

THE LAST DAYS  
*of*

JESUS CHRIST



LYMAN ABBOTT

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BY  
LYMAN ABBOTT



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## Prayer

Father, we thank Thee for the revelation Thou hast made of Thine infinite and unspeakable nature in the speaking and finite nature of Jesus Christ, our elder brother. We thank Thee that Thou hast come to earth and lived in human flesh and walked incognito among men, hiding Thyself that Thou mightst be revealed, descending that Thou mightst be exalted, sorrowing that Thou mightst add to the eternal joy of all Thy children and enrich Thine own joy—the joy of self-sacrifice, the joy of a suffering love. Thou perpetually incarnate God, through Jesus Christ Thy Son our Saviour, we come to Thee, not thinking that Thou art afar off and needest a mediator, not thinking that Thou art like the God of Israel of old, hiding Thyself between the horns of the altar, unto whom only the great High Priest can come, and the Children of Israel only unto the Priest. Through Jesus Christ we come to Thee, because through Jesus Christ Thou comest to us; to the window we come, because through the window the eternal sunlight

## THE LAST DAYS OF JESUS CHRIST

streams into the room; to him we come, because he is Thy word, Thy smile, Thine eyes, Thy very self revealing Thyself through the mask and veil of humanity. We could not look upon Thee unveiled and live; we are not large enough to see Thee; and so, dear God, we think—yea, we do know and believe—that Thou hast come to earth and seemed to belittle Thyself that we might see Thee, and so hast added to the glory that could not be added to and made more infinite the infinity of love.

**LIFE**

**CHRIST WITH HIS  
ENEMIES IN THE TEMPLE**

The God that to the fathers  
 Revealed His holy will  
 Has not the world forsaken,  
 He's with the children still.  
 Then envy not the twilight  
 That glimmered on their way;  
 Look up, and see the dawning  
 That broadens into day.

'T was but far off, in vision,  
 The fathers' eyes could see  
 The glory of the kingdom,—  
 The better time to be.  
 To-day we see fulfilling  
 The dreams they dreamt of old;  
 While nearer, ever nearer,  
 Rolls on the age of gold.

With trust in God's free spirit,—  
 The ever-broadening ray  
 Of truth that shines to guide us  
 Along our forward way,—  
 Let us to-day be faithful  
 As were the brave of old,  
 Till we, their work completing,  
 Bring in the age of gold!

MINOT J. SAVAGE.

Tuesday, the fourth day of April, A. D. 34, was by far the most eventful in the life of Christ, for on the evening of that day and for that day's utterances, not on the evening of his more formal trial nor for any word of blasphemy that he uttered, was he condemned to die.

Throughout his ministry Jesus in his treatment of the religionists of his day generally followed his counsel to his disciples. "Let them alone," he said; "they be blind leaders of the blind." This morning he pursued a different course. He went early to the Temple, and there in the outer court challenged the ecclesiastical and theological teachers of the nation. History records no greater act of courage. It was as if Luther had gone to Rome to preach the doctrines of the Reformation in the court before St. Peter's. On this day Jesus was no longer a teacher; he was a fighter. He did not avoid controversy; he provoked it. Warnings of coming doom, which had heretofore been generally confined to confidential discourses with his disciples, he now publicly repeated. He attacked the hierarchy in its headquarters. He declared

that the religion of the Pharisees was one of pretense; that they were mere actors on a stage; that the publicans and harlots would go into the kingdom of God before them; that the Jewish nation was no longer the favored people of God and would never become the ruler of the world; that the present generation, by slaying the Messiah, would fulfill the iniquity of their fathers; that the stone which they refused would fall upon them and grind them to powder; that their Holy City would be utterly destroyed and they themselves scattered far and wide among the Gentiles whom they despised. The instructions of the day ended with three parables of divine judgment given to his awed and perplexed disciples. In one of these God's judgment was compared to the fate which overtook five foolish bridesmaids on a wedding night.

The Jewish wedding day was characterized by a curious ceremonial. The bridegroom came at night with his companions to bring his bride from her home—possibly a survival of ruder times when the bride was captured in a raid and became the reward of her warrior husband's courage. Now, however, she awaited in pleasing anticipation his coming, and her bridesmaids waited with her. These bridesmaids were torch-bearers—



their torches, cup-like vessels filled with oil, a wick floating on the top. Jesus told the story of a wedding in which five of the bridesmaids thought it enough to have lighted their lamps, while five believed in preparedness and had ready a supply for their lamps when the oil in them was burned out. The foolish bridesmaids with their burned-out lamps were shut out from the procession and the feast which followed; only the wise bridesmaids shared in the joys of the wedding.

In vain does opportunity invite us if we are not ready to receive it. No splendor of the past suffices to give glory to the present.

I can remember when the admonition, Prepare to meet thy God, filled me with dread. It paralyzed my powers, forbade my ordinary activities, seemed to call me away from life to meditation, prayer, self-cleansing. Jehovah seemed to me a Judge whose exacting justice was unmixed with charity, who discerned in me the secret sins I did not myself discern, who was of inflaming consuming purity, whom I dared not meet. How to prepare to meet him I knew not.

To-day Prepare to meet thy God is to me one of the most inspiring summons any literature sacred or secular contains. He meets me at unexpected times, in unex-

pected places, and always brings with him a glad surprise—even when it is an awe-inspiring surprise. He comes bringing gifts, and not the least of them some new opportunity to share with him the burdens he is bearing, the service he is rendering, the work he is doing to bring about in this world the Kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy. He comes as Spring comes to the earth with a call to a new life; as the babe comes to the mother with a call to the joys of a new consecration to love. He comes as Christ came to the fishermen at the Sea of Galilee with the promise, I will make you fishers of men. He comes as he came to Paul when he called him to be a preacher of the Glad Tidings to the Gentiles; as he came to Luther when he met him on Pilate's staircase; as he came to Abraham Lincoln when he called him to New York to define in that ever memorable Cooper Union speech the issue which confronted a puzzled Nation; as he came to General Armstrong when he called him to lead the way to the completed redemption of the Negro race.

God comes to Nations summoning them to a national duty. Each new service rendered brings a call to a greater service; each new victory brings a call to a greater battle. Alas! for the Nation which cannot read the

signs of the times; which cannot see the opportunity which the God of Nations sets before it; alas! for the Nation if its glory all lies buried in the graves of its ancestors.

The Jews prided themselves on being the children of Abraham. But to a faithless generation it profits nothing that they can look back to an ancestor who was full of faith and dared a great adventure. It is not our glory but our shame that we are the descendants of men who fought at Bunker Hill and suffered at Valley Forge if we have not their courageous patriotism. That they founded a Republic conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal avails us nothing if we have not the self-denying courage necessary to protect that Republic from corruption within and enemies without. Are we prepared to keep burning in 1918 the lamp they lighted in 1776? If not, we are the unworthy descendants of a worthy ancestry and will find the door of the future barred in our faces.

God comes to His church, offers afresh His guiding inspiring spirit, calls it afresh to its allotted service, and gives it afresh its message, and to each age a message fitted for the needs of that age. In the first century great Pan was dead. The pagan world had grown weary of its gods and goddesses. It had grown

weary of a religion and a priesthood which demanded much and offered nothing. It was ready to welcome a religion which brought the Glad Tidings that there is but one God, who demands of his children righteousness and demands nothing else, and who is the Father, the Friend, the Helper of the whole human race. In the sixteenth century the world was growing weary of a church which had become corrupted by its wealth and its temporal power, and had lost in the cathedrals the spirit which had actuated it in the catacombs, and the world was ready to welcome the Glad Tidings that the gifts of God are not for sale, but like the sun and the rain are freely given to all who will receive them. In the twentieth century the message given to the Church is "One is your Master—Christ—and all ye are brethren." God brings men of every Nation, tribe and tongue from every quarter of the globe, and sets them here in America at our church doors, that we may give them this message. How to unite these people of various habits and traditions in one American citizenship is the political problem of the Nation. How to unite these people of hostile creeds in one catholic faith more spiritual and, therefore, more catholic than any creed is the problem of the Christian Church. Is it fulfilling its mission?

The world judges the Church by its present service, not by its past history, and the world judges it aright. If the Church has to look to a historic past for its glory, that glory is its shame. The lamp which a previous generation lighted furnishes only smoke unless the present generation keeps alive the spirit of the fathers. The orthodoxy of the sixteenth century does not make the twentieth-century Church sound in the faith; the piety of the first century does not make the twentieth-century Church a living Church. And only a living Church can be a Church of the living God. The father may live in the sons, but the sons cannot live in the fathers; and it is quite immaterial whether they are Puritan fathers or ante-Nicene fathers.

To every wedding Christ comes as he came to the wedding in Cana of Galilee. To every bride and groom a new book of life is offered, a new door of opportunity stands ajar—opportunity for love, service and sacrifice. Every new family may be and should be a type of the true social order. Every new parenthood should get its inspiration from the Father of whom every family in heaven and earth is named.

But if love is only a new form of self-seeking, if happiness is the only prize perceived and sought for, the book of life re-

mains unopened, the door of opportunity is closed. Of the various escapes offered for unhappy marriages some are nostrums, some are palliatives. There is only one cure—love. They who keep their love aflame only during the honeymoon add to the bitterness of the present by their memory of the past. Happy they who keep up the spirit of their courtship during half a century of wedded life. Happy they who keep love always lighted in their home, for they find the joy of the golden wedding more satisfying, though it be less exuberant, than the joy of the bridal day.

