

## Chapter One The Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ

### The Christ of the Doorstep

*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me (Revelation 3:20).*

*From The War Cry (New York), December 3, 1921.*

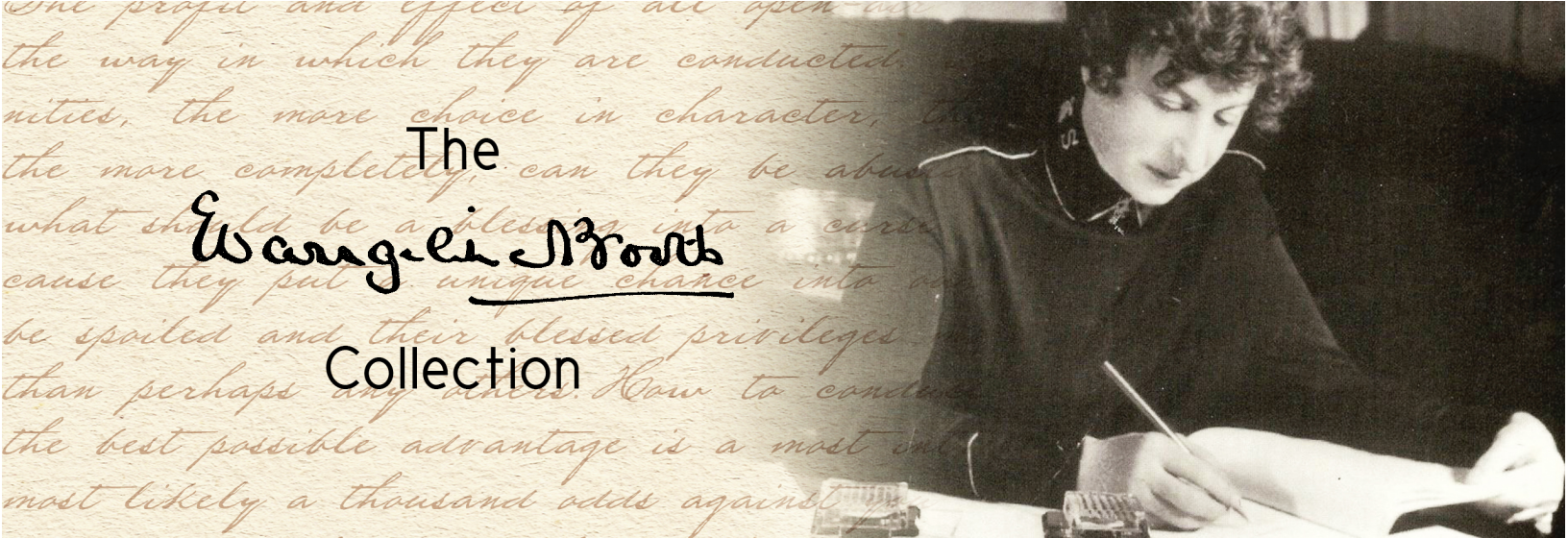
This text reveals to our minds a vision of Christ which is one of the most beautiful presented in the Bible.

As we read, our eyes rest upon Him as we saw Him in the picture-books of childhood. The tall, slender, delicate form, with a countenance of faultless beauty – the faultless beauty of blameless purity – standing at the door. And it is a closed door!

The picture impresses me first with the universally recognized fact that with all dwellings, no matter how resplendent with architectural achievement, or how lowly in crude and impoverished appearance, it is the door that is the acme of importance.

It is the door that shuts out the enemy, the door that opens to the friend. It is at the door the workman lays down his tools. It is at the door the traveler shakes from his garments the dust of the day's journey. It is the door that stands ajar for the girl or the boy who has wandered.

It is at the door of my own home that comes before me as I write, my father and mother upon its threshold, their arms locked like the interlacing branches of a great oak, keeping all the hurt and harm from within. Sometimes father opened it to us, but oftenest mother, when we returned merry from the game, or with bleeding finger or scratched knee. I see her now like an angel awaiting our entrance, her voice, as she called our names, as sweet as the changings that broke over Bethlehem.



Ah! I have grown up since then. I have passed in and out of some of the world's most significant entrances, but no door like that door. Angels encamped about it, and as I write, all the tender memories, lights and shadows, joys and sorrows, losses and affections, with their height and depth and length and breadth and eternity of meaning coming down to me through the years, I find laden with the blessings of that doorstep. Let all the hosts of heaven sing the praises of God forever for the Christ of the Doorstep!

I learn again from the picture that God is near at hand. He is quite close. We have not to travel a long way to find Him. So many of us, if we want to meet or talk with our friends, or even our relations father or mother or child, have to take a long journey.

A minister's little boy of four years of age, on his way home one Sabbath, after hearing his father preach on the text, "Blessed are the pure in heart," asked the question, "Where is God, father?" "In heaven," the minister, replied. "When you took me just over to Uncle Harry's farm you had to carry me most of the way, so it is quite certain I shall never see God." Since then he has learned, and is preaching to the heathen on the missionary fields, that God is quite near – nearer than Uncle Harry. We need not even lift our voices when we speak to Him. We need not even lift our voices when we speak to Him. He can hear a whisper. He can hear what is lower than a whisper, for He says: "Before they call I will answer."

