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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

Abingdon Press is delighted to bring back into print *Victorious Living*. Originally published in 1936, *Victorious Living* was inspired by a letter E. Stanley Jones received from a reader of one of his earlier books. *Victorious Living*, his response, has touched the lives of people around the world.

For this edition, the publisher has made some minor revisions. The updates include spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and some language usage and references that would distract or confuse the reader. References to humanity, no longer expressed as *men* and *mankind*, have been updated. Some references to God have been recast to avoid masculine pronouns. In the prayers, *thee*, *thou*, and *thine* have been changed to *you*, *your*, and *yours*. The term *African American* is used in this edition. A major undertaking to provide source citations where none existed was often but not always successful. Every effort was made to retain E. Stanley Jones's voice for today's readers, so there have been very few changes to content or style.

The publisher acknowledges with gratitude the efforts of Dean Merrill to keep the works of E. Stanley Jones available to readers in recent years.

FOREWORD

So Much the Better

I used to play racquetball three times a week. My favorite T-shirt bore these words: “The older I get, the better I was.” Aging is mostly another way of talking about “so much the worse.” For some special individuals, however, the more time passes “so much the better.” E. Stanley Jones is one of those few historical figures whose life and writings seem to get better—more rewarding, more relevant, more magical—the more time passes.

E. Stanley Jones (1884–1973) was a Methodist missionary most known for indigenizing Christian faith in Hindu culture. A preacher, evangelist, and best-selling author who gave away all his royalties, Jones was a prolific writer and speaker who preached more than sixty thousand sermons, twenty thousand more than John Wesley himself. Jones was also an early human rights advocate both in India and in the USA.

Jones went to India in 1907 as a missionary when just twenty-three years old, and stayed there for fifty years. Very early in his career, Jones urged Indian Christians to remain within their culture. He was convinced that Christianity could be truly indigenous in every culture. For example, we translate “Logos” as “Word,” as in John 1:1: “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word *was* God” (emphasis added). But God doesn’t think in “words.” God’s original “word” for dirt is the dirt. God’s original “word” for flower is the flower. God’s original word for “water” is the water. God’s original “word” for wind is the wind.

God’s original “word” for Truth is Jesus. In Jones’s theology, God speaks the language of incarnation. Since there are no words outside of languages, if God spoke in “words,” what language does God speak? God speaks the language of love, the language each of us hears. And the mission of Jesus, helped by the missionary, is to speak Jesus in every language of the world.

The foundation of faith, Jones believed, was not the superiority of Christianity but the supremacy of Christ. When you think of E. Stanley Jones you think of one thing: Jesus. Jones didn’t talk or write about Christianity or about being a Christian. He was all about Jesus, or what he called the “treasure” of Jesus. The kingdom of God is not a geographic domain with set boundaries and settled decrees, but a set of relationships in which Christ is Sovereign.

In Jones’s theology, what made paradise paradise was not pearly gates or golden pavement. Not crystal fountains or jasper walls. Not endless buffets or

perpetual Bible studies. Jesus makes paradise “paradise.” Jesus’ paradise calls all of us not to “settle down” in our dwellings or our religious systems or our routines, but to “settle in” to a new paradigm of living. In fact, Jesus leaves us more unsettled than settled, and Jones left his contemporaries unsettled with his non-goring of sacred cows. E. Stanley Jones’s Jesus takes us where we’ve never been, by paths we’d never take, even as he calls us to go further.

While Jesus is the head of the church, Jones insisted that he is not the church’s private property nor can he be held hostage by it. Jesus belongs to the world. Jones presented Jesus as a universal Christ, belonging to all cultures and races and the answer to *all* human need. In his first book, *The Christ of the Indian Road* (1925), Jones made this point clear with a threefold approach for the embodiment of Jesus in all cultures.

First, E. Stanley Jones held his lectures (not sermons) in public halls, a neutral ground for non-Christians. After a lecture he would reserve the next two hours for interactions with the audience, and would answer any question anyone chose to pose.

Second, Jones sponsored Round-Table Conferences at which he positioned himself as a learner and receiver, willing to be changed and open to conversion himself. At these Round-Table conversations, representatives of different faiths, including agnostics and atheists, would be invited to share what their faith or lack thereof meant to them in experience. “Tell us all what you have found through your faith,” Jones would sincerely ask. “What does it do for you in your everyday life?”