To every youth God gives two lights—idealism and hope. I like to speak to college students because through their faces I see these inward lights shining. Too often, ten years later life has extinguished them. Why? All his troubles, difficulties, enemies could not extinguish these lights in Paul. "We glory in tribulations," he said, "knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." The experience of life should feed the light of hope, not extinguish it. His ideals grew clearer and nearer as the years went by. It was as life was drawing to its close that he wrote to his friends, "I press forward toward the goal for the prize of the upward calling of God in

Christ Jesus." No man ever need lose the ideals and hopes of his youth.

I cut from a recent issue of the *New York Evening Sun* the following paragraph:

Young Paget knew he could not live long. Hands and arms were paralyzed and he entered classes in a wheeled chair. Said Professor Erskine:

He resolved to spend his hour richly, pursuing large plans, as one whose hope was in the everlasting and who though not permitted to enjoy his share of time was at home in eternity. It was his wish to prepare himself for important service, however short the opportunity might prove. . . .

No man should allow himself ever to lose the ideals and hopes of his youth, for they are the secret of perpetual youth and perpetual youth is an essential condition of usefulness. The octogenarian who lives only in the memory of the past will never find an opportunity for useful service for himself nor be able to aid his grandchildren to find one. "Old men for counsel, young men for action," is a wise motto. His counsel is priceless who gives younger men the lesson of his own blunders; but his counsel is valueless if all he can say is, "We did not do so in our time."

God comes to the individual, comes in an experience so novel that he thinks of it as a



new birth. H. G. Wells has in a characteristic paragraph described this experience:

The moment may come while we are alone in the darkness, under the stars, or while we walk by ourselves or in a crowd, or while we sit and muse. It may come upon the sinking ship or in the tumult of the battle. There is no saying when it may not come to us . . . . But after it has come our lives are changed, God is with us and there is no more doubt of God.

Oh! if it only were always so. But it is not always so. The doubts of God come back again. He seems to have left us; or have we left Him? The light and joy of the new life go out. Religion becomes a memory. God becomes an hypothesis. The lamp has gone out. It gives no light, only smoke. Faith ceases to be a living experience and becomes a creed. What was once alive is now a fossil.

What shall we do? If the wheat planted in the Spring brings forth no harvest in the Fall, a recollection of the Spring sowing will not furnish Winter food. Better plough the weeds under and begin again. The Christian who can find nothing better to sing than

What peaceful hours I once enjoyed,  
How sweet their memory still!

had better forget them and be reconverted. He whose only reason for thinking that he is



a Christian is that he "got religion" in his youth had better forget that he got it and try again.

It is a poor present which shines only by the reflected glory of a past.



## Prayer

Father, who sent Thy Son into the world to be the light of the world, lighten our darkness we beseech Thee. We, Thy children, know neither ourselves nor the life that lies before us. Prepare us for what Thou art preparing for us. Keep us from the ambition that covets great tasks. Keep us from the cowardice that evades the tasks to which Thou dost call us. Keep us from despair because of our failures. Keep us from self-conceit because of our successes. By Thy companionship equip us for the high adventure of life. To every call of duty may we respond, Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God. Ever forgetting what we have left behind, may we press forward in eager response to Thine upward calling in Christ Jesus. Amen.



# LOVE

CHRIST WITH HIS  
FRIENDS IN THE HOME

Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew  
back,  
Guilty of dust and sin.  
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow  
slack  
From my first entrance in,  
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning  
If I lack'd anything.

"A guest," I answered, "worthy to be here."  
Love said, "You shall be he."  
"I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,  
I cannot look on Thee."  
Love took my hand and smiling did reply,  
"Who made the eyes but I?"

"Truth, Lord; but I have marr'd them: let  
my shame  
Go where it doth deserve."  
"And know you not," says Love, "who bore  
the blame?"  
"My dear, then I will serve."  
"You must sit down," says Love, "and taste  
my meat."  
So I did sit and eat.

GEORGE HERBERT.

From his conflict with his enemies in the Temple during his last eventful week Jesus sought at night repose, generally outside the city walls; sometimes probably sleeping on the hillside with his burnoose wrapped about him; once we know in a garden of olives; once in a house of a friend in the neighboring village of Bethany; once in the house of an unknown friend within the city. The name, condition, character of this friend are all unknown. Jesus probably had many devoted friends even in Jerusalem whose friendship in that perilous hour was carefully concealed except from the elect few. This unknown friend had offered him a room where he could observe the Passover supper with his disciples. Even they apparently knew nothing of their host.

The record which we possess of the Master's parting words to his disciples was probably written down by disciples of John, as his amanuenses, more than half a century after the event. To the literalist this will seem a great misfortune. To me these incomparable words are not less sacred because they represent the imperishable memory of

the one disciple whose courageous devotion to his Mas'er kept him at the cross until his Master's death—the disciple whom Jesus in that hour adopted as his son and to whom he intrusted the future care of his own widowed and heart-pierced mother.

It was characteristic of Jesus that he made this hour of gloom the most luminous hour of his life's teaching, that he did not seek comfort from his disciples but gave comfort to them, and strengthened the courage of his own faith by imparting courage to their perplexed and troubled hearts. For the spirit always grows by imparting: we add to our courage by encouraging the timid, inspire our hopes by ministering to the disheartened, and make clearer our vision by telling others what we have seen.

I shall not attempt a paraphrase of Christ's monologue. My ambition is humbler; it is to translate it into terms of every-day human experience.

His opening sentence gives two keys to unlock the door to the "life that really is." "Have faith in God." How can we have faith in him whom we have not seen and cannot see? Show us the Father and it sufficeth us. If you cannot have faith in God, then "Have faith in me."

Faith in God is not the door to Christian



faith; Christian faith is the door to faith in God. It is not easy in a world of sorrow, temptation, and sin to have faith in a good God who made and governs the world. But it is not difficult to have faith in a good man who confronts danger with courage, endures sorrow with patience, encounters temptation without thought of yielding, and bears the burdens of sins not his own without murmuring. Who can do other than believe in such a one? Not in ecclesiastical definitions about him, but in his character, in his personality, in the worth-whileness of his life. Faith in Abraham Lincoln has inspired the American people and made them what they would not have been but for Abraham Lincoln. Faith in Jesus Christ has made the world what it never could have been without Jesus Christ. This is the beginning of Christian faith: it inspires in us the desire to encounter our dangers with his courage, to bear our burdens with his patience, to meet our temptations with his unyielding resolve, and to bear the consequences of others' sins with his suffering love.

But this is only the beginning. This human life is a reflection of the divine life. Sir Oliver Lodge has put this second step in the Christian faith with beautiful simplicity:

Undoubtedly the Christian idea of God is the simple one. Overpoweringly and appallingly simple is the notion presented to us by the orthodox Christian churches:

A babe born of poor parents, born in a stable among cattle because there was no room for them in the village inn—no room for them in the inn—what a master touch! Revealed to shepherds. Religious people inattentive. Royalty ignorant, or bent on massacre. A glimmering perception, according to one noble legend, attained in the Far East—where also similar occurrences have been narrated. Then the child growing into a peasant youth, brought up to a trade. At length a few years of itinerant preaching; flashes of miraculous power and insight. And then a swift end: set upon by the religious people his followers overawed and scattered, himself tried as a blasphemer, flogged, and finally tortured to death.

Simplicity most thorough and most strange! In itself it is not unique. Such occurrences seem inevitable to highest humanity in an unregenerate world; but who, without inspiration, would see in them a revelation of the nature of God? The life of Buddha, the life of Joan of Arc, are not thus regarded. Yet the Christian revelation is clear enough and true enough if our eyes are open and if we care to read and accept the simple record which, whatever its historical value, is all that has been handed down to us.

Believe in me, Jesus says to me. Yes, I reply; I can believe in thee. Even Renan, even John Stuart Mill, could believe in thee. Believe that the Father is in me. Yes; I can believe that the Father is in him. The Church tells me that the Father is all-powerful. Perhaps. But I do not reverence

power. The Church tells me that the Father is all-wise. Perhaps. But I do not reverence wisdom. Jesus tells me that the Father is all love, and his life tells me what love means. And I reverence love. Whether it is all-powerful or not, whether it is all-wise or not, I reverence love. Even if I were a Persian and believed in two gods, an Ormuzd and an Ahriman, a good god and a bad god, and believed that in this world they were in a battle on which the destiny of the universe depended, even if I did not know and could not even guess which was to win, I would reverence the good god and fight the bad one. Even if I thought the drama of Palestine foreshadowed the end of the world drama, that the ambitious Caiaphas and the cowardly Pilate and the treacherous Judas would be victors and love would be crucified, I should still reverence love, and I hope I should dare to take my place with the mother of the pierced heart, not with the triumphant foes. Yes; I can believe that the Father is in Jesus His Son.

But this is not the end of the Christian faith. There is a third stage. "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me, because I am living and ye

shall live also." An orphan is not one who is fatherless. He had a father, whom memory recalls from the past. He will have a father, whom hope anticipates meeting in the future. But now he is without a father.

