

# Essays :

## A Triptych

(Three Essays with Two Hinges)

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## Nothing To Say

If I had something to say, I would say it. But since I have nothing to say, I will remain silent - I will not speak. If I told you that Jesus is God, that your salvation is in Him and in His Church, who would listen? Who would hear? If I stood before you like Peter before the Sanhedrin and proclaimed that "the God of our fathers has raised up Jesus whom you put to death, 'hanging Him on a tree'"; if I testified that "He whom God has exalted at His right hand as ruler and Savior is to bring repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins" and that the Holy Spirit also testifies to this... what would it matter? What difference would it make? Those who claim to be believers would nod their heads, those of no faith might muster a scoff... but of what consequence would it be? Would any change? Would any heed? Even as the day nears, we fall asleep.

And so, I have nothing to say. No way to stir you from your complacency - no way to draw you to the light. It seems darkness must reign, in this time. Few there are whose hearts burn with the truth. And so what shall I do, but remain silent?

"But you are speaking!" you say. "You are speaking and so are not silent." It is true, my words come out. My pen writes. I have no choice but to transcribe these passages. But I am silent. I remain apart. Still. And, again, what purpose have these words if none listen?

God called Ezekiel to speak to the people, although, as He tells the prophet, they will not listen. And so the prophet speaks the words of God. But to what end? - but to hardened hearts, but to deaf ears... the Word resounds with none: none turn from their sins and worship the One True God. And so the prophet is thus silent.

And so I have no choice but to speak, or I would assuredly be as deaf as you - I would thus also fail to heed God's Word. I gain benefit by speaking, by being obedient... but, again, I am silent. In silence I hear and obey.

"But all the books you've written," you ask, "are they in vain as well?" Nothing done for the Lord is in vain; nothing accomplished at His command is empty - but do you hear the words? Do you heed them? Does the Lord speak to your heart, and does your life bear the fruit of His Word? I do not think so; and so it is you who remain vain - it is you who remain in darkness, though the light would enter your soul. And even if you do recognize your face in this mirror, do you not quickly turn away and forget who you are?

"We know you are only contriving," you insist. "You are only using this chastisement as a means to teach us. You do not really mean what you say." Do I not? Do I not, then, speak the truth? Do you not remain hard of heart, my friend? Do we, rather, see a world on fire with the Holy Spirit as we look around ourselves? Are you bearing the abundant fruit Christ has promised to the faithful? Is His Word *evident* in your life? Are you one of the very few who have chosen to enter the narrow gate? Your self-assurance belies your state. For if this is but artifice, but a manner of speaking, then do you not call the Word of God itself vain?

Jesus speaks with no artifice. Jesus speaks the truth. The truth, and nothing more. He has much to say: He calls all souls to His presence, to the Father's love. But you may be confident that the way is narrow and there are few who enter there. You may be confident that our Lord is not a liar or a player of games. You may rest assured that His Word is pregnant with meaning, with truth, as is nothing else in this world.

But do you come to Him, my friend? Have you cause to be confident of His grace and blessing? Does His Word enter deeply into your being and burn away the darkness there - do you swallow Him whole? Or is your holiness lacking, and thus empty and vain? You tell me, my friend.

"But I am a priest, a religious, a doer of good deeds!" None of this matters, my friend. Many religious there are who go more quickly to hell; many a priest condemns himself - "Lord! Lord!" many will say, and He will answer He does not know them.

This is not easy to say. It is not easy to call a soul to see the corruption in his heart... but many there are rolling merrily along in blindness to their sin and the condemnation wrought by it - by pride, by lust, by anger or greed or envy or any deadly sin. It is not easy to expose that which all would sooner conceal... But, then again, as I say, who will listen anyway? And so, do I not say nothing at all?

"And you, what about you, who are so ready to criticize? Are you so sure of yourself?" I pray not. The only thing of which I am sure is that I am nothing at all... the rest is in God's hands. If you are asking me if there is sin in my soul, I can only answer that the question is absurd - who is without sin? All men sin, but none so much as he who thinks he is free of sin, above sin, for how can such a one then conquer the sin which corrupts his soul?

What can we do but take refuge in the mercy of Christ, we who are but dust? What hope have we but that in His love He will mend our broken pathways? What are we but nothing before Him, before His infinite majesty? But whose heart is so contrite?

