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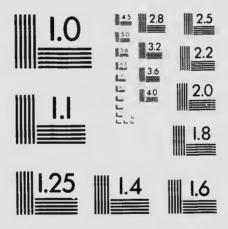
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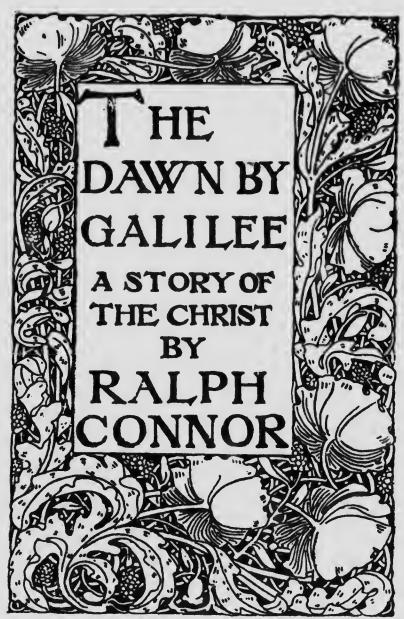
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The Dawn by Galilee

"Jesus said unto them, Come and breakfast."

"Jesus said . . . Lovest thou Me?"

JOHN XXI.

I



the Bible there is no sweeter, kindlier, no more beautiful pieture of God than that which represents Him as the partner of man in all his experiences of toil, of trouble, of sorrow, of defeat or of success.

It was God who came to Adam when he had lost everything, found him in his sin and a tored him to his place. It was God who came to Abraham by night when his faith had run low and his courage was almost gone, pointed him as the stars and, by the stars, called up his faith again. It was God who met His friend Jacob as he went out from his mother's tent and faced the great, gaunt wilderness, afraid of himself and afraid of the things he might meet. It was God who eame to him and gave him courage to go on. When Moses,



all but broken-hearted by his people's faithlessness, pled with God for help and guidance in the weary journey, it was God who said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." When Joshua stood before the promised land, a new general appointed to God's army, looking into that land of conflict, all unknown, full of terror, it was God who said to him: "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." When Elijah was sick at heart, discouraged with his life-work, driven out from his native country far into the desert and wishing only to die, it was God who sat beside him in the desert and prepared his meal and rested him and fed him and rested him again, before He sent him back. And wherever you find the people of God in their hour of sorrow you will always see God looming up and coming near over the deserts, God coming through the dangers, God making Himself known; for God is the Partner of man in his great life-enterprise.

Because people were slow to understand this, God said: "I will make them know it." Because the human heart finds it difficult to realize that God can come on to the streets or into the house, or into a tent, or out on the desert, God said one day: "I will make them know." And so He came down in human form, and by Jesus Christ, and in Jesus Christ, He made us know that it is

possible for God to be the Partner of man in his great life-enterprise.

So I want you, for a little while, just to look, first one way, then another, at our silent, unseen Partner, Jesus—Jesus our Partner, silent, unseen, but always at hand, and always aware.

In John's story of the Dawn by Galilee we have three pictures by which Jesus reveals Himself to us as the Partner of the disciples.