There are many orphaned Christians. They believe in a Father who was formerly active in the world, about whom they read in the Bible. They believe in a Father who will appear in the great day of the future to judge the world. But now? Now they are without a Father. Inspiration and revelation they think have ceased; no wonder, then, that prayer ceases. Why go on forever talking to a god who gives no answer? God in history? Yes; in past history. In Jewish wars; but not in the European war. In humanity? Yes. In Hebrew prophets; but not in twentieth-century prophets. Walking with Enoch, but with no one now; speaking to Abraham, but to no one now; dwelling in the Christ, but dwelling with no one now. A silent God; an absentee God; a forgetting and a forgotten God; what Carlyle has well called "an hypothetical God." Over against this common experience of to-day I put Harnack's confession of his faith: "Not only in the beginning was the Word, the Word that was at once deed and life; but the living, resolute, indomitable

Word—namely, the *person*—has always been a power in history, along with and above the power of circumstance.”

This is my faith. I believe in a Universal Presence, a Great Companion, a living Christ forever incarnate in the hearts and lives of his friends, living now in the world with mightier and wider influence and in more intimate communion and companionship with his disciples than ever before, a living vine growing from a little seed planted nineteen centuries ago and since then spreading over the whole earth, whose fruits are a peace which troubles cannot disturb and a joy which pains cannot destroy. The seed of this faith was given to me many years ago by John's report of the last discourse of Jesus to his disciples. It has grown since with the growing experience of over half a century of Christian discipleship.

It is true I have never had the ecstatic visions which I read of occasionally in the spiritual biographies of the mystics. Jesus has not promised such visions to any one. They may be real, but they are not normal. I doubt whether they conduce to the most Christlike living. At all events, they are not for me. I have no desire for them. George Croly has voiced for me my prayer:

I ask no dream, no prophet ecstasies,  
No sudden rending of the veil of clay,  
No angel visitant, no opening skies;  
But take the dimness of my soul away.

Teach me to feel that thou art always nigh;  
Teach me the struggles of the soul to bear,  
To check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh;  
Teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.

I have never practiced the fastings, the flagellations, the denials of the body which some of the mystics seem to have thought essential to obtain their spiritual ecstasies. If personal fellowship with God is to be a natural experience, the condition of enjoying it must be a natural condition. Jesus prescribes no other. Loyalty to him is the only condition he prescribes. "If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." And lest any one should think this word which his disciples are to keep requires some mystical act of faith or supernatural act of self-denial, Jesus tells them what this word is: "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."

Love is the key to Christ's character; love is the secret of the Christ life; to love is to follow Christ. A life of asceticism, a life of retirement and meditation, is not the way to

companionship with Christ. The way to companionship with Christ is a life like that of Jesus—a life of love, service, and sacrifice. And as to self-denial as a means for the purification of the spirit, "Life itself, rightly lived, offers the best and most normal means of purification. Here, right at hand, in daily living, without fleeing to the desert or retreating to the monastery, without the use of fasting or hair shirt, mortification or flagellation, in every-day duties and disciplines, lies the divinely ordained corrective of the flesh. Here is ample training for the spirit."<sup>1</sup>

Faith in the life and character of Jesus Christ as a supreme example of a life worth living and a character worth having; faith in Jesus Christ as the supreme interpretation of a God to love and to obey; and faith in Jesus Christ as a giver of life by his presence and companionship with those that love him and desire to be like him:—Such is the last message of Jesus to his disciples, or rather, as much of that message as one of his disciples has learned in his life experience.

<sup>1</sup> "Mysticism and Modern Life," by John Wright Buckham, p. 41.





## Prayer

Father—who hast given us Thy Son to be our Comrade, sharing our joys and our sorrows, our imperfect knowledge and our imperfect strength, our trials and our temptations, 'having everything except our sins, we believe in him, in his life, his love, his mission. Are we too venturesome if we dare to ask for ourselves what Thy Son has asked for us? We are Thine: have us in Thy keeping. We ask not that Thou shouldest take us out of this sinning and sorrowing world; but, Father, give us the strength to share with Thy Son the burden of the world's sins and sorrows, that with him we may conquer the evil that is in the world. Dying, he has sent us into the world to carry on the work which Thou gavest to him and to us to do. By Thy truth make us holy and undefiled, as He was holy and undefiled. Abide in us as Thou didst abide in him, that we may be made perfect in him with Thee. Is he not still in the world, redeeming the world? Suffer us, though we are not yet holy and undefiled, to be with him in his great mission, understanding his glory be-

cause we share it with him—the glory of his love, his service, and his sacrifice. And this we ask for his sake who is our Leader in the great campaign. Amen.

# CONSECRATION

CHRIST WITH HIS  
GOD IN THE GARDEN

Into the woods my Master went,\*  
Clean forspent, forspent,  
Into the woods my Master came,  
Forspent with love and shame.  
But the olives they were not blind to him;  
The little green leaves were kind to him;  
The thorn-tree had a mind to him;  
When into the woods he came.

Out of the woods my Master went,  
And he was well content.  
Out of the woods my Master came,  
Content with death and shame.  
When Death and Shame would woo him last,  
From under the trees they drew him last;  
'Twas on a tree they slew him—last  
When out of the woods he came.

SIDNEY LANIER.

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The Old Testament prophets had foretold a new social and political order of the world in which war would cease and the weapons of warfare would be turned into tools of peaceful industry, in which liberty would be established and the only sanction for law necessary would be the authority of God, in which property would be more equitably divided and every man would sit under his own vine and fig tree, in which there would be universal education and no man would need to teach his neighbor. The burden of Jesus' ministry was that this kingdom of God was at hand. He had come to inaugurate it, and his message was at first received by the common people with great enthusiasm.

But they received it with enthusiasm because they did not understand it. The expected emancipation from the Roman yoke; the establishment of a new and world-wide kingdom of which the Jewish nation would be the head; and that Jerusalem, not Rome, would be the mistress of the world. This dream of a Jewish empire was hopelessly wild and singularly visionary. Rome was a nation of soldiers. Her standing army num-

bered nearly half a million of men. The whole military force of Judaism proved no match for about thirty thousand of these men forty years later. Nor would the condition of the world have been improved by any such change of masters. Rome was a better queen than Jerusalem would have been; Pilate a better administrator than Caiaphas.

Yet Judaism might have conquered Rome. Rome, strong in military power, was weak in moral ideas. Her heart was feeble; only her muscles were strong. Her government was corrupt; bribery was universal and unconcealed. In the courts of justice gold was the plea of the wealthy, the passions of the populace were the defense of the poor. Chastity and temperance were the common subjects of satire. The drama was supplanted by gladiatorial combats, and feasting and revelry, continued through many days and nights, became banquets of death. Here, then, was Rome's weakest point, here Judaism's strong point. The religion of Rome provoked the derision of the wise by presenting for their adoration a host of sensual gods and goddesses; the religion of the Jews demanded reverence for one supreme and spiritual Jehovah. The Roman religion deduced the will of the gods from the chance flight of birds or the study of the entrails of the sacrificial victim; the

Jewish religion pointed to the sublime enactments of Mount Sinai, the plain precepts of the prophets, and the moral maxims of the Book of Proverbs. Rome, regarding religion as a political instrument, left it to be regulated for the nation by the senate; Judaism, regarding it as an individual life, forbade any one from interfering between the soul and its God.

But if this conquest of Rome was to be achieved by the Jewish people they must first win a conquest over themselves. They must revive the spiritual faith of their fathers, proclaimed, manifested, and illustrated by their prophets, and sweep away the mass of ecclesiastical and theological rubbish beneath which that faith was buried.

At first the message of Jesus was accepted with enthusiasm. His grace of diction, his pictorial imagination, his sympathetic understanding of the common people, his spiritual enthusiasm, the contrast of his vivid teaching of practical truth with the dry-as-dust theologies of the scribes, his practice in acts of mercy and charity of the truths he taught, drew the people to him. Great crowds thronged to hear him wherever he went. His journeys through Galilee were like triumphal processions.

But this was because the people did not,

would not, perhaps could not, comprehend his message. In vain he told them with many a parable that the kingdom of God would not immediately appear; that it would grow up gradually, secretly, in spite of hostility; that it would not be given to a waiting Israel by God, but won by an eager Israel at a great cost. Prejudices, the growth of generations, cannot be dissipated by a single teacher in a single lifetime, however powerful his teaching. The popular misapprehension in that age is not strange, since even now scholars insist in attributing to Jesus the very errors which he so vigorously combated. When he refused the proffered crown and told the thronging hearers plainly that they could win only by self-sacrifice the kingdom which they had hoped to receive as an inheritance without effort, they abandoned him. So universal even in Galilee was the disaffection that he turned sadly to his own chosen friends with the pathetic inquiry, "Will ye also go away?"

And now that the end was drawing near it needed no supernatural vision to foresee what that end must be. The brief enthusiasm with which Jesus had been welcomed on entering Jerusalem did not deceive him. Probably that enthusiasm was effectually dissipated by his Temple teaching that the kingdom would



be taken from Israel and given to the Gentile world. At least no indication of its continuing existence is furnished by the Gospel accounts of Christ's last week in Jerusalem. The plans for his arrest, trial, and conviction had been made. The traitor who was to betray his place of retirement had been purchased. Jesus had but one alternative: either to flee into the wilderness, abandon his mission and wait for some other one to succeed where he had failed, or to go forward in a hope against hope that by his martyrdom he might accomplish what by his life and teaching he had not been able to accomplish, the beginning of the conversion of the world from pagan to divine ideals of life.

