

God is grieved because Adam and Eve have separated themselves from one another. Blame has come into their lives; the original unity is broken, between themselves, and between themselves and God – the original unity we have in God. Mary is a symbol of that original unity and of its recovery, though not without struggle, so she is a symbol of that possibility for us. But the struggle is not one of us earning our place once more in God, retrieving that original unity for ourselves, meriting it in some way – but of saying ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to its possibility; ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to being forgiven; ‘yes’ or no to being clothed by God. For God’s love has not changed, is undiminished, is God. So the struggle is one of acceptance, of being loved. God has never withdrawn that possibility and, in this sense, intended Christ from the very beginning and, indeed, from ‘before’ in the sense that there is no beginning or end in God.

*Before the world was made he chose us, chose us in
Christ to be holy and spotless, and to live through love
in his presence:*

to be as Adam and Eve were when first in God; to be as Mary is, but not without a struggle.

Mary do not be afraid: you have won God’s favour.

But how can this be, since I am a virgin?

Virgin that, troublesome word, but symbolic here of her openness to God, of her ability to receive, and of our ability to receive, also; to be once more at God’s right hand in Christ; handcrafted in Christ; made or ‘maid’ in heaven, after all — with child.

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