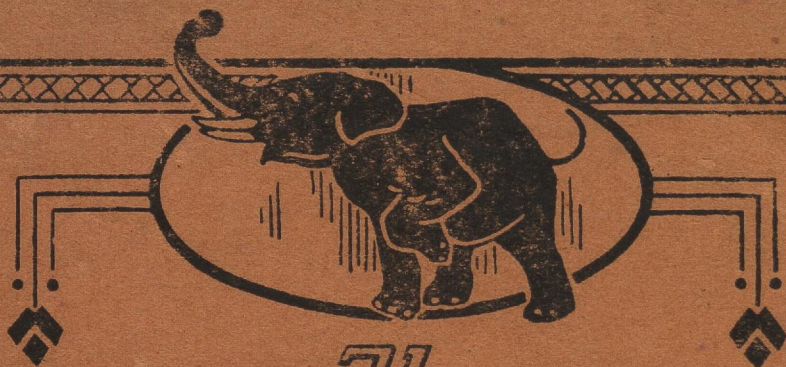


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The
**ELEPHANT
EXERCISE BOOK
No. 5 A.**

Subject Short religious themes

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Long night and a dawn.

A golden summer morning on the Lake of Liberia. A western breeze fanned into playful ripples the emerald surface of the water. The sun rose above the green eastern hills as a red ball of fire thrown up from the silence of the unknown.

A single, battered fishing craft broke the loneliness of the wide expanse, propelled by the uncertain oars of tired fishermen. Five tired fishermen, Peter and his companions, sat in it. Disappointment, dejection, deep distress were written plainly on their faces. All night long they had cast their nets over these placid waters, had strained their eyes peering into the deep for absent shoals, had wearied their limbs in the unbroken monotony of casting and drawing empty nets. The sadness of unbelieved failure lay heavy upon their hearts. Other boats had come out with them, and had returned ^{to the shore} with filled hulls in the grey hours of the morning. Theirs alone still floated lightly upon the sea, guided by the uncertain oars of men who had not the heart or strength to keep on.

A clear voice that sounded strangely familiar ~~so~~ broke in upon their ears from the distant shore. "Children, have you any meat?" They answered

huskily: "No"

The stranger bade them cast their ^{net} ~~net~~ on the right of the boat. They obeyed hardly knowing why they obeyed. A miraculous draught of fishes that passed all hope was the result. In an instant the revelation dawned on them: it was the Master. His near presence, his bidding voice had crowned with perfect success a whole night's fruitless labour.

Has not failure such as this dogged the steps of many all the weary days of life and all ~~the~~ its sleepless nights? From early boyhood when we put out to sea with filled sails and splashing oars, all through with golden dreams and buoyant hopes, all through the dim dark secret land's night of youth, manhood and advancing age, each one of our honest efforts had upon it the blight of failure. Our work justly merited ^{the} means to live in decent comfort; we had a right to a fair name and a public ^{recognition} acknowledgment of our works; we should have marched easily from success to success; our out-stretched hands should have captured

some at least of life's coveted prizes — but in every line we failed. Disappointment like a thick hoarfrost nipped in the bud each one of our hopes. Life lies about us in ruins.

And if our outward reach was in the fields of the spiritual and ^{the} heavenly, how much more pitiful appears our achievement, how much more painful our failure! Perfection like the snowclad mountain peak seems as far away, as impossible ^{to scale} as when we began our arduous, upward trudge.

In the weeding away of rooted vices, in the practice of fair virtues, in the striving towards the soul's union with its Maker, we ^{longed} strove to do our utmost.

Yet how greatly our longing distanced our doing!

Is it for this that we feigned to strive — to find our-

selves after years of effort so filled with low desires, so weak in virtue, so cold in love? Broken promi-

ses, rejected graces, ^{and} lost occasions haunt

us with their shadows. The past seems to show us nought but fruitless quests ^{and} shattered hopes.

But woe to us if we give up the striving before
the dawn of the eternal day. The longest night must
see an end. When the shadows part and the sun
rises from the east, the Master will stand upon the
shore. At his word the net will be cast once
more. And out of life-long striving, fruitless labour
and constant failure will emerge a glorious
success, a reward exceeding great. All our dark
nights will be seen as a prelude to the gladsome
dawn of glory, and all our seeming failures as
the stuff out of which ^{is built up} grows a superb achievement.
In the flush of new-found joy we shall know that it
the Master who speaks to us, and that he He wel-
comes with open arms ourselves and all that
we strove to gain.

dangers of the night, in search of the one lost sheep. Of the ^{parables} many stories that He spoke, the most touching was that illustrating the infinite tenderness of God towards His prodigal children and His ^{unwearied} ~~patient~~ waiting for their return.

The world glorified Him but ^{held} ~~loathed~~ the ^{in scorn and contempt} ~~sinners~~. Christ abhorred sin but loved the sinner, and longed for his return. ^{the humble, repentant sinner who felt the shame of his deed and came} ~~came~~ to Christ's feet with tear-filled eyes, received from Him not only pardon but the warm embrace of love. In a striking parable of contrast He compared the self-righteous pharisee boasting before Jehovah of his fastings and prayers and legal observances with the outcast from society, the publican, who stood at the gate of the temple striking his breast and pleading ^{for} mercy. The pharisees heard the parable and saw its meaning; hatred mounted in their hearts; they decided to kill the Master ^{whose} ~~with~~ speech and habitual mode of acting so wounded their ~~pride~~ complacent pride.

Christ's visible presence has been taken away
from the world. But the world still has its sinners;
and the Christ's work of comforting ^{and} welcoming ^{and} guiding
sinners to pardon and love and peace must still go
on. Each Christian is another Christ; he now must
carry on Christ's work in a Christ-less but Christ-
hungry world.

The stricken conscience, the guilty face, the
blood-shot eyes, the halting prayer of the sinner
whom haunts the memory of his ^{black part} deed, must find in
Christ's friends an echo of Christ's love. Christ never
would break the bruised reed or quench the smok-
ing flax. His are the wounded feet that searched
the thorny paths after the straying sheep. He would
have ~~all~~ His friends, ~~all~~ those who continue on
earth His mission, deal kindly with all whom
sin holds captive and who fain would break
their ⁱⁿ bonds. [It is no great distance that separ-
ates sorrow from despair. The drooping spirit
must be raised; the timid resolve must be stren-

glimmered; the dull spark of love must be fanned
to be a bright flame. To hesitant steps the door
of the Confessional must be unlocked. The prodigal
must be guided safely back into his Father's
home. This is cooperating with God in the saving
of souls; no sublimer mission can be entrusted
to man.

Christ was the friend of publicans and sinners;
and so He remains still. His loving, pierced Heart
hungered for a return of love from sin-sodden
lives; the eyes that wept over Jerusalem weep too over
souls rushing to certain perdition. But His kindly
face, ^{His} pleading eyes and the loving hands so
outstretched in welcome cannot be seen except
through the eyes of faith. And where faith is dim or
dead, straying feet need the guidance of
Christ's ^{through} intimate friends to lead them to Him.
Let not ~~through~~ ^{through} us neglect, a single soul be lost,
nor Christ's yearning love be cheated of His Blood's
ransom.

The Living Bread.

Our Lord had chosen an ideal setting for His great Eucharistic promise. He was in Capernaum, the little seaside town that had witnessed so many of His miracles and was to witness many more. Before Him were people in whose presence not many days ago, out on the mountain beyond Bethsaida, ~~He had multiplied five loaves of that miracle, ^{was} ~~not~~ ^{of a green one for food.}~~ barley bread to feed five thousand ^{people} in their enthusiasm they had wanted to make Him king. Poor, wayward people! They were like sheep without a shepherd. They needed not only food for the body; they needed much more food for the soul, the living Bread that came down from Heaven. About this He would now speak to them.

Before Him to the west stretched mile after mile the rich wheatfields of Galilee. He could see them if He but raised His eyes — golden ears of wheat, sagging low with their load of grain, swaying in the breeze, mellowing in the April sun. He could see too with His mind's eye other ears of

wheat, down the ages, in all lands, plucked with care, ground and baked into spotless bread, bread, over which His words of omnipotence would be spoken, to change it into the Bread of Life.

Christ was speaking in the synagogue of Capernaum. Was it not this same synagogue which was built for the Jews by a Gentile, a Centurion, whose words of faith and humility, uttered for the first time a year ago, would be repeated down the centuries by Jews and Gentiles alike? Synagogues would give place to Churches; Judaism to Christianity. But the words of the gentile builder of a Jewish synagogue: "Lord I am not worthy.... Say but the word" would become the prayer of Eucharistic welcome in all Christian Churches of the world.