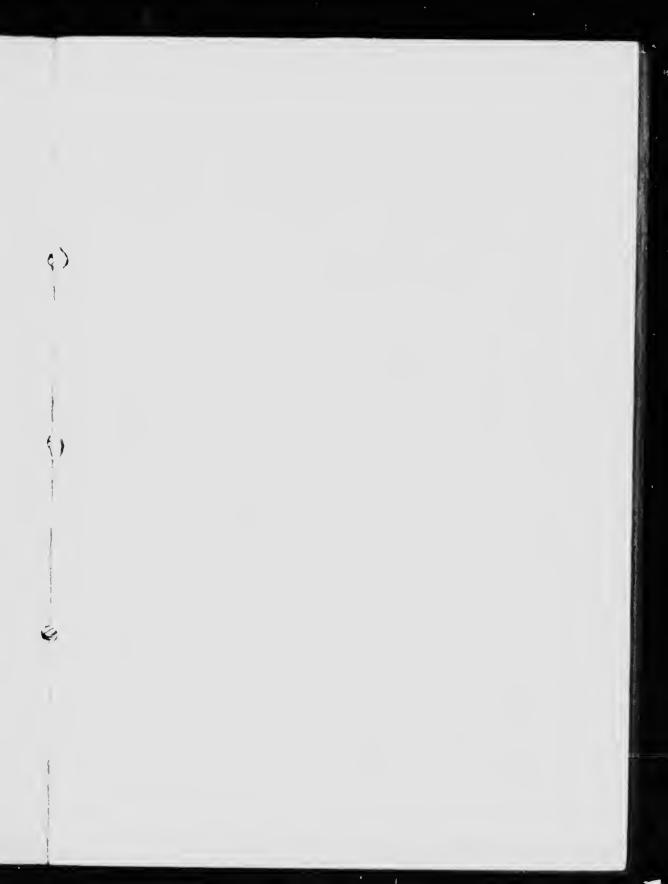
1. First, He stands on the shore at night while they fish out in the deep. All night long, while they were throwing the net and hauling it in, and being disappointed at every draw; all night long, as they tossed up and down upon that heaving floor of Tiberias, He stood on the shore unseen, voiceless, but very much aware of them, and very alert for them. So it is appointed that we must live and work. Every man has to row his own boat out to the fishing, every man must throw out his own net after the fish, every man must do his own work, hoe his own row, work his own ship, as if there were no God at all. To him it seems as if he were all alone upon this great life-sea, so far as any sight of God is concerned. It is true there are others throwing the net, others fighting the fight; but, after all, it is each man for himself, to each man his own work, to each man his own anxiety, to each man his own disappointment, to each man his

own heart-bitterness. Every man lives and works by himself, no matter how many stand round. That is the consciousness that we have in regard to life, and that consciousness does not distress us unduly while the fish are coming. We do not mind how much alone we are so long as they bite. That is all right. While the sails are filled with the favouring breeze we are all right, we do not care whether we are alone or not. But when the night comes down, and one by one the lights go out, and the net comes back empty, and the sail is flat on a dead sea; when life is going hard with us and business is bad, and when we feel that the time for help has come and there is no helper—then it is that the loneliness of life smites a chill to our heart and sinks us down to discouragement.

I am glad that I am able to give you the assurance that you are never quite alone in your business of life, that the Partner, silent and unseen, is standing on the shore.

You say, "That is all very well for spiritual things; that is all right for religion, for the struggle with temptations and sins."

But I think it is right for the daily duty of life, whatever that may be. These disciples were not fishing for men that night, but fishing for mere fish. And so the farmer in his furrow, the business man in his counting-house and his office, every man in his place, doing





It was God who met his friend Jacob as he faced the great gaunt wilderness."



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his daily work, when things are going badly, ought to remember that, silent and unseen, but very sympathetic, stands his Master, his Partner, Jesus. How great the comfort is, how impossible for a man to be quite borne down, how impossible for the waves of failure to swamp him or the non-success in life to daunt him, if he nows that to go down he must pull God down with him ere he sinks and is lost! There is a partnership between you and God, and when you fail utterly-you, a disciple of Jesus Christ-it is because God has fallen down from His throne and the waves have engulfed Him too. I do not think the Atlentic Ocean could drown Jesus Christ; do you? One would think you did, because last week you know how you worried about your business, you know how vexed you were about this uncertainty and that, and you thought you were the only person concerned, that no one else knew or cared; but all the while Jesus was standing, the silent Fartner, alert and watchful, and, mark you! sympathetic and planning. When you meet Him again He will have a plan for you, and the plan will mean success. heart, men. One would think God had died overnight or last year, the way some Christian people take Think, ere you despair, that all through the toiling night your Partner stands unseen and silent, but observant, sympathetic, and planning.

2. Next, in the morning He speaks. He speaks

IN THE MORNING. Why then? Why? Because He knows that in the morning you have reached the limit of your endurance. The night before it would not have been so important. But after a night's long fishing—and you know how discouraging it is to fish without a catch, without a bite—how necessary it is,

You know how discouraging it is to have all your plans for success in your business come back at you empty. Business men know it. Ministers know it. Sabbath School workers know it. How heart-depressing it is in the morning to find that the net is still empty. That is a common experience. Then, when you have reached the limit of your endurance, your Partner will speak out, and He will say to you this word, "My friend and brother, anything to eat? Anything for your heart-hunger? Anything to stay your body upon, your wearied, toil-worn body, or mind, or heart? Any food in that boat?" That is what He will say, and He will wait to hear the voice come back out of the heart, sick with disappointment, "No, there is none."