One of the prophets had forecast his purpose by putting in his mouth the saying, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." That prophecy Jesus had fulfilled. His will had been one with his Father's will. His life desire was to know that will and do it. "I seek," he told his disciples, "not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." He believed that God had a plan that gave meaning and purpose to all history, and to carry out that plan was his one all-controlling desire. "He believed that he and his followers were called on to build roadways over which the hosts of God would march in victory. He believed

that he was the representative of the eternal purpose of God, the only thing in life worth living and dying for, and his enthusiastic loyalty is his dominant quality from the time he came into Galilee crying, 'The kingdom of God is at hand,' until he died for his Cause on Calvary."<sup>1</sup>

And now the question pressed upon him, as it presses at times on all God's children, Had he misunderstood his Father's will? Was the supreme desire of his life to be disappointed? Was the Father to be disappointed in his child? It was not the fear of the morrow's anguish, the shame and spitting, the cruel flagellations and the crown of thorns, the shouting of the mob eager for his death and the death upon the cross to follow, that made the anguish of Gethsemane. Many a soldier on French soil during the last two years has faced without hesitation physical pains far more prolonged than Jesus had to bear. The insupportable anguish of that hour was the question, Had he misunderstood his Father's will? And if he had correctly understood it, would he have the strength to fulfill it?

The Hebrew psalmist centuries before had prayed, "Show me thy paths, O Lord." This

<sup>1</sup> "The Manhood of the Master," by Harry Emerson Fosdick, p. 56.

had been the burden of Jesus' prayer. His will had been so to present the kingdom of God that the people would accept it, a hope which he had expressed in a characteristically homely figure: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings!" But they would not. And now? Now he faced not merely dishonor and death to himself; he faced the despair of his disciples, the wreckage of their hopes, the heartbroken mother, the taunts and triumphs of his foes, Israel's foes, God's foes.

Could this be what his Father willed? Could triumph for God's kingdom come out of the defeat of his Christ? And if the endurance of that defeat for himself and his friends and his disciples and his mother—if that was his Father's will, would he have the strength to fulfill that will? "Not what I will, but what thou wilt," was not a prayer of submissive resignation. It was a prayer of eager consecration, not a prayer that his Father would fulfill His Son's will, but that the Son might be clear of vision to see and strong of purpose to fulfill his Father's will.

It sometimes helps us to understand the experience of Jesus if we read it in the light of a like experience of one of his followers—

perhaps an unacknowledged and unconscious follower.

In 1864 Mrs. Gurney, an English Friend, wrote a letter to Abraham Lincoln which, as far as I know, has not been preserved; it elicited from him a letter from which I make the following extract:

We hoped for a happy termination of this terrible war long before this; but God knows best, and has ruled otherwise. We shall yet acknowledge his wisdom and our own error therein. Meanwhile we must work earnestly in the best lights he gives us, trusting that so working still conduces to the great ends he ordains. Surely he intends some great good to follow this mighty convulsion, which no mortal could make and no mortal could stay.

Six months later, in his inaugural address, he repeated the same truth in words which history will never forget:

Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

What perplexities clouded Abraham Lincoln's mind, what insistent doubts whether he

was doing the will of God assailed him with the argument that many good men and true believed the war for which he was so largely responsible was not God's will? We do not know. He wrote no journal, left no autobiography, and rarely, if ever, disclosed to others the secret struggles of his own heart. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick characterizes prayer as "dominant desire." All dominant desire may not be prayer, but nothing is prayer which is not dominant desire. And we may be sure that this dominant desire for the preservation of his country and the emancipation of the slave could not have sustained Abraham Lincoln through those four years of burden-bearing if the dominant desire had not also been a prayer—a prayer that he might understand the will of God and that he might have strength and courage to fulfill it.

Every earnest soul who has reached the age of Jesus has had occasion to pass through his own Gethsemane. Not with many is it any such Gethsemane as Abraham Lincoln's; perhaps not with any such a Gethsemane as that of Jesus. Yet who, when in his pilgrimage he has come to the Valley of the Shadow of Death, has not questioned with himself whether he has not missed his way, whether he has not misunderstood the will of God,

whether, if he has understood it aright, he has the courage to go through the Valley to the unseen, unknown, and, to him, uncertain life which lies beyond?

In such an hour what we need is not resignation, not submission to the will of one too strong to be resisted, but consecration, the absolute, unreserved dedication of one's self to the service of one whose love is richer, wiser, and stronger than one's own; not the prayer, Save me from the Valley of the Shadow of Death; but the prayer, Grant me the rod and the staff which will enable me to go through the Valley of the Shadow of Death and fear no evil; never the prayer, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me," except as it is accompanied by the prayer, "*Not what I will, but what thou wilt.*"

Christ's prayer was not unanswered. Nor was it denied. An angel, it is said, appeared to him from heaven strengthening him. Did this angel come as art has customarily represented him, robed and winged? Or did he come unseen, unheard, bringing his message to the heart of the petitioner? We do not know. We only know how he comes to us; and we may reasonably and reverently surmise that as he comes to us he came to Jesus. What the answer was that he brought the events which follow make clear.

An ancient artist, Gaudenzio Ferrari, truly expresses that answer in a painting in which the angel presents to the kneeling Christ a cup with a miniature cross surmounting it. By the angel's message Christ's question was answered, his doubts were dissolved, his perplexities were ended. His Father's will was made clear to him, and with the clearness of vision came the strength to fulfill that will. In all the tragedy of the hours which followed, in the court of Caiaphas, in the judgment hall of Pilate, in the march to death, in the slow agony of the crucifixion, before the howling mob, the taunting priests, the brokenhearted disciples, Jesus was the one calm, unexcited, unperturbed figure, dwelling in divine peace in the midst of the human tempest, sustained by the assurance that he had seen clearly and would be able to accomplish completely the work which the Father had given him to do.





## Prayer

Father—Thou dost so often seem to hide Thyself: we cannot see Thee; Thou art so often silent: we cannot hear Thy voice; we so often miss our way: we long to follow Thy Son but cannot tell which path he would take were he in our perplexity. Then, Father, we know that he also has experienced our perplexity and we take courage. The two deepest desires of our hearts we bring to Thee. Take away the dimness of our vision: enable us to see clearly what is Thy will. Take away our coward fears: give us courage to do that will. Help us never to pray, never to desire, our will not Thine be done: always to desire, always to pray, Thy will not ours be done. Help us ever to make it our will to do Thy will. This we ask for the sake of our Leader and his cause to whom we have dedicated and do now rededicate our wills, our powers, our lives. Amen.



# RELIGION

CHRIST WITH THE  
CHURCH IN THE COURT ROOM

What laws, my blessed Saviour, hast Thou  
broken  
That so severe a sentence should be spoken?  
How hast Thou 'gainst Thy Father's will  
contended,  
In what offended?

With scourges, blows, and spitting they re-  
viled Thee;  
They crowned Thy brow with thorns, while  
King they styled Thee;  
When faint with pains Thy tortured body  
suffered,  
Then gall they offered.

Say wherefore thus by woes wast Thou sur-  
rounded?  
Ah! Lord, for my transgressions Thou wast  
wounded:  
God took the guilt from me, who should have  
paid it;  
On Thee He laid it.

JOHANN HERMANN.

The trial of Jesus before the Jewish Sanhedrin is the most important ecclesiastical trial in the history of the race. It is not the only one in which time has reversed the position of the parties. Then Jesus Christ was on trial before the Church. Now the Church is on trial before Jesus Christ.

Jesus had from his first entrance into public life given himself wholly to the service of his fellow-men. For himself he neither refused nor asked anything. Proffered hospitality he always accepted. When none was proffered, he slept with his cloak about him for a covering and the sky above him for a roof. Honors he never sought, and he received with equanimity alike the applause and the execrations of the crowd. His pleasures were of the simplest—boating on the lake, walking with his friends in the fields. He accepted gladly the loyalty of spontaneous disciples, but sought not to make proselytes—neither for himself nor for his doctrines. When the people crowded about him, attracted by his winning personality, he warned them not to follow him unless they were willing to suffer for their loyalty at the hazard of losing property, friends, reputation, life it-

self. When he told the rich young ruler to sell all that he had and give to the poor if he wished to become one of the disciples in immediate attendance on the Master, he proposed the standard which he had made his own. He adopted his service to the needs of the people. Were men hungry, he fed them; sick, he healed them; ignorant, he taught them; discouraged, he heartened them; self-satisfied, he rebuked them; despairing, he forgave them. He was equally ready to minister to the rich and to the poor, to the scholar and to the peasant, to the Jew and to the Gentile, to men and to women, to grown-ups and to little children, to the virtuous and to the vicious. To him no one was outcast. He touched the loathsome leper when he healed him; opened his heart to the wandering lunatic driven out as accursed by God from the habitations of men; and stooped and wrote, we know not what, upon the ground, that he might not look upon the adulterous woman shrinking in fear and shame before him.

And now he was put on trial for his life by the Church of his fathers. Why? What had he done? And who were his accusers?

Historically the Pharisees were the reformers of the second century before Christ. Like the Roman Catholics of a later age, they sup-

plemented the Old Testament with traditions; these, they asserted, had come down from the days of Moses. These traditions, which they asserted had been handed down orally from generation to generation, came to be regarded as of equal binding force with the Scriptures. Obedience, not merely to the moral laws contained in the Old Testament, but to a great number of minute ecclesiastical regulations, became to the Pharisees the essence of religion.