How, in our ignorance, we blunder, and how we suffer through our blunders! If we could but learn our lessons without making so many Mistakes!

Some of us think there must of necessity be a toilsome journey to travel to reach this great, all-saving, all-helping, all redeeming God. That there must be some great expense of money, of effort or of learning, many years spent in scientific research.

Some of us think we must attack every positive of God with a negative; that we must refute infinite plan and arrangement with finite reasoning and questioning, and see if the great unerring Creator can stand the test of the little, insignificant creature; if the sun can withstand the glimmer of the rush light. So we travel along making these big mistakes.





Some of us think we must travel the long, toilsome journey of good deeds – sewing for the poor, nursing the sick. Some, that we must sacrifice, and even some that we must do penance or submit to physical suffering.

All these things maybe be good and helpful. A great number of them are very desirable and very blessed. I say to those who have given their mite or their cup of cold water, go on! The only change I would suggest is that you make it more and give it oftener. The service you have rendered others will, of all that has to do with earth, be the thing that you will care most to think upon when you are dying. But no service or suffering or sacrifice or knowledge will of itself bring Jesus into your heart with His peace and happiness and salvation.

Christ does not stand at the end of the avenues of service or scientific research or years of sacrificial deeds or a long period in the theological seminary. In fact, we often become so absorbed in our own righteous productions, so concentrated upon the development of our own reputation, so elated over the promulgation of our own ideas as to rights and wrongs, and laws and justice, so fascinated because of the thousand questions we can ask more than the ordinary man as to God's sovereignty, Christ's divinity and the eternal decrees that, like Saul of Tarsus, after sitting at the feet of Gamaliel, the greatest religious teacher of his day, we miss Jesus altogether.

We are running with heated thirst and quickened feet down those mistaken avenues to find Him, when, to the everlasting joy of the hosts of all the redeemed on earth and in heaven, He stands upon our threshold, upon our doorstep, at our door!

So simple! We cannot be saved as philosophers, but as little children. We cannot go to heaven by the way of Athens, but by the way of Bethlehem. Not by the Mars Hill of reason, but by opening the door of the heart.

O sinner! Christ is near you. Throw out your arms in repentance now, and the first thing you will strike will be a beam, and that beam will be the Cross.



Again, I learn from the text that Christ is not only within the most limited reach, but that with the humility infinite He stands upon our own level – on our doorstep. Think of it!

He might have been near us, but in an elevated position. He might have stood within our reach, but by the evidence of His greatness, His power and the insignia of His authority been separated from us by an impassable gulf. But here He is, the King of heaven and earth; His throne overtopping all thrones; His dominion embracing all heavens, all earths, all suns, standing on our doorstep.

We have, by courtesy and gracious condescension, sometimes being called into the presence of great dignitaries, but the trappings of their greatness have made a gap between us we could not pass. We have felt awkward and embarrassed in their presence. Their whole attitude and appearance remind us all the time of their vast superiority.

But not so with this Christ. He steps down to our platform. He has taken our form upon Him. He is dressed in our garments. His hands are gnarled and knotted by our tools of labor, His feet bruised upon our stony steps, His face saddened by our sorrows, His body wearied by our toils. He stands upon our level!

Christ stepped down to the level of those around Him when He was upon earth – to the level of all fisherman when He sat eating His bread on the ropes and rigging at the back of Peter's boat: to the varying levels of the multitude when He sat at the great picnic and divided bread which blossomed into greater and greater loaves: when He asked the woman at the well to give Him to drink and put His divine lips to her crude goblet. So He waits at the door to put His lips to the cup of your distresses, your griefs and your tears.

O ye of the poor man's lot! Ye who carry the hod of bricks up the ladder on the wall; ye who ring the pickax down in the gold shaft; ye who have felt the smite of the tempest at mast-head; ye who stand amid the flying spindles and straining straps of the great factory; ye who have sinned and in sinning have broken hope and heart and home and faith and prospects; ye mothers whose little children go to school without any breakfast, despite the ceaseless plying of your needle and thread; ye who sit in the rear tenement basement overworked, overtaxed, overtroubled; I





point you to the Christ of the doorstep! He stands upon your dilapidated threshold, knocking, knocking at the shabby door. Let Him in! He will take the bitter out of the cup.

But perhaps the sweetest thought in this text is that if we will but open the door Christ will come in and sup with us.

I see in this intimate touch the great principle of equality and fraternity. Surely this doorstep, sitting-down-at-the-table Christianity is world-wide democracy. While authority will ever, and must necessarily ever, have its place, and God has willed that there shall be leaders, and masters and superiors in every sphere, yet this Christ of Peter's boat and the Samaritan well and the cottage tea-table made the scepter and the shovel brothers.

### **Bring All Men Together**

Tapestry and lace must not despise calicoes. Epaulette has no right to be unmindful of blacksmith's apron. Fricasseed fowl should not speak disparagingly of plain bread. There is nothing in this Christ of the Doorstep that causes cathedral to look down upon sailors' bethel. The whole Gospel teaching is to bring together the hearts of men.

