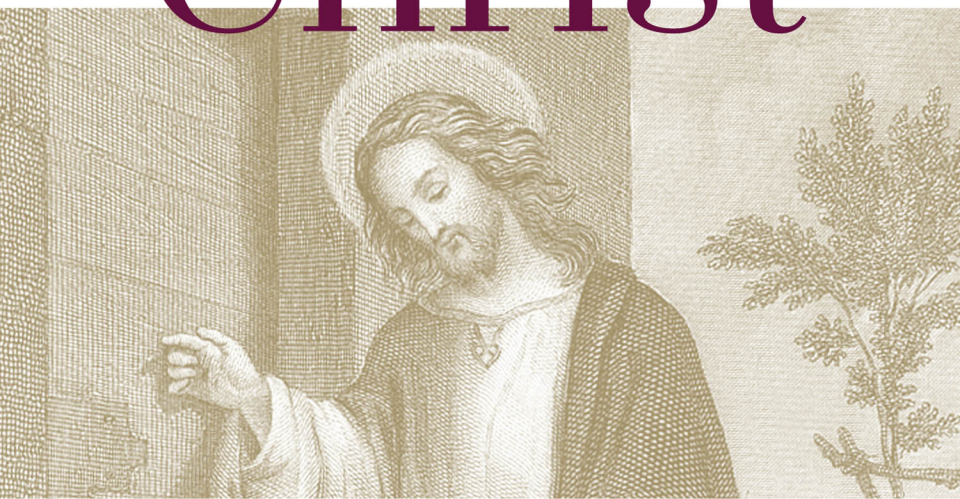


In Christ



DEVOTIONS FOR EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR

E. STANLEY
JONES

Foreword by Maxie Dunnam

In Christ

DEVOTIONS FOR
EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR

S. Stanley Jones

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Foreword

IN CHRIST IS one of two books, apart from Scripture, which most shaped my theology and spiritual formation.

In my first appointment out of seminary, I was the organizing pastor of a congregation in Gulfport, Mississippi, in the early 1960s. We grew rapidly, and the pace of leadership was demanding. But what was more draining and spiritually demanding was the civil rights furor that was raging and becoming more intense and violent.

Though our church was considered by the denomination to be exceedingly successful, I felt an emptiness at the heart of what appeared to be a dynamic Christian fellowship. I could not escape the fact that the fellowship of the congregation was not unlike the fellowship of the Rotary Club.

In my pastoral leadership, I placed a strong emphasis on prayer and small-group study and sharing. It was in my small prayer/share group that I received the most spiritual strength.

In 1963, civil rights leader Medgar Evers was assassinated. Roy Wilkins, executive leader of the NAACP, said that no other state had “a record that approaches that of Mississippi in inhumanity, murder, brutality, and racial hatred. It is absolutely at the bottom of the list.”* It was during this time that my pastoral leadership was constantly challenged and the emotional and physical demands were unbearable. I was losing confidence in my call, feeling totally inadequate and ready to throw in the towel. I felt incapable of navigating the sea of hatred and distrust. Providentially, the Lord intervened.

At a pivotal time in my personal struggle, I discovered E. Stanley Jones’s book, *In Christ*, and used it in my prayer/share group. Not only did the book give me perspective and empower me in that season of my life, it helped me become the spiritual man that I am today.

When we think of the apostle Paul, we normally think of his great teaching on justification by grace through faith. But equally prominent in his teaching was the indwelling Christ. It is a cardinal principle taught not only by Paul, but it the glorious invitation of Christ, “Abide in me.” This dynamic came alive in my life through my study of *In Christ*.

* Paul Hendrickson, *Sons of Mississippi: A Story of Race and Its Legacy* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), 47.

Off and on now, for more than fifty years, my morning ritual has included a word to myself. Sometimes I speak it aloud, sometimes I simply register it in my consciousness: “Maxie, the secret is simply this, Christ in you, yes, Christ in you, bringing with him the hope of all the glorious things to come.” That’s Phillip’s translation of Colossians 1:27 addressed to me personally.

You may not begin that ritual after reading this book, but you will certainly become aware of the cardinal principle of the indwelling Christ; the invitation of Jesus, “Abide in me,” will become more meaningful and attractive.