There were some pure precepts in their teaching; the characteristic feature of their religion was a pious formalism thinly covering an intensely selfish spirit. Religion tended to become a trade. "Three things," so ran their proverb, "will make thee prosper—prayer, alms, and penitence." The spirit even of their ethics was based on the maxim, "Consider for whom thou dost work and what is thy master who will pay thee thy wages." They fasted and prayed with great regularity and paid tithes of all they possessed, but all was done for hope of reward.

The simple narratives of the Gospel writers do not give us the details of the accusation which the Pharisees brought against their prisoner, but from later Jewish writings<sup>1</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> See Isaac Goldstein's "Jesus of Nazareth" and "Trial of Jesus" by M. Salvador and M. Dupin.

from incidental references in the Gospel we can easily reconstruct the charges preferred against him.

It was charged that he was a preacher of turbulence and faction; that he flattered the poor and inveighed against the rich; that he denounced whole cities, as Capernaum, Bethsaida, Chorazin; that he gathered about him a rabble of publicans, harlots, and drunkards, under a pretense of reforming them; that he subverted the laws and institutions of the Mosaic commonwealth, and substituted an unauthorized legislation of his own; that he disregarded not only all distinctions of society, but even those of religion, and commended the idolatrous Samaritan as of greater worth than the holy priest and pious Levite; that he had condemned the solemn sanctions of their holy religion, had sat down to eat with publicans and sinners with unwashed hands, had disregarded the Jewish fasts and the obligations of the Jewish Sabbath, had attended the Jewish feasts with great irregularity or not at all, had declared that God could be worshiped in any other place as well as in his holy temple, had openly and violently interfered with its sacred services by driving away the cattle gathered there for sacrifice, and, above all, that he had been guilty of the most heinous crime known to Jewish law—



blasphemy—by asserting of himself that he was the contemporary of Abraham, the Lord of David, the superior of Solomon, the Son, even, of God. That he had been guilty of any inhumanity to man, that he had violated any moral precepts of the Mosaic code or taught anything inconsistent with the spiritual teachings of the great prophets, was not then and never has been since charged against him.

Thus in this trial were put in sharp contrast two conceptions of religion, the humanitarian and the ceremonial—two conceptions which have been in the world ever since Cain made an offering to Jehovah and almost simultaneously slew his brother.

The one conception imagines that God is best pleased by a scrupulous obedience to certain carefully defined regulations and a punctilious observance of certain prescribed rituals. This it is that will save the world from the wrath of God or the gods. The other believes that God is best pleased by a spontaneous life of love, service, and sacrifice. This it is which will save the world from the terrible evils it brings upon itself by its selfishness, its self-seeking, its self-indulgence.

The first conception was held in Old Testament times by priests who put emphasis on the importance of the Levitical code and the sacredness of the Temple sacrifices. In New

Testament times by those who insisted on fastings and ablutions, on synagogue services and priestly sacrifices; who would plan the murder of their opponent, but would not enter a pagan court on a holy day. In the Middle Ages by priests who devoted their lives to masses and confessions, and by inquisitors who executed as criminals those who doubted the doctrines or neglected the services of the Church. In the eighteenth century by a Church which preached a "code of ethical laws" to select congregations and left the common people unshepherded and uncared for. In New England by Puritans who made much of understanding foreordination and decrees, much of a scrupulous observance of Sabbath regulations, and made money out of selling rum to the heathen and importing slaves from heathendom.

The second conception of religion was held in Old Testament times by prophets who taught that what God required was doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God. In New Testament times by the Apostle who declared that greatest of all virtues is the love that suffereth long and still is kind. In the Middle Ages by preaching friars who ministered of the truth to the poor of England and by nuns whose lives were unselfishly devoted to ministering to the bodies

of the poor. In the eighteenth century by Wesley, who abandoned the ecclesiasticism of his early years for a lifelong itinerant ministry to the neglected and the outcast. In New England by John Eliot and Jonathan Edwards preaching to the Indians.

Jesus did not merely go about doing good. He did not "turn aside to make the weary glad."<sup>2</sup> To make the weary glad was his life mission. This was his method of achieving the world's salvation. In his first recorded sermon in the synagogue at Nazareth he declared this to be the object for which he was sent: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." When John in prison, puzzled by the fact that Jesus had seemingly done nothing effective for the emancipation of the Jews, sent his disciples to ask, "Art thou he that should

<sup>2</sup> When the Lord of Love was here,  
 Happy hearts to him were dear,  
 Though his heart was sad;  
 Worn and lowly for our sake,  
 Yet he turned aside to make  
 All the weary glad.

come, or do we look for another?" Jesus sent back the account of his ministry of love as the sole evidence of his Messiahship. "Go," he said, "and show John again those things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." And when at the close of his Temple teaching he pictured to his disciples the last judgment, the standard he set up was not scrupulous obedience to regulations, nor punctilious observance of ritual, nor accurate understanding of theological truth, but practical charity. It was those who had given food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, hospitality to the stranger, clothing to the naked, personal fellowship to the sick and the imprisoned, that were welcomed to the palace of the King.

Love is the only wedding garment needed to furnish the guest for the wedding feast. The kingdom of God is the kingdom of Love. And when the spirit of love animates the children of men, then, and not before, will come on the earth that kingdom for which the Master bids his followers work and pray.

## Prayer

From shams, false pretense, and formalism, Spirit of God, deliver us. From doing deeds of charity as servants in hope of reward, Spirit of God, deliver us. From shallow conformity to custom, from seeking the applause of our fellow men, from pride of good works, self-conceit, and self-righteousness, Spirit of God, deliver us. From mere unthinking imitation of others, even of our Master, in careless forgetfulness of the inner purpose of his life, Spirit of God, deliver us. Endue us with our Master's spirit that all our acts, whether of service or of worship, may be the spontaneous expression of that life of faith, and hope, and love which Thou dost freely give to us that we may be in very truth Thy children. Amen.



# FAITH

CHRIST WITH THE  
SKEPTIC IN THE PRÆTORIUM

God is never so far off  
As even to be near.  
He is within, our spirit is  
The home He holds most dear.

To think of Him as by our side,  
Is almost as untrue  
As to remove His throne beyond  
Those skies of starry blue.

So all the while I thought myself  
Homeless, forlorn and weary,  
Missing my joy, I walked the earth  
Myself God's sanctuary.

FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER.



“What is truth?” said jesting Pilate, and would not wait for an answer.

Nothing strange in that. What was truth in that hour? What protection did it afford against a mob maddened by an egotistical nationalism which it mistook for patriotism and a malignant bigotry which it mistook for religion; what protection against the scheming ecclesiastical politicians who had cunningly planned for this hour and aroused the passionate prejudices of the mob to serve their purpose; what protection against the disappointed ambition of a treacherous disciple? The clamorous welcome of the Galileans on the first day of the week, “Crown him! Crown him!” was drowned by the clamorous execration of the mob on Friday, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” Who could then foresee that to-day no enemy would be left to defend the crucifixion, while a throng which no man can number, Jew and Gentile, Christian and pagan, would join with the skeptic John Stuart Mill in declaring that there is no “better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life,” and with the rationalist Dr. Hooykaas in the

reverential acclaim: "Thy triumph is secure. Thy name shall be borne on the breath of the winds through all the world; and with that name no thought except of goodness, nobleness, and love shall link itself in the bosoms of thy brothers who have learned to know thee and what thou art. Thy name shall be the symbol of salvation to the weak and wandering, of restoration to the fallen and the guilty, of hope to all who sink in comfortless despair. Thy name shall be the mighty cry of progress in freedom, in truth, in purity—the living symbol of the dignity of man, the epitome of all that is noble, lofty, and holy upon earth."

This self-conscious age, sitting in judgment on itself, declares itself to be a skeptical age. Schumann musically interprets its spirit by his questioning "Warum?" (Why?); Goldwin Smith, by his essay "Guesses at Truth", J. Cotter Morison, by his proposal to substitute "The Service of Man" for the abandoned service of God. This skepticism is not a mere doubt of ancient creeds, not merely a doubt or a discarding of the Church or the Bible as an authority, not merely Tennyson's "honest doubt."<sup>1</sup> It is a doubt

<sup>1</sup> There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

sometimes of the value of truth, sometimes of the possibility of attaining it.

It is expressed by the agnostic, who tells us that "the Great Companion is dead"; that at death our friend has slid down into "the somber, unechoing gulf of nothingness"; that there is so little basis for moral judgments that it is difficult to find a man so virtuous as to deserve a good supper or so wicked as to deserve a good drubbing.<sup>2</sup>

It is expressed by the safe man who, for an eager search for the truth, substitutes an eager search for peace; "who never enunciates a truth without guarding himself against being supposed to exclude the contradictory; who holds that Scripture is the only authority, yet that the Church is to be deferred to; that faith only justifies, yet that it does not justify without works; that grace does not depend on the sacraments, yet is not given without them; that bishops are a divine ordinance, yet those who have them not are in the same religious condition as those who have."<sup>3</sup>

It is expressed by the Athenians, who "spend their time in nothing else but either to tell or hear some new thing"; who throng a forum and occasionally a church, not in search of truth, but in search of the latest

<sup>2</sup> W. K. Clifford; John Morley; David Hume.