There are those who do not like the idea. They say there are racial differences that stretch a gulf man between and mana that can never be bridged: differences that will ever make those of certain isles and certain lands and certain hues of skin less worthy than others. But Paul knocks that theory down when, standing in the presence of one of the most wealthy and learned audiences of the world, he proclaims in the name of God this democratic doctrine! "God hath made of one blood all nations of men." They started from one Eden, they fell in one transgression, the redeemed are saved by the one and only source of Divine Grace, and are to dwell forever in the one eternal home.

But you must let Him in, you must open the door. Christ will not force an entrance. No virtue or pardon or grace or peace will come to us by compulsion. We must seek, we must ask, we must open.



The beautiful picture of Christ knocking at the door painted by W. Holman Hunt, was first refused exhibition by the art critics for the reason that the artist had not made any provision for the door to be opened on the outside. When asked for the reason he said: "The conception is figurative of Christ pleading for an entrance at the door of the heart, and the human heart cannot be opened from the outside." Many a lad would have won his lassie if he could have opened the door of her heart. But only we ourselves can open our hearts. Oh, how dreadful, how appalling to have this all-helping, loving Christ so near and yet so far! Upon the threshold, but the door closed!

### Kept His Heart's Door Barred

When one of my officers said to a dying, suffering, old man this summer, "Christ will help you," he replied: Well, He never has. Christ has never done anything for me." No; because although with a sister as a Salvationist, a good, loving wife, and Christ on his doorstep through seventy years, he kept the door of his heart bolted and barred against Him.

A few days ago a lady told me: "I found no comfort in Jesus when my two babies died of pneumonia." No! Because, although Christ had been patiently knocking since she was a little child, she had kept the door closed.

Some people keep Christ out because they are ashamed of the condition of their souls. They intend one day to open unto Him, when they have put out of their lives evil, foul practices. A man said to me during the camp meetings at Old Orchard: "How can I sing hymns, mingle with the good or pray, with my wicked life? I must prepare myself to be a Christian."

No! do not wait to make preparation. Sometimes, when a child or mother is sick, the wife of one of the rich men of the village will visit a poor home. As soon as word is received, oh, what a scurrying and scampering around in a pitiful attempt to improve appearances! The one clean cloth is spread to hide the scars and stains of the old rickety table; a mat, little more than a rag, is laid over the filthiest part of the floor; a clean pinafore covers the dirty threadbare dress of the little girl. And the squalid, foul condition of the room is somewhat covered. But not so with this Christ of the doorstep! He would rather see us as we are!





He will cleanse the room Himself. He says so. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean," is God's way and does not the Apostle Paul say of the man in Christ: "Old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new!"

### **Het Him In! Let Him In!**

The State of Indiana is called the "Hoosier State." This is because the early settlers were afraid to have door-knobs or any kind of latch that could be opened from the outside lest their enemies should surprise them. And so when there was a knock at the door, they would cry out: "Who's here?"

It is not without purpose that there is no means of opening the door of our hearts from the outside. The enemies of our souls are every cunningly trying to gain admittance. We cannot afford to open to every knock, and so, like the wary settlers of old, we find it wise to cry, "Who's here?" Sweeter than the chimes that ring over the hills of paradise is the answer: "It is I, be not afraid – I, the Prince of Peace, the Babe of Bethlehem, the Christ of God!"

### **Last Opportunity for Repentance**

Oh, ye who are sitting by a desolated hearth; ye who are wresting with suffering and trials; ye who know not which way to turn for trouble; ye who are burdened with sin, arise and fling wide the door! The Judgement is coming, eternity is coming; this very hour may be your last opportunity for repentance. The heart of the Eternal God yearns for you. He has been knocking many a long day at the door of your soul.

When the baby died He knocked; when you lay in the hospital He knocked; through every sunny day and every stormy night, and every harvest gathering and every Spring morning, and every Autumnal withering. He knocked and knocked and knocked.

Hear Him and let Him into your heart He waited for you all last year, and all the year before and all your life. He has waited for you with blood on His brow and tears in His eyes, and two outstretched mangled hands of love, knocking, knocking, knocking!



Oh, let Him in! He will bring comfort dearer than can be found in a mother's arms. As in the midnight sky of Bethlehem, He will break through your darkest night with angelic song: He will bring pardon. Under the first step of His feet sins of a lifetime will perish. Remember, He made a palace of a stable because the door was open to Him. He passed the inn by because the door was closed.

Your whole life will be laughing, praising, gladdening experience if you let Him in. Blessed be God for this unspeakable gift of Christ of the Doorstep!

### Christ as a Mother

*As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you (Isaiah 66:13).*

*From The War Cry (New York), May 13, 1916.*

Yes, I have written of "Christ the Pilot" navigating our barque through the voyage of life, for life is no calm lake, canopied with blue skies, but great, dangerous sea, billowed up with trouble and overhung with storm clouds threatening disaster.

