

There are some truths that are in season, even out of season. And the first is quite simply that of the utter priority of God. We are nowadays being told on all sides that it is in our fellow-men that Christ is to be found. And this is the theological backing to so much involvement in the world.

There can, however, be a confusion here, and we need to distinguish—between knowing and loving, between an ontological and a genetic description, and between expression and identity. The fact that we get to *know* God through getting to know our fellow-men does not mean that we do not *love* God directly and our fellow-men derivatively. Nor does the fact that we love God directly and our fellow-men derivatively mean that we do not *learn* to love God through learning to love our fellow-men. But no more does the fact that we learn to love God through learning to love our fellow-men mean that the love of God is *nothing but* the love of men, any more than the fact that we get to know God through getting to know men means that our knowledge of God is no more than our knowledge of men. There is an analogy of love as there is an analogy of knowledge, though the movement in either case is opposite.

There is therefore a pre-eminence about our love of God that is both logical and ontological. Every true love is existentially a love of God, more or less aware of itself as such. And this awareness is a matter of knowledge and its gradual refinement through time and catechesis:

If ever any beauty I did see,
Which I desir'd, and got, 'twas but a dreame of thee.

Worship, dwelling in the house of God, going into one's inner room, seeking the kingdom—these are therefore the primary things in the dialectic of commitment to God and commitment to men.

Of course, to insist on the primacy of the love of God in the face of the implications of this love for one's fellow-men is to expose oneself to a terrible tension. That is the crux. Last month we published a powerful statement of the case for Christian political commitment in the world in virtue of eschatology. This month we publish a no less potent reminder of first things. Much, no doubt, needs to be sorted out here. But to some extent at least, this tension is irreducible. The important thing is to go on seeking.

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