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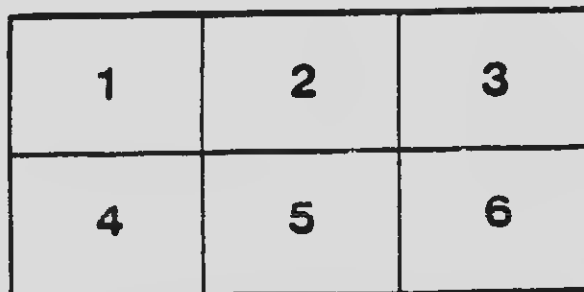
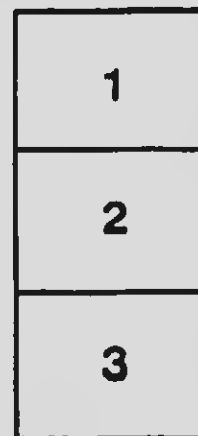
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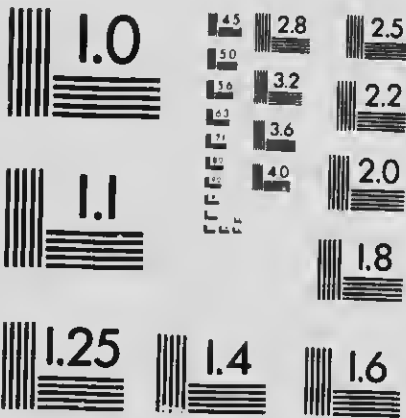
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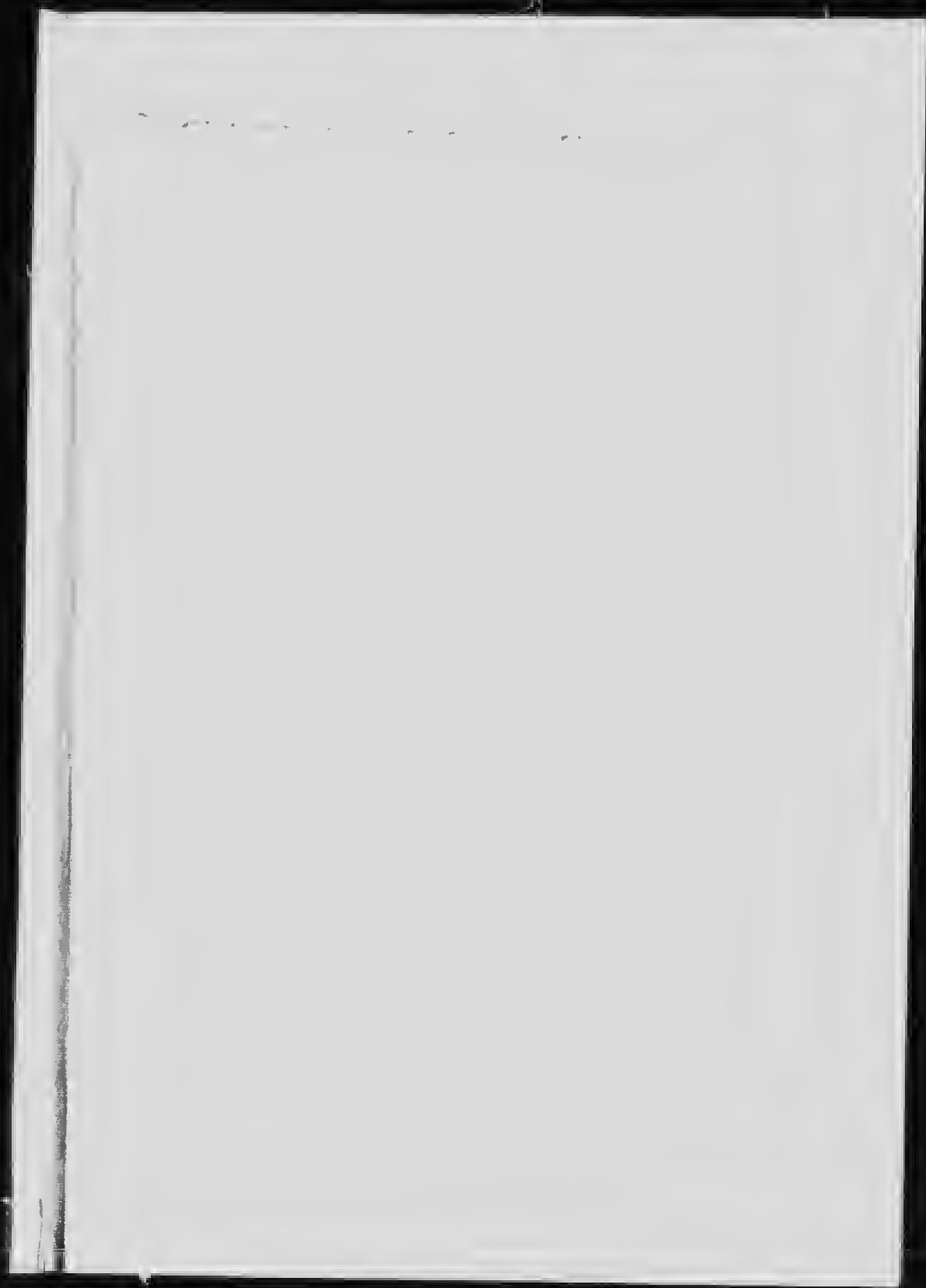
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A VISION
OF IMMANUEL

BY THE
REV. F. JOHNSTON
Westbourne, Manitoba
Canada



TORONTO
WILLIAM BRIGGS
1906



Entered according to Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year one
thousand nine hundred and six, by JOHN JOHNSTONE, at the
Department of Agriculture.

PREFACE.

The subject of this poem is the testimony of John the Baptist to Jesus, as recorded in John 1. 29.

The title originally chosen was "Agnus Dei," but as that was already appropriated the present title has been substituted.

To the service of the Master, whose life and death I have long tried to understand and to make understood, I dedicate this work. May He bless and prosper it, so that readers of it may be helped in some degree, though it be but "as through a glass darkly," to a vision of Immanuel.

