creases, he has them. He is at least a foot shorter than I am, and he stands right in front of me and says, "*Tatai.*"

This is Quechua for *Padrecito*, a word packed with *cariño*, affection, and a charming intimacy. He looks up at me, with penetrating, weary eyes and says, "*Tatai, gracias por haber venido*" (Thanks for coming).

I think of something to say, but nothing comes to me. Which is just as well, because before I can speak, the old campesino reaches into the pockets of his suit coat and retrieves two fistfuls of multicolored rose petals. He's on the tips of his toes and gestures that I might assist with the inclination of my head. And so he drops the petals over my head, and I'm without words. He digs into his pockets again and manages two more fistfuls of petals. He does this again and again, and the store of red, pink, and yellow rose petals seems infinite. I just stand there and let him do this, staring at my own huaraches, now moistened with my tears, covered with rose petals. Finally, he takes his leave and I'm left there, alone, with only the bright aroma of roses.

For all the many times I would return to *Tirani* and see the same villagers, over and over, I never saw this old *campesino* again.

God, I guess, is more expansive than every image we think rhymes with God. How much greater is the God we have than the one we think we have. More than anything else, the truth of God seems to be about a joy that is a foreigner to disappointment and disapproval. This joy just doesn't know what we're talking about when we focus on the restriction of not measuring up. This joy, God's joy, is like a bunch of women lined up in the parish hall on your birthday, wanting only to dance with you—cheek to cheek. "First things, recognizably first," as Daniel Berrigan says. The God, who is greater than God, has only one thing on Her mind, and that is to drop, endlessly, rose petals on our heads. Behold the One who can't take His eyes off of you.

Marinate in the vastness of that.

# For the Life of the World

*Alexander Schmemmann*

Introduced by Ryan Stewart, Pomona '14

In this short section, Schmemmann provides an incisive analysis of the landscape of contemporary Christian culture, and even contemporary American culture at large. On the one hand, he describes the "spiritualists," who put their faith in a world of piety and religious life quite distinct from the world—a classic picture of religion. On the other hand, Schmemmann also portrays the "activists," or those who only seek to better the natural world by natural means, and leave little space for "contemplation and adoration," much less any religious life of worship. Over the course of this chapter, Schmemmann proposes, in his own distinctively Eastern Orthodox way, a middle path that collapses the dualism of spiritual religion and secular activism. Schmemmann argues "the world is meaningful only when it is the 'sacrament' of God's presence." That is, we are not meant to withdraw away from the world to God on the one hand (spiritualism), or engage the world without God on the other hand (materialism), but we are to engage the world--in ALL its facets and particularities-- with God.

And this (THIS!) is the context in which the whole project of the Ekklesia becomes meaningful. We Christians at the Claremont Colleges--those peculiar people--are called out in order to engage our academics, our artistic passions, and our personal stories as Christians. We are to orient those great loves of ours toward God, ushering forth the sacramental presence of God, a presence that is our only true hope for a redeemed, renewed creation.

“**M**an is what he eats.” With this statement the German materialistic philosopher Feuerbach thought he had put an end to all “idealistic” speculations about human nature. In fact, however, he was expressing, without knowing it, the most religious idea of man. For long before Feuerbach the same definition of man was given by the Bible. In the biblical story of creation man is presented, first of all, as a hungry being, and the whole world as his food. Second only to the direction to propagate and have dominion over the earth, according to the author of the first chapter of Genesis, is God’s instruction to men to eat of the earth: “Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed ... and every tree, which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat...” Man must eat in order to live; he must take the world into his body and transform it into himself, into flesh and blood. He is indeed that which he eats, and the whole world is presented as one all-embracing banquet table for man. And this image of the banquet remains, throughout the whole Bible, the central image of life. It is the image of life at its creation and also the image of life at its end and fulfillment: “... that you eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom.”

I begin with this seemingly secondary theme of food—secondary from the standpoint of the great “religious issues” of our time—because the very purpose of this essay is to answer, if possible, the question: of what life do we speak, what life do we preach, proclaim and announce when, as Christians, we confess that Christ died for the life of the world? What life is both motivation, and the beginning and the goal of Christian mission?