Perhaps, brother, sister, I am being too harsh. Perhaps you are in Christ and I need not fear for your life. Perhaps all is well with your soul and the day will not come upon you unawares. But in this age of complacency, it is much more likely not to be so, and so I am compelled to offer these words - and so I am obliged to propose that they will not be listened to. So the darkness we must face. For how much better it is to confront our emptiness, our lack of the Lord's presence in our life, here, while there is time, than to be confronted unprepared by the overwhelming light of God in the time to come. Would you enter not properly dressed into the marriage feast? Yet many make no provision for that day, setting their hearts rather on passing things. And so, great numbers will be turned away: the gates of heaven do not open vainly, as do so many doors on this corrupted earth. For within these gates eternity awaits, not things which come to dust.

And so, brace yourself, my friend. Be among the few who listen, the few who take to heart the words of our God, and set your sights on heaven alone. For heaven is all that matters, the Lord is all that is, and if you would draw close to Him, if you would enter His kingdom, your desire must be entirely for His sacred face, and nothing of this barren place.

Amen.

## He Is All That Is

You, Lord, are all that is. Nothing is but you. All that seems to be fades away before your eternal majesty, in your blessed simplicity.

It is in silence before your Tabernacle I see this truth - I speak it in words of the bread of life. I realize I am small and all things are not... you are all that is.

What peace you bring me, Lord, opening my eyes and my heart to your presence. What light is mine as I rest in you. Nothing I want apart from you... let me remain in your Tabernacle all the day - let nothing of this world hold any sway. Do not let me forget you, Lord, who are all that is.

For if I do not remember you, Lord, how can I be? What will become of me? Separate from you, nothing exists; and so, what darkness will be mine if I am distracted in mind - if my soul does not speak with you, how dumb is my tongue! What life has anyone blind to you? So, dead would I be apart from you who are all that is.

Let me not die, Lord. Let me not forget you. Remain in me that I might remain in you and so live eternally. Here in your presence let me stay, your heart beating in my chest, your blood coursing through my veins... your love sustaining my every hour upon this earth. Then heaven will be mine. Then nothing need I fear. If I could but remain with you here, knowing that you are indeed all that is.

(He is our peace.)

# His Peace Let Us Pray Upon Ourselves

Where will you find your peace, my brother? Where do you expect it will be? In what way will you discover blessing, the happiness you seek?

Where is your heart being led, do you think? Upon what mountain will you know rest? Is there any refuge for the human race apart from Jesus? Is there any other place to which we might come?

If it is peace you seek - true, lasting peace - if the blessing of God you would find upon your soul and His praise upon your tongue... if your heart is genuine and your eye open, nothing else could you know, to no other water could you be led, than our eternal Savior. For none other has the Father ordained His Son.

He is our peace. He is our Lord. He is our life and our light, in this world and the one to come. To Him alone should you come - your steps should be directed to His home, for His home is indeed your own.

But it shall not come to you if you do not seek it. Him you will not know if you do not approach His presence. He calls, and you must answer... you must come to the water and drink.

There must be a prayer welling up in your heart; your desire must be all for Him. If anything of this earth precedes this love, if attachment you have to some vain thing, how will you find Him who is perfection? If you do not pray, and with a whole heart, where shall be your peace?



Where shall be your peace and where shall be your love, your light in this world? Will you not in darkness dwell without a prayer in your soul, without the faith that makes you whole? How indeed will you live at all? Will you not rather die in your sins?

Without Jesus, there is no peace - no peace in our hearts, no peace in our lives, no peace between peoples or nations. Where there is war, Jesus is not there. Where there is hatred, the Lord flees - His Spirit cannot remain in such a place. And without His Spirit, what hope has man for survival? For it is His Spirit alone that gives life, that is life.

And so if Arab and Jew are at one another's throats, if African brothers are shedding each other's blood... if your own heart is set on vengeance, if it seethes with anger, know well that Jesus is absent - that He is not welcomed in such houses. And every house in which His peace is not accepted can but come to tragic ruin.

There is no other name under heaven by which we are saved. There is no other way to be redeemed from our sinful lot. Turn to Him or turn to death: choose peace or nurture war in your heart. It is simple as this for any soul, and the soul of any people. Each must make Him Lord of his home, thus making his home in Him, or there shall be no home at all, but the plagues upon this barren land will inevitably continue.

What plagues there are in this place, plagues of war that rob us of peace, plagues of sin that condemn us to death. But life is in Jesus, healing in His hand, and into His hands, into His arms, we must come to be saved from the plagues now native to this place, to come to the heavenly kingdom.

The darkness of jealousy encroaches upon man's soul and reveals itself in sickness and disease, both of body and of soul. Where can we turn and not see death closing in upon the human race, and not see the sad effects of his blindness? Man makes himself king, crowned with his deeds, but cannot see how soiled are his hands - and so, what death he brings to this earth (and what death to his spirit!). Yet he defends and praises his ways that lead to division and darkness.