Third, Jones believed that each culture must write a fifth gospel—“the gospel according to . . .” He symbolized the incarnation of faith in indigenous culture by taking a Sanskrit word and baptizing it for religious purposes. In Sanskrit, for example, *Ashram* means a place of withdrawal from the everyday world of work, or it can mean a place of intensified experience, including the most intense “experience” of all—PRAYER. In every Jones Ashram, Jesus became the guru or teacher.

E. Stanley Jones’s life and service in India brought him into contact, and ultimately into a close friendship, with Mahatma Gandhi. As Gandhi worked out his own version and vision of protest—both against the British rulers of his country and the divisive caste system of his own countrymen—Jones offered Gandhi the example of Jesus as a possible model to follow. Jones suggested to Gandhi that the gospel of the kingdom defined options of love and suffering as ways and means to the end of peace and justice. Gandhi is famous for his quotation “I would suggest, first, that all of you Christians . . . must begin to live more like Jesus Christ.” The quotation could just as easily have come from Jones himself, since he believed the same thing.

Mahatma Gandhi's idiosyncratic fusion of slices of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity proved a powerful beverage for the Indian people. But Gandhi founded much of his nonviolent resistance movement upon what he learned from his Methodist friend's Jesus-centered messages. Gandhi took to heart the teachings that Jesus offered in his Sermon on the Mount, his parables of love and forgiveness, his morality of turning the other cheek, of loving one's enemies. Satyagraha transformed and ultimately freed India from its oppressors and its own oppression.

Shortly after Gandhi's assassination in 1947, Jones was asked by the Methodist Publishing House to write a book about his friendship and relationship with Gandhi. Reluctant at first, and after great hesitation, Jones finally produced his version of a biography that he called "an interpretation." These were Jones's firsthand reflections on the nonviolent yet confrontational campaigns of Gandhi and how Gandhi's strategies in a Hindu culture reflected the teachings of Jesus.

Even though E. Stanley Jones was "the Billy Graham of his day," as someone called him, or "the most important missionary force in Christian history since the Apostle Paul," as another person celebrated him, *Mahatma Gandhi: An Interpretation* went over like a sack of stale bread. It bombed. Sales were nil, and the feedback was deafening in its silence. Jones felt that the publication was his least successful book, and its messages completely ignored. In 1948, messages about the civil rights of all individuals, regardless of race or class, were not exactly welcomed.

A few years later, a recent graduate of Crozier Theological School and a doctoral candidate at Boston University was looking up some references about Mahatma Gandhi and happened upon E. Stanley Jones's unsung volume. As he read about Gandhi's commitment to a nonviolent, yet noncompliant form of protest, this young pastor and civil rights leader found a basis for forming his own resistance to abuse and oppression. The book that Jones deemed his greatest failure was pulled from the stacks of a theological library and then had enthusiastically penned in its margins "THIS IS IT!" by a single student: Martin Luther King, Jr.

You can still see King's marginal notation in the Martin Luther King Library in Atlanta, where the full handwritten sidebar reads: "This is it! This is the way to achieve freedom for the Negro in America." The backstory of how one of Jones's worst-selling and least-known books (Jones's books sold 3.5 million copies and were translated into thirty languages) became the inspiration for the civil rights movement was revealed by King himself after a convocation where he was honored by Boston University just before leaving for Sweden to receive the 1964 Nobel Peace prize.

When King was introduced to Jones's daughter Eunice Jones Mathews at a reception following the convocation, King immediately started touting the praises of E. Stanley Jones, but not for Jones's nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize. "E. Stanley Jones was a very important person to me, for it was his book on Mahatma Gandhi that triggered my use of Gandhi's method of nonviolence as a weapon for our own people's freedom in the United States."

King had been very familiar with Gandhi's concept of Satyagraha and had studied Gandhi's method of nonviolence for years. But it was not until he read Jones's treatment of Gandhi did it click with him that nonviolence could be the primary vehicle for civil rights reform in the United States. Dr. King formed and formulated the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott and the nonviolent resistance model of the early civil rights movement in part by what he read in a "failed" book by an author who thought that no one was interested in what Gandhi had done in India thirty years earlier. The book Jones considered his biggest failure turned out to be one of his greatest successes, and its impact is still being felt today.

Jones found the Christian movement absorbed in the ding-dong of doctrinal debate and the ping-pong of denominational scuffling and shuffling. He left it focused on Christ.