J. JOHNSTONE.

WESTBOURNE, MAN., April 25th, 1906.



A VISION OF IMMANUEL.

PART I.

"Behold the Lamb of God."

Each life leaves trace and record of the past.

Each word we've uttered, every deed we've done,

What the mind garners, what the heart has won,

Grow to their utmost influence at last

On those that are within our shadow cast,

Or share our day and summer in our sun ;

And on that morn when life's long muster rolls

Are called, and God holds His review of souls,

As is our record He blames or extols.

There is no life so lowly as to be

Beneath God's notice: none is placed so high
That he may God's supremacy defy.

Ev'n here with our dim vision, even we
Never misread a good man utterly.

True worth finds still its homage, and the cry
Goes up from every heart for Heaven to bless
The souls grown great through Heaven's own
gentleness,
Who use the world to ease the world's distress.

But of all records of a human life

You've ever read, have you read aught like this
Record, that's fourfold, yet so simple is
A child may understand it when all strife
Of tongues is hushed—for, where'er clamour's rife,
Truth is burlesqued, or understood amiss—
A fourfold tale that's uttered in a breath
And breadth of heavenly influence, and hath
Its perfect harmony for simple faith.

And if we fairly read these histories,
Which bear no trace of ornament or art,
These records in the language of the heart,
We will not call them myths, but mysteries
Of growing revelation, wherein lies
The miracle that, labouring each apart,
Hand with untutored hand could still combine
To embody with each touch, and line by line,
This one conception of a life divine.

Oft has been told the story of a face
Conceived by a great artist, who proposed
To limn ideal beauty, and composed
His picture with each loveliness and grace
He ever had observed in any place.
Where could these simple limners be supposed
To find their one ideal but in the real?
They copied what they saw, and thus reveal
The living and divine original.

Here goodness superhuman is pourtrayed,
Virtue untempered with one base alloy,
A purity that nought can e'er destroy,
Reflecting and transmitting—as 'twere made
For passage of Heav'n's lustre undecayed—
The light of life, and truth, and love, and joy :
Here flowers but once in simplest human dress
Heaven's highest grace and earth's one loveliness,
Immanuel! God with us!—with us to bless.

All human faiths their incarnations have.
Can one, or all, or all in one compare,
In any spiritual grace they bear—
These numerous gods-with-us the nations gave—
With Him for whom men would forsake the wave,
Receipt of custom, mart, and home to share
His fortune, hear His words, and see His face,
If haply they might catch, each in his place,
Some reflex of His glory and His grace?

We read their story, and His image takes
Held of us, mirrored by their faithful art.
Heaven set Him in the light, and them apart
To show us Him. Or, as when one awakes
Amidst a storm that revelation makes
Of all it clothes with fire, he learns by heart
What has escaped the lightning, what's been scarred,
So here we see One with His visage marred,
While others 'scape whom He holds in regard.

Dear God! what nation e'er conceived a man
After this type, in myth, or flesh and blood?
And when Thy Christ in flesh is understood,
In blood accepted, who in spirit can
Prefer another type, when such types ran
'Twixt law and statecraft, and sheer lustihood?
Nations have ne'er wrought types of holiness,
Create purity, whose art's to bless
Man with the gift of perfect righteousness.

Alas ! that we're so ready to believe
The greatest attribute of God is power,
For God is love. Through every age and hour
To give's more blessed still than to receive.
He's most like God who lives to love and give :
And Christ's whole life was fragrant as a flower
That gives itself to all who breathe its air,
Than Rose of Sharon still more rich and rare,
Than Lili of the Valley sweet and fair.

That Love can be essential deity
We scarce can credit, else we could not read
Of ever-present help to men in need ;
Of patience provocation could not try
Past limit—were it not hypocrisy ;
Of tenderness ne'er failing to take heed
Of penitence, simplicity as clear
Of wile as sunshine, without feeling, here
Is Love incarnate, and our God is near.

No man e'er spake like this man, for His word
Was with authority. Whate'er He said
Was truth ; and if of truth men were afraid,
His words would often smite them like a sword.
Were truth less feared than loved, of truth the Lord
Salved with a healing word what wounds He
made. [speech

Where learned this man His marvellous power of
No hesitating scribe could hope to reach,
Nor wisest rabbi of the schools to teach ?

In days of old the speaker from a throne,
The man of ancient and illustrious race
Could lend to words an influence and grace
They never could have won themselves aione ;
And though of Christ the lineage was known,
And He to David's line His blood could trace,
Yet was He but the man of Nazareth,
Son of the carpenter. How could His breath
Inspire heroic types of life or death ?

In our own day, as ev'n in days of old,
A patriotic word's a gathering cry
Whose very utterance may make history,
For men are ever followed as they're bold.
In Christ all would have hailed their king foretold,
They thought, to lead their hosts to victory,
Had He but breathed a word that David's son
Was come to seek His throne. He sought for none
In this world, save in faithful hearts alone.

The church is mighty, and her words have lent
Strength to the humble and abased the proud ;
And where her pageants pass, there kneels the
Neither as Priest nor Levite was Christ sent [crowd.
To say to men of Israel what Heaven meant
All men to hear that all hearts might be bowed ;
The common lot of man did Christ partake,
Although a priest forever, for man's sake,
After the order of Melchizedek.

Great men are prophets oft unconsciously.
The Baptist stood with Jesus by his side
And saw a dove rest on Him and abide,
And heard a voice from heaven testify
The Son of God had come, and Christ was He.
And John bare record unto all and' cried,
"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away
Men's sins," yet, in a later, darker day,
The prophet would almost his words unsay.

From long, slow-dropping torture men may cover ;
Or if they shrink not, doubt may dim the truth
Loved more than that they die for ; Heaven's
Is questioned ; faith has lost its power [ruth
To comfort ; they see vanish in an hour
The hopes of manhood and the dreams of youth :
Yet truth endures although its heralds die,
Or prophets should unsay their prophecy,
And shines, transparent in its purity.

