

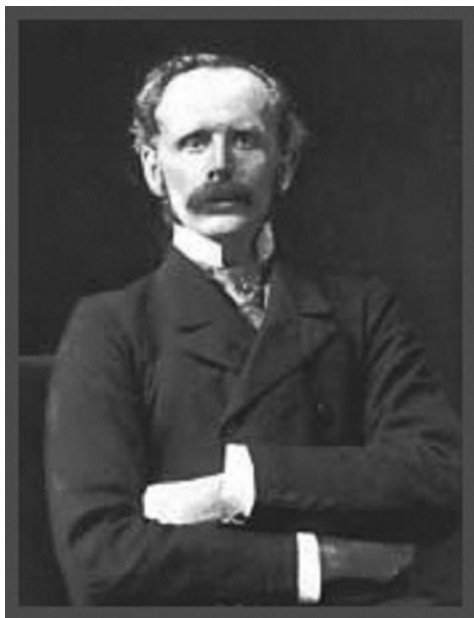
PAX VOBISCUM

**PAX VOBISCUM**

Peace Be With You

DR. HENRY DRUMMOND

# PAX VOBISCUM



# PAX VOBISCUM

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# PAX VOBISCUM

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

H. D., Nov. 1, 1890

# PAX VOBISCUM

## CONTENTS

6 FOREWORD

9 PAX VOBISCUM

14 EFFECTS REQUIRE  
CAUSES

38 WHAT YOKES ARE FOR

48 HOW FRUITS GROW

# PAX VOBISCUM

## Foreword

There are two words in *Pax Vobiscum* whose meaning can benefit from some discussion. These words are: meekness and lowliness, or as Dr. Drummond has it, Meekness and Lowliness.

The words meekness and lowliness – along with the word *humility* – have had a hard time of it in our culture. Meekness is often equated with a vapid passivity; lowliness with low self-esteem, and humility with humiliation.

A re-evaluation of these words might help clarify some of Dr. Drummond's statements. In his book *The Sermon on the Mount* Emmet Fox gives a wonderful definition of meekness that could be applied to the concept of lowliness as well.

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After noting that the word meekness has come to denote a kind of spineless obsequiousness, Dr. Fox says that there's really no one word in the English language for what the word meekness, as used by Jesus, really refers to.

Dr. Fox says that meekness is a mental attitude. An attitude that is "a combination of open-mindedness, faith in God, and the realization that the Will of God for us is always something joyous, and interesting, and vital, and much better than anything we could think of for ourselves."

He adds "This state of mind also includes a perfect willingness to allow the Will of God to come about in whatever way Divine Wisdom considers to be best, rather than in some particular way that we have chosen for ourselves."

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I have found Emmet Fox's description of meekness to be an effective counterweight to the negative connotations that the word has acquired. Perhaps you will find it useful as well.

My favorite description of *humility* is: "The desire to seek and do God's Will."

Keeping the above definitions in mind will, I hope, assist the reader in understanding meekness, lowliness, and humility, in a healthy and beneficial way.

Pax Vobiscum!

Jim O'Neill St. Petersburg, Florida 2008



# PAX VOBISCUM

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I heard the other morning a sermon by a distinguished preacher upon "Rest." It was full of beautiful thoughts; but when I came to ask myself, "*How* does he say I can get Rest?" there was no answer.

The sermon was sincerely meant to be practical, yet it contained no experience that seemed to me to be tangible, nor any advice which could help me to find the thing itself as I went about the world that afternoon. Yet this omission of the *only* important problem was not the fault of the preacher.

The whole popular religion is in the twilight here.

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When pressed for real working specifics regarding the experiences with which it deals, it falters, and seems to lose itself in mist.

The want of connection between the great words of religion and everyday life has bewildered and discouraged all of us.

Christianity possesses the noblest words in the language; its literature overflows with terms expressive of the greatest and happiest moods that can fill our souls.

Rest, Joy, Peace, Faith, Love, Light -- these words occur with such persistency in hymns and prayers that an observer might think they formed the staple of Christian experience. But on coming to close quarters with the actual life of most of us, how surely would they be disenchanted.

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I do not think we ourselves are aware how much our religious life is made up of phrases; how much of what we call Christian experience is only a dialect of the Churches, a mere religious phraseology with almost nothing behind it concerning what we really feel and know.

