

IN THE HOUR OF SILENCE

AT CAESAREA PHILIPPI

Peter's despairing confession, "Lord, to whom can we go but unto Thee," was the beginning of the Christian Church. It was wrung from his heart by bitter disillusionment. The fickle mobs thronging their footsteps had made him and his companions dream dreams of power and splendor, of a life sated with the things that are seen. But the mobs and the dreams had vanished together and left them alone by the red cliff at Caesarea Philippi. Alone, yet not alone. When the Master asked "Will we also go away?" and they had cast about in all directions whither they might go, the truth dawned clear upon them that here was the centre of reality, Christ was the home of the soul. The things that are seen vanish. "Thou hast the words of eternal life."

And ever and anon, the successors of the disciples, the Christian church, come to Caesarea Philippi, where the Christ stands forth anew, and they find life's meaning in Him. Such a time is upon us now. It is no longer the proper thing to throng the Nazarene. The worshippers of fashion have discovered that following the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life are in quite as good form. And they have gone away. Those who joined the company about the Master, in bitter need or lazy indolence seeking loaves and fishes, they too, have gone away. While they were with us, like the disciples, we too often took our ideas of the Kingdom of God from them. Now that they have left or are leaving, some of us are looking and longing the way they went, and others mourning that the glory of the Lord has departed. But if we listen, we shall hear the challenge "Will ye also go away?" and discover that our hearts cry out "To whom can we go?" "For us to live is Christ." And that discovery and that confession will save the church. When we are most forsaken by the fickle and the base, when the glory of the world is dim, then the glory of the Christ shines out and we find our life in Him. We have come to our Caesarea Philippi. We are at the beginning of a great new day.

PRAYER

O Thou, Whose all seeing eye sifts the motives at the hearts of men, Thou knowest altogether what we are, yet in the sacred confidence of prayer we would tell Thee all and come to know its mean-