Christ lacked not witness to the truth He spake,
Although His mode of utterance was no art
Learned in the schools. Simplicity took part
With perfect wisdom and pure love to make
Truth manifest to each for its own sake :

Christ found His witness in each simple heart.
The simplest may perplex our insight dim,
And have its mysteries for the seraphim :
No heart has any mystery for Him.

Where'er Christ spoke He never spoke with less
Power than His wont. Whate'er His audience,
None caused nor caught one feeble utterance ;
Foes oft grew silent—since they dared not bless—
Fearing His strength and their own feebleness.

Often He spake when burdened with the sense
Of weariness ; acquaint with sorrow more
Than any man, to men His heart ran o'er ;
Did He not preach the gospel to the poor ?

Howe'er He spoke—whate'er might be His theme—
Whether in story or in parable ;
Or talked, where women gather, by the well,
Or men, beside the shore ; where the old dream
In doorways, as they've feit some warmer gleam
Of sunshine linger ere the shadows fell ;
Or in the synagogue ; or on the hill
He spoke at length of mingled good and ill. [will.
Christ's words could wake the heart and mould the

Christ spoke with power to whomsoc'er He spoke.
The Pharisee from smooth hypocrisies,
The Sadducee from shallow sophistries,
The keen Herodian from his wiles awoke
Blinking at truth, whose flaming sword had broke
Through the'r defences—refuges of lies.
When evil hides in labyrinths of the night,
And slays the souls of men snatched from the light,
Then wrath, as outraged love, in truth must smite.

All were not set on wickedness as these.
Some ignorant and wilful, without thought
As sheep without a shepherd, sinned and sought
Their toothsome morsel, or, at times, their ease
'Mong thorn-brakes, or beside the precipice,
For aught but their own pleasure caring nought.
For these poor wandering sheep that went astray,
Each turning foolishly to his own way,
The Lord had nought but truth in love to say.

He sought and found and won them one by one,
All who would hear His voice and heed His call.
Christ has to win His bride, though Lord of all,
By finding ways to woo her when alone.
Though sovereign, He would force the will of none ;
The humblest soul He woos not as a thrall.
She, as she loves Him, to His height will rise :
Love grasps through faith all possibilities,
And reads her future in her Bridegroom's eyes.

Some souls have special wooing ; untrod ways
Christ takes that they may meet Him face to face.
When He reveals himself they seek His grace,
And all the carnal dies from out their days.
They worship God in spirit, and the praise
Of Him they love grows larger in the place.
Thus by the well whence she had come to draw
Water, the woman of Samaria
Found her life's Lord, and in His love her law.

Others through love are drawn to Jesus' feet, [hair,
Wash them with tears, and wipe them wit' their
Kiss them, and salve with ointment. Sitting there
Pride looks askance on service it was meet
That pride itself should render, from the seat
Of judgment passing to show courteous care.
Love still finds large forgiveness, and heart's ease
From sin low at Christ's feet upon her knees,
While pride ne'er enters into perfect peace.

The world lays sad restrictions on the heart,
And ne'er forgives desertion of its cause.
It starves our love. Through keeping of its laws
Our poor morality becomes an art
Of selfishness—though youth would fain take part
With Christ, and, sense of something lacking,
Them hurrying to ask Him, in the dust, [draws
For life eternal: Sad's the youth that must
Leave Christ for love of gold, or lack of trust.

We know the end of worldliness. It grows
To habit of the life, and habit brings
Familiar knowledge of all meaner things
Nought pure can live with, till the worldling knows
Joy withers in his grasp: the fragrant rose
Fades fastest in the hand that closest clings.
He who lives for himself is oft deemed wise
In this world's wisdom; Death has its surprise
For him when he has "lifted up his eyes."

How poor the souls are that are bent to seek
Gold at all hazards, and how sad their case.
Misfortune never can the man abase
Who's pure in heart, as in his spirit meek ;
But to the covetous the Lord may speak
In vain, and for the pittance that they chase
With eager feet, they to themselves may lie ;
Betray their Lord ; and in their agony
May forfeit all, forsake the light and die.

But Christ to seek and save the lost has come.
And with God all is possible. The poor [store
May reap where they have sowed not—half the
Of him who looks for Christ, and brings him home.
Of each accused account the fourfold sum,
As one who robbed God's sheep, he reckoned o'er
Who counted once with Christ. Men cannot lie
To Him, or rob His flock beneath His eye
Bent upon them in utter charity.

The souls that question may come short of peace,
For, without Christ, men cannot find the way
To life for evermore, and the clear day
Of light eternal ; and as doubts increase,
To question heaven and earth they will not cease :
Though learning much, they have not learned to
Let subtlest scribes distinguish as they can, [pray.
But he who does not love his brother man,
May love God less than the Samaritan.

The law breeds candour more than subtlety,
And reverent handling of the written word ;
Nor do all souls that question tempt the Lord.
The thoughtful spirit may draw very nigh
To God, loving the simple verity ;
And nowhere is Jehovah more adored
Than 'midst the scribes, instructed in His law,
Who know love's more than sacrifice, and draw
Near man through love, towards God in love and
awe.

And such as fear the world but love it not
To seek Christ in the night at times are fain,
For He perhaps may ease them of their pain,
Resolve their doubts—the Lord is often sought
By men weary of doubt and worn with thought.
What saith the Lord? “Ye must be born again.”
Thought’s timid tentatives are not faith’s ways,
And warrant for his birthright no man has
Except in what his Father does and says.

Joseph of Arimathæa, a rich man,
An honourable counsellor and just, [dust
Owned Christ when others’ hopes were in the
With their dead Lord. None, as the timid, can
Grow bold at need. His faith at last outran
His fears: they are the bravest that can trust.
Such faith will find a brother by the tomb
In him who through the night to Christ had come:
Where courage fails true love is venturesome.

Women are often those who venture most [all
 For Christ, and following in would give Him
 Their substance, and they wait upon His call ;
 Weeping they linger long where they have lost
 Trace of their Lord. Though of His angel host
 They may see twain, their eyes will turn to fall
 On mercy's Lord who dwells not now between
 The shadowing cherubim. He will be seen
 Of all, and first of Mary Magdalene.