I have written of "Christ the Shepherd," with weary, bleeding feet, and torn patient hands, scaling highest steeps and penetrating deepest chasms, looking for the one lost lamb, although ninety-nine were safe in the fold, for "all we like sheep have gone astray."

I have written of "Christ the Gardener," standing in our midst as one of life's humblest workmen, a most practical Savior, with understanding sympathy entering into close bonds with all the toilers of the world, for how apt we are to break down under our labors, as well as depart from a just and true course in our business without Jesus.

I have written of "Christ the Friend," standing close up to our hearts, making joy to the more joyous, sorrow bearable and burdens easy, for every heart at some time knows the vicissitudes of exquisite emotion, and into each life "some rain must fall."





I have written of "Christ the Light," rivalling all suns and paling earthly brilliance, making plain the traveler's path, shedding a gleam into the mariner's midnight and throwing across the "valley of the shadow" a shaft of resurrection light, because of all, one by one, earth's lightships sink, and without Him we find ourselves groping like the Egyptians of old in horror of a great darkness: and I have written of "Christ the Song," "Christ the Everlasting," "Christ the Wonderful," "Christ the Father," and many others.

But here I am attempting to write of Christ as a mother, and at the onset my mind is flooded with overwhelming suggestion.

All portrayals of Christ are wonderful, but as we stand spellbound before a masterwork, so our very hearts are held in wonder as we look upon this picture, which, in its intimate human revelation of matchless love divine, captivates and conquers as beyond and over all.

There are one or two characteristics surrounding motherhood which, in all reverence, I would suggest as a worthy similitude of Christ.

### **Mother's Preference**

In the best, happiest and most carefully regulated families, there are favorites. It may be concealed, never admitted, fought against, but no matter, there it is. There are those among the children – that boy or that girl – to whom father's and mother's heart goes out with something special in their affection. With father it is generally for his son – usually the firstborn. That high hopes are flung over that little head brimming full of mischief! Father says, "That's a fine, bright boy. He will take my place in the business one day. He will perpetuate my name. He shall not be handicapped by lack of education as I was. Never mind if I have to toil and sacrifice to send him to college – he's worth it. He is a great boy, that boy."

But how different with mother. Her favorite is the delicate one. She who can never bear what the others can or do what the others do; she who has the awful setback of a crooked spine or blind eyes or a defective heart. It is she for whom mother makes her great sacrifices; it is she for whom mother stays home to make happy when the rest have gone to the party or the circus; it is she



for whom mother puts aside the most dainty portion of the meal; it is this little, pale face mother kisses the oftenest; this little frail form which she carries in her arms the most tenderly.

Yes, the little hunchback or the little lad whose mind is defective or the one who will have to go all through life on crutches is mother's favorite.

As a mother, our natural weaknesses and finite setbacks only draw out His great heart the more toward us. This must be the explanation of how exceptionally happy and joyous we so often find those who are sorely afflicted.

The sick room of dear Ensign May Rogers – although she has been bedridden for eighteen years and unable to move any part of her suffering body for eleven years – had such a supernatural sunshine in it that as soon as I was in her presence I knew it to be the audience – chamber of the King of kings.

Oh, take courage and comfort, you who feel yourselves so weak and wanting! Remember, that not only is it written, "a bruised reed shall He not break," but that very afflictions and frailties will the more endear you to His heart. Service rendered to Him despite your natural handicap is of so much greater worth than service rendered out of every advantage, and if in your voyage toward the blest shore you are best with human disadvantages, remember, as a mother, He careth for you the more.

### **Mother's Understanding**

With the mother and the child small grievances and distresses or large. The broken toy or the cut finger or the bumped head may not be much to father. He is sorry to see the little one cry, but he's so engaged with life's sterner matters that he cannot attach any importance to such infinitesimals. He says "Oh that's nothing; it will soon be better; run along!"

But mother gauges the significance of the grievance by the extent of the sorrow caused the child and seeks to repair the break, no matter what it may be or bind up the wound or try her best to





make less the disappointment. Just as big as the trouble is to the little one, or the young boy, her understanding sympathy makes it big to her.

And it is just this that makes us even now — long years after her sweet presence has passed beyond our reach — in our hearts tell her our troubles still, for she always understood what our troubles were to us and, although we are children of much older growth, we have never found anyone else who understands quite as she did. She would always beg us to tell her anything all, saying, "No matter how great the mistake you have made or how disastrous the position in which you find yourself or how stupidly or wrongly you have acted, tell me all how it happened;" and we would know as we looked into the anxious, tender eyes that we could depend on the last drop of blood in the precious form to help us.

As a mother. Is this not what it means — "come let us reason together?" "Whatever the nature of your sins tell Me about them, and though they be read like Crimson they shall be as wool whatever the character of your sorrows, tell Me about them, and 'as one whom his mother comforteth so I will comfort you.' "Is this not what it means — he is "acquainted with grief? "All grief, every grief, and that in his limitless knowledge and boundless kindness he persuaded us to turn to Him and tell Him all our sorrows, our mistakes, our sins, and He will listen. He will understand, He will forgive, He will cleanse, He will dry our tears, and with that kiss which rivals every embrace known to men and gods He will seal us His.