Nation is divided against nation, man against man, husband against wife... and the children die in their innocence, oppressed by the unyielding will of ever-hardening hearts. They die in wombs and in the wars spawned by their parents; and those that survive but die inside and are drawn into the evils that plague this prodigal age, walking the path of sin to selfsame disease and destruction.

What hope is there in this culture of death, where murder is lauded as grace? What escape have we from the evil that pervades, except to turn to Him. Light is in Jesus alone.

He is our light and to Him we must turn. Else indeed we will be in darkness and no hope will remain. The light has come into the world, but do men turn to Him for salvation or choose to continue in their sin?

Jesus calls us to the water of life; He is the Temple in which God is worshiped. If we do not live in Him, we do not live at all; and be assured that all false illusion will soon pass away: the glamorous light of this vain world will soon be exposed for all its emptiness, and those who make their home in it will find no peace, will be bereft of all things and call the mountains to fall upon themselves.

False light shines and entices weak hearts to bask in its shallow glory. But like the light, the glory is false, and those who cling to it will be destroyed like the beasts of the field, like grass that is cast into the oven. They will not be able to stand in the great light that is the Lord Jesus Christ - its intensity can but burn them.

But those who turn to Jesus will find themselves purged by the all-encompassing light of God. In His presence all their sins will be burned away, but the faith they hold will remain and be refined like gold tested in fire. And they will become one with the fire that heals, the fire that redeems, and shine as brightly as He on the day of His coming.

That day is upon us now, brothers and sisters. In Jesus find your faith, find your peace, and join your spirit with the saints and the Queen of Peace, who stand at His side.

Come to the New Jerusalem, the City of Peace, where the Queen of Peace does stand at the side of her Son, who is its peace, and to which all are called by the LORD.

There is a voice - a "tiny, whispering sound"... a "still, small voice"... speaking to your soul, entreating your spirit, revealing the truth of God's presence to your troubled heart. Will you listen and come to the LORD's peace, to His New Jerusalem?

Or do you prefer the company of sinners on earth to that of the saints in heaven? Is the whore of Babylon she whom your heart desires, or the Blessed Mother, who wears the crown of twelve stars in heaven? Is it from the apostles you find your light, the light of Christ, or from the garish neon of this jaundiced life?

Your sick soul may yet be healed. Still you may come to the water and drink - still His call to freedom you may answer. But soon your slavery may be made permanent, the chains locked that none may open, if you do not upon hearing turn away. Then there shall be no escape.

Set your feet at liberty. Heavenly pastures let your soul seek. There our Queen Mother will instruct you with her gentle voice; there the saints will pray for your salvation; there the angels fly and the only Son waits for you to knock upon the door that He might open and welcome you into His eternal presence, into His everlasting peace. Come to Him who is your peace.

## None Is Worthy

No one is worthy to stand in His presence, to sing His praise. None is worthy even to serve Him.

The Baptist was the greatest of men and yet did not qualify to unfasten His sandals. Then what of Buddha, what of Muhammad, what of Krishna or the preacher on the corner...? None of these, nor any other, is worthy even to bow down before Him, except that He grants this favor, except that He has pity on our humility, accepting our contrition.

Yet this Man, yet this God, the only God, the Great I AM, bends down to wash the feet of even the soul who betrays Him, even the filthiest of men. Who can explain it? Who can understand the ways of our God? Who can know His love? None can comprehend the LORD of all for none there is who loves as He. Yet to such love He calls us.

Would you join Him on the cross, my friend? Would you find your salvation there? Do you see how love bleeds for you, and is it your desire to be mingled with that blood, to become one with such blessed sacrifice? This alone will make you worthy. By this means only you will come to Him.

But who will die that others might live? Who will lay down his life for all? Whose heart is so open to absolute love? Who is the worthy soul?

# The Way, the Truth, and the Life

No one comes to the Father except by Jesus, except through His cross: His cross is the tree of life; it is made of the hard wood of truth, and so is the means of our salvation.

What other path can one walk to come to glory? They will all be vain; they will all prove their emptiness in the end. But in the end Christ's sacrifice bears the fruit of eternal life - do you doubt its power? Do you not know that it is He alone who lasts?

Though scourged for our sins and condemned to death, yet the Son of Man lives forever in the Father's presence; and none can come to the kingdom of our eternal God except by the wounds in His hands and in His feet, except by the blood and water which flow from His side. Here is the way, and the truth, and the life.