Whenever He speaks, wait for Him, because He means to do something. He means to do something with you, with your business, with your fishing, with your life. He will do it as soon as He can get your mind and your attention, and notice this—that

He cannot get our attention till we have thrown up ou hands. While we think we are going to get the haul this time our minds will be—where? On the net, on the business scheme. But when we have done with it, when we throw up our hands, when the last haul brings nothing, then He says to us, "I'll tell you how to sell, I'll tell you how to buy, I'll tell you where to fish. Throw the net down here on the right-hand side."

Here is the surprising thing—every time you take the Partner's advice the fish begin to come, the business goes right. I know what you are thinking, but I am not going to stop to argue with you. I am too busy. I say this now: I don't care what your business is, when you are listening to Christ He will give you success, and all the success you want, right in your business; that is, if it is a business He is a Partner in. Of course, if it is a business He cannot take part in you will have to fight it out yourself. But if He is a Partner with you-and He is in all legitimate business-when He gives the word and gives the direction and you follow, the fish will come. The word of Christ indicates the line of success, success as He understands it, success not merely because you must eat to live, but success because He wants successful men for further service. Therefore He stands all night on the shore watching, listening to the splashing, knowing the emptiness, planning. Then in the morning, when



the limit of endurance is reached, He throws the word that arrests your attention. Perhaps you cannot go down in the morning to business—He lays you up with a headache or some sickness. You have worn yourself right out, and still you won't listen to Him, so He sends you to bed for a few days. When He has got you listening quietly He says, "There is the spot where the fish are. That is where you are wrong, and here is where you can get right. Now get right, and take hold of your work and you will succeed."

3. After He has filled their boat with fish, He calls them to breakfast. He calls them from their fishing to breakfast with Himself. What does that mean? For us it means that He not only teaches us to succeed in life, as He interprets success and as success bears upon the larger life, but He calls us away from the fish and away from the boat and away from all toil and worry and discouragement; calls us from success, calls us to some place where we can have a time of fellowship with Him, to breakfast. It is good to be a fisherman. It is a good thing to have the courage to toil all night, to keep throwing that net and hauling it in although there is not a fish in sight. It is a good thing to meet your day's toil and your day's battle, to play the man. That is good. It is a good thing, too, when fish come your way. God gives success to every man that can stand it. But He does more. He says, "Now, My partner, here is something better

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o you remember Peter, James, and John, that night in the garden."



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THE DAWN BY GALILEE



than fish. Come, let us sit down and have breakfast together." The disciples forgot their fish when they went to breakfast with their Lord. The man who can be entrusted with loads of gold is the man who loves something better than gold. The man to whom Christ gives success, as the world counts it, is the man to whom fellowship with Christ is more than the success the world gives.

This was the second time He did this thing. When first He called these men to serve Him, you remember He found them busy fishing. He didn't say, "You haven't got fish there, your boat is empty, come with Me." No! He said, "Go out and throw the net yonder, where it is good deep sea," and He filled up their boat; and then He said, "Come now, leave your fish. I have something better for you—fishing for men." I believe the man who is successful in business is the man God wants to follow to greater success in the King's Business.

"Come and eat with Me." Where did He get that breakfast, I wonder? Where did He ever learn to cook the food? Where did He get the bread? Not one of us knows, and it is better so. If we knew the place we would go and hunt it up for ourselves, and leave Him alone. But because He keeps His storehouse hid away, we, when we are hungry, come to Him, and He spreads before us the bread and the fish. Is



it not pathetic that we come to the Lord Jesus Christ only when we have to come? And is not it wise of Him, and very loving, that He will not tell us where to get things unless we come right to Him? Jesus is far more anxious to have our friendship than our fish, and Jesus is far more anxious that we should have His fellowship than all the fish in Tiberias. He puts a large value upon a breakfast with Him. What does it mean?

I was invited once in Edinburgh to breakfast. It was during the General Assembly, and dinners and teas were all taken up. It was pretty early. I didn't care very much about going. But I went—not for the buns and coffee which they always give you in Scotland: I went for the talk there would be. I met some of the orightest men in Scotland; some of the brightest men in the world were there. When they were through the preliminary of buns and coffee and fish, they went at the real breakfast—interchange of thought. When you ask people to dinner you often make the mistake of feeding them so well that they forget you and your friends. I want my friends to come to see me; not to see my turkey, but myself.