Jones found a religion where the church was a collection of objects--rules, regulations, rituals, resolutions. He left it a communion of subjects—saints and sinners together around a common table.

Jones found evangelism a dirty word and an embarrassing presence. He left it an enchanted word and a compelling presence.

Jones found a church that was all about the harvest. Jones left it planting seeds, and seeing evangelism as "seedtime." It's a rare and special gift when seedtime and harvest are one season.

Jones found a gospel either social or personal. He left it a whole gospel, a total way of life.

Jones found a theology where the "human" was sinful and shameful. He left it where the "human" is what Jesus came to show us how to be.

Jones found the kingdom of God an inward and mystical concept. He left it as Christ's alternative to all the isms, wasism, or ismisms of the world.

Jones found Christianity colonialist and westernized. He left it more localized and globalized.

Jones found a church where Jesus was little more than a cultural veneer, a lifestyle accessory at worst, a values choice at best. He left it where the name of Jesus is what made the church's heart sing and its mind dance.

One of E. Stanley Jones's granddaughters, Anne Mathews-Younes, likes to

quote her grandfather's ritual affirmation that it does not take much of a man or woman to be a Christian, but it takes all of them that there is: "It doesn't matter how much you've got; it matters how much God's got of you." God had enough of E. Stanley Jones to change, not just the face but the very heart of humanity.

Leonard Sweet
Professor (Drew University, George Fox University)
Chief Contributor to sermons.com

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

Three years ago the Inner Urge came to me to write on *Victorious Living*. The Voice seemed to sum up what through years of dealing with inquirers has become to me a pressing fact, namely, that the most urgent necessity in human living is to be able to face life victoriously. For many—the number is appalling—are living morally and spiritually defeated. They are inwardly beaten, hence outwardly ineffective. They do not know how to live and to live victoriously. They lack resources. This book is addressed to that need.

I have tried to combine the individual and the social emphases in a living blend, with a devotional spirit running through all. The socially minded must be patient if I seem in the beginning to stress overmuch the personal emphasis. I think we should begin just there. But we must not end there. The end is the sum total of human relationships.

In the structure of the book I have tried to meet three needs: (1) A book of daily devotions for personal, group, and family devotions. Instead of making it, as usual in devotional books, a book of scattered thoughts, changing from day to day, I have woven the devotions around one theme, *Victorious Living*. (2) I have gathered these daily studies into groups of seven, so that the book can be used as a weekly study book by classes of various kinds. (3) I have tried to put the subject matter into such a continuous whole that it may be read through as an ordinary book.

I have begun at the lowest rung of the ladder, and have tried to go step by step to the full implications of victorious living. Mature souls must be patient with the first steps, remembering that many are not able to live a victorious life because they do not know how to link up with God's power. I have tried to make the first steps very clear. In doing so I have endeavored to answer this letter:

I am an average young American mother. I have two very small children. I have read your last book, *Christ's Alternative to Communism*. It is great, soul-stirring, ringing with truth, but it leaves me with a terrific thirst—how do you get it? You advised a bored young woman to “Try Christ, and I give you my word of honor that it will work to the degree you work it.” But how? Where to start? Then again in chapter eleven: “Today so far as I am concerned this program begins”—and, still, how? How to achieve a life evidencing the peace that passes understanding, even in myself, let alone passing it on? How does the kingdom of God start within my unruly, discontented, selfish, ungrateful, impatient, and sullen self, before I can begin to spread it? Your books (I have read several) paint a glorious picture of living life—but you forgot to tell us what brushes and

colors to use, and how. I believe there must be thousands like me. Won't you write a book about "Christ and the Kingdom Within"?

I am sure that the writer of this letter represents many, and I have written for them as well as for the mature Christian. I mentioned in my last book that I had received a request signed by many prominent Christians of America asking me to write a book on the "Inner Life." I trust that this book fulfills that request—a request that I deeply appreciated. But, as the reader will see, it goes beyond it, for all life is one, the inner and the outer being indissoluble.