Christian Churches, the tabernacle, the Eucharistic presence, the sanctuary lamp, the believing worshippers — they were all things

of the future. But now before our Lord were the Jews of Capharnaum, sceptical, materially minded, rooted in traditions, clinging to empty formalism. Were they prepared for the staggering promise of things to come?

Our Lord spoke in clear, unmistakable terms. He would be the living Bread. His flesh was truly food, and His blood was drink indeed. His face showed earnestness; His voice betrayed ~~an~~ immensity of love. He was speaking the truth; and even as He was speaking, ^{painfully} He noticed painfully estrangement in the eyes of His listeners. "This is a hard saying; who can believe it?" they murmured. They left the synagogue; "they walked no more with Him."

With sadly Jesus turned to the faithful few, the chosen twelve, who remained behind. "Do you also wish to go away?" He asked. Peter answered for the rest: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

These few wavered not in their faith. From Christ's own hands they received the Eucharist and the power of consecrating. Through them, through the Church we too have received the stupendous gift of the living Bread, the heavenly Manna. Twenty centuries have passed; but the love that prompted that first promise in Capharnaum still remains, reaching out to millions of human hearts, multiplying Christ's presence in innumerable Churches of the Catholic world. Not all have responded to that love; many have wavered in their faith and fallen away in times of heresy. But by His grace we have heard and have believed; and no power on earth shall shake away the rooted faith of our hearts.

Christ is our Emmanuel, God with us. We believe it. But is our faith only a weak tiny spark, or is it a living flame, a blazing fire, one that sets our hearts throbbing with love, one that longs to reach outwards, and kindle in others a similar faith?

May our faith and love grow with each Mass, each Communion, each visit. Seeing us and our hearts' eager response may the loving Jesus never have reason to repent of the great promise He made in distant Capharnaum. May our love be a compensation for the fickleness of those who disbelieved and ceased to walk with Him.

Call unheeded.

For a vision that can pierce the invisible the greatest tragedy of human existence is that the soul can reject God's proffered graces. Such rejection may not necessarily lead to perdition; but who can tell the loss of glory to God, of worth to human acts, of benefit to other men, that flows from the spurning of a single timely grace? Great, thoughtless man, the mother of daylight's fancies, the sport of trifling cares, perceives not the hour when infinity is within his grasp. He lets go the outstretched hand, and sinks back into the tragic failure of dull mediocrity.

So it happened once on Galilee's shore in the days when God walked upon the earth in human form. The noble Jewish youth on whom Jesus fixed His eyes of love had in him the stuff out of which ^{God's} heroes are made. He might have been another Paul or Stephen, might have been a herald of the Gospel to distant tribes, might have ^{been} one of the Cornerstones of Christ's Church, might have been a name that the

ages would never forget, might have been....! But he was not. He did not know the hour and the gram. Sense of the call. He had riches that he loved more than heroism. Sadly he walked away to a ~~the~~ ~~dark~~ obscurity that recalls not even his name, to the counting of gold, to the lack-lustre days of a little, unknown life.

Calls such as these sound in all men's ears - Calls transient or ~~the~~ persistent, Calls to great sacrifices or to small, Calls to a life's total oblation ~~to~~ ^{at} a higher rung of the ladder of perfection or to the spinning of a trivial enjoyment, Calls away from the poisoned air of sin-ridden life, Calls along the common, beaten track of God's law, Calls towards the steep and ~~too~~ rugged path of saintliness.

There is no place so far away from God that His voice cannot reach. It sounds ever in clear, unmistakable accents on ears that would listen. But man has the power to know that voice

in the riotous clamour of merriment, in the loud
cries of many desires, in passion's tumultuous
uproar. He may make his ears deaf by plugging
his hands ^{fingers} deep in them, or hearing, he may feign
not to hear. The proffered graces reach not the
soul; and God's outstretched hand is withdrawn.
Thoughtless man, engrossed in the fetters of his
little self and its earthly dreams, lets slip by
life's golden occasions. And will in these occasions,
once missed, ever return again? And if they do
return ^{not}, how great will be the loss ^{man} he sustains!
Eternity alone will unfold the value of these life's
tremendous trifles.

God respects the sovereign right of liberty
with which He has endowed man. He never
forces entrance into an unwilling soul. He stands
at the door without, and knocks. He calls from
without, His hands laden with gifts, His heart
yearning for the answer of welcome. And how
often, alas, has He to turn sadly away!

Such is the tragedy of man's callousness. God, ever anxious to lead wayward souls back to grace, to guide tepid souls along perfection's way — and man, ever hardening his heart, and rejecting in stony silence God's repeated calls.

Grace is God's free gift to man, not due to him on any title, but beautifully given out of infinite graciousness. It is a gift that man needs must have, if he is to rise above the level of nature, rise towards God's plane, do actions that are of value for eternity. Man's soul is the meeting ground of opposite extremes — of absolute impotence and of infinite power. Impotence is man's own; power is God's gift, and will not be his, unless he freely accepts. God's calls to the human soul are an invitation to share in His power. "If today ^{you} we hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

Life's Decisions.

Life is not a moment's flight on the wings of haste; it is a patient daily trek. Its greatness comes not from the blazing achievement of a single heroic decision, but from the unknown heroism of countless small decisions made through the live-long day. Heroism flows out of life in a ceaseless trickle of tremendous trifles, not in a cascade of short-lived glory.

Life is great through its small decisions. They are to be made about the most personal things — dress and food, rest and work, company and amusement, the changeless drudgery of nameless tasks. They are to be made in every place and at all hours — in office or class-room, on the streets, at the dining table, in the privacy of one's home, in public under the glare of many eyes, in the calm deliberation of leisure, in the rush between urgent tasks.

There are those who make no decisions. Impulses carry them forward; routine drives them

round an unchanging track. They are life's slaves,
not masters. Whim, mood or fancy incline them
one way or another. Like a shipwrecked plank
floating on the sea, driven by every gust of wind
and every insistent wave, they move hither and thither,
without steer or compass, not knowing whither
they tend, not caring either.

There are others - cool, self-forgotten, ~~calends~~
~~king~~ slave - driven by ambition ^{or hate}, ~~the~~ ^{by a} craving
for pleasure or wealth or fame. They are cool,
self-forgotten and calculating. Self is their guiding
star. They decide with energy and they strike with
power. They consider no effort too painful, no risk
too great, no means too cruel. They stifle the voice
of conscience in the tumult of a raging passion;
and one goal achieved, they press forward to another.
^{warfare and satisfaction are they know not.}
~~and a fighter~~. Most of life's apparent successes belong
to this class of men, as to the former class belong
all life's failures.

But there are some who belong to neither of these

claves. They are men who have heeded Christ's words: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be given to you besides." They are life's real successes. They are slaves neither to ^{their} passing whims nor to a ruling passion; they are masters of themselves. ^{Their} decisions are made prompt and correct for they have the habit of judging things in relation to eternity. "What has this to do for eternity," St. Aloysius Gonzaga used to ask. There are countless others who ^{many times every day} ask the same question, though not perhaps in the same words. And if they find that something is not conducive to, or is harmful to their eternal life, they leave it aside.

Such men are not without feelings and desires; they too have their natural likes and dislikes. But these do not dominate them. They remain always in control. There is in their lives a strong undercurrent of conscience. These carry them forward. The feelings are like ripples on the surface, and cannot affect their course.

① One of His chosen twelve betrayed Him with a kiss; the chief of the group denied on oath having ever known Him; all of them fled away in His hour of trial. What bitter anguish, enveloped in mystery, is not revealed in the bloody sweat on His final cry in the garden or in the final cry on the cross: "Eloi, Eloi!"

The Consoler.

How fortunate it is for us that Jesus has felt within Himself with ^a human heart or has seen in others with ~~human~~ eyes all the griefs and sorrows, the depressions and loneliness that man is heir to! He wept at the tomb of Lazarus. He wept too over the ruin that was to come to Jerusalem, and His tears showed ~~an~~ ^a grief that could not be remedied. He felt it keenly ~~in~~ ^{on} that unforgettable day in Capharnaum the people turned away from Him and would walk with Him no more. His mild complaint when only one ^{out} of the ten he had healed returned to thank Him, showed a heart that was pained by ingratitude. Loneliness and abandonment too Jesus knew; ①

And did He not feel the warm, sweet affections of home life, and the sorrow caused by death and parting? We can well imagine, though the Gospels have not recorded them, the intimate scenes of Nazareth's home, the grief shared by Jesus and His mother when death visited that home and took Joseph away, the sorrow of parting when Jesus about

Mission of love to elevate our thoughts
above the passing allurements of earth.