He met her in the breaking of the day
 When He had woke and risen from the dead.
 He called her and to her alone He said
 First what He had to all His folk to say.
 There are first may be last, and last that may
 Be first when loyalty to Christ is weighed.
 Of woman man is born, God, who controls
 Our life, so wills it, and the Lord enrols
 Among His angels mothers of His souls.

First angel to His church, sent to proclaim
His resurrection and the Fatherhood
Of God, a woman goes ; with hopes renewed
His chosen waited, gathered in His name.
But Thomas was not with them when He came,
And to believe he was not in the mood ;
For love is often wilful in the weak ;
When Christ is gone their hearts are like to break,
And they must see His wounds, and hear Him speak.

Blessed are they that see not yet believe ;
But if through lack of sight weak faith may fail,
Things seen may sometimes make the bravest
The shows of power o'erwhe'm us, or deceive ; [quail,
Fierce fires devour the light of day, and leave
The very sun hidden behind their veil.
So Peter saw too much, seeing not all,
And following Christ afar off—to his fall,
Denied his Lord thrice in the high priest's hall.

Peter denied the High Priest now come home
To His own people to go out and die
For them; and what had served the threefold lie
Except with threefold force to smite love dumb,
Save for a look? Will love forsaken come
At call, though hearts renew their loyalty?
Thrice sounding to the depths Christ seeks for faith
Till loyalty no reservation hath:
His chosen must be faithful unto death.

Strong souls are sifted more as they are true
To save them from the false they've fallen on:
The wheat is purer when the sifting's done,
And fit for sowing. Now it will renew
Its life, and grow to offer bread to few
Or many, as it ripens in the sun.
And for its distribution God will care;
He lets no pure grain perish anywhere,
Though it be bruised that men may better fare.

Christ has His lambs to feed, His flocks to tend,
His sheep to pasture, and they ask for love
As well as leading, and a faith above
Shock of surprisals, constant to the end.
Faith must not falter when it should defend, [rove;
Nor turn from truth, though with the flock, to
Christ will have utmost love, in their degree
At least, from those who would ensamples be,
Thrice questioning, for the flock's sake, "Lov'st
thou Me?"

All power is given to Christ in heaven and earth,
The nations are His birthright ; of their blood
He is born King, and for them He has stood
And suffered, as the privilege of His birth.
To them His infinite love flows ever forth,
Through baptism of His blood men are renewed ;
And He is with the world-conquering host,
Whom He calls forth to seek and save the lost,
In name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

What does Christ teach, or what does He reveal
To make all nations listen to His call?
Is He the all in one, or one in all
Some men have dreamed of? Does His word conceal
A doctrine esoteric or ideal
Meant for mankind's elect? Or does it fall
Soft on the ears that deem the calls of sense
Voices of nature in her innocence?
Or does it harden to indifference?

God through the world's wisdom is not known;
Through foolishness of preaching is He pleased
To save them that believe, and they have ceased
From man, to find God's power and wisdom one
In Jesus Christ, the Crucified, alone.

Wisdom grows not as knowledge is increased,
Nor in man's will has truth's pure might arisen;
Wisdom and strength to cease from sin are given:
All righteousness in man's the gift of Heaven.

For any cause he loves a man will die ;
All martyrs may not compass peace within ;
Only true men of God e'er die to sin.
They are the martyrs of humanity,
And Christ's the High Priest of all charity.
The Son of man, He died for all His kin ;
The Son of God, He lives for all His race ;
His brotherhood's the brotherhood of grace ;
God writes His Fatherhood upon their face.

God's Fatherhood we guess at—being born ;
They see the Father who are born again,
For they see Christ. He comes to souls in pain,
Of a dead mother-world left forlorn,
Wailing their orphan cry—the prey and scorn,
As they repeat their bitter cry in vain,
To powers that be on earth and in the air— [there,
Where they see Christ the Father's called them
And Heaven bends to greet them everywhere.

When Christ came to His own, and of His own
Was not received ; to such as did receive
Him as their Lord and in His name believe
He gave the right they hold through Him alone
To be the sons of God—a right not known
To blood or birth, nor in man's power to give.
The sons of God, of God begotten all,
Born from above, His offspring spiritual,
Grow to His likeness as they heed His call.

Far as from east to west, Heaven's width of grace,
Transgressions from God's people are removed,
And they are blessed as they've believed and
loved.

When men will claim in heaven exclusive place,
In virtue of their father's faith or race,
Their faith is dead, and they are not approved.
Heaven has no place for formalists in sooth
Where patriarchs of the faith sit with its youth
Who worship God in spirit and in truth.

Christ taught that woman is for no man's mood ;
To her each privilege of His people's given ;
She's welcome to the courts and choirs of heaven
And may be purest in her motherhood ;
That children are by angels understood, [driven.
And to the Lord that loves them drawn, not
He taught all His disciples they should say,
"Our Father," wheresoe'er they try to pray,
For man to man is kin in Christ always.

He promises His spirit still shall dwell
With men, though He himself be out of sight,
And lead them ever onward in the light,
Or, 'midst the darkness, tell them all is well,
And though no eye has seen, nor ear heard tell,
Nor heart foreknown what lies beyond our night ;
To hearts wherein God's love is shed abroad
Love's mysteries the Comforter hath showed,
Who searcheth all things, yea, deep things of God.

Christ is the resurrection and the life :
 He's gone before His people to prepare
 A place for them, where many mansions are,
And all are homes of peace ; no voice of strife
Is there, for sin is dead, nor voice of grief,
 For nothing that defileth enters there.
In a breath's pause, as from a dream, arise
The sons of God from death to lift their eyes
Upon their Lord with them in paradise.

To judge the world the Lord will come again ;
 The power of life and death is in His hands ;
 The dead shall rise from all the seas and lands ;
To rocks and mountains some will call in vain
To fall and hide the prospect of their pain,
 For wrath has come and death has found their
From the great tribulation come are they [bands.
Who stand before the Lamb in white array,
And from their eyes God wipes the tears away.

Christ works His miracles for those He loves,
In nature as in man He kills pretence,
For heaven and earth are His. Through every
Creation her devotion feels and proves [sense
At her Lord's call, whenever He removes
The disabilities from innocence,
When to His poor He multiplies their bread,
Or heals the sick, restores the sense that's fled,
Cleanses the lepers, or awakes the dead.