—Maxie Dunnam

In Christ—The Gospel According to Paul

From the glory and the gladness,
From His secret place;
From the rapture of His Presence
From the radiance of His Face—

Christ, the Son of God hath sent me
Through the midnight lands;
Mine the mighty ordination
Of the pierced Hands.

Mine the message grand and glorious
Strange unsealed surprise—
That the goal is God's Beloved,
Christ in Paradise.

Hear me, weary men and women,
Sinners dead in sin;
I am come from heaven to tell you
Of the love within;

Not alone of God's great pathway
Leading up to heaven;
Not alone how you may enter
Stainless and forgiven—

Not alone of rest and gladness
Tears and sighing fled—
Not alone of life eternal
Breathed into the dead—

But I tell you I have seen Him,
God's beloved Son,
From His lips have learnt the mystery:
He and His are one.

There, as knit into the body
Every joint and limb,
We, His ransomed, His beloved.
We are one with Him.

All in marvelous completeness
Added to the Lord,
There to be His crown of glory,
His supreme reward.

Wondrous prize of our high calling!
Speed we on to this.
Past the cities of the angels
Farther into bliss;

On into the depths eternal
Of the love and song,
Where in God the Father's glory
Christ has waited long;

There to find that none beside Him
God's delight can be—
Not beside Him, Nay, but in Him,
O beloved, are we.

—Lois Buck
(daughter of a missionary to India)

About the E. Stanley Jones Foundation

The E. Stanley Jones Foundation is dedicated to preserving and extending the legacy of the late E. Stanley Jones, who blessed millions of people around the world with his preaching, teaching, and prolific written words proclaiming Jesus is Lord! The foundation is grateful to Seedbed Publishing and its exceptional group of mission-minded disciples, who are committed to transforming lives to change the world, and for offering to reprint *In Christ* written by my grandfather, E. Stanley Jones.

In writing this book, Jones felt a need to find some concept that would reduce the whole of life to the utmost simplicity. He felt that he had found that concept in the phrase “in Christ.” “If you are in Christ, you are in life and if you are out of Christ you are out of life. If that proposition be true, then it cuts through all veneer, all the make-believe in life.” According to Jones, “Being *in Christ* is the ultimate phrase in the Christian faith, for it locates us in a Person—the divine Person and it locates us in Him here and now.” Being *in Christ* brings us to the ultimate relationship, a relationship where we dwell in Christ and He in us. Being *in* obviously brings us closer than “near Christ, following Christ, believing in Christ or even committed to Christ. You cannot go further or deeper than ‘in.’ Being *in Christ* He becomes the source of our life, the source of our thinking, our feeling, our acting and our being.” The single theme of being in Christ runs through this entire book.

Jones would often use this comment offered by an Indian non-Christian at the end of one of his addresses: “If what the speaker has said isn’t true, it doesn’t matter; but if it is true, then nothing else matters.” Jones continued, “If the thesis of this book *In Christ* isn’t true, then it doesn’t matter—forget it; but if it is true, then nothing else matters—you can’t forget it!”

Thank you, Seedbed, for sharing *In Christ* with a new generation of potential readers of E. Stanley Jones’s ministry.

—Anne Mathews-Younes, EdD, DMin
President, E. Stanley Jones Foundation
www.estanleyjonesfoundation.com

Introduction to the 1961 Edition

Fifty-two years ago I knelt before a chair with a letter spread out before me—a letter from a mission board secretary, asking me to go to India. I knew that the answering of that letter might determine my life work. So I prayed: “Dear Lord, I’m willing to go anywhere, do anything, and be anything You want me to be, provided You show me where.” The Inner Voice replied, “It’s India.” I arose from my knees and repeated those words to myself, “It’s India.” It was settled.

I was called to be a missionary. Fifty-one years later I knelt in that same room before a chair, probably not the same one, and thanked God with a deep heartfelt thanks for the unfolding purpose of these glorious years as a missionary. Success or failure mattered little—being true to that call was the only thing that mattered.