The book was written during a three-month retreat in the Himalayas, the mornings being spent in writing and the afternoons and evenings in going through a course of reading—the only vacation, if it can be called one—that I have had for some years. It was the cold season, and these hills were deserted at that time, so that my only companions were an Indian secretary and the wild animals that roamed the estate—the deer, the panther, the tiger, and the wild pig. At noon, after a morning of writing, I would take a walk through these lovely mountain paths to clear my brain, only to return to find that my faithful secretary, who was unused to the mountains, had been spending anxious moments of prayer for me until I got back safely! It was the unknown to him—to me it was the beloved known. Perhaps many of my friends across the seas will share that same anxiety and will be in anxious prayer as we penetrate from the known personal to the jungle of social relationships, and will wonder if we should not stick to the beaten paths of personal religion. But this jungle of social relations must be Christianized, for Christ must claim all life.

At the close of the retreat I had the unspeakable privilege of presenting the manuscript, during May and June, to the Sat Tal Ashram Group, made up of many nationalities, and of receiving their criticisms and suggestions.

Many in that group were led into victorious living as we made our way through step by step, and now it goes to the larger circle, and it goes out with prayer, that among them too may be many who will find through these pages a clear path from confused and baffled and defeated human living to living that is certain, adequate, and victorious.

E. Stanley Jones

THE QUESTION THAT HALTS OUR QUEST

Job 11:7-9; 21:15; 23:3-9; John 14:8

“In the beginning” God (Gen. 1:1).

It would be well if, in our quest for “Victorious Living,” we could all begin with God. It would put a solid fact beneath our questing feet. It would give meaning and purpose to the whole of life. But, alas, many of us cannot begin there. For God is the vague, the unreal. We wish we could believe in God, and get hold of God so that we could live by God; for life without the Great Companion has a certain emptiness and meaninglessness about it. For many skepticism is not voluntary, but apparently unavoidable. The facts of life are too much for us—the unemployment, the hunger of little children, the underlying strife in modern life, the exploitation of the weak and incapacitated by the strong, the apparently unmerited suffering around us, the heartlessness of nature, the discoveries of science that seem to render the hypothesis of God unnecessary—all these things and more seem to shatter our belief in God. We do not reject that belief; it simply fades away and becomes unreal. And we cannot assert what, to us, is not real. For amid all the losses and wreckage of our modern day, we are trying to save one thing: the desire for reality. We wish to keep an inner integrity. We loathe all unreality. That leads us to face the fact that our skepticism has gone deeper than the matter of belief in God; we find ourselves questioning life itself. Has life any meaning? Any goal? Is the flame of life within us different from the flame that leaps from the logs in the fireplace—both of them the result of material forces and both destined to die down into a final ash? If it has no ultimate meaning, has it any meaning now as we live it?

O God, our Lord (if we may call you thus), as we begin this quest we are haunted with many a biting fear and with hesitation and doubt. Help us to face them all and come out, if possible, on the further side of them into victorious living. Amen.

FOLLOW A LIFE OF NO OR A LIFE OF YES?

Ecclesiastes 4:1-2; 9:2-3; John 10:10

There are just two elemental philosophies of life: that of Buddha and that of Christ. The rest are compromises between. (When writer H. G. Wells chose the three greatest men of history he selected Christ, then Buddha, then Aristotle: life affirmation, life denial, and the scientific method.) The two greatest characters of history head up two diametrically different outlooks on life. Both of them looked at the same facts of life and came to opposite conclusions—one to a final yes, and the other to a final no.

Buddha, pondering under the bo tree, came to the conclusion that existence and evil are one. The only way to get out of evil is to get out of existence itself. Nirvana is so close to annihilation that scholars still doubt whether it means annihilation or not. “Is there any existence in Nirvana?” I asked a Buddhist monk in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). “How could there be?” he replied, “for if there were existence, there would be suffering.” “Is it an emptiness, a cipher?” “It is an emptiness, a cipher,” he replied with a final and decisive gesture. It is true that this is called *bliss*, but it is the bliss of the world-weary. In its revolt against life, the soul performs its final “hara-kiri,” clothed, it is true, with an air of sanctity and nobility. Buddha would cheat the sufferings and evils of life by getting rid of life itself. He would have us perform a sanctified suicide, not only of the physical, but of personality itself. It is a final no to life.

There is much to be said for Buddha’s position. Everything seems to be under the process of decay. The blushing bride—then the withered old woman shriveling to fit her narrow final shroud. We grasp the lurid colors of the sunset and find that we have grasped the dark—first the beauty, then the blackness.

O God, our Lord, we stand confused and dismayed, not knowing if we shall be compelled to adopt the noble pessimism of souls like Buddha. Perhaps there is another way. We hardly dare to believe it. But show us the way—the way to life, if there is such a way. Amen.