Inspire in all hearts the noble conviction
that in himself the only source of
security.

Instill an abiding trust and confidence
that I in Him as their eternal Friend.

Souls burdened with sin or sorrow
— Some forgetful of the sublime implicit
bonds of their friendships with Him.

Look into our own hearts and to judge
the degree of our own faith.

Minds enlightened — wills strengthened
have in their possession the only source
of security. — Share Calvary with Him
on a bed of pain — Passing from time
to eternity is truly journey home.

Everywhere a peaceful outlook in
life.

Faith goes forward where reason hesitates
for fear of discovering the truth.

Behold this woman hath put in more than all the rest.

The Jewish people's attitude towards Jahweh was a mixture of fear and gratitude, often corrupted into a real indifference which, however, kept up an empty show for the sake of social prestige or vanity. The rich, merchants and business-men who had amassed great wealth by flinging conscience to the winds and whose respect for Jahweh did not sink deeper than a thin veneer of externals were anxious to be thought religious by the priests and people. Taking a paltry pittance from their amassed heaps they strutted solemnly towards the Corbana, and flung their coins in with magnificent flourish, and all the world admired them. With gentle and timid steps approached a woman of the poor, conscious that the coin she held between her fingers was so little insignificant, conscious too of the deep sacrifice it meant to her penny, of the drastic curtailing it brought in her life so bereft of comfort and so deficient in necessaries; she approached with heart overflowing with gratitude to God her Lord, and convinced that she obeyed to Him nothing short of her utmost.

Love gifts are marked with the stamp of suffering and sacrifice. ~~The~~ Love is absent in those gifts which of course regard-lywise out of abundance, which entail no discomfort, ~~in the truth~~ there are some who would indeed say their prayers, but only if they feel like it and if there is time after all other things they choose to do. They would drop in occasionally for a visit, but if at the Church door they find a friend, they much prefer to while the time there. They

perform the strict religious duties, but only
in order to live this side mortal sin.
Their gifts are not love-gifts.

What does Jesus deserve from us any
but love-gifts. His giving did not stint
suffering. The cold of the crib, the poverty
of exile, the hardship of the carpentry, the
total oblation of Calvary, the loneliness of the
tabernacle - are not all these love's and supreme
gifts, strongly stamped with suffering.

Jesus, teach me thy generosity in giving.
Let me give until in heart - I'm checking
the hasty tongue, in ~~checking~~ checking the jealous
thought, in coming to thy holy table in
the early hours after sleep cut short, in
aiding thy cause with labour and money
not until I feel the weight of the love gift's
^{cross} pressing upon my shoulder.

And Jesus sat thus by the well-side.

He was lonely and in a strange land. In the valleys below and over the mountain slopes were dotted stray villages of a people which knew not who ~~was~~ it was that sat thus by the side of their father Jacob's well. Long he waited straining his eyes towards ~~the~~ a near village. But ~~as~~ it was toward noon, not the early hour of the day, when the woman-folk used to come in their noisy groups. Not a figure moved; the Apostles who had gone to buy victuals were tardy in returning. And Jesus sat thus lonely and waiting by the well-side, until at least came the woman who was to be the Apostle of the Messiah.

The loneliness of Jesus ~~as~~ did not end for ever with that unlooked for meeting. In order to be the guide and friend of men there are a thousand other places where he has chosen to pitch his tent for all time. In the prisons of love, with sentinel angels and unflinching sanctuary lamps, he waits, lonely once again, the livelong day and night, straining his ears for the distant footfall and for ~~the~~ his eyes for the welcome hand that turns the ~~handle~~ of ~~locket~~ of the Church door. He waits in gold-kimmed tabernacles of splendid marble edifices which the faith of bygone ages have built; he waits in frail wood boxes in thatched huts which the love of the missionary and the generosity of his folk have put up. But everywhere weary and long are the hours ~~as~~ he spends waiting for souls who do not come.

Friendship Delights in Company. When sorrow ~~heads~~ or loss or death or sickness hath left its blight upon the home of a dear one, we hasten to offer comfort, to help to ~~white away~~ ^{sweeten} dragging ~~town~~ and painful hours with the consciousness of sorrow shared and sympathy felt. When success in an enterprise, fair name, or great fortune gladdens our life's journey, we long for friends to share our joy; for bitter is the

Cup of joy drunk in loneliness. Human friend-
ships leave much from us.

Is Jesus friendship alone to be passed over
unheeded, unvisited?

Jesus, between hours of work or at break and
close of day let me remember thee waiting thus
by the well side. Let my footfall become familiar
in thy ears. Thus shall the obligations of true love
be satisfied; thus shalt thou be gladdened; and I
shall ~~now~~ receive from you the the waters of
eternal life. Drinking which I shall not thirst for
ever nor go to the muddy cisterns which I have dug.

We have not a High Priest who cannot have
Compassion on us.

How fortunate it is for us that Jesus has
known in himself or has seen with human eyes
and felt with human heart in others all the griefs
and sorrows, depression and loneliness than man
is heir to. He wept at the tomb of Lazarus; he
felt keenly when people turned away from him and
would walk no more with him; he grieved over the
fate of Jerusalem; and when St. Joseph died or
when he had to bid farewell to his mother before
starting his public ministry, there is no doubt that
his heart throbbled with those very emotions which
we have experienced at the bedside of a dying Jean
one or when we part in life's long partings. And
what can we say of the deep ~~sadness~~ ^{loneliness} enveloped
in mystery; the ~~sorrow~~ sadness and weariness
unto death which caused the bloody sweat or wrong
the final cry "Dadi, Dadi, Elvi"? And what his
lured sinner's soul could not experience in
itself - the restlessness, the gnawing anxiety of
the ~~guilt~~ of the wanderer, the ~~horrible~~ ^{terrors} terror
and fright with which bloodshot eyes view the
ugliness of stained conscience - these he saw
and pitied and succoured in others, in Madgalen
who wept at his feet, in the adulteress whom
he saved from stoning, in Peter on whom he too
cast his questioning, redeeming look.

It is well for us that Jesus has listened to
every very note which human heartstrings can
produce. For there are moments in life
quite frequently when no human friend
can help us. ~~We are~~ The frightful
loneliness of our lives puts us beyond
the succour; there is between us ~~the~~ and our
best friends a gulf too wide to be spanned
by consoling words or felt sympathy. It is

only the surface of our being that we dare to reveal; all the deep undercurrent of life with its worries, rejections, and grinding helplessness we ~~hide~~ conceal jealously lest one passing gesture or a faint word that comes not from a perfect understanding inflict a wound far too deep for time's healing.

But with Jesus we have no concealment. Of his sympathy we have no doubt; of his infinite love we have had most signal proofs. When loneliness crushes us we hasten to where he waits for us; the span is made; thoughts flow out freely; sit of a peace too deep for words settles on our souls.

Kind master pardon the days when I was diffident even about you and allowed myself to pine in secret when you longed for my confidence.

If thou wilt be perfect go sell what thou hast, give to the poor, come follow me.

It was from the depths of a loving heart that these words welled up. This young man before him, desirous of perfection, pure in a foul atmosphere, god fearing in spite of the pride of wealth, had never deviated from the Commandments since the days of his youth, though many were the opportunities for sinful sensuality, & cruel oppression. Jesus looked on him and loved him. And he offered him ~~the~~ held out for his acceptance the best of gifts he could offer, that of becoming a disciple of the Messiah. He might have given undying glory to God, might have been one of the foundation stones of the Church, might have been an outstanding hero in the Calendar of God's saints ... might have been! But he did not know the hour. He was too engrossed in his wealth to realize the full import of the call. He turned readily away into the mediocrity of a rich man's life, into the obscurity of a grave-borne magnificence.

Calls such as these, Calls feeble or insistent, Calls demanding the supreme sacrifice of life or a total oblation of self or a spurning of trivial pleasure, Calls away from sin's & sodden ways or up the steep and rugged path of perfection, Calls in the dawn of life or when the evening shadows lengthen, Calls of every kind at all times surround our years. If today we hear his voice let us not harden our hearts, for grace once proffered may be and refused may be taken back, and eternity alone will reveal what ~~the~~ is the value of these tremendous tribles which now we spurn.

In childhood's unthinking days, the Call comes revealing to us with a first shock that the tawdry tinsel and glittering apparel which deck the world are so many foils for our unwary feet.