Christ is himself the eternal miracle ;
His work is perfect as His word is pure,
And both from age to age with Him endure.
Through Him the dead still live, and they that dwell
With devils among tombs come forth to tell
Their story at His feet, and find their cure.
No evil ever holds eternal sway ;
Nature herself's but monarch of a day ;
Nor to the Lord's yea may she say Him nay.

"Nature" means mostly the mere physical ;

Tò πᾶν of old with us is "nature" now.

Why should we low before her altars bow ?

Did the first-born of men from goodness fall

Because he loved but what was natural ?

Can love to man from love of nature grow,

As art and culture do, at cost of pain ?

Could Tubal's hammers beat, and Jubal's strain,

In chords that ne'er recalled the curse of Cain ?

Nature is man's first love, and it is pure

In most as is the love of God ; whene'er

We put her in God's place, she draws us where

Vast solitudes engulf us, and nought's sure

But solitude, and striving to endure

Long thoughts, large haunting spaces, larger care.

Nature is cruel, worshipped in God's place ;

Her place is service, service is her grace ;

Her laws are ways of God for her to trace.

The laws of nature are but ways of God,
And miracles His by-path, used for speed
At times when nature is outstripped by need.
Or to reveal what she has never showed,
God has appeared, sometimes 'midst fire and cloud,
In law disclosing what love has decreed.
For Christ the world's in pangs, yet nature's dumb,
While Heaven proclaims Him come and still to
come,
And points to Bethlehem and His empty tomb.

Nature is not creative. Though she grows
Food in abundance, never has she been
Equal to all our needs. Men lack, I ween,
More than mere appetite demands or knows.
Nature is plastic, wrought with she bestows
All in her power, but she has never seen
The heart of God, nor soul of man conceived ;
She knows not how to love. Whoe'er believed
Nature can give more than she has received ?

We knock at nature's door and ask for balm
To heal our spirit wounded nigh to death ;
Nature is silent, for no balm she hath,
Nor does our sorrow move her from her calm.
To song of triumph, penitential psalm ;
To wail of mourner, as to the low breath
Of prayer, nature's deaf : in her domain
There is no remedy for souls in pain,
Nor can she bring the dead to life again.

Nature's no mother for an aching heart ;
She has no counsel for a troubled mind,
Her very travail makes a mother kind ;
Nature ne'er travailed with us, and her art
Of motherhood forgets its better part,
Since to our prayers she's deaf, to our tears blind.
Christ's soul in travail bare us, and though ill
We oft requite Him, yet He loves us still ;
If God hear us, is that a miracle ?

Nature's God's work, but we His children are;
And if He bid her sun arise and shine,
Our darkness He will lighten, corn and wine
His hand will give since He makes her His care ;
And if He grant her rain, He'll hear our prayer ;
While lilies grow God will clothe thee and thine.
If earth renews each spring flower, leaf, and sod,
Our dry tree blossoms in our High Priest's rod,
And in our flesh we too shall see our God.

PART II.

"Which taketh away the sin of the world."

In spirit let us go to Calvary,
And mingle with the multitudes that wait
Upon the Lord, who's gone without the gate
To Golgotha, at the third hour to die.
The cup men offer those they crucify
The Lord receives not ; but of His estate,
As thorn-crowned monarch of the world of woe,
Takes full possession ; and for all will know
The utmost measure to which grief can grow.

He, in a felon's room, as one of three,
He in the midst, and one on either side,
Is numbered with transgressors, crucified,
And lifted up on the accursèd tree.
Did ever man before so pray as He
For those that slew Him ? " Father," Jesus cried,
" Forgive them for they know not what they do,"
While red hands rent His garments in His view,
And lots for sole right in His vesture threw.

They sat down with their spoil and watched Him there,
These soldiers of the world's first sovereign power,
And mocked Him as they waited His last hour.

In threefold scroll His accusation bare
His name on high, and became everywhere

The nation's scourge to bid His slayers cower.
Some stood beholding, dumb with sense of loss,
While passers-by reviled Him, and would toss
Their taunts to Him to come down from His cross.

Rulers, chief priests, elders and scribes deride,

"Others He saved, himself He cannot save,"

Those who with Him were hastening to the grave.

The very malefactors by His side

Cast the same in His teeth. One railing cried—

In the same breath keen to reproach and crave—

"If thou be Christ, then save thyself and us."

The other answering rebuked him thus,

Turning to truth in his hour perilous.

“Fear’st thou not God, seeing that we are come
 Into like condemnation, and it is
 Our due, but this man hath done nought amiss?”
Nor unto Christ himself will he be dumb;
In his last hour his soul has found the sum
 Of all he seeks in Christ, and upon this, [cries,
 “When thou com’st to thy kingdom, Lord,” he
 “Remember me.” “To-day,” the Lord replies,
 “Thou art to be with me in paradise.”

Near by His mother and her sister stood
 With Clopas’ wife and Mary Magdalene.
When Jesus therefore had His mother seen,
And, standing by her, in a solitude
Love had made for them in His neighbourhood
 The one disciple loved as none had been,
He to His mother saith, “Behold thy son.”
“Behold thy mother,” to His chosen one,
Who took her from that hour unto his own.

And now the noon is come. The sun grows dim,
And there is darkness over all the land
Until the hour when men were wont to stand
Before their God, and sacrifice to Him
Their lamb for a burnt-offering. Then the grim
Silence of that eclipse on every hand
Is shaken by a solitary cry,
"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"
(My God, my God, wherefore hast Thou left me?)

Then low upon the startled, straining ear
Of those beside the cross there falls again,
Wrung from the parching lips by mortal pain,
Nature's last call, "I thirst." One who was near
Gave Him to drink. The crowd could only hear
Him calling for Elias: ruth was slain.
When people will have wonders, then "Let be"
They call aloud to Mercy, "Let us see,"
And Mercy, oft alas! will drop her plea.