To some of us, indeed, the Christian experiences seem farther away than when we took the first steps in the Christian life. That life has not opened out as we had hoped. We do not regret our religion, but we are disappointed with it.

There are times, perhaps, when wandering notes from a divine music stray into our spirits; but these experiences come at few and fitful moments. We have no sense of possessing them. When they visit us, it is a surprise. When they leave us, it is without explanation. When we wish their return, we do not know how to secure it.

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All of which points to a religion without a solid base, and a poor and flickering life. It means a great bankruptcy in those experiences that give Christianity its personal solace and make it attractive to the world. There is a great uncertainty as to any remedy. It is as if we knew everything about health -- except the way to get it.

I am quite sure that the difficulty does *not* lie in the fact that people are not in earnest. This is simply not the fact. All around us Christians are wearing themselves out in trying to be better.

The amount of spiritual longing in the world -- in the hearts of unnumbered thousands of men and women in whom we might never suspect it; among the wise and thoughtful; among the young and carefree, who seldom quench and never show their thirst -- this is one of the most incredible and touching facts of life.

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It is not more heat that is needed, but more light; not more force, but a wiser direction to be given to the very real energies already there. The address which follows is offered as a humble contribution to this Problem.

In the hope that it may help some who are "seeking Rest and finding none" to a firmer footing. A firmer footing on one great, solid, simple principle that underlies not just the Christian experiences, but *all* experiences, and *all* life.

What Christian experience wants is method. It is impossible to believe that there is no remedy for its unevenness and dishevelment, or that the remedy is a secret.

The idea, also, that some few people, by happy chance or happier temperament, have been given the secret -- as if there were some sort of knack or trick to it -- is wholly preposterous.

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Religion must ripen its fruit for *every* temperament; and the way to even its highest heights must be by a gateway through which the peoples of the world may pass.

I shall try to lead up to this gateway by a very familiar path. But as that path is strangely unfrequented, and even unknown, where it passes into the religious sphere, I must dwell for a moment on the commonest of commonplaces.

## EFFECTS REQUIRE CAUSES

Nothing that happens in the world happens by chance.

God is a God of order. Everything is arranged upon definite principles, and never at random.

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The world, even the religious world, is governed by law. Character is governed by law. Happiness is governed by law. The Christian experiences are governed by law.

People, forgetting this, expect Rest, Joy, Peace, and Faith to drop into their souls from the air like snow or rain. But in point of fact they do not do so; and if they did they would no less have their origin in previous activities and be controlled by natural laws.

Rain and snow *do* drop from the air, but *not* without a long previous history. They are the mature effects of former causes.

Equally so are Rest, and Peace, and Joy. They, too, have each a previous history. Storms and winds and calms are not accidents, but are brought about by previous circumstances.

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Rest and Peace are but calms in man's inward nature, and arise through causes as definite and as inevitable.

Realize this thoroughly: it is a methodical world; not an accidental world. If a cook turns out a good cake, it is the result of a sound recipe, carefully applied. The cook cannot mix the assigned ingredients and fire them for the appropriate time without producing the result.

It is not the cook who has made the cake; it is nature. The cook merely brings related things together; sets causes at work; these causes bring about the result. The cook is not a creator, but a sort of broker, or middleman.

A cook does not expect random causes to produce specific effects -- random ingredients would only produce random cakes.



# PAX VOBISCUM

So it is in the making of Christian experiences. Certain tenets are followed; certain effects are the result. These effects cannot but be the result. But the result can never take place without the previous cause.

To expect results without antecedents is to expect cakes without ingredients. That impossibility is precisely the almost universal expectation.

Now what I mainly wish to do is to help you firmly grasp this simple principle of Cause and Effect in the *spiritual* world. And instead of applying the principle generally to each of the Christian experiences in turn, I shall examine its application to one in some detail.

The one I shall select is Rest. And I think anyone who follows the “recipe” in this single instance will be able to apply it for themselves in all the others.

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Take a sentence such as this: African explorers are subject to fevers that cause restlessness and delirium. Note the expression, "*cause* restlessness."

Restlessness has a *cause*. Clearly, then, anyone who wished to get rid of restlessness would proceed at once to deal with the cause. If that were not removed, a doctor might prescribe a hundred things, and all might be taken in turn, without producing the least effect.

Things were so arranged in the original planning of the world that certain effects must follow certain causes, and certain causes must be abolished before certain effects can be removed.