In youth's first flush the call comes starting us from ~~the~~ painful fitful sleep, and we realize that our life is laid not in the a hotel de luxe in a retired town but in the rude Sargant of the battle front. When life's decision has to be made the call comes again, imperious and solemn calling us to the sacramental bond of matrimony and the stern duties of family life or to the leaving of all to follow the virgin Christ in his whole-hearted service. As life advances, day by day, the call ~~comes~~ sounds repeatedly, demanding now a deeper love and more fervent prayer, now the sacrifice of some pet vanity, now the faithful adherence to monotonous duty.

Ever, Jesus, let my ears be attuned to the voice that comes from you. Let not the din of pleasures drown your still tones which speak interiorly.

I am the living bread which came down from
Heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live
for ever...

John 6, 51 & 52

It was a splendid new building, this
Synagogue of Capernaum built through the
munificence of a gentile who later would approach
Jesus for the cure of his servant and say those
audacious words ^{to be} repeated by every Christian before
Communion "Lord I am not worthy... Say but the
word..." Through the door one could see mile
upon mile of wheat fields, golden ears of corn,
gently swaying in the sea breeze; and Jesus thought
of similar ears of corn, plucked by loving hands
down the centuries in every land, ground and baked
into loaves, and changed into his own flesh. Just
before him stood a ^{thick} crowd, a small part of
the five thousand he had fed the day before, ^{to}
by miraculously multiplied loaves, descendants
of that same race whom once thought fed in name
from heaven unnumbered against God and to cla-
im for the flesh pots of Egypt. Jesus knew
that the folk before him would not do ^{the} otherwise.
They would spurn the supreme gift of His Eucharistic
presence and would walk no more with him because
His saying was hard. But there were a few faithful
souls ^{in expect} who would find in Jesus the words of eternal
life and will not go away, and the many gentile
nations who would believe in these
words of the disciples. Hence he hesitated not
to make the great Eucharistic promise.

Now after twenty ¹⁹ centuries, in this distant
land has Jesus any cause to repent of his promise
when he looks at me? Is the Emmanuel truly a
God with us for me? The half-hour of Mass spent
I meanly, visits swift and rare, neither longed for
nor fruitfully used, ^{from} begrudged, occasional
presence at benediction, and the frigid welcome
the distracted thanksgiving of Communion receives
as not with ardent longings but as routine or
etiquette — are there ^{over} a fair catalogue of
our relations with the bread that has come down
from Heaven. Or do we find in the Eucharist the
source of all our ^{strength} ⁱⁿ the constant companion

in life's unbefriended journeys? In the dark
and sunless valleys, when the burden presses
heavily on the shoulders, when fatigued feet
sicken and we fall to the ground, swiftly to rise
again, when bruised and mangled we trudge wearily
on, when with set face we spurn the warm allure
ts of pleasure haunts by the wayside, when day after
day we pick our steps towards the summit of
perfection, is Jesus our friend ^{and} Companion,
the force that energizes us, the bread of true
heavenly life? In the paths of imperfections
he will strengthen us to withstand; in the path
of virtue he will fill us with slender generosity.
Ever forward is the motto of those who have seen the
value of the Crucifixion.

Jesus, friend of all our dark nights and bright
days, keep ^{me} close to thee that I may not lower
your banner of victory. Frequently, and lovingly
let my feet stand in thy Courts; let ^{open} the sanctuary lamp
shed its familiar light on my bowed head while
your heavenly light penetrates into my soul.

Why doth your master eat with publicans &
sinners Mt 9, 11.

Does not say well that thou art a Samaritan Jn 8, 48

Thus ^{his} the proud observers of the law ever find fault
with Jesus. He ate with publicans and sinners; he
did not refuse to receive the invitation of the tax gather
Levi. He forgave the sins of those whom all the
world condemned, and healed their diseases. He
allowed them to wash his feet, ^{and} served the adulteress
woman taken in adultery from the stony. He
associated easily with the sinful nations; by the
well he held a long converse with the Samaritan
woman, and he ~~conceded the disease~~ worked a miracle in
favour of the Chanaanite. He even defended his
conduct ~~to the~~ towards sinners; he said that
he was come for them; that he gave the penalties of
the lost sheep, the prodigal. The self-satisfied
pharisees and doctors who had reserved for themselves
a pedestal in the midst of the people, who vaunted
before Jehovah that they were not like 'this publican'
would not grant that a prophet from God should
have dealt with any but themselves. The scum of the
people were for them for ever reprobate, abhorred of
Jehovah and deserving to be trampled under foot.
But Jesus who came to give his life for all the people,
and for whom every soul was dearer than his life's
blood knew better.

The kind master expects every one of his dear
friends to continue his work. Times without number
we shall have golden opportunities to open the
ways of grace to sinners who know not whither to
turn. The perplexed eyes, the guilty face, the
stricken conscience, the halting prayer of often
find no kindly hand to guide them, no encouraging
word to raise their drooping spirit, no gentle
advice that breeds lasting hatred for sin and
unlocks the door of the Confessional. How easily
we might have done that Christlike work and
gladdened the heart of him that died for these

weary and souls. But with callous heartlessness
we satisfy ourselves that it is none of our business.
None, indeed, if True, indeed, if Jesus had not
taken us out of the world, had to the intimacy of
his friendship. Has love no claims upon us?
Is our attachment to him an egoistic concentra-
tion upon our own perfection in Christ? In school
or office, on the streets or in the home, friends, acquaint-
ances, ~~comrades~~ partners in work, ~~mates~~ meet us
and greet us ~~as~~ with a familiarity that shows that
there are no walls of aloofness separating us. But
even as they speak, can we not see the strained
look on dear Jesus' face? Do we not feel that some-
thing we might say to put it alright between
Jesus and this soul he tangles for?

Jesus all my life I have camp for nought.
But myself. I cannot but but shrink of
from speaking about you to others. I would fain
keep you a confine you to my friends. But
let not this be so in future. Come then with me
wherever I go; and teach me to introduce you to
others.

21 ~~Apr.~~ Children have you caught any thing... To they an-
spered us.

It was a feeble despairing cry that came
across the waters to the gusher on the shore.
All night long they had cast their nets hither and
thither, had strained their eyes peering into the deep
for approaching shoals, had wearied their limbs
in the monotonous casting throwing and pulling of
the net. The lassitude of unbroken failure lay
heavy upon their heart. Other boats had gone
back with filled bunk's at earlier hours of the
dawn; theirs alone still thrashed listlessly on the
waves, under the stroke of uncertain oars, with
men who had neither wind nor power to go on. Then
came the question from the shore, the last cast,
the miraculous catch - perfect success crowning
a fruitless quest in the vision of the master.

Failure such as this dogs the steps of many
throughout life. From early ^{years} when we put
out to sea with filled sails and buoyant hopes, all
through the dark night of youth, manhood and old age,
all our efforts seemed foredoomed to failure.
We had striven for success which we could legiti-
mately claim; we had a right to a fair name and
decent reputation among men; we our work justly
merited an average standard of comfort of our
dependents; our striving should have led to the capture
of that prize in life - but everywhere our hopes
were blasted. Life lies in ruins about us like
the desolation of a bombed city. Still more
painful would seem our failure if our goal in
life was the perfection of the spiritual life. In the
conquest of virtue, in the close union with our
Lord, in the purging of our sins we strained every
nerve. We prayed, we mortified ourselves, we
strived mightily to walk unshaken in a fork atmos-
phere. But all through the dark night of life, un-
relieved by a single flash of light from the
heaven, gloom and despair lay like a heavy fall
on us. The distance between our infinite longings
and our petty conquests was so appalling. Nothing
but an ulcer of vices and imperfections
seemed our lives to us. All was labour wasted,

hope deferred, quest unrewarded.

But woe to us if we give up the striving before the dawn of the eternal day. For when the sun rises in the east, the Master will stand upon the shore. At his word the net will be cast once more and out of the patient striving, the lifelong labour, the repeated failures will come a magnificent reward. All our dark night will be seen as a part of the eternal dawn, and all our failures as the stuff out of which our final reward is built up. We shall know that 'it is the Master' who speaks to us, ^{and} who watched us ~~all~~ from boyhood on. We shall rush to him, and he will welcome us and all we have gained on ~~the~~ to the shores of eternity.

Jesus, Friend of all our brief days and long nights, weary I look forward to you. Strengthen my limbs, give ~~breath~~ courage to my failing heart, and let not ~~dist~~ despair ill-succeed in robbing me of an atom of the effort you expect in me. ~~Thus~~

to begin His public life bade goodbye to His mother and home. In later years few were the moments when He could meet His mother; but did not both of them look forward to these meetings, and did not their hearts throb with that purest of human affections, the love of mother and son? On Calvary, seeing His mother beside His Cross Jesus experienced the poignancy and comfort of shared grief.