### Mother's Patience

Of all vocations motherhood brings the greatest strain upon human forbearance. Mother's nerves maybe taxed by scrubbing floors and mending clothes by day and watching the sick infant by night, yet rarely does she give evidence that her endurance is breaking, rather throughout her great profession, with all its branches of tending and training, she shows that her patients grows but stronger with trial.

This is the reason there is no teacher like mother. Life's earliest lessons require such exceptional patients. It takes mother to teach the alphabet. Who without chiding or irritation would go over and over so many times the difference between M and N, and B and R?



Much has been written to extol and explain the wonders of Froebel and Montessori to the infant understanding, but how far short the fall of the ingenuity of mother! Countless means and measures suggest themselves to her mind whereby the difficult becomes easy in the seemingly unexplainable comprehensible. Look, for instance, at the clever and often amusing inventions by which she aids the child to grasp the multiplication table – sometimes by the use of apples, sometimes beads, sometimes bricks, inventions and plans which only she could devise.

Looking back to my own childhood I seem to see my mother as if it were but yesterday, with her loving, gentle face and soft, wondrous eyes, leaning over me at the piano. So simple and so plain she made these first sheets of music, with all the printed notes looking like a lot of fork-prongs engage in pugilistic combat. I see now the delicate hand upon the key-board, showing me over and over again the same exercise, note by note without the one impatient utterance, or one word as to my being slow or stupid, which would have so disheartened me.

Ah! Mothers are wonderful, and then nothing more wonderful than in their patience with their children.

As a mother. Our stupidity and slowness cannot tire Him out, and He never expects from us clearer vision or quicker understanding or more efficient service that is ours to give. He leads us, step-by-step, note by note, letter by letter. He does not crowd all our lessons upon us at once; does not ask all our sacrifices the same day. He measures out the exact weight of the burden for His children and then give strength accordingly. He is willing to wait for our souls to “grow in grace.” I believe this is the chief reason why His abundant mercy has veiled from our eyes the future, for what could more greatly intensify the acuteness of today’s sorrow if it didn’t have knowledge of tomorrow’s?

Oh, the ineffable Wisdom and incomparable tenderness of Christ’s school! He stooped down to our infantile mines and teaches us “line upon line, precept upon precept;” one day this, another day that. He has been teaching some of us thirty and some of us fifty years the same lesson, from the same book, and we do not properly know it yet, and yet it is so simple. Thousands of times





He has explained it to us in different ways — that one little word of five letters — T-R-U-S-T. We still stumble over it, yet God's patience is not exhausted.

If He has been as a schoolmaster He would have punished us; if as a father He would have been angry with us, but He is as a mother, and so He bears with us and leads us on, little by little, into a perfect knowledge of a perfect trust in Him, which makes life and death an unbroken morning.

### Mother's Forgiveness

In this mother's heart is enthroned, above every other value, forgiveness, for in her tremendous and boundless capacity to forgive she outstrips everything else that is human and comes closer to the Divine.

Look at her pardoning love following that wayward boy. With his broken promises piled like burned-out cinders in her heart; with her repeated expectations raised by his resolutions earthquaked into heaps of ruin; with all the flowering of his promising manhood blighted ere it bloomed before her hopeful gaze; with all the ruins of his early wreck staring her in the face, yet that undying, tenacious, immortal something, which alone finds life in the breasts of mothers, rises up and refuses to abandon him — to let him go — to declare him hopeless, but again and again, and for the seventy-seventh time will hope, will forgive, will trust, will have bright visions, will pray, will believe, will expect, although probabilities declare to her that she is only lengthening out the long suffering path for her poor feet to tread.

When does a mother give a boy up? Where is the milestone that marks the end of the travel of a mother's heart after him? No! Away on the highest hill, down in deepest sea, across widest range, she is before him.

I see that poor, wandering son crossing the seas and putting half the world between him and the one who gave him birth, but he cannot get away from mother's heart. I see him flinging the last remnants of respectability behind him in a deeper plunge into infamy and crime, but his mother's heart goes down with him into the darkness.



I see his waywardness turning from him every other well-wisher, every other helper, every other friend, but his mother's heart is closer yet, and no matter how branded and sin-stained he comes back to her he will find her waiting with her wounded breast ready for him to lean his poor bruised head upon, and her arms outstretched to gather him into love and pardon.

As a mother, God is slow to give a man up. He gives the wanderer chance after chance to prove His promise to pardon and to save.

Walk through the dismal corridors of our penal institutions, look into the faces of those who haunt the underworld, and tell me if anything else but Divine love can account for the very existence of these forlorn hopes. They have been given up by society, given up by their friends, given up by their families, given up by their own despairing souls; but all their wickedness and abominations have not carried them out of the reach of Christ's pardoning forgiveness. He has not given them up. He still puts opportunities in their way. He still makes mercy's call to ring in their ears. He still sends rays of light to illumine their souls' midnight.

A human savior said to me, "That man is irreclaimable; words are wasted on him; effort thrown away. "

"Well," I replied, "Christ has not given him up; He still see something in him to pity, something deep under all the chaos to which to appeal; something — oh, miracle of compassion — something He died to redeem!"