If I was called to be a missionary, I was pushed into being an author—it was a very gentle push, but a push nevertheless. Dr. Diffendorfer, secretary of the mission board, said to me, “Why don’t you write down what you have been saying to the American people, before you return to India?” I replied, “Give me a month off and I’ll do it.” So during the month of May 1925, I wrote the *Christ of the Indian Road*, gave it to the publishers with an apology (which they deleted), and went back to India. I was surprised to find I was an author, for I had no intention of becoming one. Since then it has been the same push or pull that has led me to write another book. Some need has tugged at my inmost being demanding to be met, and a book has resulted. This twenty-third book is the result of a feeling of a need. The need is this: some concept that would reduce the whole of life to the utmost simplicity. If you have that, you’re “in”; if you don’t have it, you’re “out.” By “in” I mean “in life,” and by “out,” “out of life.” I felt I had found that concept in the phrase “in Christ.” If you are “in Christ,” you’re “in life”; if you are “out of Christ,” you’re “out of life.” If that proposition be true, then it cuts down through all veneer, all seeming, all make-believe, all marginalisms, all half-wayisms—through everything—and brings us to the ultimate essence of things: if you are in Christ, you are in life; if you are out of Christ, you’re out of life, here and now, and hereafter.

Obviously, this concept goes deeper than being interested in religion, for you may be interested in religion and not be in Christ. You may be in the

church and not be in Christ; in orthodoxy and not in Him; in the new birth and not in in Christ, for the new birth may be in the past and only faintly operative now; you may be in conversion and not in Christ, for the conversion may have ceased to convert to Him.

The phrase “in Christ” is the ultimate phrase in the Christian faith, for it locates us in a Person—the Divine Person—and it locates us in Him here and now. It brings us to the ultimate relationship—in. Obviously this in brings us nearer than near Christ, following Christ, believing in Christ, or even committed to Christ. You cannot go further or deeper than in.

What would be involved in becoming in Christ? Some are in self—they are determined by self-interest primarily—it is the driving force of their lives. To get and to get on for self is the compelling motive. Some are in the herd. Before they act, they look around—they don’t act; they only react to what the herd does. The roots of their motives are in *What will people think?* Making self, or the herd, our God, is sin, the chief sin. To be in Christ means to pull up the roots of one’s very life from the soil of sin and self and herd and plant them in Christ. He becomes the source of our life, the source of our thinking, our feeling, our acting, our being.

This obviously involves self-surrender. Not merely the surrender of our sins, our bad habits, our wrong thinking, and our wrong motives, but of the very self behind all these. All of these are symptoms; the unsundered self is the disease. So the phrase “in Christ” is not only the ultimate concept, but it demands the ultimate act—self-surrender. The only thing we own is just ourselves. We don’t own our money, our property, not even the house we live in, for we will leave it all behind. The only thing we will take out with us is just ourselves. It is the only thing we own. That one thing we own—the self—is deliberately handed back to the Giver in an act of supreme self-surrender with words like these: “I can’t handle this self of mine. Take me as I am, and make me as I ought to be. I give myself and my sins and my problems to Thee; but myself first and foremost. I’ve been ‘in myself’; now I am ‘in Thee.’” We lose ourselves, and to our astonishment find ourselves. We live when we live “in Him.”

One would expect that this ultimate concept in Christianity—in Christ—leading to the ultimate human response—self-surrender—would be deeply embedded in the New Testament. Is it? It is far more deeply embedded in the New Testament than many things upon which we have built whole

denominations—the new birth, conversion, baptism of the Holy Spirit, justification by faith, baptism by water, apostolic succession, presbyters, bishops, forms of church government, inner light, absence of forms.

The phrase “in Christ” or its equivalent is found 172 times in the New Testament. It is found in every book except the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) and the Epistles of James, Jude, and 2 and 3 John. Why the phrase is not used in these places in the New Testament we shall take up later.

Paul, the greatest interpreter of Christianity, fastens upon the phrase “in Christ” and uses it in his epistles ninety-seven times—more than all the rest put together. With deep insight he saw that this was the ultimate phrase, dividing all humanity into two classes, in Christ and out of Christ; so that his world was not divided by BC and AD, but into IC and OC—“In Christ” and “Outside Christ.” Those in Christ have life, those outside Christ have death.

This is the ultimate division. Each person is placed, not arbitrarily, but by the facts, on one side or the other of that line—in Christ or outside Christ. This is a division that divides—the only division that divides. It reduces life to simplicity. Every thought, every aspiration, every act, every reaction, all one’s possessions, all one’s relationships are either in Christ or outside Christ. If they are in Christ, they have eternal life; if outside Christ, they have eternal death. This is the thesis of this book. To the exposition of this thesis we now turn.