Now Jesus wants people to come to Him, not for the fish breakfast or for the bread, but for the conversation with Himself. Breakfast will pass away, but the thoughts will remain. I shall never forget the

things I heard at certain dinners and breakfasts and teas. I shall never forget some of the things I heard over a lunch-table in Philadelphia with some of my friends and fellow workers there. You will never forget some of the things you heard at some dinner-table. You will forget what you ate, but will you forget the thing your friend said to you? will you forget how your heart warmed up? Will you forget this feeling-how good it is to have a friend like that? And so when Jesus Christ invites us, calling us from our business to fellowship, He means that we should get hold of the thoughts in His heart by listening to Him talking to us, that we should understand some of the big thoughts in His mind, the big joys in His heart. What did He talk to them about, I wonder? I know. He talked to them about the great triumph of the cross. said to them, "You remember that night when you all forsook Me because you were afrail of the cross? Do you know that cross is the most glorious thing in history? Do you remember, Peter, James, and John, that night in the garden? I was afraid that night, but I shall never be afraid again. Do you remember when I came back from the olive-trees, with streaks of blood down My face? John, do you remember when you stood there, just when the blood was dropping at the foot of the cross, when I gave My mother to you? My heart was breaking then because I could not see quite

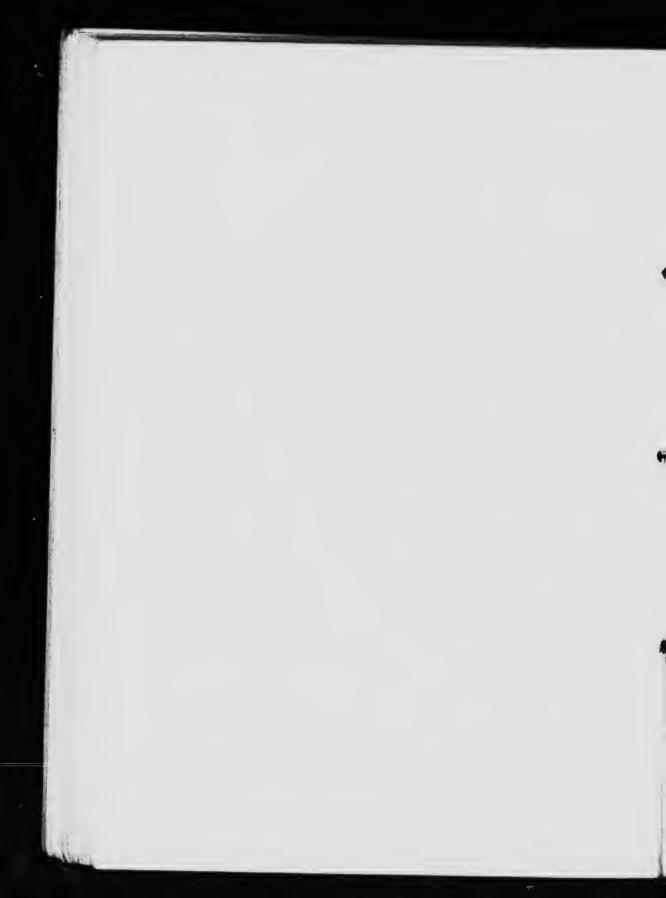
THE DAWN BY GALILEE

clearly through that awful gloom. But the cross is glory now. There will never be for Me any more tears or blood. I will never be separated from My beloved disciples or mother or brother." These are the things He would talk about until the bread-and-fish breakfast were forgotten. What great thoughts! How He opened to them His great heart, told them of the great joys that were thrilling Him through and through, and then how He told them of what He meant them to do! How He laid out for them His plans, until not a man of them would go back to Tiberias to fish any more!

When Jesus bids us breakfast with Him, when He invites us to His house and seats us at His table, what does He feed us on? He feeds us on His own great thoughts, the thoughts of how He, the Son of God, became man, and how He, for love of men, the sinful. sorrowing hosts of men, broke His mighty heart, and by dying for them won a way to glory. He talks to us about such themes as these until we see what God's love means and feel how good it is to have a part with Him in the salvation of the world. That is how the Master lifts men out of the mean and sordid and base things of life up to the larger life, and the more glorious life, and the more splendid service He has for those who are partners with Him in His kingdom and glory.



eter went out into the night and wept bitterly."