Who can measure the range of such pardon? Who can sound the depths of such mercy? Have you who read this forgotten it? Did you say, "I have sinned away my day of grace; I have lost all clean up on the One who died for me?" Do you say, "I am lost?" No, not lost, not beyond help! You will be if you go on — yes, by the on alterable and in affable laws of judgment — you will be lost if you go on, but not lost yet, for God has not given you up.

His nail-pierced hands are outflung to meet you, and his hand is as a mother's hand. What it touches, it heals. It is not a sheriff's hand, this hand which would take hold of you. Not a hard





hand, a cold hand, an enemy's hand. It is a gentle hand, a soft hand, a sympathetic hand — even as a mother's. There is no one like mother can put a child to sleep.

When the party is over, and the games are done and the guests are all gone, it is no easy work to get the child to sleep, and as soon as nurse or aunty or the big sister ceases to pat the back or take their foot from the rocker, the large eyes open and the work must be done all over again.

Even father is of no use here, but mother gathers up the little thing and, sitting in the rocking chair, swings back and forth, and there is an opiate in the arms that circle the little body and a sedative in the soothing breast upon which the head is laid and a lullaby as of distant bells in the voice which softly sings, and before the old clock calls out another half hour flown the child is asleep.

As a mother, God has His own way of putting His child to sleep.

We need not fear that dread hour. He will gather us as a mother gathers her child, in His arms everlasting, and upon His breast will hush our weariness in to rest perpetual.

I think upon the day my mother died. She passed away in a little cottage by the sea. It was stormy, and the waves, which leapt high against the rugged rocks were so like the sorrow which struck hard against our breaking hearts. We were called to her bedside, and although for two long years we had expected it, it seems incredible to have to associate her with death. She had been so vital to us, such a forerunner, so triumphant in her individual warfare, so glorious in her self-forgetting service for others. How could we reconcile her splendid powers with the fact of dissolution?

But death was there. We could see it's a great shadow upon the precious face. The terrible suffering which had wrecked her was suddenly allayed, she was restful — quiet. She was beyond all speech. Her eyes, which held the brilliancy of stars to the last, passed from one child to another and then fastened upon my father's face — that face which had been the one face in all the world to her.



# The Wangeli North Collection

It seemed that she had an understanding with my father that if speech left her before death came, and if she realized Christ was with her in the valley, she would wave her handkerchief that she might tell her husband and her children all was well with her at the last. And so rallying her remaining strength she raised it up — up — up, once, twice, thrice. Only an instant it remain uplifted; then the worn, tired arm sank, but still the hand was raised, and when that could no longer be upheld, her thin forefinger moved back and forth, back and forth, then fell, the eyes closed, and she was asleep. But we had the message; we knew that she had found in the valley the One for whom she had looked, and that upon His breast He had given "His beloved sleep."

For all that time that precious finger of my dying mother, covered with the little white handkerchief signaling the triumph of grace in death will mean more to my soul's faith than all the theological books and scientific arguments history has ever known.

## Thou Shalt Call His Name Jesus

*Thou shalt call his name Jesus: For he shall save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).*

*From The War Cry (New York), December 25, 1926*

Much care must be exercised in the interpretation of Shakespeare's immortal question, "What's in a name?" If the answer is to be given with any semblance of discrimination or judgment. A mere negotiation is certainly not sufficient, for sometimes the whole story is in a name. A man's name becomes so inseparably identified with his life and character that it may be regarded as sort of a miniature biography with the high spots for good or evil starred in the preface. Or it may be likened to a face by which he is unmistakably and universally recognized.

There are names we cannot hear without a shudder; and there are names whose beloved cadences fall on our ears like divinely sacred music and are an inspiration to all men. Among these latter maybe mentioned "mother," the sum of all life's blessings; "friend," sweetest flower of altruism; "the baby," which vibrates perhaps the finest and most sensitive chords of the human heart.





Then there are the great names that stand out like a mountain peaks in the long history of man.

Moses, for all time, stands for exalted personal integrity, for constructive statesmanship, for legislation founded on the principles of eternity and sublime faith in God. Of David, the sweet singer of Israel, we invariably recall God's declaration that he was a man after his own heart. Paul, to whom was revealed the secret of secrets, the omnipotence of Divine love, is synonymous with Divine revelation. Alexander the Great, with all his glory, portrays the pitiable limitations of mere human ambition. Nero, "one compound of mud and blood" as his people called him, is a synonym for bestial brutality. Whenever we hear such names as Peter the Hermit, Savonarola, Wycliffe and Luther, we behold again the undimmed torches of truth with which they defied the darkness of superstition, overcame false doctrine, heresy and schism and blazed a trail throughout the ages for the progress of Christian faith.