Certain parts of Africa are inseparably linked with the physical experience called fever; this fever is in turn infallibly linked with mental experiences called restlessness and delirium.

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To abolish the mental experiences the radical method would be to abolish the physical experience, and the way of abolishing the physical experience would be to abolish Africa, or to cease to go there.

Now this holds good for all other forms of Restlessness. Every other form and kind of Restlessness in the world has a definite cause, and the particular kind of Restlessness can only be removed by removing the allotted cause.

All this is also true of Rest. Restlessness has a cause: must not Rest also have a cause? Of course it must.

If it were a chance world we would not expect this; but, being a methodical world, it cannot be otherwise.

Rest, physical rest, moral rest, spiritual rest, every kind of rest has a cause, as certainly as restlessness.

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Now causes are discriminating. There is one kind of cause for every particular effect, and no other, and if one particular effect is desired, the corresponding cause must be set in motion.

It is no use proposing finely devised schemes, or going through some vague pious exercise in the hope that somehow Rest will come.

The Christian life is not casual but causal. All nature is a standing argument against the absurdity of expecting to secure spiritual effects, or *any* effects, without the employment of appropriate causes.

The Great Teacher dealt what ought to have been the final blow to this absurdity by asking us a single question, "Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?"

# PAX VOBISCUM

Why, then, did the Great Teacher not educate His followers fully? Why did He not tell us, for example, *how* such a thing as Rest might be obtained? The answer is, that He did.

But plainly, explicitly, in so many words? Yes, plainly, explicitly, in so many words. He assigned to Rest its cause, in words which each of us has been familiar with from earliest childhood.

He begins, you remember -- for you at once know the passage I refer to -- almost as if Rest could be had *without* any cause: "Come unto me," He says, "and I will give you Rest."

Rest, apparently, was a favor to be bestowed; men had but to come to Him; He would give it to every applicant. But the next sentence takes that all back. The qualification is, indeed, added instantaneously.

# PAX VOBISCUM

For what the first sentence seemed to give was the next thing to an impossibility. For how, in a literal sense, can Rest be given? One can no more give away Rest than he can give away Laughter.

We speak of "causing" laughter, which we can do; but we cannot give it away. When we speak of giving pain, we know perfectly well we cannot give pain away. And when we aim at giving pleasure, all that we do is arrange a set of circumstances in such a way that pleasure is caused.

Of course there is a sense, and a very wonderful sense, in which a Great Personality breathes upon all who come within its influence an abiding peace and trust. Men can be to other men as the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land.

Much more so Christ; much more so Christ as Perfect Man; much more still as Savior of the world. But it is not this of which I speak.

# PAX VOBISCUM

When Christ said He would give men Rest, He meant simply that He would put them in the way of it. By no act of conveyance would, or could, He give His own Rest to them. He could give them His recipe for it. That was all.

But He would not make it for them. For one thing, it was not in His plan to make it for them; for another thing, men were not so planned that it could be made for them; and for yet another thing, it was a thousand times better that they should make it for themselves.

That this is the meaning becomes obvious from the wording of the second sentence: "Learn of Me and ye shall find Rest."

Rest, that is to say, is not a thing that can be given, but a thing to be acquired. It comes not by an act, but by a *process*.

# PAX VOBISCUM

It is not to be found by luck or chance, as one might stumble on a hidden treasure; but slowly and surely, as one finds knowledge.

It could indeed be no more found in a moment than could knowledge. A soil has to be prepared for it.

Like a fine fruit, it will grow in one climate and not in another; at one altitude and not at another. Like all growths it will have an orderly development and mature by slow degrees.

The nature of this slow process Christ clearly defines when He says we are to achieve Rest by learning. "Learn of Me," He says, "and ye shall find rest to your souls."

Now consider the extraordinary originality of this utterance. How novel the connection between these two words, "Learn" and "Rest"?



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How few of us have ever associated them – or ever thought that Rest was a thing to be learned; ever dedicated ourselves to it as we would to learn a language; ever practiced it as we would practice the violin?

Does it not show how entirely new Christ's teaching is *still* to the world, that so old and threadbare an aphorism should yet be so little applied?

The *last* thing most of us would think of would be to associate Rest with *Work*.

What must one work at? What is it which if duly learned will find the soul of man in Rest?

Christ answers without the least hesitation. He specifies two things -- Meekness and Lowliness. "Learn of Me," He says, "for I am meek and lowly in heart."