The existing answers follow two general patterns. There are those among us for whom life, when discussed in religious terms, means religious life. And this religious life is a world in itself, existing apart from the secular world and its life. It is the world of “spirituality,” and in our days it seems to gain more and more popularity. Even the airport bookstands are filled with anthologies of mystical writings. *Basic Mysticism* is a title we saw on one of them. Lost and confused in the noise, the rush and the frustrations of “life,” man easily accepts the invitation to enter into the inner sanctuary of his soul and to discover there another life, to enjoy a “spiritual banquet” amply supplied with spiritual food. This spiritual food will help him. It will help him to restore his peace of mind, to endure the other—the secular—life, to accept its tribulations, to lead a wholesome and more dedicated life, to “keep smiling” in a deep, religious way. And thus mission consists here in converting people to this “spiritual” life, in making them “religious.”

There exists a great variety of emphases and even theologies within this general pattern, from the popular revival to the sophisticated interest in esoteric mystical doctrines. But the result is the same: “religious” life makes the secular one—the life of eating and drinking—irrelevant, deprives it of any real meaning save that of being an exercise in piety and patience. And the more spiritual is the “religious banquet,” the more secular and material become the neon lighted signs EAT, DRINK that we see along our highways.

But there are those also, to whom the affirmation “for the life of the world” seems to mean naturally “for the better life of the world.” The “spiritualists” are counterbalanced by the activists. To be sure we are far today from the simple optimism and euphoria of the “Social Gospel.” All the implications of existentialism with its anxieties, of neo-Orthodoxy with its pessimistic and realistic view of history, have been assimilated and given proper consideration. But the fundamental belief in Christianity as being first of all action has remained intact, and in fact has acquired a new strength. From this point of view Christianity has simply lost the world. And the world must be recovered. The Christian mission, therefore, is to catch up with the life that has gone astray. The “eating” and “drinking” man is taken quite seriously, almost too seriously. He constitutes the virtually exclusive object of Christian action, and we are constantly called to repent for having spent too much time in contemplation and adoration, in silence and liturgy, for having not dealt sufficiently with the social, political, economic, racial and all other issues of real life. To books on mysticism and spirituality correspond books on “Religion and Life” (or Society, or Urbanism or Sex ...). And yet the basic question remains unanswered: what is this life that we must regain for Christ and make Christian? What is, in other words, the ultimate end of all this doing and action?

Suppose we have reached at least one of these practical goals, have “won”—then what? The question may seem a naive one, but one cannot really act without knowing the meaning not only of action, but of the life itself in the name of which one acts. One eats and drinks, one fights for freedom and justice in order to be alive, to have the fullness of life. But what is it? What is the life of life itself? What is the content of life eternal? At some ultimate point, within some ultimate analysis, we inescapably discover that in and by itself action has no meaning. When all committees have fulfilled their task, all papers have been distributed and all practical goals achieved, there must come a perfect joy. About what? Unless we know, the same dichotomy between religion and life, which we have observed in the spiritual solution, remains. Whether we “spiritualize” our life or “secularize” our religion, whether we invite men to a spiritual banquet or simply join them at the secular one, the real life of the world, for which we are told God gave his only-begotten Son, remains hopelessly beyond our religious grasp.

# The Weight of Glory

*C.S. Lewis*

Introduced by Howard Chang, Pomona '14

In his famous essay “The Weight of Glory” (originally preached as a sermon in 1941), the renowned British philosopher C.S. Lewis explains that the most profound desires within the human heart to belong and to be known – desires often misplaced, misguided, or falsely interpreted as being self-centered – are godly desires which will ultimately be met in the eternal glory of being known and accepted by God. Until the day in which these desires are rightly met, however, it is not surprising that Christians do not, in this world, know what it is about Heaven (or God) that they truly want; they rely on either symbols of “beauty” or false idols to mimic, imagine, or fulfill natural longings which God placed within them and intends to satisfy fully in His eternal company. In light of eternity, Lewis challenges believers to see each person as he or she truly is; not a mere mortal, but an immortal being whose destinies depend on the present world and our effort to love others within it.