II

We have come back with the men from their fishing; we have gathered about the fire on the sea-shore, and, with awe in our hearts and yet with a feeling of comradeship, have sat down on the sands to take what the Master provided for our morning meal. Now let us rise and follow Peter and the Master up the beach a little and stand over here and talk.

This is really the restoring of the disciple to his place in the ranks of the workers. Not very long ago he had read himself out of those ranks by shamefully denying this his Lord; disowned Him when there was none to own Him. Afraid for his life, he denied his Lord when his Lord was being done to death by His foes. It was a cruel thing. It was a base thing. It was a mean, cowardly thing. As Peter thought it over, his heart penetrated by that look that flashed from his Master's eye across the little fire in the courtyard, he went out into the night and he wept bitterly. Those tears of his were the beginning of his return. No man can easily deny his Lord. No man can deny, without following tears, who comes back to Him. Where he spent the night I know not, but next day, strange to say, you find him once more haunting the places where the other disciples are. There are those, when they do wrong and are guilty of some mean sin, who think the only

course for them is to avoid the company of the honourable and the pure and the loyal-hearted. If they do so, they do so to their loss and their destruction. The only hope for the man who denies his Lord is that he haunt the places where Jesus is wont to be and the people who are Jesus' friends. Where Peter met the risen Lord first none of us know. There is an exquisite reserve now and then appearing in the story of Jesus Christ, but none more exquisite than this that draws the curtain over the meeting of the Master and the man who failed Him in the hour of His need. They met somewhere alone. They had their talk out together. I do not know what Peter did. I like to think of him with his face in the dust and his arms around those wounded feet. I like to think of the passion of self-reproach and the agony of shame and tears that broke his heart as he confessed his sin to his Lord. But I like more to think of the kingly word of grace that lifted the sinner up and said to him, "Be at peace; it is all forgiven." I like to think of Christ that day who would not lay it up against this man that he had been so base. For behind Peter I come creeping, hoping for forgiveness, for Peter's mercy.

This scene, then, is the restoring of Peter to the ranks of the disciples, to the ranks of the workers for Christ. And these two words are synonyms, "disciple" and "worker," "disciple" and "servant."

These two words are the same in Christ's vocabulary, but not with us. We have the disciples, the Christians, and we have the Christian workers. Oh, if we had a Church made up, not of Christians, but of workers, where every man felt himself bound to be a worker! Oh, if the rest of us would go out, if we would just leave the Church, if we would just depart! "Oh," says the Christ, "oh, if thou wert only cold!" If they were only cold, how much better! If the merely Christian of us would take our names off the roll how much better the Church would be!

When Christ restores a man who has sinned grievously He restores him for work, not to get him to heaven. If any ne who reads these words has denied his Lord, and is not yet rescored to the ranks of the disciples, when he comes back it will be not for heaven's sake, but for work's sake. Christ is anxious for one thing, He is anxious for one thing only, and that is that those He calls His sheep or lambs should be attended and fed. He has no other ambition, He has no other aim, no other, at least, that we know of. As far as we read, His heart is filled with this ancient longing and yearning for those He calls His sheep and His lambs. And He looks amid the ranks of the sinners like us, the deniers like us, who come creeping back for pardon. He looks among us for those to whom He may safely give the care of His lambs and f His sheep. And the



lesson we learn from His talk with Peter in the morning by the lake, is that the only equipment for service to Christ is love for Christ.

If I had the opportunity I should like to take out of my congregation, and out of other congregations, half a dozen men, men who can think clearly and practical men, and ask them, if I dared, "Do you really love Christ?" I wonder if the thing is known among us. Is it known? Are there in our Christian Churches large companies of men and women who can, with true, full meaning, say, one by one, "I love Jesus Christ"? I believe that those who kept the faith in the past, some of them whom I have known, could say it. I am coming to feel, more and more, that the religion of Jesus Christ is to be tested in this generation as it has never yet been tested. I believe this: that one generation dies for its faith, the next generation lives upon the faith of its fathers, and the next generation begins to die for its faith again. Where we are I am not quite sure. Thank God, in every generation there are those who keep the faith, and to whom Christ is very real and very precious; but in some of the generations these are not the many, but the few.