And if there are certain feelings which He could not Himself experience in His own pure, sinless soul — the consciousness of sin, the restlessness and gnawing anxiety of the wanderer, the terror and fright with which bloodshot eyes view the ugliness of a ^{befouled} ~~stained~~ conscience — these He saw and pitied and succoured in others, in the woman of Magdala whom He saved from the haunts of vice, in the adulteress whose death by stoning He prevented, in Peter on whom He cast His reproachful, pleading, uplifting glance.

It is well for us that Jesus has listened to every plaintive, distressful, harrowing note that ~~from~~ ^{from} human heart-strings can produce. There are moments in our lives when no merely human friend can help us. A frightful loneliness sometimes shuts across in, and places it beyond human succour. A bruised heart sees between itself and the world a gulf too wide to be spanned by shared grief or felt sympathy.

It is not that sympathy is lacking, or that we are ~~they~~ ^{they} are still real and ^{are} thankful for them. ~~cut off from human love.~~ But we dare not reveal to others except the surface of our being. The deep undercurrents of life, with its broken endeavours and blasted hopes, with its grinding helplessness, we conceal jealously, lest a passing gesture or a faint word that comes not from perfect understanding, inflict a wound far too deep for time's healing.

But with Jesus there is no concealment. We know that He always understands; of His sympathy we

○ But they do not give us when aid is needed most, for in such moments

do not doubt, of His infinite love we have had
the most signal proofs. He has known sorrow
and pain and has felt the bleeding of the human
heart. He will not let us go unconsoled. When the
world's oppressive weight descends on our shoul-
ders, when tears of anguish and bitterness
blind our vision, when our choked voice cannot
utter even a pleading cry, we will kneel close
to ~~our~~ ^{the} tabernacle home, where Jesus, our change-
less friend, waits for us. In the silence of the
sanctuary, in the dim glow of the sentinel
lamp, we shall be faintly assured of love and
sympathy. And our hearts will pour out their
floods of unspoken grief. It is the gentle
touch that soothes every sore. Our griefs may
not vanish; our pains may not cease; but
in Jesus' Company, with the certainty of His love
and sympathy, we shall feel within ^{our heart} ~~our~~ a new
strength to sustain the weight which otherwise
might crush us.

Emmanuel - God with us.

Jesus waited by the well-side. He was lonely
and in a strangers' land. His disciples had gone off
to the village to buy victuals, their indistinct forms
had long ago disappeared beyond the brow of the distant
hill. In the valleys below and over the mountain
slopes lay scattered the silent cottages, ^{of Samaria} People lived ⁱⁿ
them, engrossed in the lowly cares of their creamy
lives, unconscious of the Lord of life who was now
waiting for them by the well of Sichem, ^{by} their "father
Jacob's well."

Jesus scanned the horizon for a passing figure;
there was none. It was mid-day, long past the hour
when women-folk used to gather at the well in their
noisy groups. Jesus was weary by the long journeying,
Lonely, He sat by the well ^{lonely,} ^{frankly,} expectantly, until
at last came the ^a woman He was waiting for, she
who dared not come in other women's company, she
who was to become the first apostle of the messias.

The loneliness of Jesus did not end for ever with
that meeting ~~which~~ by the well of Samaria. Sichem and

walked along Jordan's shore. "Master, where dwellest Thou?" they inquired. They stayed with Him all that evening, and next day they spoke of ~~the~~ to their other friends of the Messias whom they had seen.

Simeon came to Jesus, fell at His feet, and heard ^{from Him} the comforting words of pardon and hope. The lame and the blind and the deaf came to Him, and felt the power of His healing touch. The sorrowing mother mourning the death of her only son looked ^{at} into Jesus' eyes with her pleading eyes; she received the answer of her faith, her son alive once again.

On our altars there lives and waits for us the same Jesus, the babe of Bethlehem's crib, the master who called and formed His apostles, the miracle-worker of Galilee, the friend of the poor and afflicted. His love changes not, nor His power to help. "The Master is here and calls for you": ^{were} these words spoken of old to Mary of Bethany

and brought her to the feet of the Divine Consoler; ⁺
for the eyes of faith are written before every
(the same words) ~~are written in letters~~ tabernacle;
they are an ever present, urgent invitation.

Human friendship craves for company and is sustained by it. We long to share our joys and sorrows with those we love. When sorrow or loss or sickness or death visits the home of a dear friend, we hasten to offer comfort. A balm to the smarting wound is the consciousness of sorrow shared and sympathy felt. When life's sunshine crosses our path and success crowns an enterprise, we look for a friend to break our glad tidings to, to share our new-found joy with. Bitter is the cup of joy drunk in loneliness.

Twice the friendship of Jesus it is not otherwise. He wants to share both in our joys and ^{in our} sorrows. Let our joys become more ^{heartening} ~~fruitful~~ and our sorrows more bearing when we make Jesus a sharer in them. It is for our sake that He has built a home on our altars.

Over the Waters.

"Take courage, ~~it~~ it is myself; do not be afraid," said Christ in clear, reassuring tones across the waters. It was no phantom that came to them over the ^{stormy} ~~hiding~~ sea; it was Jesus Himself; ~~pleasing~~ He appeared to them standing His feet were placed on the foamy waves as though on ~~the~~ firm earth; He was walking forward, slowly, with measured steps, as many a time they had seen Him walk on the sandy shores beyond.

Peter could not ~~be~~ but recognize the Master's voice. With hopeful desires stronger than a faltering faith, he said: "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee over the water." Jesus was willing to humour the desire wish of His chosen Apostle. "Come," He said. Peter stepped over the side of the boat, into the deep sea, and to his pleased surprise was able to walk over the waves towards Christ. But when the first thrill had passed, his faith began to waver, and he felt the water yielding below his feet. "Lord, save me," he cried out in terror. Jesus stretched out His hand ~~and raised~~

to His apostle and raised him with the rebuke: "O, thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?"

We feel sorry for Peter that he had not a stronger faith, and we feel sorry for Jesus too that even ^{in front} the Chief of His apostles He met with ~~no~~ doubt and fear. But ~~let~~ if we look into our own hearts,

~~waters of a stormy sea~~
~~to go~~
Can we say that Jesus has no reason to be disappointed with us? ^{waters of the stormy sea tossed by} The life of grace and saintliness is like walking ^{over the} ~~is~~ our faith strong enough to ^(as well) make us cling to ^{our Lord} Jesus even when the wind is strong and the storm rages around us, or ~~shall~~ ^{shall} we sink fearfully beneath the waves? \Rightarrow Continued In the moment

Note
order
①②③④

③ We know that Christ is God; ^{too} ~~if~~ our minds are ~~enlightened~~; we know that no powers of evil can harm us if ~~He~~ ^{He} is with us, and ^{if} we cling to Him. Our minds are enlightened by the truth of ~~the~~ Christ's teachings; and we need not any longer grope ~~in~~ in doubt and uncertainty; we know the goal we tend towards and the way that leads thereto. Our wills are strengthened by the graces God gives us. We live, but not ourselves; it is Christ who lives in us. Raised above nature to God's own plans

of being, we feel ~~to~~ not move on the wings of divine power. Why then should we be cowardly or fearful? God's almighty power is our security against the dangers which ~~are~~ surround us.

(2) God expects from us nothing short of ^{saintly hero-} ~~all the more difficult~~ ^{because it is hidden.} ~~isn't~~. The spurning of world's allurements, the conquest of every sin and temptation, the ceaseless striving towards Christian perfection — these lie ^{the reach of human} beyond flesh and blood. Our feeble ~~human~~ nature is more soft and yielding than the waves on which Peter ~~at~~ walked towards Christ. What makes us achieve the impossible, ~~is~~ is not our self-reliance but God's power. ~~Sustain~~ Self-reliance is the dead weight that would drag us down; God's power sustains us and uplifts us, ^{Self-reliance would} ~~in spite of our own~~ make cowards of us; reliance on God's grace gives us courage and strength and determination.

(1) In the moment of prayer, buoyed up by strong desires, we promise fervently that we shall not sink beneath the waves, and that our faith will

be stronger than an iron chain to bind us ~~et~~
inseparably to Christ. But when our fervour cools
down, when ~~we are back in the daily~~ ^{the grind of monotonous daily} duties begin
to tax our patience, when we chafe at not being
the heroes we deem ourselves to be, it is then that the
strength of our faith is put to the crucial test of
fighting against failure, of struggling on though
struggle seems futile.