If you asked twenty good men to-day what they thought the highest of the virtues, nineteen of them would reply, Unselfishness. But if you asked almost any of the great Christians of old he would have replied, Love. You see what has happened? A negative term has been substituted for a positive, and this is of more than philological importance. The negative ideal of Unselfishness carries with it the suggestion not primarily of securing good things for others, but of going without them ourselves, as if our abstinence and not their happiness was the important point. I do not think this is the Christian virtue of Love. The New Testament has lots to say about self-denial, but not about self-denial as an end in itself. We are told to deny ourselves and to take up our crosses in order that we may follow Christ; and nearly every description of what we shall ultimately find if we do so contains an appeal to desire. If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is no part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.

We must not be troubled by unbelievers when they say that this promise of reward makes the Christian life a mercenary affair. There are different kinds of reward. There is the reward which has no natural *connexion* with the things you do to earn it, and is quite foreign to the desires that ought to accompany those things. Money is not the natural reward of love; that is why we call a man mercenary if he marries a woman for the sake of her money. But marriage is the proper reward for a real lover, and he is not mercenary for desiring it. A general who fights well in order to get a peerage is mercenary; a general who fights for victory is not, victory being the proper reward of battle as marriage is the proper reward of love. The proper rewards are not simply tacked on to the activity for which they are given, but are the activity itself in consummation. There is also a third case, which is more complicated. An enjoyment of Greek poetry is certainly

a proper, and not a mercenary, reward for learning Greek; but only those who have reached the stage of enjoying Greek poetry can tell from their own experience that this is so. The schoolboy beginning Greek grammar cannot look forward to his adult enjoyment of Sophocles as a lover looks forward to marriage or a general to victory. He has to begin by working for marks, or to escape punishment, or to please his parents, or, at best, in the hope of a future good which he cannot at present imagine or desire. His position, therefore, bears a certain resemblance to that of the mercenary; the reward he is going to get will, in actual fact, be a natural or proper reward, but he will not know that till he has got it. Of course, he gets it gradually; enjoyment creeps in upon the mere drudgery, and nobody could point to a day or an hour when the one ceased and the other began. But it is just in so far as he approaches the reward that he becomes able to desire it for its own sake; indeed, the power of so desiring it is itself a preliminary reward.

The Christian, in relation to heaven, is in much the same position as this schoolboy. Those who have attained everlasting life in the vision of God doubtless know very well that it is no mere bribe, but the very consummation of their earthly discipleship; but we who have not yet attained it cannot know this in the same way, and cannot even begin to know it at all except by continuing to obey and finding the first reward of our obedience in our increasing power to desire the ultimate reward. Just in proportion as the desire grows, our fear lest it should be a mercenary desire will die away and finally be recognized as an absurdity. But probably this will not, for most of us, happen in a day; poetry replaces grammar, gospel replaces law, longing transforms obedience, as gradually as the tide lifts a grounded ship.

But there is one other important similarity between the schoolboy and ourselves. If he is an imaginative boy he will, quite probably, be revelling in the English poets and romancers suitable to his age some time before he begins to suspect that Greek grammar is going to lead him to more and more enjoyments of this same sort. He may even be neglecting his Greek to read Shelley and Swinburne in secret. In other words, the desire which Greek is really going to gratify already exists in him and is attached to objects which seem to him quite unconnected with Xenophon and the verbs in  $\mu\iota$ . Now, if we are made for heaven, the desire for our proper place will be already in us, but not yet attached to the true object, and will even appear as the rival of that object. And this, I think, is just what we find. No doubt there is one point in which my analogy of the schoolboy breaks down. The English poetry which he reads when he ought to be doing Greek exercises may be just as good as the Greek poetry to which the exercises are leading him, so that in fixing on Milton instead of journeying on to Aeschylus his desire is not embracing a false object. But our case is very different. If a transtemporal, transfinite good is our real destiny, then any other good on which our desire fixes must be in some degree fallacious, must bear at best only a symbolical relation to what will truly satisfy.