Looking back over the history of the Church, we make this startling discovery—that in the mind of the apostles, in the mind of the early Christian Church, in the mind of those who in every age revived the Christian



like to think of him with his face in the dust and his arms round those wounded feet "



religion, there existed, as a very great reality, a passion of love for Christ. Think for a moment. Let us begin with the a. 's. Peter cannot write a letter without his pen sarring on to this word-love for Jesus Christ, "whom," he says, "having not seen, ye love." And he knew them well. Again he said, "Unto you who believe, He is precious." When we come to Paul, of course Paul's great heart is one living flame. It is like a fountain of love in his hot passion for the Christ who redeemed him. "The love of Christ," he says, explaining how it was that people counted him mad, "the love of Christ constraineth me. I am content to be counted mad." "To me," he said, another time, "to live is Christ." And again he said, nearing the end of his life, "I know not which to do. I would like to remain with you, but to go away and be with Christ is far better." There are maidens who will go from the old land to meet their lovers in the new world, so great And they leave home and father and is their love. mother and kindred and beloved Scotland, or Ireland, or England, and come all the way across the sea under this mysterious passion of love. To Paul, dear as were his friends, it was dearer to him to be with Christ. Whatever may be true of you or me, let us write it down as true of this great typical man of Christ that the passion of his heart was love for Christ; so much so that one day he broke forth in this terrific cursing:

"If any man love not my Lord Christ, let God curse him." How terrific must be the love that speaks in words like these!

We are not surprised to find that Christ expected such love. He said one day to those who were gathering about Him nibbling at His religion, hoping to get something good from it, hanging on to the fringe of His new faith, not willing to bear the cross after Him; to those He said, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. He that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." Let us pause a moment. Let us ask, as fathers and mothers, "Do we love Christ that way, more than our children, our boys and girls?" Let us ask the young man, "Do you love Christ more than your mother?" That is what Jesus meant. Now it may be-I take comfort out of this-it may be that, though at the first blush we would be inclined to say, "No, I love my boy more than I love my Saviour"; "No," the young man may say, "I love my mother more than all the world"-it may be that, pushed by life and life's strenuous demands, and driven back against the experience of our sins and our sorrows, we would come one by one to confess, "Yes, more than son or daughter, more than husband, more than wife, I love my Saviour." That is the ideal that Christ has of His disciple. And it is when a man comes to that ideal that Christ

puts His hand upon him and says, "Now then, do My work."

You ask why this is. Why is it other things will not do in the service? Why cannot a man be a servant, a worker for Christ, and yet not be a lover of Christ? The answer is that service follows loving. If you love yourself you will serve your sweet and beautiful self. If you love your wife, your joy is to serve your wife. Love is the thing that conquers self, and nothing else will. Love is the most potent of all the passions that sweep over our hearts-this kingly, godly, mighty thing that is like to God Himself. So Christ attaches service to the regnant passion of love, and lovers only know how to serve man, woman, or God. Yet, and because love is so terrific a master and so kingly a passion, when we are asked to attach it to our religious service, we hesitate. We like to substitute, to buy ourselves off from loving with something else; and the man will work for his Christ and his faith, will fight for his Christ and his faith, will pour out his money for his religion and his Church and his God, will give himself to arduous toil and self-denial, if he may be excused from loving his Christ with all his heart. But work will not do, and suffering will not do, unless work and wealth and suffering mean to express to Christ this all-compelling, all-absorbing passion of love to Him.

Well, are we satisfied that, whatever else we can do, we cannot work for Christ unless we love Him? can build churches, you can keep laws, you can engage in forms of Christian work; you can be kind and loving and just and true in many things and many ways; but you are deried a part in what Christ calls this service of His unless you be a lover of your Lord. If you want anything else the choice is wide for you to take. if there should be in any heart a yearning really to do the work that Jesus wants His disciples to do, the one work He has in this world; if you have any desire to rank there, there is only one equipment for it: it is that you become a lover of the Christ. I wonder if that is possible for us in this twentieth century; I wonder if it is possible for us who have inherited our religion, which has not cost us one pang. How easily we have come to follow Christ, and how we have somehow avoided the cross! But is it possible still to us to be real lovers of Christ? I would like to think it was. I would like to think it possible for us who call ourselves by His sacred name, who do His work, icuitate His example, and are following Him; I would like to think it possible for us to experience this love. I would like to think that hearts that are loyal would also be full of love. Let this come to pass and your service would be spontaneous and you would be a delight to the Lord you are seeking to serve. All that

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dragging of you by the neck of your conscience would go; all that lashing of you by the terrors of your conscience would disappear. You would be eager! seeking opportunities of service, your money would be flowing where Christ pointed the way. I would like to think that it is possible for people like us to fall into love with Christ.