(4) These are divine truths more real than the earth
beneath our feet
on which we tread and the sky above our head.

Let these truths sink into our hearts and take deep
root therein. Then we shall have no cause to be
cowardly or fearful; our faith and confidence
shall never fail. And we shall repeat with the
Psalmist "Even though I shall walk in the midst
of the valley of death, I shall fear no evil; for Thou, O
Lord, art with me!"

typed

Man and God!

"What think ye of Christ?" This is the most staggering question for which ^{confronted man for a reply} man was ever asked. It was first ^{asked} put by Christ Himself nineteen centuries ago to a small group of ^{Galilean} ~~Hebrew~~ ^{Palatinate} Jews. Down the ages it has never ceased echoing in men's ears. It is a disconcerting question; it urges for an answer with pressing insistence; and the answer to it is not the fleeting breath of a few unweighed words; the answer in every case has to be a momentous life's decision that ^{first} ~~valid~~ for all eternity.

What thinks ^{the non-Christian world} ~~the Christian Church~~ about Christ?

There have been men who took Him to be, or at least said, they took ^{Him} to be — a myth, an mob-leader, an exalté, whatever that may mean, a lunatic, or even a skilled impostor. There are others who would size Him more generously. They would grant that he was a good man, a great man, perhaps ~~even~~ a man of God — but nothing more.

What thought the world of Christ's own day about Him? The common people were fanned to en-

thrusiasm by the marvels he did. They heard him gladly and went in crowds after Him. They would have crowned Him a King had He permitted it. But those who held power in ^{and claimed to represent} Judaism ~~and the~~ ^{the people} Roman government found that He talked too much and uttered too many inconvenient truths. So they tried Him on a ^{trumped up} ~~Common~~ charge of being a trouble-monger, had Him flogged, and killed Him on a Common gibbet. They said He was an impostor, and ~~appeared~~ ^{seemed} glad that they were rid of Him ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~not~~ ^{not} for long.

They were rid of Him, but not for long. They killed and buried Him; they sealed the tomb and set a guard to it. But three days later, He came out of the tomb, just as He had said He would. He gathered His followers round Him, and with them established a Church which He asked to be preached all the world over. That Church ^{replaced Judaism} ~~lives to this day~~ ^{and lives to this day}. ~~lives long enough to see that in dying, Christ had triumphed over them. Christ's Church lives to this day.~~

What does that Church say about Christ? Briefly

this: That this ^{man, the} Joseph Son of Mary, the Carpenter in Nazareth and later the preacher in Palestine, was in fact and in truth, in the most literal and exact sense of the word, ~~the~~ God. His body and brain were those of a man. ^{In fact} He went through the whole of human experience. He worked hard; ^{many a time} He felt hungry and weary; He suffered and died. But He was a true ^{man}; and as truly He was God. The personality in Him was God's personality. He said so Himself and He proved what He said by works of power. Nature obeyed Him; life ~~at~~ obeyed Him; and having been dead three days, He rose. He was God; and God He still is. He eternally is. He was not a spirit clothed in human form; in every respect He was ^{God} man. He was not merely a man so good as to be a man of God. He was and is both man and God.

This is the most staggering fact that ~~the~~ history records. God came down to earth as one of the human kind. This is not a misty fable from a mythical past, but history with fine reference and wealth of details.

men may deny it; but a wish cannot blot out an event; fact cannot change to fiction. The man who snaps his fingers at the sun, cannot flick it out of space; the sun will still be in the sky, and will shine serenely. God's becoming man is a fact, ^{bracing, uplifting and} tremendous, and perhaps to some distressing.

What think we of Christ? Evidently, what the Church ^{teaches} thinks, what the early Christians thought, what the Apostles knew, what Christ said He was. Faith, more unerring than reason, has planted us firmly in that truth; and we shall not be shaken. For that truth died the martyrs; on it have been built the Christian ages; and by it live or have lived countless millions of men. By that truth we too shall live — not a truth to be heard once and then to be forgotten, but a life-giving truth, an energizing truth, one that lifts courage, strength, manliness, to the height that takes the prize.

The Mystery of Sin.

typed

Often we are apt to complain at the mounting tide of sin and misery and destruction that we see in the world. Sin thrives; misery engulfs more and more innocent victims in its swirling flood; and those who spread destruction are not themselves destroyed, but stand triumphant over scenes of carnage. Justice is not even-handed. Bloody instructions do not return to plague the inventor. The honest toiler for whom conscience is the guide becomes the under-dog and gets beaten. Exploitation of the weak, corruption and bribery, sharp business deals, lying publicity, unabashed luxury, the tyranny of power, — these win in the world's struggle.

We are apt to complain. Often an unexpressed thought rises in our hearts that if God is holy and omnipotent He should stop all this ~~not kind~~ ^{kind} manifest injustice and evil. Has God ceased caring for the world He created? Why does He not strike the dictator dead? Why does He not rain fire and brim-

stone on ~~men~~ the ruthless rich who exploit the poor?
To our impatient quest ^{from} ~~from~~ across seventy centuries, ~~the gentle Christ~~
The gentle Christ would answer our impatient questioning
that we know not of what spirit we are led. And perhaps
our own Conscience might ask us why we ourselves
are suffered to live on after that unjust slander ^{of} that
unjust thought. Is our sin less heinous because
our power of causing harm is more limited? ^{Or} Do we
presume that we are too trivial for God to bother
about? All men and the whole of the mighty universe
are trivial; but trampling underfoot the law God has
set is never trivial; eternity will not suffice to wash
away its effects.

If suffering is a mystery, sin is a greater mystery.
God has not only permitted ^{sin} suffering; it would ^{even} seem that
a premium has been set on sin. It pays to flout Con-
science, ~~to~~ at least so it seems. So it seems, but is it so in
truth? Who would deny the inward grinding of the
sinner's conscience? The first thrill of pleasure passes
and in its wake comes the inevitable, lasting bitter-
ness. It was one who had tasted all that the world could

give of success ^{and pleasure} ^{same} ^{a German poet,} who wrote: "I reared to
myself like a poisoned rat, running hither and
thither to swallow everything, yet unable for a mo-
ment to suppress ~~the gnawing agency~~ ^{reality}." A poisoned
rat! This is often the ^{harsh} ^{reality} hidden behind ^{the}
silk veils of luxury and ^{the} ^{seduced} ^{clouds} ^{of} ^{fame}. ^{the}
Wealth and power are not often the bed of roses that they
seem to be.

But it is also true that not all who sow in sin
reap in misery. They may stifle ^{the} ^{voice} ^{of} ^{Con-}
science and live in contentment this side the grave.
But this side the grave is not the whole of human
existence. Men, unlike the brute creation, have a
hereafter. Here below God's watchful eyes ever follow
us with reproof, pleading or encouragement; ^{no}
passing thought goes by unrecorded for the reward or
punishment of life beyond life. Ignorant and ^{silly} ^{foolish}
are we to complain to God that there is no justice in
His creation. For God time a hundred years are as
a moment, and time as the fleecy cloud of a morning

sky. The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly well. There is not the least of us, no, nor the greatest, that shall not experience in full rigour God's infinite justice tempered with an infinite mercy.

But the mystery of sin still stares us in the face, not why it goes unfurnished, but why it exists at all.

Could not God make us incapable of sinning? Indeed He could. The earth on which we tread, the planets in the sky, the flowers and the leaves never transgress the perfect laws ^{God} He has set for them. They cannot sin. We too could have been created as puppets ^{blindly} to ~~execute~~ ^{execute} moved by ^{a showman's wires} the strings God holds, incapable ^{of anything} anything ^{but} God's pattern of perfection. We would not then have rebelled against God; neither would we have ^{tendered} ~~given~~ God the homage of our free service. No, God has made us as earth and stone. He has given us freedom and responsibility. There are noble gifts, and ^{nobly} we can use them for a great purpose, and alas! ignobly we can misuse them too.

typed

Christ and His Critics

Christ is a puzzle to men's proud scholarship. He is too great for the yardstick of criticism. History can show none other who ^{with} apparently so little achieved what is manifestly so great.

This man who came from an obscure Galilean village, from a poor, subject nation, who was no leader of armies, who founded no schools of thought, raised no national revolution, wrote no books, travelled not beyond the narrow borders of his own land, who in everything was unlike the great men that history can show, who was all meekness and gentleness, first a village carpenter for ^{over} thirty years, then a preacher for little over two years, who died as a despised criminal on the common gallows — this is the man who has shivered human society to its foundations, whose memory is the vital force ⁱⁿ of millions of human hearts; for whom the martyrs have died, whose name the missionaries have carried to the farthest ends of the earth, who still lives in His work which is the monument of the ages.