Like all my books for the cultivation of the inner and outer life, the book is divided into readings of a page a day, which will take approximately five minutes to read. It can also be used by groups on a weekly study basis and, at the same time, it is a book that can be read straight through, for a single theme runs through the whole: What happens to life and living when you are in Christ and what happens when you are out?

The angel said to the writer of the book of Revelation: “Write what you see.” This I have tried to do; I’ve written what I see in Scripture and what I see at work in life. They are the same.

A non-Christian chairman of one of my meetings in India commented at the close of my address: “If what the speaker has said isn’t true, it doesn’t matter; but if it is true, then nothing else matters.” If the thesis of this book isn’t true, then it doesn’t matter—forget it; but if it is true, then nothing else matters—you can’t forget it.

—E. Stanley Jones

Who Is This Christ?

THIS BOOK IS an invitation to live life in Christ as the only way to live. But before we issue that invitation and before the thoughtful reader can accept it, we must explore what we mean by “Christ.” I came near saying “we must define,” but to define is to confine, and when we are dealing with the Eternal God manifested in the flesh, which I conceive Him to be, we can only explore—our definitions are departure points, eternally open to eternal explanations.

We begin with Jesus, not with Christ, for you cannot say Christ until you have first said Jesus—the Incarnate One. For Jesus puts His own character content into Christ. The Jewish people had the idea of a conquering Christ, the Messiah, conquering by force. The Amplified New Testament when it uses the word “Christ” amplifies it into “Christ, the Messiah,” but this isn’t amplification—it is minification, for it puts Christ back into a Jewish Messianic mold. That mold has been broken; it was too small.

Other molds have proved too small. One by one they have been broken. Christ, the Teacher, the greatest of all teachers? Yes, but more, for a teacher imparts knowledge—He imparts life. The greatest of characters, the best of men, the highest example? Yes, but more, for we are not to imitate Him in life, we are to receive Him as life. Someone pinpointed in history, our Guide and Inspiration? Yes, and more, for we cannot live on a remembrance, we must live on a realization. A martyr to the cause of the kingdom of God? Yes, and more, for His death seems to have all the signs of a cosmic struggle with a cosmic result—the redemption of the race. Who then is He? He is the Word become flesh, God become man, the Eternal manifesting Himself in time, God simplified, God approachable, God lovable.

O Christ, while we cannot define Thee precisely, we can know Thee intimately. And to know Thee is to know life, to know release and redemption. We thank Thee. Amen.

AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: *This is eternal life, that they know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.*

January 2

Is Christ Cosmic?

A REFUGEE FROM North Korea to South Korea, an elder of the Presbyterian Church, and an artist, produced a very remarkable picture of Christ—remarkable in detail and conception. It has to be seen to be believed. In a space of three feet by four feet of canvas he has written by hand the whole of the New Testament in minute letters in English. There are approximately 185,000 words, with about a thousand words in a line. Out of these words arises the full-length figure of Christ. The figure is produced by inking some words more heavily than the others. Out of the words arises the Word. Out of the gospels arises the Gospel. He Himself is the good news.

Around the figure of Christ are twenty-seven little angels, all looking toward Him, some with folded hands in adoration. These twenty-seven little angels represent the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. They are all looking at Him, bringing out the fact that the whole New Testament brings out the Person of Christ—it all looks at Him, the Center.

This fits in with Paul's description of the Christian faith:

Great indeed . . . is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory. (1 Tim. 3:16)

Note: "our religion: He . . ." One would have thought it would be "our religion: It . . ." Our religion is not an "it"—a system of thought, worship, ritual, institutions—these are built up around the Person of Christ and may be more or less Christian. Our religion is "He." We may get caught in the system of thought, worship, ritual, and institutions and never get to a saving contact with the personal Christ. If so, we are this side of salvation. For salvation is in Christ, and not in the system built up around Him.

O Christ, we pant to get beyond forms to the Form, to go from the good to the Good. We who are personal cannot rest this side of the Personal. So take us by the hand and lead us to Thyself. Amen.

AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: *The words of Scripture take me beyond the words to the Word—the Word Made Flesh.*

The Mystery of Our Religion: He

WE SAW YESTERDAY that a Korean, right out of paganism, grasped with Paul the great “mystery of our religion: He”—a vivid illustration of how our Christian faith is enriched by its outreach.

Jesus emphasized His own centrality in Scripture: “You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life: and it is they that bear witness to me” (John 5:39). You think you find eternal life in the words, but out of the words comes the Word—they “bear witness to me.” Eternal life is in Him. He points it with “yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life” (v. 40).

The business of the Scriptures is to take us by the hand and take us beyond the words to the Word. The Scriptures are not the revelation of God—that would be the Word become printer’s ink. The Scriptures are the inspired record of the Revelation—the Revelation is seen in the face of Jesus Christ, the Word become flesh. Every day I go to these words and say to them: “Hast thou seen Him Whom my soul loveth?” These words take me by the hand and lead me beyond the words to Him Who is the Word.

The opening sentence of the book of Revelation says: “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him” (1:1). This is interesting and important. For in the rest of the Scriptures Jesus is revealing God, showing us in concrete, human terms what God is like: “He who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). What a revelation of God we find in Him! There can be nothing higher, and there can be nothing other—this is it! Here, however, the roles are reversed: God reveals Jesus! That is a fulfillment of the law laid down by Jesus: “whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life . . . will save it” (Mark 8:35). Jesus lost His life in revealing the Father and found it again in the Father’s revealing Him. And the Father is revealing Jesus—He is growing upon us, amazingly.

O Father, Thou art revealing Thy Son to us. He is growing upon us so amazingly that we can scarcely keep up with Thy revelations. He breaks out everywhere—from every bush, every star, every happening—everywhere. Amen.

AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: *To see Jesus is to see what God and man and life are like.*

Is Christ the Author of Creation?

WE SAW YESTERDAY that the revelation was reciprocal. Jesus reveals God, and God reveals Jesus. Jesus is growing upon the human race. He is proving to be so much greater than we thought. In that revelation “which God gave him” are the words saying that Jesus is the first and the last—“the Alpha and the Omega.” How first is that first, and how last is that last? Is He the “Alpha,” the Christ of the beginning, and the “Omega,” the Christ of the final word?

We see that that “beginning” stretches back further than we had thought—back beyond the historical account of two thousand years ago, back to creation, and beyond. Some strange passages like these take our breath: “all things were made through him [Christ], and without him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:3). And this: “but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world” (Heb. 1:2). And this: “He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible . . . all things were created through him and for him” (Col. 1:15–16).

What do these strange passages, in which it is said unequivocally that God created the world through Christ, mean? The usual idea is that God created the world, and that Jesus appeared two thousand years ago to reveal God and to redeem us. Here it says that God created the world through Christ—without Him was nothing made that was made. Do they mean that the touch of Christ is upon all creation? That everything is made in its inner structure to work in His way? That if it works in His way it works well and harmoniously, and if it works some other way it works its own ruin? Is everything destined by its very nature to be in Him?

O Christ, we begin to see the revelation that God is making of Thee. We begin to see Thy footprints everywhere—in the Scriptures, in nature, in us. We are afire to see more, for what we see transforms. Amen.

AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: *I am destined to be in Him, then I shall accept that destiny and work it out.*

The Christian Way Is the Way

WE ENDED YESTERDAY with the questions: Is everything destined by its very nature to be in Him? Is everything made by Him and for Him? Is that destiny written not in the inscrutable will of God, but written into our nerves, our tissues, our blood, our organs, our very souls, our relationships? Are we destined, by our makeup, to be Christian, to be in Him? Is He the ground of our being, the homeland of our souls? When we find Him, do we find ourselves?

When we lose Him, do we lose ourselves? These questions, boiled down to one—Is He our life?—are the most important questions, barring none, that can be asked of life and destiny. If they can be answered in the affirmative, then it is all over but the shouting. You cannot live against life and get away with it.

Life will have the last word, whoever has the first or the intermediate words. You cannot buck the nature of the universe and not get hurt, for “the stars in their courses will fight against Sisera” (see Judges 5:20).