In speaking of this desire for our own far-off country, which we find in ourselves even now, I feel a certain shyness. I am almost committing an indecency. I am trying to rip open the inconsolable secret in each one of you –the secret which hurts so much that you take your revenge on it by calling it names like Nostalgia and Romanticism and Adolescence; the secret also which pierces with such sweetness that when, in very intimate conversation, the mention of it becomes imminent, we grow awkward and affect to laugh at ourselves; the secret we cannot hide and cannot tell, though we desire to do both. We cannot tell it because it is a desire for something that has never actually appeared in our experience. We cannot hide it because our

experience is constantly suggesting it, and we betray ourselves like lovers at the mention of a name. Our commonest expedient is to call it beauty and behave as if that had settled the matter. Wordsworth's expedient was to identify it with certain moments in his own past. But all this is a cheat. If Wordsworth had gone back to those moments in the past, he would not have found the thing itself, but only the reminder of it; what he remembered would turn out to be itself a remembering. The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not in them, it only came through them, and what came through them was longing. These things—the beauty, the memory of our own past—are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the thing itself they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshippers. For they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited. Do you think I am trying to weave a spell? Perhaps I am; but remember your fairy tales. Spells are used for breaking enchantments as well as for inducing them. And you and I have need of the strongest spell that can be found to wake us from the evil enchantment of worldliness which has been laid upon us for nearly a hundred years. Almost our whole education has been directed to silencing this shy, persistent, inner voice; almost all our modern philosophies have been devised to convince us that the good of man is to be found on this earth. And yet it is a remarkable thing that such philosophies of Progress or Creative Evolution themselves bear reluctant witness to the truth that our real goal is elsewhere. When they want to convince you that earth is your home, notice how they set about it. They begin by trying to persuade you that earth can be made into heaven, thus giving a sop to your sense of exile in earth as it is. Next, they tell you that this fortunate event is still a good way off in the future, thus giving a sop to your knowledge that the fatherland is not here and now. Finally, lest your longing for the trans temporal should awake and spoil the whole affair, they use any rhetoric that comes to hand to keep out of your mind the recollection that even if all the happiness they promised could come to man on earth, yet still each generation would lose it by death, including the last generation of all, and the whole story would be nothing, not even a story, for ever and ever. Hence all the nonsense that Mr. Shaw puts into the final speech of Lilith, and Bergson's remark that the *élan vital* is capable of surmounting all obstacles, perhaps even death—as if we could believe that any social or biological development on this planet will delay the senility of the sun or reverse the second law of thermodynamics.

Do what they will, then, we remain conscious of a desire which no natural happiness will satisfy. But is there any reason to suppose that reality offers any satisfaction to it? "Nor does the being hungry prove that we have bread." But I think it may be urged that this misses the point. A man's physical hunger does not prove that that man will get any bread; he may die of starvation on a raft in the Atlantic. But surely a man's hunger does prove that he comes of a race which repairs its body by eating and inhabits a world where eatable substances exist. In the same way, though I do not believe (I wish I did) that my desire for Paradise proves that I shall enjoy it, I think it a pretty good indication that such a thing exists and that some men will. A man may love a woman and not win her; but it would be very odd if the phenomenon called "falling in love" occurred in a sexless world.

Here, then, is the desire, still wandering and uncertain of its object and still largely unable to see that object in the direction where it really lies. Our sacred books give us some account of the object. It is, of course, a symbolical account. Heaven is, by definition, outside our experience,

but all intelligible descriptions must be of things within our experience. The scriptural picture of heaven is therefore just as symbolical as the picture which our desire, unaided, invents for itself; heaven is not really full of jewelry any more than it is really the beauty of Nature, or a fine piece of music. The difference is that the scriptural imagery has authority. It comes to us from writers who were closer to God than we, and it has stood the test of Christian experience down the centuries. The natural appeal of this authoritative imagery is to me, at first, very small. At first sight it chills, rather than awakes, my desire. And that is just what I ought to expect. If Christianity could tell me no more of the far-off land than my own temperament led me to surmise already, then Christianity would be no higher than myself. If it has more to give me, I must expect it to be less immediately attractive than “my own stuff.” Sophocles at first seems dull and cold to the boy who has only reached Shelley. If our religion is something objective, then we must never avert our eyes from those elements in it which seem puzzling or repellent; for it will be precisely the puzzling or the repellent which conceals what we do not yet know and need to know.