Rationalist
Criticism, arrogantly proud, disdainful of all

typed

Christ and His Critics

Christ

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Napoleon Bonaparte sat pensively looking over the ocean rampart which surrounded his island prison. A question had been put to him which was the happiest day of his life. After some moments the answer came slowly yet decisively: "The day of my first Communion." Startling it was that to this distant day in a humble church of Corsica should have been selected out of all the glorious days of his life. He had lived for power and in a brilliant series of victories had achieved it. Many were the days which stood vividly in his crowded memory - when at twenty in his childhood's dreams were realized in his being made a Captain - when later he was proclaimed Commander-in-Chief - when with laurels of victory he stepped on the soil of France as Emperor - days of dizzy excitement when all seemed lost and at the last moment with veterans snatched victory from a dazed foe - days of Austerlitz when against heavy odds he conquered made his superb triumphs - all these ~~rose~~ ^{passed through} on his memory rising and breaking one behind the other like the waves in the against the rocky beach below. He Again and again he had raised the cup of bubbling joy to his lips, had quaffed it to the dregs, and in stead had felt the ^{but} lingering bitterness. One day stood out and that was when unsoftened conscience he had knelt by the altar rails and ~~received~~ welcomed his God as a guest of honour.

lies in his work which is the monument of the ages.

Rationalist
Criticism, arrogantly proud, disdainful of all

Thank God ours has not been a life
so full of the bitterness of failure, the
heartlessness of conquest, the Happy Days
are not so rare in our lives since we
have chosen the humble path of duty and
Conscience. But which are the happi-
est moments in our lives? Do we
find the brief quarters of an hour after
Communion all too brief? ~~because we~~
Do we long look forward with pleasure
to the joy of that meeting? Do we spend
(those precious minutes in) loving con-
verse which gladdens our heart and his?

Jesus fill full my soul with the
heavenly happiness of your presence. Let
the joy of earth pale before the joy of thy
indwelling. Thus through every Communion
I shall ascend the ladders of thy perfect
ways till the unending Communion of thy
heavenly home.

We can trust them too.

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the mercy.
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No, God has
us freedom
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as! ignobly

① First it tried to blot Christ out of history, to discard Him as a myth of religious fervor. But

that is beyond its grasp, has tried to solve the paradox of Christ's greatness. It has woven many theories round His person and work and ^{Confessing defeat,} has discarded each new theory as more hollow ^{than the one} ~~that~~ it sought to improve upon.

① Hesitantly, unwillingly ^{was forced to} criticism ^{Admission} ~~that He is no myth~~ = His truth that Christ did live; ~~that~~ no man can doubt. Christ was what history records about Him; that too is unquestionable. No critic could honestly deny that.

^{The Critics}
History then tried to study what history says about Christ — not all that it says in the authentic records, but only what they would pick and choose. They formed to themselves pictures of Christ, true indeed in part, revealing different facets of His greatness, yet entirely false to His unique reality. It was not the historic Christ that they sought to discover, but a ^a ~~the~~ Christ of their ^{own theories;} ~~own~~ and they searched the Gospels for details to ^{build} ~~prop~~ their theories. Twice in their own conceit all of them erred in essence.

Rationalist criticism has seen in Christ an

utter greatness, a greatness unlike that of any other
great man, a something "wholly other", all embracing,
and all transcending, a unique greatness that does not
belong to the human kind. Thus far criticism has gone,
but no farther. It admitted Christ's transparent
truthfulness, His utter selflessness, His sublime moral
idealism, His unique powers, His ^{undying} ~~ever~~ work.
What was He then, or who? Rationalist criticism
stops with a great interrogation on the threshold of
reality.

Faith crosses that threshold and beholds the mys-
tery of God's wondrous Condescension. This man Christ
Jesus, transcendent in His greatness, is more than man;
He is more than all creation; He is God. He has said
so in words; He has proved it in deeds. His is a clear
Consciousness that cannot be mistaken about His iden-
tity. His is an utter truthfulness that cannot deceive
His trustful listeners. Faith accepts on God's word God's
revealed truth, and reason can bring no shred of
evidence against that truth.

Admiration for Christ that stops short of this momentous truth about His personal identity is but a cloak for malicious contempt. To deny this truth is to make Christ not the ^{noblest} greatest of men but the worst of imposters. [The seeming paradox of Christianity, all that it has achieved through the ages, the heroism of sacrifice and service and spotless living, the moulding of millions of human hearts to ~~so~~ a heavenly pattern of perfection, ~~the~~ the shedded blood of martyrs, the ~~taking~~ purity of consecrated virgins and priests, the ~~taking~~ of missionaries, the perennial strength of the papacy, the sublime moral teaching that ~~at~~ Christianity ever holds forth in a world of corruption — all this is a riddle wrapped in a mystery is Christ's reality is forgotten; but if Christ is the eternal God who lives in His work, all this is seen as the outward manifestation of a divine greatness.

Let rationalist criticism ponder and falter.
Faith never wavers. We know in whom we have
believed.

The Following of Christ

"He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness," said Christ. And again: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." These words were spoken in Palestine twenty centuries ago, but they were spoken to the whole world ^{and} for all ages. Christ's teaching and example unfold a new philosophy of life which is as much needed today as it was in the first century of our era. The Son of God became man to implant in the human race the seed of a new life. To minds groping in darkness and ^{fondly} ^{heartlessly} ~~blindly~~ following the siren voice of falsehood Christ unveiled the truths of salvation. Men needed a way ^{to lead} ~~out of them~~ out of the abyss wherein they had sunk; Christ came to show the way. The world of the Greeks, the Romans and the Jews needed Christ's saving message. That message is no less needed today. Man's life on earth is even a struggle with and alas, too many, instead of facing the struggle confess defeat and capitulate to the powers of evil. Corruption holds sway in the world of power, politics and high finance. Warring factions are on each other's throats. Truth and justice and God's immutable moral law have ceased to be the guide of human conduct. To satiate their appetite for the ^{pleasure or fame or} ~~possessing~~ joys of the

wealth men have bartered away their birthright to happiness. The black night of discontent and hazy and aimless endeavour reigns in their hearts.

It is to a world such as this that Christ announces His hopeful message that ^{he who} ~~to~~ follows Him ^{will} ~~is~~ not to walk in darkness. To follow Him is to recognize the rights of God over human wills. To follow Him is to be a Christian in the full meaning of the term, with a mind that is alert, with a will that is firm and steady, with ^{senses} ~~senses~~ bridled and emotions controlled, practicing a noble self-conquest whenever flouting God's law appears alluring. To follow Him is to take up one's cross daily and go along the path ^{of} sacrifice that Christ has trodden.

Is it a hard following? But Christ asked it of the fishermen, the shepherds and the vine-dressers of ancient Palestine. He asks it today of men and women, of boys and girls in all walks of life. ~~He~~ He never lessens His demands; they are the ^{true} warp and woof of happiness. Human nature has

not changed through the centuries. The circumstances of life may have changed, but not life itself. We ride in trains and automobiles and aeroplanes; we read from books of science and from newspapers multiplied in their millions; we work with mass producing, intricate machinery; we have the radio and the talking film for our hours of leisure. But beneath all these externals of life we carry a human nature which is fundamentally the same as it was twenty centuries ago, as it was when God first created man. And the law of that nature is the bidding of Christ: "Take up your ^{daily} cross and follow me."

The following of Christ is not easy for weak human nature. The cross might bruise our shoulders, and the path might be thorny and steep. The resistance to self and its wayward cravings is a hidden, unremitting struggle that calls for high heroism. Success may not place a flattering crown on our efforts, at least not visibly. No applause from the world, no encouraging word will reach the inner sanctuary.

of the soul. We work in silence; we suffer in
silence. Day by day, by slow, painful degrees
we ^{train} fashion our rebellious wills to the perfect response
to God's will. We fashion our souls after Christ.

This is the following of Christ. Let us not pretend
that it is easy. It is not walking down a primrose
path to the sound of flutes. It takes strength,
courage and manliness to lift them to the height
that takes the prize.

But Christ has also said that His yoke is
light and His burden sweet. Incredible though these
words may seem, they are true. The following of Christ
brings an inward happiness which the world can
not ^{give} which passes understanding, which is a fore-
taste of heaven. And though our life be silent and
hidden, it is never lonely. God is with us, powerfully
aiding us with His grace. We live and move in the
supernatural plane, and we achieve what is above
the power of
nature's powers. Heaven's light is our guide. God
is the sustainer of our being and our effort.