At the name of Washington our pulses leap with enthusiastic patriotism, and before our mental vision there rises the noble form of that "statesman, soldier, patriotic, sage, revisor of creeds, teacher of truth and justice, achiever and preserver of liberty; the first of men, founder and savior of his country, father of his people, solitary and unapproachable in his grandeur." The name of Abraham Lincoln will ever stand for the two greatest forces of national life — liberty and union. Such a name as Frances Willard compels us to bow in reverence and admiration for the intellectual breadth and spiritual powers of her sex, in the realization of her message her memory will ever be monumental in the homes of America. Who can hear the name of William Booth, Founder of the Salvation Army, and not remember the man, the life, the service to the world, of the "Apostle of the Poor?"

But there is one name transcendentally unique in the wealth of its suggestion and meaning. A name presaged before birth and heralded above all others; a name that made heaven and earth to stand in inexpressible and mysteriously wonderment while angelic choirs proclaimed its natal morn. A name that flashed in the meteor that swung over Bethlehem hills, and let the Magi of the East to cross the desert trails that they might behold him. A name that appears the heart nature of Herod and convulsed his throne with fear. I need to pass by the Pharisical magnates of Jerusalem, but crown the lowly fisherman of Galilee as the Promised of the Lord Most High.



Wherever this name has traveled it has abolished the inhumane practices of heathen worship. It has broken the cords that bound the girl-widow to the funeral pyre. It has delivered little children from yawning-mouth crocodiles. It has penetrated the black pall of superstition and swept the midnight sky of heathendom with a blaze which all the powers of sin and hell can never extinguish.

And by what reason have such signs follow the progress of this name in its starlike course through the ages? The answer is writ in the language of heaven, in the fulfillment of prophecy. It is the name of the only Begotten of the Father, the supreme expression of the divine will for man's everlasting destiny — in all ages, for all colors and creeds. And just as the rays of the sun, in innumerable billions, come millions of miles in night - dispelling energy till not a vestige of darkness is left to more of the splendor of its meridian glory, so this name of Jesus will dispel all darkness from the souls and lives of men.

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

"Thou," addressed to Joseph: thus the divine purpose imposes human obligation. This is God's way, God's law from the beginning. "Shalt"— it appears to me that this shalt is an imperative assertion made by Jehovah, and that it is a very serious matter to interfere with. There was no alternative, no need for family discussion, no other name proceeding and no other name following. Through all the realms of Glory, through all the caverns of the lost, through the length and breadth of earth, His name forevermore is Jesus! That shalt of Almighty God remains for all time.

"Call" — tell it out, proclaim it from Zion's hill in the valley of Jehoshaphat, on Mount Olivet, in the Temple of Diana, in the slave marts of Europe, in the black holes of heathendom, in the royal corridors of kings and emperors, in the lowest regions of the wretched; wherever men huddle together in misery and sin, tell it out.

"His name" — it is His own name; it defines His personality; he proclaims His infinity; it declares His divinity. It is the name by which we shall ever honor His birth, life, death, resurrection and mediatory place at the throne of the Father in the skies — JESUS!





But the question is not yet fully answered. There is a miraculous, dawn-breaking, sin-pardoning in wound-healing reason; the whole world stood still in the angels flung down light over the midnight hills while heavenly choirs announced it; it was in the "glory to God," in the "peace on earth," in the "goodwill to men." "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."

I like the personal objective in the coming of our Lord — His people. There is the ring of patriotism in it. There is the admission of the greatest sorrow that ever shadowed the face of Him that sit on the throne in it. God wanted a people for His own, His very own, when the world was still in its cradle. He gave lands and herds and silver and gold and cities and palaces and princes and rulers to the people He had chosen; but, with pathos it is recorded, "He came on to his own, in his own received him not!" We know how they despised His marvelous gifts, how they forsook the unseen for the seen, how they treated His prophets with disdain, how they journeyed to the groves of the Philistines, how they substituted an earthly throne for the glory of the Shekinah, and finally, having lapsed into civil belligerency how they were destroyed by their enemies, shattered and scattered throughout the world.

Mother, father, can you imagine what would be your feelings if not one, but all of your children grow up to curse you, forsook the paths of their childhood, and "turned everyone to their own way?" And if you saw the whole world in similar rebellion would you not first, out of them all, if it were possible, select your own for succor and salvation? And with what infinitely more love and compassion God looked upon the back sliding of Israel! Consequently, the very first note of deliverance, echoing and re-echoing through the galleries of heaven and vibrating through every artery of earth, offered salvation to His people. I am one of those who believe that the time will come when our Savior "shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied."

Nevertheless, the reason for Jesus' coming was universal and all-comprehensive. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever so believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He came to bring salvation to all peoples.



What is wrong with the world? It is not lack of bread. It is not the wrath of man against man, nation against nation. There is a sense in which that evil cures itself. The big gaps in national and international strife had become wider and wider as time has gone on. War is spasmodic. Men cannot always be fighting.

Neither is that which is wrong with the world a lack of law and order. Regrettable as disorder is, it is not so rampant today as it has been in the history of peoples centuries gone by. One of the wonders of our time is the peaceable and orderly life of the millions of people in our great cities. No, run up the gamut of our civilization's activities and you cannot describe the cause of the world's unrest to any specific ill — economic, social or commercial. The world's chief need is still to be found in the human heart.

