

THE SUFFERING GOD

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IF He could speak, that victim torn and bleeding,
Caught in His pain and nailed upon the Cross,
Has He to give the comfort souls are needing ?
Could He destroy the bitterness of loss ?

Once and for all men say He came and bore it,
Once and for all set up His throne on high,
Conquered the world and set His standard o'er it,
Dying that once, that men might never die.

Yet men are dying, dying soul and body,
Cursing the God who gave to them their birth,
Sick of the world with all its sham and shoddy,
Sick of the lies that darken all the earth.

Peace we were pledged, yet blood is ever flowing,
Where on the earth has Peace been ever found ?
Men do but reap the harvest of their sowing,
Sadly the songs of human reapers sound.

Sad as the winds that sweep across the ocean,
Telling to earth the sorrow of the sea.
Vain is my strife, just empty idle motion,
All that has been is all there is to be.

So on the earth the time waves beat in thunder,
Bearing wrecked hopes upon their heaving breasts,
Bits of dead dreams, and true hearts torn asunder,
Flecked with red foam upon their crimson crests.

How can it be that God can reign in glory,
Calmly content with what His Love has done,
Reading unmoved the piteous shameful story,
All the vile deeds men do beneath the sun ?

Are there no tears in the heart of the Eternal ?
Is there no pain to pierce the soul of God ?
Then must He be a fiend of Hell infernal,
Beating the earth to pieces with His rod.

Or is it just that there is nought behind it,
Nothing but forces purposeless and blind ?
Is the last thing, if mortal man could find it,
Only a power wandering as the wind ?

Father, if He, the Christ, were Thy Revealer,
Truly the First Begotten of the Lord,
Then must Thou be a Suff'rer and a Healer,
Pierced to the heart by the sorrow of the sword.

Then must it mean, not only that Thy sorrow
Smote Thee that once upon the lonely tree,
But that to-day, to-night, and on the morrow,
Still it will come, O Gallant God, to Thee.

Swift to its birth in spite of human scorning
Hastens the day, the storm-clouds roll apart ;
Rings o'er the earth the message of the morning,
Still on the Cross the Saviour bares His heart.

Passionately fierce the voice of God is pleading,
Pleading with men to arm them for the fight ;
See how those hands, majestically bleeding,
Call us to rout the armies of the night.

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Not to the work of sordid selfish saving
Of our own souls to dwell with Him on high,
But to the soldier's splendid selfless braving,
Eager to fight for Righteousness and die.

Peace does not mean the end of all our striving,
Joy does not mean the drying of our tears ;
Peace is the power that comes to souls arriving
Up to the light where God Himself appears.

Joy is the wine that God is ever pouring
Into the hearts of those who strive with Him,
Light'ning their eyes to vision and adoring,
Strength'ning their arms to warfare glad and grim.

So would I live and not in idle resting,
Stupid as swine that wallow in the mire ;
Fain would I fight, and be for ever breasting
Danger and death for ever under fire.

Bread of Thy Body give me for my fighting,
Give me to drink Thy Sacred Blood for wine,
While there are wrongs that need me for the righting,
While there is warfare splendid and divine.

Give me, for light, the sunshine of Thy sorrow,
Give me, for shelter, shadow of Thy Cross ;
Give me to share the glory of Thy morrow,
Gone from my heart the bitterness of Loss.