Think of what we are trying to do. Did anybody ever hear of Him being seen? Did anybody ever touch Him? Is He anywhere? Is He real at all? That is the first thing. He is in the Book. So is Napoleon, and so is Wilberforce, and so is John Knox, and so is many another great man. Do we love John Knox? We revere his memory. Did the Old Guard love Napoleon after he had passed from their sight? Yes, they died for him. Do we to-day love those great names with whom we are personally associated in the history of our faith? We revere their memory, and in a sense we love then. Is loving Christ the same thing? Yes, it is that; but it must be more than that, because if Christ is to us real—and if we are to love Him He must be real—then He must be alive, must be moving among us, must be touching our lives, must be with every live man. So it is imperative, if we are to love the Christ, that we conceive Him to be alive. Can we work back from our experience to the possession of this faith? Can we work back through



our own experience to this position that the Christ is as much alive and as truly among us as our nearest friend?

In my despair at this business I worked it out like this: I started from the point of having the conviction in my head, but an absolute and utter want of the conviction in my heart, that Christ was and that I could touch Him with anything like affection. I worked at it from my latest experience of failure and of sin. That was my point of departure. That was my gateway to a new conviction, which I now have, that Jesus I looked at sin, and the horror of it made me look around for a Saviour. I knew better than to try to gain self-respect and a sense of purity by promises of amendment. Most men know better than that, knew that there must be something to make God say to me, "You have sinned, but you are forgiven." I looked around at the horizon of my experience. I looked in every direction. The whole world was blank, and I said: "There is none to whom I can appeal, unless this figure that moves toward mc from that ancient history, this figure of the Sin-bearer, is real. If He is alive, if He can come to me and take my hand and turn my face up to God and say to God, 'This is My brother, he is not to be condemned,' then I can stand before God unafraid." This was where I found the Christ, living and to be loved, and it dawned upon me that this



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There is none to whom I can appeal, unless this figure that moves toward me from that ancient history, this figure of the Sui-Bearer is real."



was where that greater man than I found Him. was the spot where the apostle who loved Him so passionately f und Him who loved me and gave Himself for me. This was the spot where Peter found Him. This is where the Christian Church finds Christ, at the spot where guilt is lifted off and a sense of cleanness comes in. If you don't know that you never really loved Christ. You may pay your money out for His cause. For your father's and mother's sake, for the sake of all that have gone before you, or for sheer honour's sake, you may serve truly and long, but you have never known the glad service that comes from love until, in the hour of your self-condemnation, there moves to your side the Bearer of men's sins and you feel that He has borne away your sin too. So I believe it is possible even for those who are called hard, shrewd, level-headed, twentieth-century, business Christians, who give their money so freely, I believe it is possible even for them to be turned into lovers of the Christ; and if you dig down into their hearts, where they keep the secrets of their lives, you will discover that, close by every sin, there is a little spring of flowing love to Christ.

Why is it that love is so important in this service? Don't you see? Why won't money do? Oh, don't you know? You are trying to help the poor with money—you are hurting them. You are trying to help the





sick by gifts-no good. You are trying to make the world better by everything but love; and only love can feed the hearts of men, only love can feed the lambs and feed the sheep. So, because they are lying for love, yearning for love, forsaken for love, departing from God for want of love, lovers are sent to them, lovers feed them, lovers tenderly heal their wounds. "Lovest thou Me, Peter?" "Yes, my Lord." "Then I can trust you with the broken hearts of the world." "Lovest thou Me, thou son of John?" "Lord, Thou knowest I love Thee." "Then I can trust the deniers with you, all these poor sheep of mine with you, because you have a tender, loving heart." You can do much with your gifts, with your powers, with your other things. I would not despise them; but you will not touch one of the sheep or one of the lambs, you will not help any broken hearts, unless you have in you the heart of a lover of Jesus Christ.