<sup>3</sup> Cardinal Newman.

fashion in philosophy; who change their opinion as frequently and as readily as a fashionable woman changes her bonnet; who deny every affirmative and affirm every negative; who "make use of their reason to inquire and debate, but not to fix and determine."<sup>4</sup>

It is expressed by the cynics who imagine that to believe anything is a sign of a decadent intellect, and pride themselves in being in advance of their age because they imitate the toleration of the ancient Romans, who regarded all religious creeds and forms as equally false, but also equally useful as a political convenience.

How shall the Church of Christ meet this spirit of skepticism? How did its Master and leader meet this spirit of skepticism in his own age? What answer did he give by his life to the half-contemptuous question, "What is truth?"

Truth was not to him an opinion, tentatively held, for further investigation and subject to future reversal. It might almost be said of Jesus that he had no opinions—as thus defined.

Nor was truth to him an intellectual conviction borrowed from others. He did not derive his faith from the beliefs of his forefathers or the affirmations of the Scriptures.

<sup>4</sup> Montaigne.

Nor was it a discovery ascertained by investigation and confirmed and buttressed by arguments. There is no indication in his teaching of a search after truth; no outcry like that of the Psalmist, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God;" no sign of personal perplexity like that of Paul's "perplexed, but not in despair." Compare his "Father, I knew that thou hearest me always," with Job's "O that I knew where I might find him!" Read his assurance to his disciples in his last message to them, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever;" then compare with it the last message of Socrates to his friends before his death, "And where shall we find a good charmer of our fears, Socrates, when you are gone?" "Hellas," he replied, "is a large place, Cebes, and has many good men, and there are barbarous races not a few; seek for him among them all, far and wide, sparing neither pains nor money, for there is no better way of using your money."

We all know some truths which are experiences. Long before the child learns in school about the attraction of gravitation he discovers, in his first lessons in walking, that if he is not careful he will fall. He does not

formulate the law, nor define it, nor know the methods or limits of its operation. But he has an experience of it, and that experience no argument gave and no argument can take away. So, if he has a happy home, long before he studies moral philosophy he has an experience of parental love and care and a responding experience of filial obligations, honor and affection.

In his teaching Jesus assumed that there is in all men an undeveloped capacity to experience the truth. He acted on the assumption that truth fits the human soul as a well-made glove fits the hand; that truth and the soul are made for each other. He identified truth and life, and for the most part taught only those truths that are a part of life. He dealt not in surmises, opinions, hypotheses; he dealt only in convictions, and only in those convictions that have their roots in ennobled human nature. In what we call the subconscious self he saw the seeds of truth and life, and his appeal was aimed to draw them out, as the sun draws out the slumbering seed in spring. He often addressed questions to those who questioned him and incited them to find in themselves the answer to their own questions. Thus he asked the rich young ruler, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God;" and to the

scribe asking which is the chief commandment, he replied, "How readest thou?" and called on the group hearing his parable of the Good Samaritan to tell him, "Which now of these three thinkest thou was neighbor to him that fell among thieves?"

In studying Paul's epistles the reader can often see that the Apostle, to convince others, uses the arguments by which he has first convinced himself. Jesus rarely argues. He affirms. His most solemn and weighty affirmations are often preceded by the words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." So far from defending a tradition he often sets his simple affirmation against it: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, but I say unto you." When he cites Scripture, it is generally as an illustration, not as an argument. He puts his personal experience above Scripture: "Ye search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

All spiritual truths were thus elemental in Jesus. God, immortality, the life eternal, the laws of righteousness, were no convictions imported from the past, no opinions derived from and supported by philosophical arguments. They were a part of his self-conscious self. He says of himself, "I *am* the



truth!" Paul says of him, "He cannot deny *himself*." And to the divinely conscious sense of truth—perhaps I should rather say to the unawakened capacity to become conscious of it, which all normal men possess—he habitually appealed in his public ministry. The awakened life responded to his words; and the people were astonished at his teaching because he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes. The authority was the divinely awakened response in their own souls.

The Church must find in the spirit and method of its Master the answer to be given to this age asking, sometimes seriously, sometimes carelessly, sometimes cynically, Pilate's question, "What is truth?"

It cannot find in the recorded experiences of the past an answer which will either satisfy the serious or confound the cynic. The age will not be content, it ought not to be content, with convictions imported whether from the Reformed creeds of the seventeenth century, or from the Catholic creeds of the first four centuries, or from the pre-Christian creeds of the Hebrew prophets.

Certainly it will not be content with hypotheses derived by the much-vaunted "scientific method" and buttressed and defended by biological evolution and literary criticism. The beliefs of the past may help to confirm



the believer in his present faith. The modern scientific and literary method may help to clear away some intellectual difficulties which perplex him. But it is the *life* which is the light of the world. And the doubts of the world will never be solved by either the old theology or the new theology. They will be solved only by a new life, a life in the Church which is a present experience of a living God, bringing with him to the soul which accepts him a present experience of forgiveness that relieves from the burden of past errors and sins, and a present inspiration that gives power for future achievement.

That it is not theological opinions which have made effective preachers of truth is evident from the fact that Savonarola and Luther, Massillon and Wesley, Phillips Brooks, and Dwight L. Moody, have been effective preachers of the truth. It is only the truth which transcends all definitions, the truth that is more than an ancient tradition or a modern hypothesis, the truth that is a living experience, which can endow the Church with power to silence the sneers of the cynic or to satisfy and relieve the perplexities of the honest doubter.



## Prayer

Father—keep us from idle curiosity; from idle credulity; from prejudice of mind and blindness of heart. Inspire in us the readiness to accept truth whoever may bring it. Make us eager to know the truth; but suffer us never to be content with knowledge. Make us eager to act truly and to be true. May Thy truth make us free: free from false teaching, false fears, false hopes, false ideals. Suffer us never to accept falsehood because falsehood is comfortable; never to be false to ourselves and to Thee because falseness is easy. As we grow older may we grow wiser—grow in our understanding of life and in our acquaintance with Thee. May our wisdom be first pure, then peaceful, always the enlightener of our conscience, the servant of our love, the minister to our life. So may we grow into the likeness of him who is the way, the truth, the life—Thy Son, our Saviour. Amen.



**SACRIFICE**

**CHRIST ALONE  
UPON THE CROSS**

Jesu, whelmed in fears unknown,  
With our evil left alone,  
While no light from Heaven is shown:  
Hear us, Holy Jesu.

When we vainly seem to pray,  
And our hope seems far away,  
In the darkness be our stay:  
Hear us, Holy Jesu.

Though no Father seem to hear,  
Though no light our spirits cheer,  
Tell our faith that God is near:  
Hear us, Holy Jesu.

THOMAS B. POLLOCK.

“There are,” says F. W. Robertson, “two kinds of solitude: the first consisting of insulation in space, the other of isolation of the spirit. The first is simply separation by distance. . . . The other is loneliness of soul.” Jesus on the cross was one of a great multitude. But what companionship of soul was possible for him with the victorious priests saying to each other, with malignant, smiling triumph, “He saved others; himself he cannot save,” or with the indifferent soldiers gambling for the possession of the robe which love had wrought for him; or with the careless spectators drawn to the place by the news of a triple execution; or with the cursing brigand on one side of him; or with the repentant brigand looking back on a life dedicated to lust and plunder.

There were his mother and his much-loved disciple at the foot of the cross and two faithful women. But they did not and could not comprehend the true significance of that hour. They saw with pitying anguish their Master dying, and with him dying their hope that he was to be the world’s Messiah. They needed the comforting strength which by his

dying words Jesus gave to them; comfort and strength they could not give to him.

And now a greater loneliness fell upon him—greater than that in the childhood vision of his Father's commission in the Temple, which even his mother could not comprehend; greater than that of the long and perplexed pondering in the wilderness upon the problem of his life-work; greater than those hours which he spent at night when he went apart by himself to recruit his courage and his strength by prayer; greater than his solitude in the Garden, in the court-room, or at Pilate's judgment seat. He had only partially foretold this hour—had he more than partially foreseen it?—when he told his disciples: "The hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

For now the Father was not with him. He was left, or at least seemed to himself to be left, to face this trial hour without even his Father's companionship. It was the only experience in his life that wrung from him a cry of self-pity. The nation had rejected him, his mother and his brothers had thought that he was beside himself, the fickle multitude had deserted him, the Church had conspired to slay him, his disciples had scattered



every man to his own, the one disciple who understood him best did not understand him now. But never till the consciousness of his Father's presence was denied him did he utter a word of remonstrance or an appeal for help.

We may well believe that this experience came to Jesus because it was his mission as our guide and companion to pass through every experience of trial common to man. And this experience of "forsaken" is not uncommon. Jeremiah describes this experience as "the wilderness, . . . a land of deserts and of pits, . . . a land of drought and of the shadow of death, . . . a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt." Bunyan allegorizes this experience in his picture of Christian going alone through the Valley of the Shadow of Death where "one of the wicked ones got behind him and stepped up softly to him, and whisperingly suggested many grievous blasphemies to him, which he verily thought had proceeded from his own mind." Tennyson portrays this experience in Sir Percival's quest for the Holy Grail:

But even while I drank the brook, and ate  
The goodly apples, all these things at once  
Fell into dust, and I was left alone,  
And thirsting, in a land of sand and thorns.