The promises of Scripture may very roughly be reduced to five heads. It is promised, firstly, that we shall be with Christ; secondly, that we shall be like Him; thirdly, with an enormous wealth of imagery, that we shall have “glory”; fourthly, that we shall, in some sense, be fed or feasted or entertained; and, finally, that we shall have some sort of official position in the universe—ruling cities, judging angels, being pillars of God’s temple. The first question I ask about these promises is: “Why any of them except the first?” Can anything be added to the conception of being with Christ? For it must be true, as an old writer says, that he who has God and everything else has no more than he who has God only. I think the answer turns again on the nature of symbols. For though it may escape our notice at first glance, yet it is true that any conception of being with Christ which most of us can now form will be not very much less symbolical than the other promises; for it will smuggle in ideas of proximity in space and loving conversation as we now understand conversation, and it will probably concentrate on the humanity of Christ to the exclusion of His deity. And, in fact, we find that those Christians who attend solely to this first promise always do fill it up with very earthly imagery indeed—in fact, with hymeneal or erotic imagery. I am not for a moment condemning such imagery. I heartily wish I could enter into it more deeply than I do, and pray that I yet shall. But my point is that this also is only a symbol, like the reality in some respects, but unlike it in others, and therefore needs correction from the different symbols in the other promises. The variation of the promises does not mean that anything other than God will be our ultimate bliss; but because God is more than a Person, and lest we should imagine the joy of His presence too exclusively in terms of our present poor experience of personal love, with all its narrowness and strain and monotony, a dozen changing images, correcting and relieving each other, are supplied.

I turn next to the idea of glory. There is no getting away from the fact that this idea is very prominent in the New Testament and in early Christian writings. Salvation is constantly associated with palms, crowns, white robes, thrones, and splendour like the sun and stars. All this makes no immediate appeal to me at all, and in that respect I fancy I am a typical modern. Glory suggests two ideas to me, of which one seems wicked and the other ridiculous. Either glory means to me fame, or it means luminosity. As for the first, since to be famous means to be better known than other people, the desire for fame appears to me as a competitive passion and

therefore of hell rather than heaven. As for the second, who wishes to become a kind of living electric light bulb?

When I began to look into this matter I was stocked to find such different Christians as Milton, Johnson and Thomas Aquinas taking heavenly glory quite frankly in the sense of fame or good report. But not fame conferred by our fellow creatures—fame with God, approval or (I might say) “appreciation” by God. And then, when I had thought it over, I saw that this view was scriptural; nothing can eliminate from the parable the divine accolade, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.” With that, a good deal of what I had been thinking all my life fell down like a house of cards. I suddenly remembered that no one can enter heaven except as a child; and nothing is so obvious in a child—not in a conceited child, but in a good child—as its great and undisguised pleasure in being praised. Not only in a child, either, but even in a dog or a horse. Apparently what I had mistaken for humility had, all these years, prevented me from understanding what is in fact the humblest, the most childlike, the most creaturely of pleasures—nay, the specific pleasure of the inferior: the pleasure a beast before men, a child before its father, a pupil before his teacher, a creature before its Creator. I am not forgetting how horribly this most innocent desire is parodied in our human ambitions, or how very quickly, in my own experience, the lawful pleasure of praise from those whom it was my duty to please turns into the deadly poison of self-admiration. But I thought I could detect a moment—a very, very short moment—before this happened, during which the satisfaction of having pleased those whom I rightly loved and rightly feared was pure. And that is enough to raise our thoughts to what may happen when the redeemed soul, beyond all hope and nearly beyond belief, learns at last that she has pleased Him whom she was created to please. There will be no room for vanity then. She will be free from the miserable illusion that it is her doing. With no taint of what we should now call self-approval she will most innocently rejoice in the thing that God has made her to be, and the moment which heals her old inferiority complex for ever will also drown her pride deeper than Prospero’s book. Perfect humility dispenses with modesty. If God is satisfied with the work, the work may be satisfied with itself; “it is not for her to bandy compliments with her Sovereign.” I can imagine someone saying that he dislikes my idea of heaven as a place where we are patted on the back. But proud misunderstanding is behind that dislike. In the end that Face which is the delight or the terror of the universe must be turned upon each of us either with one expression or with the other, either conferring glory inexpressible or inflicting shame that can never be cured or disguised. I read in a periodical the other day that the fundamental thing is how we think of God. By God Himself, it is not! How God thinks of us is not only more important, but infinitely more important. Indeed, how we think of Him is of no importance except in so far as it is related to how He thinks of us. It is written that we shall “stand before” Him, shall appear, shall be inspected. The promise of glory is the promise, almost incredible and only possible by the work of Christ, that some of us, that any of us who really chooses, shall actually survive that examination, shall find approval, shall please God. To please God...to be a real ingredient in the divine happiness...to be loved by God, not merely pitied, but delighted in as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son—it seems impossible, a weight or burden of glory which our thoughts can hardly sustain. But so it is.