# PAX VOBISCUM

Now these two things are not chosen at random. To these *accomplishments*, in a special way, Rest is attached. Learn these, in short, and you have *already* found Rest.

These as they stand are direct causes of Rest; will produce it *at once*; cannot *but* produce it at once.

And if you think for a single moment, you will see how this is necessarily so, for causes are never arbitrary, and the connection between antecedent and consequent here and everywhere lies deep in the nature of things.

What is the connection, then? I answer by a further question. What are the chief causes of Unrest? If you know yourself, you will answer Pride, Selfishness, Ambition.

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As you look back upon the past years of your life, is it not true that its unhappiness has chiefly come from the succession of mundane mortifications and almost trivial disappointments that the journey of life has brought you?

Great trials come at lengthened intervals, and we rise to meet them; but it is the petty friction of our everyday life with one another, the bustle of business, the discord of the domestic circle, the collapse of our ambition, the crossing of our will or the taking down of our conceit, which make inward peace impossible.

Wounded vanity, disappointed hopes, unsatisfied selfishness -- these are the old, vulgar, universal sources of man's unrest.

Now it is obvious why Christ pointed out the two chief virtues for attaining Rest as being the *exact opposites* of these.

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To Meekness and Lowliness these things simply do not exist. They cure unrest by making it impossible.

These remedies do not trifle with surface *symptoms*; they strike at the root by removing *causes*.

The ceaseless chagrin of a self-centered life can be removed at once by learning Meekness and Lowliness of heart. He or she who learns them is forever protected against it. They live henceforth a charmed life.

Christianity is a fine inoculation, a transfusion of healthy blood into an anemic or poisoned soul. No fever can attack a perfectly sound body; no fever of unrest can disturb a soul that has breathed the air or learned the ways of Christ.

People sigh for the wings of a dove that they may fly away and be at Rest. But flying *away* will not help us.

# PAX VOBISCUM

"The Kingdom of God is *within* you."

We aspire to reach the top in order to find Rest; it lies at the bottom. Water rests only when it gets to the lowest place. So do men.

Therefore, be humble. The people who put God first can never be hurt if others do not acknowledge them. Hence, be meek. Whoever is without personal expectation cannot fret if nothing comes to them.

It is self-evident that these things are so. The lowly person and the meek person are really above all others, above all other things. They dominate the world, because they are not ensnared by it.

Misers do not possess gold, gold possesses them. But the meek possess it, because they are not possessed *by* it.

# PAX VOBISCUM

"The meek," said Christ, "inherit the earth." They do not buy it; they do not conquer it, but they *inherit* it.

There are people who go about the world on the lookout for slights, and they are necessarily miserable, for they find them at every turn -- especially the imaginary ones. One has the same pity for such people as for the very destitute.

They are morally illiterate. They have had no real education, for they have never learned how to live. *Few* people know how to live.

We grow up at random, carrying into mature life the hand-me-down methods and motives that we acquired as little children.

And it does not occur to us that all this must be changed; that much of it must be reversed.

# PAX VOBISCUM

Life is the finest of the Fine Arts; it has to be learned with lifelong patience, and the years of our pilgrimage are all too short to master it triumphantly.

Yet this is what Christianity is for -- to teach us the Art of Life. And its whole curriculum lies in one phrase -- "Learn of me."

Unlike most education, this is almost purely personal; it is not to be had from books, or lectures, or creeds, or doctrines. It is an education gleaned from *life*.

Christ never said much in mere words about the Christian graces. He *lived* them, He *was* them.

Yet we do not merely copy Him. We learn His art by living with Him, like the old apprentices with their masters.

Now, do we understand it all?

# PAX VOBISCUM

Christ's invitation to the weary and heavy-laden is a call to begin life over again upon a new principle -- upon His own principle. "Watch *My* way of doing things," He says. "Follow Me. Take life as I take it. Be meek and lowly and you will find Rest."

I do not say that the Christian life is to every person, nor any person, a bed of roses. No educational process can be this. And perhaps if some folks knew how much was involved in the simple teaching of Christ, they would not enter His school with such an irresponsible heart.

There is not only much to learn, but much to *un*-learn.

Many people never go to this school at all till their disposition is already half ruined and their character has taken on its fatal set. To learn arithmetic is difficult at fifty -- so much more to learn Christianity.