① The day when though only twenty,

The Secret of happiness

Napoleon Bonaparte looked wearily across the ocean rampart that held him across the Captive of St. Helena. It was sunset in a cloudy sky. A question was put to him which roused him from his dreamy mood. He was asked which the happiest day of his life had been. He reflected for a while and then answered with startling firmness: "The day of my First Communion."

Napoleon had seen many days of glory and thrilling achievement. They filed past in his memory claiming fond recognition. He remembered them all

~~the~~ ^{days of} ~~all those~~ ^{of which} ~~history would record~~ ^{with minute care} ~~then~~
He realized his childhood's dreams and received a captain's badge in the army; when later he was acclaimed by his soldiers as a brilliant victor

^{late} though all seemed lost — Chief of all French forces; he was decked ^{in rewards and honours} when ^{he} ~~recovered~~ ^{with the banners of victory} ~~he~~ ^{became} the emperor of France; days of ~~excitement~~ ^{the battle} when ~~it~~ ^{seemed} lost and at the last moment his veterans shared victory from a faged foe; days of Jena and Austerlitz when he fought

against heavy odds and won two of the most glorious
battles
triumphs in history. ^{and many others} All these ^{days} stood out as tri-
umphant arches on his life's golden path; their splen-
dour could never fade. And yet none of these ^{days} could
he honestly call the happiest ^{day} of his life. He looked
across them to a dim, distant childhood, to a humble
Church in Corsica, to the day when with unshuffled
conscience and snow-white dress he knelt at the
altar rails to make his first Communion.

The ex-Emperor spoke truly when he called
that day the happiest of his life. Happiness is a
blossom of heavenly clime. On earth ~~it~~ it grows,
but as an exotic. Men imagine that happiness
can be found in ^{power or} wealth or fame or pleasure. These
~~to~~ cannot yield happiness any more than ^{metal} ~~wood~~
and stone ^{burst into blossoms.} can begin to reason. Rather they stifle
happiness. In the conscientiousness of God's law faithfully
obeyed and ^{of} dutifully ^{correctly} performed lies the secret
of happiness.

One has not been, thank God, the dizzy heights of

1
fame and power. Happiness thrives ^{heights of splendour} ~~more~~ ^{less} easily ~~in the~~ ^{in the} ~~highly bright~~ than in the lowliness of common life. ~~It is in the highly bright~~ This world's successes are often ~~It is in the highly bright~~

only for those who would suppress their nobler selves and crush silence the voice of conscience. At heavy stakes they bid for ~~something that~~ ^{what} holds forth the illusion of satisfaction. Their achievement is more bitter than the struggle. The poisoned fruits of life once tasted create a thirst for still more. The suicidal frenzy that ~~drives~~ ^{rocket} a man higher in success also drives him lower and ever lower in soul's bitterness and ~~in bleak~~ ^{in bleak} desolation.

Life's greatest paradox is that he who would lose his life for God's sake will truly find it, unlike the rest of ~~creatures~~ ^{the visible} creation, man gravitates not downwards but upwards. He is centred not on the earth nor on self, but on God. ~~Such is the~~ ^{Such is the} ~~to strive~~ ^{to strive} plane of his being. If blindly, foolishly he strives to find a centre for his being in things of earth or in the satisfaction of his lower instincts, if he substitutes ~~things~~ ^{creatures} for his supreme goal, the Creator, he does violence to his nature; and he must experience in himself the

reaction of his nature.

Far be it from us to regret that our life has not been a blazing trail of glory. We have not carved out history; we are little known; and dying we shall be forgotten sooner than blades of grass sprout on our graves. Our successes like our failures were mediocre. But still we have known true happiness, soul-filling happiness with no trace of bitterness. We have plodded along the beaten track of duty. Heroism of a sort has been ours — a lack-lustre heroism, which sends no sparkling rays to dazzle other people's eyes, which elicits no praise and causes no pride. Our Father in Heaven who reads our hearts' secrets will reward us. He already rewards us. Our Conscience is our witness that we are tending towards the home of true joy. And may no will o' the wisp of the world's miasma allure us away from the path we tread, nor snatch away from our life the deep happiness which is our beacon light.

I wish that to convince all that life would be most precious if only ^{we} they knew what it is given ^{to us} for.
— Olle-Laprene.

Life is a grave task though often we see not its use. Tiny droplets of water, we ask what need the ocean has of us; the ocean would answer that it is but droplets that make it.
La Cordaire.

Our age is for us the best of all that were and shall be; ^{for} it is on this that we can act. Coetan-Bonville

Before undertaking any work ask not only whether it is useful; ask also whether something more useful awaits to be done, how whether something else has to be done first. Time is limited. De la Roche.

Rather today than tomorrow; rather tomorrow than the day after.
P. Plus.

God blesses man not for the finding but for the searching.
Vian Hugo.

Not an ideal too high but an ideal too vague saps our courage; for there is no idea but can show us the path to its achievement.
P. Rowland

The grimness of all trials is discouragement.
St. Francis de Sales.

P. Chauvin: Only souls fired by a passion can reach to heroic

Confidence is no condition for starting nor success for keeping on.

← Guymener: Until all is given, nothing is given.
Each day is given me to become greater than I was yesterday —
H. De la Roche.

Stand in land, ever true, ever higher.
Have a heart great as the world, pure as the sky,
high as the stars.
To live is but knowing to give. Blk.

Contd on sheets of SPO No XVI.

The work reveals the artist.

- La Fontaine.

Work is a struggle in which the will alone can capture victory and that only at the cost of sacrifice

- H. Parny.

To work, is it not to pray?

- J. Muellet.

If you wish now this, now that, you will wish for much, but achieve little

- Palau.

Confidence in life

The present life is good, because here we enjoy, we suffer, we work, we struggle, not in vain, but with a double assurance of preparing for an eternal here after. ^{where} the reign of ^{of perfect} the good reigns perfectly, and of increasing the amount of good even here below. Nothing is ever lost; the least good to the lowest creature has a ^{lasting} ~~never-ending~~ great effect.

- Ollé-Laprun.

Courage! The struggle is of brief and conquest eternal. To suffer passes away; to have suffered remains.

- St. Theresa of Avila.

Face cheerfully life and its tasks. Never despair of the future; love for those who hate; suffer for those who enjoy

- Elizabeth Lesseur.

To a stout heart there is no impossible

§

The greatest talent of men who found success had been their strong confidence in the power of work

- Mrs. Spalding.

A man to Before us, not behind, lies what is best.

- Ingr. Spalding.

If the thing is possible, already it is done; if impossible, it shall be done.

- Calonne ^{fall}

None has the right to refuse a duty or to ~~with~~
^{back} ~~draw~~ in the false ~~belief~~ hope that attempt is useless

A ~~narrow~~ ^{small} prudence, but above it a large confidence.

- P. Plus.

A straight path is never evil

- Victor Hugo.

Study the past; it removes much prejudice about the present.

- Palau.

None succeeds but who dares to dare

- Clemenceau.

In war, who doubts is lost; never doubt.

- La Foch.

Jesus can do all things; Confidence has worked miracles

- Teresa of Lisieux.

Love your work if you would do it well; or else do it as though you loved it.

See in all things the bright side; no cloud is ~~so~~ ever so black that it has not a silver lining.

Not by ~~these~~ wishful but by the daring the world is governed, the world is saved.

- P. Bessieres

Confidence is the soul of courage.

- P. Elisee.

Tell me what things you don't like; I shall tell you what virtues you don't have.

- Palam.

One would have many more things achieved if he had a few less things thought impossible.

- Kalesherbas.

If you feel that nothing succeeds with you, turn your thought to ^{things} events in the past where which did succeed.

x (Faith in Jesus Christ a spider web becomes a fortress; without Jesus Christ a fortress is but a spider-web.

- St. Felix.

The wise man changes his mind when he should; the fool sticks.

x (Heavy or light - your cross is to your size; and different from any other.

- Francis Maurice.

x (We receive from God just as much as we hope for.

- St. John of the Cross

x (What offends Jesus, what pains His Heart is lack of confidence.

- St. Teresa of Lisieux

It's struggle, not rest, that makes the strong.

-
Nothing prevents your being natural so much as your anxiety to appear so.

If you suffer more in life than another be not surpr-
ised; a ^{large} ~~great~~ soul must contain more sorrows
than a ^{narrow} ~~little~~ ~~heart~~ one.

- Chateaubriand



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