IS LIFE A BUBBLE OR AN EGG?

Ecclesiastes 1:1-9; 2 Corinthians 5:1-4

A noble missionary drew near in spirit to Buddha when he said with a sigh, “Every new affection brings a new affliction.” Philosopher Bertrand Russell also took his stand with Buddha when he said, “All the loneliness of humanity amid hostile forces is concentrated upon the individual soul which must struggle alone, with what courage it can command, against the whole weight of the universe that cares nothing for his hopes or fears.” There are many modern followers of Buddha, unconscious of course, but driven there by the hard facts of life. They worship with a sigh at the shrine of the *stupa*.

Standing in the midst of a Buddhist ruin, I asked the learned Indian curator why the stupa was always oval shaped. “Because Buddhism believes that life is a bubble, therefore the stupa is shaped like one,” he replied. Life is a bubble—*sunnayavada* (“nothingness” in Sanskrit)—at its heart! At the very thought I felt the darkness close in upon me, and my universe reeled. But as I looked at it again light seemed to dawn: “Why, it isn’t shaped like a bubble, it is shaped like an egg,” I remarked, as I felt the rock beneath my feet.

Is life a bubble, or is it an egg? Is it a bubble with nothing in it, or is it an egg filled with infinite possibilities—possibilities of growth and development and perfection? I vote for the egg view of life. I grant that even an egg, if badly handled, can turn rotten, so life can turn rotten if we handle it badly. Nevertheless, I shall have to vote on one side or the other of that question, and I shall tell you why I vote for the egg view of life.

I follow the One who saw just as deeply as and more deeply than Buddha into the sorrow, the sheer misery of life and yet came out at the other end of it all and affirmed his faith in life. “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” He affirmed that life was not a bubble, but an egg. Was he right?

O God, our Lord, light gilds our darkened horizon as we listen to this Man. But will it be an ignis fatuus* that leaves us floundering in the swamp of final despair? Help us, we pray. Amen.

**Ignis fatuus*, literally “foolish fire” or the light from swamp gas.

IN WHICH WE LOOK AT THE ALTERNATIVES

1 Corinthians 15:19-26

Is life a bubble or is it an egg? I must make my choice. On the one hand, experts tell us that the universe is slowly running down and that one day it will end in ash, carrying with it all things and all life to its final doom. Death shall reign. On the other hand, they tell us that the universe is being renewed by a silent and saving bombardment of life-giving rays, so that the last word is not being spoken by death but by life. Life shall reign. One says the universe is a bubble, the other says it is an egg.

On the one hand, they tell us that man is made up of elements that can be purchased for a few cents, so that life is only mucus and misery. On the other hand, they tell us that humanity is made in the image of the Divine, that we have infinite possibilities of growth and development before us. One says humanity is a bundle of futilities, the other says we are a bundle of possibilities.

On the one hand, they say that humans are just a composite of responses to stimuli from environment, mechanically determined and with no real power of choice. On the other hand, they say that we have sufficient freedom to determine our destiny and that the soul shapes its environment as well as being shaped by it. One says that human freedom is a bubble, the other says it is an egg.

Some say that prayer is an auto-suggesting of oneself into illusory states of mind, that nothing comes back save the echo of one's own voice. Others say that in prayer actual communication takes place, that I link myself with the resources of God, so that my powers and faculties are heightened and life is strengthened and purified at its center. One says prayer is futile, the other says it is fertile.

O God, our Lord, we want life, but not false life. Show us if there is real life, and if there is, help us to choose it. Amen.

IN WHICH WE CONTINUE TO LOOK AT THE ALTERNATIVES

Psalm 42:1-5; 53:1

On the one hand are those who tell us that God is an unnecessary hypothesis, that science can explain all, that the interstices and gaps of the universe into which we used to put the working of God are being slowly but surely filled up by science, so that the universe is self-sufficient, law-abiding, and predictable.

On the other hand are those who tell us that God is not to be found in the gaps and interstices and in an occasional breaking into the process, but that God is in the process itself, the life of its life; that the universe is dependable because God is dependable; that it works according to law because God's mind is orderly, not whimsical and notional; that since intelligence comes out of the universe and meets my intelligence it must have gone into it, so that according to Sir James Hopwood Jeans, the twentieth-century English physicist: "the universe is more like a thought than a machine"; that since the universe seems to work toward purposive ends, we must either endow matter with intelligent purposes (in which case it would not be mere matter), or we must put a purposive creative Intelligence in and behind the process; that since the universe—from the tiniest atom to the farthest star—is mathematical, we must either believe that matter has sufficient intelligence to be mathematical, or else that "God is a pure mathematician."