And now notice what is happening. If I had rejected the authoritative and scriptural image of glory and stuck obstinately to the vague desire which was, at the outset, my only pointer to heaven, I could have seen no *connexion* at all between that desire and the Christian promise. But

now, having followed up what seemed puzzling and repellent in the sacred books, I find, to my great surprise, looking back, that the *connexion* is perfectly clear. Glory, as Christianity teaches me to hope for it, turns out to satisfy my original desire and indeed to reveal an element in that desire which I had not noticed. By ceasing for a moment to consider my own wants I have begun to learn better what I really wanted. When I attempted, a few minutes ago, to describe our spiritual longings, I was omitting one of their most curious characteristics. We usually notice it just as the moment of vision dies away, as the music ends or as the landscape loses the celestial light. What we feel then has been well described by Keats as “the journey homeward to habitual self.” You know what I mean. For a few minutes we have had the illusion of belonging to that world. Now we wake to find that it is no such thing. We have been mere spectators. Beauty has smiled, but not to welcome us; her face was turned in our direction, but not to see us. We have not been accepted, welcomed, or taken into the dance. We may go when we please, we may stay if we can: “Nobody marks us.” A scientist may reply that since most of the things we call beautiful are inanimate, it is not very surprising that they take no notice of us. That, of course, is true. It is not the physical objects that I am speaking of, but that indescribable something of which they become for a moment the messengers. And part of the bitterness which mixes with the sweetness of that message is due to the fact that it so seldom seems to be a message intended for us but rather something we have overheard. By bitterness I mean pain, not resentment. We should hardly dare to ask that any notice be taken of ourselves. But we pine. The sense that in this universe we are treated as strangers, the longing to be acknowledged, to meet with some response, to bridge some chasm that yawns between us and reality, is part of our inconsolable secret. And surely, from this point of view, the promise of glory, in the sense described, becomes highly relevant to our deep desire. For glory meant good report with God, acceptance by God, response, acknowledgment, and welcome into the heart of things. The door on which we have been knocking all our lives will open at last.

Perhaps it seems rather crude to describe glory as the fact of being “noticed” by God. But this is almost the language of the New Testament. St. Paul promises to those who love God not, as we should expect, that they will know Him, but that they will be known by Him (I Cor. viii 3). It is a strange promise. Does not God know all things at all times? But it is dreadfully reechoed in another passage of the New Testament. There we are warned that it may happen to any one of us to appear at last before the face of God and hear only the appalling words: “I never knew you. Depart from Me.” In some sense, as dark to the intellect as it is unendurable to the feelings, we can be both banished from the presence of Him who is present everywhere and erased from the knowledge of Him who knows all. We can be left utterly and absolutely outside—repelled, exiled, estranged, finally and unspeakably ignored. On the other hand, we can be called in, welcomed, received, acknowledged. We walk every day on the razor edge between these two incredible possibilities. Apparently, then, our lifelong nostalgia, our longing to be reunited with something in the universe from which we now feel cut off, to be on the inside of some door which we have always seen from the outside, is no mere neurotic fancy, but the truest index of our real situation. And to be at last summoned inside would be both glory and honour beyond all our merits and also the healing of that old ache.

