



*"Oh, darn, and just as I was beginning to take charge of my life."*

*"Please, God, wait one more day before you come like a thief in the night."*

What was true of Christ  
is also true of his disciples;  
Something in us,  
Something of ourselves,  
must die for the fruit  
to be born; and the  
greater the degree of  
death, the greater will  
be the rebirth and  
the fruit.

THOMAS MERTON

ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE Much about the life of Charles de Gaulle is well known. What is not so widely known is that Charles and Evonne de Gaulle were the parents of a Down Syndrome child. She was a treasure to them; she was a concern for them. Regardless of what was occurring in the affairs of state, Charles arranged his life so that he and Evonne would have some time almost every day with their infant daughter. When they would put her to bed, and the child had fallen asleep, Evonne would often ask, "Oh Charles, why couldn't she have been like the others?"

As had been predicted by the physicians, the de Gaulle's daughter died in her youth. There was a private, graveside Mass, and when the priest had pronounced the benediction, all present began to leave the grave -- except for Evonne. In her grief, she could not pull herself away. Charles went back to her, gently touched her on the arm and said, "Come Evonne. Did you not hear the blessing of the priest? She is now like the others."

"In this age," Jesus said, "people marry, are given in marriage and die." In this age people shiver through the night with no place to call home, find themselves deprived of human dignity, and perish from loneliness. That is the way of this age. "But in THAT age," Jesus goes on to say, and by so saying points towards an age not governed by the captivities of this age. The promise of the gospel is that the possibilities for human life are not contained in the assumptions of "this age." Because, by the grace of God, there is -- "that age," "this age" loses its power to condemn. Even now God's new age is gathering us into its embrace, setting us free, and claiming us as God's own sons and daughters."