It would seem that the purposive-matter hypothesis takes more sheer credulity than the notion of an Infinite Spirit, called God, who is within the process working toward intelligent moral ends, inviting our limited spirits to work with him toward intelligent, redemptive purposes.

One says the idea of God is a bubble, the other says it is an egg. I must make my choice.

O God, our Lord, shall I rule you out and vote for a dead universe, dead because its final goal is death? Or shall I vote for a living universe with you as its genesis, with you as its perpetual Creator and with you as its goal and end? Clarify my mind, my heart, that I may not lose myself and you in the maze of things. Amen.

IN WHICH WE STILL CONTINUE TO LOOK AT THE ALTERNATIVES

2 Corinthians 13:3 (Moffatt); 2 Timothy 2:8; Hebrews 1:1-3

On the one hand are those who tell us that Christ is a spent force in humanity; that Thomas Carlyle (nineteenth-century Scottish satirist) was right when he stood before the Italian wayside crucifix, slowly shook his head, and said, "Poor Fellow, you have had your day." They tell us that his day is over because he spoke to a simple age, but now we face a complicated, scientific age; that he was good, but not good enough for us.

On the other hand are those who feel (with the Carlyle of later years) that his day is just beginning; that what has failed has been a miserable caricature and not the real thing; that even the partial application of his teaching and spirit has been the one thing that has kept the soul of humanity alive; that he has been and is the depository and creator of the finest and best in humanity; that when we have hold of him we have the key to God, to the meaning of the universe, and to our own lives; that when we expose ourselves to him in simplicity and obedience, life is changed, lifted, renewed; that he is the one really unspent force in religion. Jesus faces this age as the Great Contemporary and Judge. One says that dependence upon Jesus is a bubble, an illusion; the other says it is an egg with untold redemptive possibilities.

On the one hand are those who say that conversion is an adolescent phenomenon; coincident with and caused by the awakening of the sex instinct; or that it is the result of mob-suggestion, easily induced and quickly evanescent. On the other hand, many affirm that this change called conversion helps them control and redirect the powers of the sex instinct, and that, far from being mob-suggestion, it helps them to cut across the purposes of both the mob and the self when they are wrong. One says that conversion is a bubble, the other says that it is an egg.

O God, our Lord, hold us steady as we face the issues. May there be no dodging, no turning to irrelevancies, and no excuses. Save us to the real. Amen.

IN WHICH WE MAKE OUR CHOICE

Joshua 24:15; Matthew 4:17-22

The issues of life are before me, I must vote for or against a view of life that has worth, purpose, and goal. If I vote that the universe has no meaning, then I vote that my own life has none. But if my life has no meaning and hence no purpose, it will go to pieces. Psychology tells us that without a strong controlling purpose, which coordinates life, the personality disintegrates through its own inner clashes—no purpose, no personality.

But my purpose must be high enough to lift me out of myself. If my purposes end with myself, again I disintegrate. They must include God, who gives basis and lasting meaning to my purpose. If I lose God, I lose myself, my universe, everything. I see that the eighteenth-century French critic Voltaire was right when he said, “If there is no God, we will have to invent one to keep sane.”

If I let go of Christ, then God becomes the Distant, the Vague, the Unreal. In Christ, I find “the near side of God.” In him, God speaks to me a language I can understand, a human language. And as I listen to that language, my universe seems to become a Face—tender, strong, forgiving, and redemptive. Law becomes Love.

If I do not sincerely get in touch with him through the written Word, I neglect the greatest and most redemptive fact of history, and I pay the penalty of being unfed at the place of my deepest need. If I do not pray, I shall probably become cynical and shallow. If I do pray, I shall probably get nerve and courage, a sense of adequacy, power over wayward desires and passions. If I undergo a moral and spiritual change called conversion, I shall probably be unified, morally straight, and spiritually adjusted. If I do not, I shall probably become a stunted human soul.

If I must vote, then I do. I vote for Life.

O God, our Lord, I make the choice. I do choose life with all its fullest, deepest implications. Help me to find life and live it victoriously. Amen.