And this flesh He bears for our sakes, the life He lives upon the dust of the earth, is the cross He carries for our salvation. And we must join Him beneath its weight. We must accept its blessing upon our souls, for by its weight bearing down upon our shoulders, by this burden alone we will be released from the weight of our sins, which keep us weighted upon this earth, unable to come to Him.

Walk now in the way, the way of truth, the way that brings life. And death shall flee away.

Through His death we conquer death. Walking His way of love we find life. This is true. He is true. All else is darkness and decay.

Is not the human soul shrouded in fear of its imminent death? Does anyone think he can escape this fate? Yet does not everyone seek release from this fear, from this loss of the gift of life? And yet, would you not come to Jesus?

A moment of prayer will bring you to Him. But a thought in right reason will convince you of His presence, of the life He brings - that He is the Son of God who holds the keys of death and the nether world and is ready to set all souls free from their clutches. But will you take a step in His direction?

Is Jesus not the Son of God? Who can say this? Who can possibly be convinced of this? Only he whose heart is set on deception, on falsehood, who has no thirst for the truth, would begin to believe such clear lie. For nothing is more true than this - nothing could be denied with greater difficulty. It would be easier to tear down a steel wall with one's bare hands.

Yet some attempt to do just this, and so, what awaits their souls but death? They cannot escape themselves and the Lord, however hard they may try, and so into what state do they fall. Refusing to come to His cross, they die. Life is only found in submission to the will of God.

Will you do the Lord's bidding? Or does this seem a burden to you, a certain humiliation? Do you find yourself belittled by commands from the Father who loves you more than you could love yourself? Would you prefer to follow your own way, or the way of some other, or the devil himself? Can you not see what folly this is?

Who can trust his own heart? Who knows himself better than the Lord? Whose care extends beyond the Father in heaven? Who has greater concern for our good? Certainly none could begin to understand or provide for our souls as does our Lord and God, yet we turn from Him and His way to follow our own blind paths into strange towns, into profligate cities. We must ask ourselves why.

Giving ourselves to God's will we transcend all difficulties - all burdens indeed become light with Him at our side, with His Spirit as our guide. Death itself holds no power over Him, and so, freer we could not be. Yet we continue blindly. Yet we rush to distraction like a moth to flame.

His way alone is a lighted path, a burning bush that is not extinguished, that grows unto greater glory even as it cleanses and purifies. All other ways are false. Any will set apart from His own is vain. It is only uniting ourselves to the Creator of the universe and to His Son that truth is known, and that our lives become our own.



Branches of His vine, only in Jesus are we nourished, only in Him do we find life - apart from Him we die. How can a broken branch bear fruit? And so we are barren as we are separated from the Lord, as we are cut off from this root, and from the teachings of His Church.

His Word alone brings life. His Body and Blood alone nourish our souls. Who are we without Him? We are not at all. Dead. Lying fallow... no breath in us.

It is He who brings us to life, who anoints us as children of the Father - who makes us sons and daughters of God's holy light. Let us turn to that Light that we might find ourselves alive.

Are you planted in His kingdom? Is His Word the desire of your souls? Or do you find your food in the poisonous growth of this world? Who is your father: the LORD of all, or the maker of lies? If the Father of all, you shall be His child and so live forever in His heaven; if the father of lies, the clutches of death shall hold you, and you will be as if not at all.

Would a flower growing in a field reject the water which rains down upon it from above? Would it hide its leaves from the light of the sun? Then how very absurd for you not to listen well to the teachings of the Christ; how very blind are those who close their eyes to His light. Would you not be who you are?

All are called by the humble Lord Jesus; all He would lead on lighted paths to His Father's kingdom. In Him all find life.

The life of the Father is Life itself, for God is all that is alive, that has life, and His Son is the only means to find that life which awaits us all and calls to each of our souls. That is calls to our souls and that that call is through Jesus reveals the truth of the Spirit working in each of His children. Should we not heed what is deepest in our hearts and leads us to the greatest heights? How else should we spend our time?

All else is indeed useless activity that does not lead to Him, that does not walk the path Jesus makes. To follow in His footsteps is alone effort worthwhile for our souls. Every other road leads but to a dead end - and death should not be our end!

Do not be afraid. Do not be afraid of the cross you must bear. If you bear it willingly, it will be light and bring the fruit of redemption, which you will taste even now. Though the world persecute you and put you to death, all this will but bring you joy, as you pray even for these persecutors. None will be able to touch your glory or take your joy away.

And so, let us walk the way of truth that leads to life in the kingdom.