And this brings me to the other sense of glory—glory as brightness, splendour, luminosity. We are to shine as the sun, we are to be given the morning Star. I think I begin to see what it means. In one way, of course, God has given us the Morning Star already: you can go and enjoy the gift

on many fine mornings if you get up early enough. What more, you may ask, do we want? Ah, but we want so much more—something the books on aesthetics take little notice of. But the poets and the mythologies know all about it. We do not want merely to see beauty, though, God knows, even that is bounty enough. We want something else which can hardly be put into words—to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it. That is why we have peopled air and earth and water with gods and goddesses and nymphs and elves—that, though we cannot, yet these projections can, enjoy in themselves that beauty grace, and power of which Nature is the image. That is why the poets tell us such lovely falsehoods. They talk as if the west wind could really sweep into a human soul; but it can't. They tell us that “beauty born of murmuring sound” will pass into a human face; but it won't. Or not yet. For if we take the imagery of Scripture seriously, if we believe that God will one day give us the Morning Star and cause us to put on the splendour of the sun, then we may surmise that both the ancient myths and the modern poetry, so false as history, may be very near the truth as prophecy. At present we are on the outside of the world, the wrong side of the door. We discern the freshness and purity of morning, but they do not make us fresh and pure. We cannot mingle with the splendours we see. But all the leaves of the New Testament are rustling with the rumour that it will not always be so. Someday, God willing, we shall get in. When human souls have become as perfect in voluntary obedience as the inanimate creation is in its lifeless obedience, then they will put on its glory, or rather that greater glory of which Nature is only the first sketch. For you must not think that I am putting forward any heathen fancy of being absorbed into Nature. Nature is mortal; we shall outlive her. When all the suns and nebulae have passed away, each one of you will still be alive. Nature is only the image, the symbol; but it is the symbol Scripture invites me to use. We are summoned to pass in through Nature, beyond her, into that splendour which she fitfully reflects.

And in there, in beyond Nature, we shall eat of the tree of life. At present, if we are reborn in Christ, the spirit in us lives directly on God; but the mind, and still more the body, receives life from Him at a thousand removes—through our ancestors, through our food, through the elements. The faint, far-off results of those energies which God's creative rapture implanted in matter when He made the worlds are what we now call physical pleasures; and even thus filtered, they are too much for our present management. What would it be to taste at the fountain-head that stream of which even these lower reaches prove so intoxicating? Yet that, I believe, is what lies before us. The whole man is to drink joy from the fountain of joy. As St. Augustine said, the rapture of the saved soul will “flow over” into the glorified body. In the light of our present specialized and depraved appetites we cannot imagine this *torrens voluptatis*, and I warn everyone seriously not to try. But it must be mentioned, to drive out thoughts even more misleading—thoughts that what is saved is a mere ghost, or that the risen body lives in numb insensibility. The body was made for the Lord, and these dismal fancies are wide of the mark.

Meanwhile the cross comes before the crown and tomorrow is a Monday morning. A cleft has opened in the pitiless walls of the world, and we are invited to follow our great Captain inside. The following Him is, of course, the essential point. That being so, it may be asked what practical use there is in the speculations which I have been indulging. I can think of at least one such use. It may be possible for each to think too much of his own potential glory hereafter; it is hardly possible for him to think too often or too deeply about that of his neighbour. The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbour's glory should be laid daily on my back, a load so heavy that

only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken. It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no *ordinary* people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilization—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendours. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously—no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption. And our charity must be a real and costly love, with deep feeling for the sins in spite of which we love the sinner—no mere tolerance or indulgence which parodies love as flippancy parodies merriment. Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbour is the holiest object presented to your senses. If he is your Christian neighbour he is holy in almost the same way, for in him also Christ *vere latitat*—the glorifier and the glorified, Glory Himself, is truly hidden.