The bitter cup drained to the uttermost,
 "Father, into thy hands," He cried aloud,
 "My spirit I commend"; His head He bowed,
Said, "It is finished," and gave up the ghost.
God's veil was rent, earth like a sea was tossed,
 Rocks sundered—there were graves that would
 not shroud
 Their dead when He arose;—Him as God's Son
The awed centurion owned, men fled, each one
Smiting his breast, beholding what was done.

Such is, in brief, the story of a death
 That shook the earth and moves the nations still.
 The world may crucify but cannot kill
The guiltless by the stoppage of their breath.
Each righteous soul his resurrection hath
 To life, to compass which death has no skill.
The woe unutterable the Saviour bore,
And the reproach that broke His heart are o'er;
Love's cup is full for man for evermore.

Here is One claiming all His life to be
The Son of God ; and for His claim He dies
In company with transgressors, and He lies
In a grave offered Him in charity.
Among the poorest none more poor than He ;
Among the sad none stricken in such wise ;
Among the dead, the slain and oncast, free ;
The bounds of Sheol He went forth to see.
And of each gate of death He has the key.

When death was spoiled, Christ from the dead arose
To see His seed. He still prolongs His days ;
God's pleasure prospers in His hand always.
From travail of His soul His kingdom grows
Till He is satisfied ; and no man knows
How many souls He justifies. He prays
For the transgressors, as He once outpoured
His soul for them. Angels with one accord
Adore Him, and all tongues shall call him Lord.

He is the Lamb of God who takes away
The world's transgressions ; our High Priest is
God laid on Him all our iniquity ; [He ;
He was made sin for us, and who shall say
For whom He did not die, or does not pray ?
These are His mysteries : His grace is free.
He died for us. He made our sins His own,
And none but He could for our sins atone,
And we are saved by grace through faith alone.

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Truth for its own sake is not always loved.
Some will believe a lie rather than bear
Reproach for Christ. His cause is not their care,
But that which soothes them most is most approved,
By what they see not they are seldom moved,
And of sin's sinfulness are not aware ;
Or if aware, their pride's been touched too near.
They tremble, but the truth they will not hear,
And they appear to doubt to hide their fear.

Men weigh all causes when they love the truth,
They hold the balance in an even hand,
And to the scruple of a grain of sand
Are clear in judgment. Pleasure-loving youth,
Or vicious age, showing a venomous tooth,
May tamper with the scale, and make demand
Judgment be entered for them. In such wise
They find truth lacking as they trust in lies ;
Will God be blind, if men should shut their eyes ?

The word of God has never flattered man :
There only we appear ev'n as we are
Or ought to be. When we had wandered far
From God, as none but He our Father can
He wrote to us ; and, since He first began
To write, has told us how we sadly mar
Our life by license ; and a tone of pain
Runs through His letters, as, so oft in vain,
He asks us to return to Him again.

Our wickedness is desperate, and He knows
Our hearts imagine evil evermore,
Deceitful above all things. We deplore
Our fortune, He is grieved that evil grows
In us from native bias, till we close
All ways of goodness we've but crossed before ;
That none of us will seek Him ; that the good's none
Who doeth good, no ! not so much as one ;
And that His way of peace we have not known.

While God thus speaks to us our hearts confess
The truth He utters, for we know that we
Have still been wayward since our infancy,
And predisposed to evil. We care less
For God or man than our own happiness,
Till, seeking it, we drift to misery,
And in our trespasses we are alone.
The harvest passes when the summer's gone ;
How shall we stand before the judgment throne ?

In manhood all our days are given to toil ;
Our nights are often passed in wakeful care ;
The world is ever with us, though our share
In it be poor when men divide the spoil.
Or if we heap up wealth, how shall we foil
The attack of death, or find peace at ywhere ?
Wealth may bring ease, but not the better mind,
Which in all fortunes can leave care behind,
Cast upon Him in whom our peace we find.

Oh, would that we grew wise as we grow old ;
But wisdom's no prerogative of age,
And gray-haired folly lingers on the stage,
Greedy e'er pursuing going still at gold,
As gaiety's gone, and audiences grow cold.
O hoary head ! at best the world's poor wage
Is but a hard-won fee, nor heals distress ;
Wert thou but found in ways of righteousness,
Thy "crown of glory" God and man would bless.

The world is full for all of sin and woe,
 And law and justice lay our misery bare,
 While prisons cannot hide it : it is there
Close as our shadow, wheresoe'er we go.
Care is the one companion all men know,
 For sin, sorrow and death are everywhere.
Sin's the original source of all our pain,
The carnal mind fights against God in vain.
And to see God we must be born again.

We err through unbelief ; it is our way
 To question truth and grasp at liberty,
 And go astray through sheer perversity.
Good dies from out a land with faith's decay,
And then all ill is possible alway.
 Faith can dwell only with sincerity,
And is God's gift. Doubt oft with stubborn will
Dwells in the darkness because bent on ill ;
Unto the upright light arises still.

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What is sin?—the transgression of the law.

Fools make a mock at sin ; the burdened cry,
“Against thee, Lord, thee only sinned have I,”

Or dumbly suffer as they stand in awe.

While shame-faced pride seeks ever to withdraw

Its self-betrayals from the public eye,

The meek-eyed penitent is all alone

With God in a wide wor'd where all is known,

And seeks to clasp God's feet and make her moan.

Here is a man on trial for a crime

He has committed ; no one doubts his guilt ;

He long has warred with law, and blood has spilt ;

To vice apprenticed he has served his time,

And gathered lawlessness in every clime :

The cup of his iniquity is filled.

He pleads not guilty ;—but the issues lie

Too clear for quarrel, and the man must die.

How does he look on crime and penalty ?

“ Why should he die? Could he help being born
Of felon blood, and nurtured at the breasts
Of infamy? Outcast of men he wrests
The prey from those of whom he is the scorn.”
Must all the sons of perjurers be forsworn,
Of robbers steal, of slayers kill? Who jests
Or plays with law and justice stakes his head.
How shall we answer for the blood that's shed
If justice drop her sword or law be dead?