It was this interpretation which I presented in my book *The Way*. If I had one thing and only one thing to leave as a life contribution, I would unhesitatingly choose this: the Christian way is the way, and that way is written not merely in the Bible, but into the structure of reality—in us and in our relationships.

The fact is that the Christian way is called the way: “Saul . . . if he found any belonging to the Way . . .” (Acts 9:1–2); “but when some were stubborn and disbelieved, speaking evil of the Way . . .” (19:9); “About that time there arose no little stir concerning the Way” (19:23). The Christian way is the way—the way to do everything; not merely the way of salvation, but the way, full stop.

O my Father, we are beginning to see the wonder of the way. As it dawns upon us, may we decide to be on the way with both feet and with the consent of all our beings. If this is true, then nothing else matters. Amen.

AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: *I shall be upon the way with both feet and full consent.*

January 6

The Demands of Human Nature and the Christian Offer

WE SAW YESTERDAY that the Christian way is the way—the way to do everything—to think, to act, to feel, to be in every single situation. This is for God and man and for man in his individual and social attitudes, acts, and relationships. There are just two things in life—the way and not-the-way. If God should act against the way, He wouldn't be God; He would be something less and something other. And if man acts against the way, he is something less than man and something other.

Are these the statements of an overenthusiastic Christian propagandist, or simply an interpretation of what life itself says? Is life rendering a verdict, and is that verdict a Christian verdict? For more than half a century I have lived amid world currents of thought and life in East and West, and the deepest conviction of my life is that the Christian way is proving itself to be the way. I watch with breathless interest the unfolding of a drama on the stage of the world, and that drama has one theme: by putting the Christian way under the test of life to see which way life approves, the Christian way is turning out to be the way. No more important statement has come from psychiatry than the statement of M. Boss, head of the International Analytical Association and professor of psychotherapy in the University of Zurich, when I asked him, "You seem to have put your Christian faith and your psychiatry together: how did you do it?" He replied, "When I began my work as a psychiatrist I had difficulty, for I began as a Freudian, but the demands of human nature drove me back to the Christian position." What human nature demanded for its fulfillment, the Christian faith offered. Suppose the basic demands of human nature and the Christian faith were at cross purposes. Then we would be in trouble—deep trouble, life trouble.

O Father God, by trial and error we are coming out to the way to live, and that way is turning out to be the way—the way revealed in Thy Son. We are not in trouble—we are in triumph. We sing with quiet hallelujahs. Amen.

AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: *If I take any way except the way, it will turn out to be a dead end.*

The Face Emerging from the Facts

WE SAW THAT the figure of Christ in the Korean picture arose out of the pages of the New Testament—the words revealed the Word, the Word made flesh. He is the pivot around which the whole New Testament revolves. Must we now go further, is life compelling us to say that that same Figure arises out of the facts of life, apart from the New Testament? Does life reveal Life? Just as the watermark in paper is not stamped on but is wrought into the texture of the paper, a part of it, is the name of Jesus not stamped on us by human propaganda, but wrought within us by divine purpose? Are our faith and our fate the same? Is this Scripture true: “whom . . . he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son” (Rom. 8:29)? Are we predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son? And is that predestination not something imposed on life, but rather something that is being exposed out of life itself? Is a Face emerging out of the facts of life, and is that Face the “one Dear Face, that far from vanishing, rather grows and becomes my universe that feels and knows”?

A Freudian psychiatrist was driven to that conclusion and the same thing happened to a Hindu philosopher: “My study of history shows me that there is a moral pivot in the world and the best life of both East and West is more and more revolving around that moral pivot. That moral pivot is the person of Jesus Christ.”

“History is turning out to be His-story.” Where men and nations depart from Him they decay. When they obey Him they develop. Whether or not we agree with the first part of the statement of Henry Higgins Lane, professor of zoology at the University of Kansas, we must agree with the second, “Evolution is God’s method of operation in the realm of nature; Christianity is God’s plan of operation in the spiritual world.” That “One Dear Face” is beginning to emerge from the scientifically sifted facts of nature.

O God, we are like little children going to school, beginning to spell out by slow processes a name written into the nature of things, and that name is turning out to be “J-e-s-u-s.” To that name every knee shall bow. Amen.

AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: *“Jesus! the name that charms our fears. That bids our sorrows cease.”*