R. E. Prothero, in his interesting volume on "The Psalms in Human Life," gives historical illustrations of this experience: the Archbishop of Canterbury found the Crusaders so given over to licentiousness that his chaplain declared, "God is not in the camp"; and Richard I, deserted by his followers and seeing that the crusade had failed, thought himself deserted by God also, and cried out in Christ's own words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

This experience of "forsaken" is sometimes a national experience. Modern scholars think that many of the psalms which were formerly regarded as individual experiences were really composed and sung as experiences of the nation. If so, then such psalms as the Forty-second and the Forty-third may perhaps be regarded as the expression of the struggle of faith in a time when the people of Israel seemed to be forsaken by their God. As "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," when sung by a congregation, expresses a feeling of national patriotism, so these psalms and others like them would express an experience of national loneliness:

My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?

Just now there are not a few who, with Job, cannot perceive God in current events, and so conclude either that there is no God or that God dwells in beatific indifference to human sin and suffering, or that he is at best a feeble God who is doing the little that he can, but cannot do much. Christ's teaching seems to me to give a different solution to our perplexity. In a story, in substance more than once repeated, he compares the kingdom of God to an estate left by the lord of the estate in charge of his servants while he goes on a journey into a far country, a journey which lasts for a long time. He implies that God does leave us at times to ourselves that we may learn in the school of experience what we can learn in no other way. For it is in that school that we best learn the lessons that really determine our character and control our conduct.

I have a friend who seems to me to possess what I will call the teaching genius. She has charge of a room of young girl pupils. She left them alone one day, telling them before she went that she trusted to their honor to preserve order in her absence. When she returned, she found the room a scene of wild, hilarious disorder. She might have resolved that never again would she absent herself from the room. Or, if she was compelled to

do so, that she would always leave a monitor to keep order. But she believed that it was more important to teach her pupils self-control than to teach them geography or arithmetic or English. The course she pursued I need not here describe; indeed, I could not describe it, for the essence of that method was the substitution of personal influence for mere governmental authority, and the methods of personal influence defy description. Suffice it to say that less than six months later she was detained in the principal's room after the close of recess, was asked by the principal to take two visitors up to her room and let them see her class work, and entered to find that the girls were reading the Shakespeare appointed for that hour with the self-elected president of the class acting as their leader. The teacher had accomplished her purpose. Leaving them alone, she had trained them in self-control as she could not have done had she always remained with them.

Thus God is teaching his children the meaning of human brotherhood.

The ideal of a human brotherhood transcending all limits of race, religion, or nationality has been for centuries before the sons of men. Probably there has been no century since Jesus preached human brotherhood in Palestine when there has not been some

prophet or poet to give to his generation a vision of that splendid ideal. At the close of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century a few radicals attempted to realize that ideal in a government "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." In the terrible school of experience our own country, North and South, learned the incongruity of African slavery with that ideal, and it was abolished. Since that time the world has had in the unapproachable prosperity of this country a demonstration that it is possible for men of different religious faiths, different social conditions, different nationalities, different races, to live together, united by a common human aspiration and a mutual respect. We have not practiced our avowed principles consistently; we have not lived up to our professed ideal. But even so, in the imperfect realization of our ideal, in the imperfect practice of our avowed principles, we have been rewarded far beyond our deserts.

Meanwhile the common people of Europe—of England, France, Italy, and in less degree of Russia and Germany—have perceived this ideal of human brotherhood and have in some measure accepted it as their own. But they have been confronted by a very different ideal, not confined to Germany, but in Ger-

many more than in any other civilized nation taught by the religious and political leaders and more fully than in any other nation embodied in the government. That ideal, as expressed by their press, their professors, their preachers, their political leaders, has been that might makes right; that one race must dominate Europe; that the Slav and the Latin races must be subject to the Teuton race; that war is a biological, a moral, and a Christian necessity; that there is no brotherhood of nations; that the uncivilized peoples are the "spoils" of the civilized nations, and the smaller nations ought of right to be subject to the greater nations. While the German Empire has been illustrating in the trenches and in its treatment of Belgium the law of the forest, struggle for existence and survival of the strongest, democracy has been illustrating in the prison camps and the hospitals the law of human brotherhood. And by the contrast the world is learning the lesson which it apparently could not learn either from the vision of the poets or the very imperfect object-lesson of one very imperfectly developed democratic nation.

To the question of the day, asked by some cynically, by some in great perplexity, Has God forgotten us, or is there no God? my answer is: God is teaching the human race the

lesson of justice, liberty, and order—the lesson, that is, of human brotherhood based on self-control and mutual respect; as William George taught the waifs and strays of New York City in the George Junior Republic, as Mr. Osborne wished to teach the criminals in the State Prison, as my teacher friend taught the girls in her school-room by allowing the pupils to learn life's lesson in life's great school, the school of actual experience.

Jesus said to his disciples nearly nineteen hundred years ago: "The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant." These two ideals of government, the autocratic and the democratic, the pagan and the Christian, are engaged to-day in a life-and-death struggle on the battlefields of Europe, and the world has learned more of the principles and the spirit of human brotherhood in these three years of war, in seeing the evil wrought by the one and the beneficence wrought by the other, than it learned in all the centuries that preceded.

As this paper is going to press the news reaches us of the revolution in Russia, the



abdication of the Czar, the overthrow of the Russian autocracy, and the liberation of the exiled and the imprisoned lovers of liberty. It is too soon to estimate aright the full significance of this revolution, but it is reasonably certain that the old régime of irresponsible despotism will never be restored, that even if some representative of the old dynasty should be called to the throne it would not be as an autocrat but as a constitutional monarch, that never in the future will the rights and liberties of the Russian people be subject to the whims of a cruel and corrupt bureaucracy. And because this revolution has been accomplished by the people themselves, their self-reliance, self-control, courage, and manliness have been developed as they could not have been developed by any supernatural intervention in their behalf.

I do not, then, believe that this European war indicates either that there is no God or that he is an indifferent and a feeble God. It indicates that his faith in his children is so great and his love for them is so strong that he dares to leave them at times to learn in life's bitter struggles the real meaning and the real values of life. And the lesson always has been and always will be worth all that it costs.

And this lesson I would that every one



might learn who has ever personally experienced the sense of desolate loneliness expressed in the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Sometimes our sins have hidden God's face from us: "that he will not hear?" I would rather say that we cannot hear. He has not forsaken us, but we have forsaken him. When Jesus bade Judas, "What thou doest do quickly," and Judas went out and "it was night," Jesus did not forsake Judas; Judas forsook Jesus. When our Father complies with an unfilial demand and gives us our inheritance to spend as our self-will dictates, and we depart from him, and by and by we know the great loneliness of a disappointed life, there is only one remedy—a return to loyalty and a life of self-devotion to the Father's will.

Sometimes we are wearied by overwork, or by overwrought and exhausted emotions, or by a despairing conviction that we have misunderstood our Father's will because we did not possess our Father's spirit. Then life no longer seems worth living and we would desert if we dared. So Elijah thought to restore the loyalty of his Nation to Jehovah by putting to death the priests of Baal, and, failing to get from an apathetic people any response to his undivine enthusiasm, would have

been glad to commit suicide, but had either too much conscience or too little courage. In such a time we had best imitate Elijah's example, lie down and sleep, rise up and eat, give our exhausted nerves a chance to recover their tone, and re-learn the lesson we so easily forget, that the Kingdom of God comes not with tempest, earthquake and fire, but with a still small voice. Then in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and in confidence we shall recover our strength.

In our time there are many who have identified faith with creed, religion with theology, God with definitions of God. Their definitions are proved inadequate, their theology is darkened, their creed is shattered, and they feel themselves forsaken. So Job had believed that if he were virtuous he would be happy; he had been virtuous and he was not happy. His creed proved false. In the intellectual chaos of the hour God disappeared. "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him." The God whom he could not find by searching he found by trusting; the God whom he could not find without, he found within. His agnosticism was theological, not spiritual. He was a de-

vout agnostic, and his prayer, "Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat" was answered when he found his God in the mystery of life, a God whose greatness is unsearchable.

But this experience of "forsaken" may come to us as it came to Jesus. The Father may throw us on our own resources and leave us to ourselves: perhaps to learn how weak we are, perhaps to learn self-reliance, courage, independence. Ella Wheeler Wilcox's little poem does not give the whole truth about prayer, but she truly portrays one message which life sometimes brings to each one of us:

All thine immortal powers bring into play,  
Think, act, strive, reason—then look up and pray.

Christ sent his disciples out in couples to preach the Gospel apart from him. They learned to preach by preaching. God does not solve our problems or fight our battles for us. He inspires us to solve our own problems and strengthens us to fight our own battles. Sometimes he does this by leaving us alone, for so he best calls out all our powers.

This experience of loneliness comes to all of us sometimes, I suppose—an experience when our prayers seem to get no response, when, as a friend once said to me, they go

no higher than the ceiling. This is not always a sign of our weakness, our sin, nor of God's absence or indifference. Perhaps he is testing us to see what we can do. Perhaps our loneliness is a call to greater courage and more strenuous endeavors. Then let me go forward to feed the hungry, though I have only five loaves and two little fishes; go forward to fight the strong armed evil, though I have only a sling and five smooth stones out of the brook. And let my prayer still be *My* God, though because of the gathering darkness I cannot see his form, because of the shouting multitude I cannot hear his voice, and in the tumult of my own troubled heart I can discern no consciousness of his presence.