The densely materialized brains of Judea would have held even the Nazarene had he proclaimed the overthrow of the Romans and the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel. But what permanent good would a material kingdom have been in overcoming a spiritual Caesar? The empire to be overthrown was in possession of the human will. Hence the Lord's cry, "Thy kingdom come!" Unseen, but Almighty; set not in wealth or material power, but love; enthroned, a kingdom from everlasting to everlasting, with God as King.

Jesus is the name above all others, because He saves from sin. He goes to the root of all evil, all tyranny, oldest order — sin. He has conquered this imperious monster that wrecks humanity, and He ever lives to realize in every surrendered life the glory of the triumph. The venom of the sting He entirely extracts, the leprous disease He completely cures. The Saviorhood of Jesus is sufficient.

Jesus is the name above all others because He made himself partner with us in our sufferings, He "tasted death for every man." Few kings know their kingdoms, fewer still their subjects. But Jesus knows us all. He knows us not only as a people, a nation, a church, a society; He knows us individually. He knows our weaknesses, our temptations, our trials, our fears, our failures, our physical ailments, our mental doubts, our shipwrecked hopes, for "even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." This we have upon His own word: and Paul says also that He is not one





who "cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin."

Jesus is the name above all others because it promises most for the world. He is the Executive of heaven and earth. He is the Dispenser of the gifts and graces of the Comforter; He bestows the Holy Spirit. His promises anticipate every need. If a deliverer arose in London tomorrow promising work for England's unemployed, he would be proclaimed greater than all the monarchs that have been crowned in Westminster Abbey. But here is Jesus, King of kings and Lord of lords, whose power enables us to overcome all evil. In His hands we become the subject of a science that turns the bitter into sweet, the evil into good and death into the Messenger of Life.

Jesus is our mediator. The short span of His life on earth, from the manger to the cross, has forged and inseparable link between man and God. With one hand He takes hold on omnipotence, and with the other He lifts up frail and broken humanity. By His divinity He is God's son; by His humanity He is our Elder Brother. He will safeguard all the claims of God, for He has filial relationship with him. He will have understanding sympathy with us, for He "is acquainted with our griefs." Heaven charged Him with its momentous, unparalleled mission, but He never lost sight of our interests, and to save our souls from death He flung His broken body across the yawning gap of our destruction. Through Him we know the Divine mind and understand the glory of our destiny. Why then should I hesitate to lay all life's cares and mistakes and sins and troubles at His feet?

Jesus is the name above all others because it saves from sin. The Magdalene fell at his feet in humble contrition and love. The woman of Samaria ran all excited to the men of the city, saying: "Come, see a man, which told me all things that I ever did: is not this is the Christ?" He is the sinner's Savior. He has the knowledge, the power and the passion of a Savior. He understands sin, it's awfulness, its peril and its pain. Men catalogue and condemn the enormity of the act; Jesus takes into account the strength of the temper, and comes with power to save the soul which left to itself is inevitably lost. I call upon all the saints on earth and all the redeemed in heaven to lift with me hallelujahs! Ten thousand hallelujahs!



The Bible records that an angel one day measured heaven. I can see that rod jeweled in the sun that never grows old. All along the golden highways he measured, all along the sea of glass, all along the walls of Jasper — from portal to portal — hundreds of miles around, as the Bible estimates. Although the account be figurative, what a wonderful home it is that Jesus is preparing for us. And it is a better heaven now than when John wrote of it. A multitude of the redeemed have passed since then. My mother is there! My father is there! Your loved ones are there. But, best of all, Jesus is there! We shall sit down by the waters of the river of life, o'erhung by the tree bearing twelve manner of fruit, the leaves of which tree are for the healing of the nations. We shall not want for anything all through eternity. No suffering will draw the features, no discord will jar the ear, no fears will grab the heart, no tears will blind the eyes. Jesus will be there! Always there. Eternal summer — eternal joy — eternal love.

Jesus is the name above all others because it is the stupendous, incontrovertible, superlative fact of the universe.

We migrate today from the shores of the Stars and Stripes, and following the star set in heaven of His will, we find again the Babe in the Manger. Blessed, holy Babe! We kneel by the crude grass basket that lies in the feeding bin and behold in the brow of Mary's Child the glory of our King; no, sweeter far, we read the promise of God — the Bread of Heaven — Jesus our Savior, our Pardon-bringer, our Redeemer and Friend! We return to this land of liberty, this glorious diamond of jeweled States, and look out the mangers where lie the poor and the outcast, the sick and the suffering. We kneel by their carts and upon their foreheads we trace the reflection of Bethlehem's glory — Jesus, the world's Redeemer!

This is the work of The Salvation Army in the United States of America. It was for this high office I was commissioned "The Commander," the title by which I am known as the leader of our organized forces. But at this kindly season, Christmas, which brings human affection to its highest tide, my heart abounds with good will in the spirit of oneness with all men. Let me not then upon this day, when all minds are upon Bethlehem's manger, be thought of as The Commander, but as one equal with my people in the divine bonds of loving fellowship and service made possible by the newborn King. If God so loved us, let us so love one another.