Although conceived in sin man is no brute
Governed by bias; we are under law.
When the wolves ravin men restrain their maw.
Those who another's right to live dispute,
Justice, armed at all points, may well refute.
The judge may pity, justice must o'erawe
The criminal whoever he may be;
None is the creature of blind destiny;
His birth is not a man's whole history.

With laws of God we will play fast and loose,
Binding on others what we will not bear.
The infidel and scorner will declare
For laws from Heaven for his neighbour's use,
While he himself God's laws will still refuse
To own as binding on him anywhere.
Opinions vary with the point of view :
When we are wronged, and would exact our due,
God's law is ever holy, just and true.

Our laws are often intricate, diffuse,
Yet limited, defective, liable
To misinterpretation, voidable,
Failing to guard a right, or kill abuse
Of privilege. Some are annulled or lose
Most of their force, although they linger still.
God's law is perfect ; he who runs may read
Its precepts. None may supersede
The Almighty, nor annul what He's decreed.

God's first great law is love, and we must have
No other gods before Him, nor must we
To any graven image bow the knee,
Nor take His name in vain. The day He gave
For rest is holiest ; by Christ's open grave
It paused, and rose with a new memory.
The stone that hid the Lord is rolled away,
Old memories, lingering with the angels, stay
And brighten all creation's older day.

God's second law for man is love likewise,
Our parents we must honour and obey,
Nor must we kill, nor e'er become the prey
Of lust, nor steal, nor lie, nor envious eyes
Cast on our neighbour, nor on aught that's his :
The sum of the whole law is charity.
Sinai's dread darkness was beheld with awe
Gather above Christ's cross, break, and withdraw :
And Love's become fulfilment of the law.

Who is there loves his God with all his heart,
Nor clings to mammon; guards a guiltless speech,
Keeps God's day always holy, pays to each
Parent the due observance, takes no part
In hatred of another, knows the art
Of being pure at all times? Who can reach
Perfect uprightness, truth and charity?
If we say that we have no sin we lie,
Adding to all our guilt hypocrisy.

Our sins as weaknesses we oft deplore,
Or as the passing follies of a day.
But why should we for all our lapses pay
In misery? God lives for evermore,
And loves us. Can He keep a bitter score
Against His children, who are His always
Ev'n when they err the most? His love will bear
All strains, resolving to be unaware
Of aught but need in creatures of His care!

Weakness, alas! brings often bitterest loss.

 The weakest may still do the utmost wrong,
 And still the greatest sufferers are the strong :
Burdened with others' guilt, they bear their cross.
The weak will grasp at all ; the clutching moss,
 The many-figured ivy life prolong,
 While the rock suffers and the sheltering wall.
Weakness, while safe, cares not what may befall,
And wheresoe'er it reigns it ruins all.

Feebly or desperately we all rebel

 Against the law and government of God ;
 We will not do His will, nor bear His rod,
Be forced ev'n for our own sakes to do well.
Freedom's our birthright, freemen we shall dwell,
 Where'er we choose our service be bestowed.
Our will is sovereign in its own domain,
We will not bear a load, nor wear a chain
Of which we cannot rid ourselves again.

So, thinking to be free we serve our will,
And thus rebel against the Holy One.
High-handed sinners will not have right done ;
God calls for justice, they would rather kill
Whole nations than confess they have done ill.
God seeks the good of all, the wrong of none,
But they usurp the Lord's executive,
Rebels to God mischiefs to man conceive,
And at their sovereign will men die or live.

Each sin of mine's a force appreciable
Exerted for the overthrow of right.
The Almighty I resist with all my might,
Fetter with the whole weight of my whole will
The arm of God that is uplifted still
For righteousness ; and though I fail, in sight
Of Heaven and earth I've done my uttermost
To tempt a traitor's doom. When all is lost,
Of my defence who'll undertake the cost ?

Some sins are never touched by human laws.
One man may scatter death among the throng,
And one suffice to work the whole world wrong,
Scourging the earth as leader of a cause.
Sin murders souls without remorse or pause ;
For a deliverer the nations long ;
Earth will not hide her slain ; their blood will cry
To Heaven. Who is there dares God's right deny
To inquire for blood, and judge in equity ?

No sin's e'er found alone. The covetous eye
Directs the robber's hand ; adultery
Oft twins with murder ; perjury
Is one in soul and act wit. blasphemy ;
Men cling, who do not worship the Most High,
To superstition or idolatry.
They who pay no regard to the Lord's day
Give little heed to what their parents say ;
They meet all sins who travel one sin's way.

Sin genders sin. We may be born again,
But till we're born again we're born to sin,—
A patrimony we are feoffed in
More firmly than the heir in his domain.
The closest ties may bring the greatest pain ;
Our blood be least of all to glory in,
If it but serve us heirs to miseries ;
And of our race we pay the penalties
In tribute oft to madness or disease.

All are not served so by their blood, yet all
In likeness of their parents now are born ;
The yoke their fathers wore by them is worn ;
And yet in sin each man's original,
And his own heart devises his own fall.
From off the tree of knowledge we have torn
With our own hands, in seeking to be wise,
The fruit so seeming fair ; evil our eyes
Have seen, and lost the sight of paradise.

Like letting out of water such is sin :
 A devastating flood that nothing stays ;
 A beacon fire that baleful flames may raise,
And threaten ruin to each citizen ,
A pestilence, striding through the dark within
 A city fortified, that sudden slays
 To the inmost guard, and sows corruption.
Sin is a seed that ne'er abides alone,
And every man shall reap as he has sown.

Sin multiplies transgression manifold.
 Like Egypt's dust it breeds a vermin brood
 That preys on man and thrives on human blood ;
It consecrates the cursèd greed of gold,
Till souls of men are bartered, bought, and sold,
 And mammon's shrines within God's house have
 stood ;
It binds the sovereign power with faction's bands,
And sets those in high place whom it commands,
Corrupts the laws, and ties the judges' hands.

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We sin against the light. God lighteth all
Who come into the world. Things seen accuse
The doubter, leaving him without excuse.
The night may show the hand-writing on the wall
Clear through the festal blaze : whate'er befall
God has His witness true in each of us.
And on that day when all hearts' mysteries
Are judged, ev'n as our own heart testifies
To Him, the Lord condemns or justifies.