## Prayer

Father: we do not ask for Thy companionship, for that we know we always have, but we do ask that we may better understand Thy companionship and realize it more. There are times when the eternal things seem very real, and we are surer of the things that are unseen than of the things that are seen; at other times the eternal realities are obscure and seem unreal. We sail life's ocean as we sail the sea; sometimes bright sun and blue skies, sometimes storms when we cannot see—nay, scarce so much as a hand's-breadth before our eyes. Yet even then may we walk by faith and be sure Thou art, although we cannot see Thee. When Thou seemest to be sleeping and we wonder if Thou carest not whether we perish or not, still may we have faith in Thee. When Thy coming is not understood and we are terrified, calm our fears that we may hear Thy voice saying, "It is I, be not afraid." When Thou seemest to have departed and we say to ourselves "We trusted this should have been He who would have delivered us," walk by our side, though Thou

dost walk incognito, and make our hearts to burn again, and then reveal Thyself to us, and cause us to know that Thou dost never forget us, though we forget Thee, and never art absent from us, though we seem to absent ourselves from Thee. And if the time shall come when Thou dost keep silence, dost not answer our prayers, dost hide Thyself so that we cannot find Thee, dost leave us to solve our problems, bear our burdens, fulfill our tasks without Thine aid, still may we be loyal to Thee, count the problem one Thou hast given us, the burden one Thou hast permitted to be laid upon us, the task one Thou hast allotted to us, and summon all our wisdom, all our courage, all our powers to do Thy will, rejoicing that Thou dost repose in us such trust and confidence. Amen.

**VICTORY**

**CHRIST CONQUEROR  
OF DEATH**

Loud mockers in the roaring street  
 Say Christ is crucified again;  
 Twice pierced His gospel-bearing feet  
 Twice broken, His great heart in vain.

I hear and to myself I smile  
 For Christ talks with me all the while  
 No angel now to roll the stone  
 From off His unawaking sleep;  
 In vain shall Mary watch alone,  
 In vain the soldiers vigil keep.

Yet while they deem my Lord is dead  
 My eyes are on His shining head.

Ah! never more shall Mary hear  
 That voice exceeding sweet and low,  
 Within the garden calling clear,  
 Her Lord is gone and she must go.

Yet all the while my Lord I meet  
 In every London lane and street.

Poor Lazarus, shall wait in vain  
 And Bartimæus still go blind;  
 The healing hem shall ne'er again  
 Be touched by suffering human-kind.

Yet all the while I see them rest,  
 The poor and outcast, on His breast.

No more unto the stubborn heart  
 With gentle knocking shall He plead,  
 No more the mystic pity start,  
 For Christ twice dead is dead indeed.

So in the street I hear men say  
 Yet Christ is with me all the day.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.



The resurrection of Jesus Christ was not an extraordinary event. It was an extraordinary evidence of an ordinary event. All men die as Christ died. All men ever since God breathed into man the breath of his life have risen from the dead as Christ rose. Death and resurrection are synonyms. They are simply different aspects of the same fact. They are both the separation of the spirit from the body. Resurrection is the uprising of the spirit from the body. Death is the decay of the body when the spirit has left the temporary tenement.

If I believed that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was an exceptional event, I might have the difficulty in believing which is experienced by some of my skeptical friends. But I do not think it was an exceptional event. It is exceptional only in this respect, that somehow the despairing disciples had evidence of their Master's continuing life which banished their despair, transformed their characters, and endowed them with new life. Did the spirit of the Master return to reanimate the body which it had left? Or did the disembodied spirit appear to the unsealed eyes of

the disciples? I do not know. There are some incidents narrated in the Gospels which indicate one conclusion, some incidents which indicate the other. It is not material to determine which opinion is correct.

But somehow the disciples came to believe that their Master was not dead, but living; not gone away, but still their leader, their teacher, their master.

That belief I share with them. If it had not been for that belief, Christianity would have died on the cross and been buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. With their Master's death hope died and the disciples planned to go back to their fishing. It was with difficulty that they were convinced that he was risen from the dead. At first the reports of his resurrection seemed to them like women's tales. With the conviction that their Master still lived they became new men. Cowards before, they were endowed with courage. Dumb before, they spoke. They had been awed by the ecclesiastics whom now they defied. Their theme was not the Sermon on the Mount, new ethics, a spiritualized Ten Commandments. It was a gospel, a glad tidings. The Deliverer had come; he would emancipate the world; he would bring in the hoped-for kingdom of God, the kingdom which would be righteousness and peace and

universal welfare. Their faith in the risen and living leader changed the Jewish holiday of the seventh day into the Christian holiday of the first day of the week. It changed the character of the day from a day of rest to a day of inspiration. It changed it from a Hebrew ceremonial to a world gala day.

It did more. It changed for the disciples their conception of death. The graves were empty, the heavens were populous. One disciple heard in imagination his martyred companions singing, "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever." Another saw these companions risen from their resting-places, looking down upon their late companions on the earth, and cheering them on in their progress toward the goal—the kingdom of God. Death lost its sting. The grave was no longer victor. Death and the grave became, not the end of life, but the beginning. The tombs of the pagans were inscribed only with memories: "She was a good wife"; "He was a brave soldier." The tombs of the Christians were inscribed with symbols of hope: the anchor, the broken egg-shell, the sculptured angel.

Nor was this all. Love received a new inspiration, life a new significance. Philanthropists were few and philanthropy was

paralyzed in pagan Rome. Mortals found it hard to work and to suffer for the betterment of those who would not outlast the century. But now there were no mortals. And immortals found it easy to work and to suffer for immortals. Christianity was born, not at the crucifixion, but at the resurrection. Easter, not Christmas, is the true anniversary of Christendom.

What our faith in the resurrection of Jesus, with all that it involves and implies, has done for us, his followers, is indicated by a picture of what disbelief in that resurrection involves. The necessary implications of that disbelief are eloquently portrayed by Arthur Clough in a poem<sup>1</sup> too long for me to quote in its entirety. Three verses selected from that poem must here suffice:

Eat, drink, and play, and think that this is bliss:  
 There is no heaven but this;  
     There is no hell,  
 Save earth, which serves the purpose doubly well,  
     Seeing it visits still  
 With equalest apportionment of ill  
 Both good and bad alike, and brings to one same  
     dust  
     The unjust and the just  
 With Christ, who is not risen.

<sup>1</sup> Arthur H. Clough's Poems, "Easter Day." Naples, 1849.

Eat, drink, and die, for we are souls bereaved:  
 Of all the creatures under heaven's wide cope  
 We are most hopeless, who had once most hope,  
 And most beliefless, that had most believed.

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;  
 As of the unjust, also of the just—  
 Yea, of that Just One too!

It is the one sad Gospel that is true—  
 Christ is not risen!

Here, on our Easter Day  
 We rise, we come, and lo! we find him not,  
 Gardener nor other, on the sacred spot:  
 Where they have laid him there is none to say;  
 No sound, nor in, nor out—no word  
 Of where to seek the dead or meet the living Lord.  
 There is no glistening of an angel's wings,  
 There is no voice of heavenly clear behest:  
 Let us go hence, and think upon these things  
     In silence, which is best.  
 Is he not risen? No—  
 But lies and molders low?  
     Christ is not risen?"

To "eat, drink, and play, and think that this is bliss" seems to us who believe in the resurrection foolish as well as vicious. Foolish, too, to judge the meaning and merits of life from this little earthly section of a life that is imperishable. When our loved ones spring from the bodies they have occupied, as the emancipated bird springs from the opened door of its cage, our souls are not bereaved. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust"—yes! but also "the spirit to God who gave it." We look not down into the grave, but up to the

companionship which surrounds us and inspires us; not backward to the memory of a love now lost, but forward to meeting with our loved ones who are not dead and cannot die. Our Christ does not lie and molder low. He lives, our invisible Leader and Companion, who brings us a courage greater than our own with which to meet the dangers and difficulties encountered in our brief campaign to gain ourselves and give to the world his spirit of love, service, and sacrifice.

## Prayer

Father, to some of us at all times, to most of us sometimes, the story of Thy Son's resurrection seems, as it seemed to his disciples, an idle tale: the earthquake, the opened door, the empty tomb, the angel visitors, the appearing and disappearing Christ are so remote in time and so foreign to our common experiences. But we know that the Spirit of love, service and sacrifice which was in him is not dead but living, working within us, as our Saviour, our Leader, our Companion. He fulfills his promise: he does not leave us comfortless: he comes to us. Then we know him, for he dwells with us and is in us. Then we know that he is living, for in him we also live. Father, we ask not that we may see his hands or touch his wounded side. We ask that in our experience his blessing may be realized: that though we have not seen him, yet we may believe in him. We ask no celestial vision, no angel interpreters, no Christ in human form: these would not suffice our needs nor satisfy our desires. We ask that we may know him and the power of his resurrection, being

made partakers in his life and in his sacrificial death. We ask that we may keep his new commandment and love one another as he has loved us, and in thus sharing his self-sacrificing love may know that we are with him and that he is with us. And this fellowship with Thy risen and living Christ we ask in order that he may see in us the fruit of his sacrifice and be satisfied. Amen.













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