Our sin is wilful trespass against Love.
Love makes us welcome to her threshing-floor,
And pours into our bosom all her store.
We sweep her granaries bare, her barns remove
Wasted with fire. Love pleading cannot prove
Her plea with us when once she gives no more,
Yet Love has given all she has to give.
Christ gave himself for us that we might live ;
How shall we live and not in Him believe ?

Law draws a stern indictment, but the law
Breaks not the heart like love that we have lost.
Of the law's vengeance could we pay the cost
Through utmost suffering, yet, if love withdraw
Her trust, each moment of the past that saw
Us false, forever to the uttermost
Tortures our souls. If but our souls could die
And be forgotten through eternity!—
While love lives can the dead forgotten lie ?

But what if love be dead, or dead to me,
And memory no longer lighten care ?
What shall I do ? How shall I learn to bear
My growing griefs ? I can no longer be
Aught for love's thoughtfulness, and I must see
Days that forever add to my despair.
The law I broke in wantonness of mood,
Now it has smitten me, is understood ;
I know it to be holy, just, and good.

I strive to keep it, but I strive in vain ;
It cannot save or sanctify my soul,
For through the flesh I'm weak, nor can control
One poor beat of my heart, one throb of pain.
To what but sorrow can I turn again, [whole ?
Since law demands burnt-offerings that are
Dumb agonies have made my soul their own ;
To God my silence tries to make its moan,
Smitten to death, in death I am alone !

Christ comes to me in my extremity ;
And in my grief I cannot help but raise
My eyes to His, and find love as I gaze
Upon His visage marred turned full on me ,
And through my tears His every wound I see.
O God of mercy ! has thy love found ways
To reach me through the gates of death ? At last
Mine eyes behold thee, and thou hold'st me fast,
And all the bitterness of death is past.

How can I doubt when Christ is by my side ?
How can I question when He holds me still ?
How can I strive with love against my will ?
For all His love is mine. He will abide
Unchangeable. Was He not crucified
For me ? Did He not all the law fulfil
For me ? He loved me, gave himself for me,
And He has come from death to set me free,
And all my heart's desire in Him I see.

I cannot strive, or doubt, or question more.
Eternal Love's last revelation
Of Christ to me, from His last passion
Now come to bid me live, and to restore
My heart with sense of peace ne'er known before,
And love beyond all expectation,
Binds me for evermore to Christ in love.
I can but live to love, and love to move
In ways of His that may affection prove.

Just as I am I yield myself to Him.

I cannot give when I have nought to give.
He gives himself to me, and bids me live
For Him ; and while He speaks my eyes grow dim,
But my poor cup of love's full to the brim.
Such as it is I offer, and receive
The infinite for my measure, and deplore
My nature's limits while my cup runs o'er.
What cup may measure love for evermore ?

Some think to wash away their sins with tears.

Sin wantons in the blood, broods in the brain,
Nor flood nor fire can cleanse us from its stain.
Sin overlives the woes of bygone years,
Forgets both Sodom's fires and its own fears,
And turns to wallow in the mire again.
In Sheol there are many souls that weep
And watch in vain : if God the city keep,
So does He give to His beloved sleep.

The sorrow of the world still worketh death.

But who is this that forth from Edom goes,
From Bozrah with dyed garments ; glorious
In His apparel ? Forward on His path
He fares in greatness of His strength. He hath—
Since for this end from out His place He rose—
The power to speak in righteousness and save.
O death, where is thy sting ? Himself He gave
For us. Where is thy victory ? O grave ?

Comfort thee, weary soul, and take thy rest.

Alone Christ trod the winepress ; forth is He
To rule the nations, and to pray for thee.
Thy name He bears, the great High Priest confessed
Of all the heavy-laden, on His breast
Before the throne of God. The mystery
Of all thy godliness with Jesus lies,
For whom He calls He also justifies,
And whom He justifies He glorifies.

Christ is the vine, and we the branches are,
And in His life our life and increase lie ;
Though one with Him we grow at liberty
To move to subtlest influence in the air.
'Twixt earth and heaven our life grows, and we share
In all their good on Christ's security.
While He lives we live—not in idleness.
His life sways ours, and ours cannot do less
Than stir and move in His to fruitfulness.

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Soul that must put all to the proof, yet fain
Wouldst hold fast what is good, what thinkest
thou [bow
Of Christ? Whose son is He? Canst thou not
Thine heart to worship Him? Must all His pain,
His vows, His prayers, His love for thee, be vain?
Poor heart of doubt, that, doubting, dar'st avow
There is no wisdom in the Crucified,
Nor power of God, art sure thou dost not hide
Thy sin from thee, and so hast Christ denied?

To the upright light arises : put away
The evil that thou knowest. Canst thou make
Thine own heart clean, try as thou wilt, or take
One of thy stumbling-blocks out of thy way ?
Can doubters driven to despair not pray
For a deliverer, for the truth's own sake ?
Out of the depths, O Lord ! we do avow
Our sins to thee ; to thee our hearts we bow,
Wisdom thou art, and our deliverer thou.

O labouring and heavy-laden heart !
That questionest not, but dost not cease to mourn
Thy sins, thy Lord for thee thy sins has borne.
The sorrow that has touched thee is thy part
In the Lord's infinite anguish, and thou art
In tears for what thy Saviour's soul has torn.
To grief God put Him, wounded Him for thee ;
Bruised Him for thine iniquities, that He
Thy Saviour to the uttermost might be.

The shadow of a shame lay on the birth
Of Jesus, that all those without a name
Or any heritage but that of shame
Might find in Him their portion on the earth,
And place with God's first-born. Without a hearth,
Sad and alone, to Him the homeless came
For comfort, and He died as felons die,
That those who bear the law's last penalty
Their Lord beside them on His cross might see.

O wondrous revelation of the love
That for us men could hope and suffer all.
What soul so fearful as to dread the call
Of love like this? What soul can prove
So desperate, as not to turn and move
To meet Love pleading, at Love's feet to fall?
Behold the Man! While it is called to-day,
Sad soul of the lost world! come thou and pray;
Behold the Lamb of God who takes thy sins away!