# PAX VOBISCUM

To simply learn what it is to be meek and lowly, in the case of one who has had no lessons regarding that in childhood, may cost them half of what they value most on earth.

Do we realize, for instance, that the way of learning humility is generally by humiliation? There is probably no other school for it.

When a person enters as a pupil in such a school it means a very great thing.

There is much Rest there, but there is also much Work.

I should be wrong, even though my theme is the brighter side, to ignore the cross and minimize the cost. It gives to the cross a more definite meaning, and a more precious value, to connect it thus directly and causally with the growth of the inner life.

# PAX VOBISCUM

Our platitudes on the "benefits of affliction" are usually about as vague as our theories of Christian Experience. "Somehow," we believe affliction does us good. But it is not a question of "Somehow."

The result is definite, calculable, and necessary.

It is under the strictest law of cause and effect. The first effect of losing one's fortune, for instance, is humiliation; and the effect of humiliation, as we have just seen, is to make one humble; and the effect of being humble is to produce Rest.

It is a roundabout way, apparently, of producing Rest; but Nature generally works by circular processes; and it is not certain that there is any other way of becoming humble, or of finding Rest.

# PAX VOBISCUM

If a person could make themselves humble to order, it might simplify matters, but we find that this does not happen. Therefore we must all go through the mill.

Hence death -- death to the lower self -- is the nearest gate and the quickest road to life.

Yet this is only half the truth.

Christ's life outwardly was one of the most troubled lives that was ever lived: Tempest and tumult, tumult and tempest, the waves breaking over it all the time till the worn body was laid in the grave.

But the inner life was a sea of glass. The Great Calm was always there.

At any moment you might have gone to Him and found Rest.

# PAX VOBISCUM

Even when the bloodhounds were dogging him in the streets of Jerusalem, He turned to His disciples and offered them, as a last legacy, "My peace."

Nothing ever for a moment broke the serenity of Christ's life on earth. *Misfortune* could not reach Him; for He had no fortune. Food, fine clothing, money, mansions -- fountainheads of half the world's weariness -- He simply did not care about; they played no part in His life. He "took no thought" for them.

It was impossible to affect Him by *lowering* His reputation; He had already made Himself of no reputation. He was silent before insult. When He was reviled He "turned the other cheek." In fact, there was nothing that the world could do to Him that could ruffle the surface of His spirit.

Such living, as mere living, is altogether unique.

# PAX VOBISCUM

It is only when we see what was in Him that we can know what the word Rest means.

It lies not in emotions, nor in the absence of emotions. It is not a hallowed feeling that comes over us in church. It is not something that the preacher has in his voice. It is not in nature, or in poetry, or in music -- though these can all be soothing.

It is the mind at leisure *from itself*. It is the perfect poise of the soul; the absolute adjustment of the inward man to the stress of all outward things; the preparedness for any emergency; the stability of assured convictions; the eternal calm of an invulnerable faith; the repose of a heart set deep in God.

It is the mood of the man who says, with Browning, "God's in His Heaven, all's well with the world."

# PAX VOBISCUM

Two artists each painted a picture to illustrate their conception of rest. The first chose to paint a still, lone lake among far-off mountains. The second artist painted a thundering waterfall, with a fragile birch-tree bending over the foam; at the fork of a branch, almost wet with the cataract's spray, a robin sat on its nest. The first painting depicted mere Stagnation; the second painting portrayed Rest.

For in Rest there are always two elements -- tranquility and energy; silence and turbulence; creation and destruction; fearlessness and fearfulness. This it was in Christ.

It is quite plain from all this that whatever else He claimed to be, or to do, He certainly knew how to *live*. All this is the perfection of living -- of living in the simple sense of passing through the world in the *best* way.

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Hence, His anxiousness to communicate His idea of life to others. He came, He said, to give people life, *true* life, a more abundant life than they were living; "the life that is life indeed." This is what He himself possessed, and it was this that He offers to all humanity.

And hence His direct appeal for all to come to Him who have not made much of life, who are weary and heavy-laden. To these He would teach His secret. They, also, would know "the life that is life indeed."

## WHAT YOKES ARE FOR

There is still one doubt to clear up. After the statement, "Learn of Me," Christ throws in the disconcerting qualification, "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me."

# PAX VOBISCUM

Why, if all this be true, does He call it a yoke? Why, while professing to give Rest, does He with the next breath whisper "burden"?

Is the Christian life, after all, what its enemies make of it -- an additional weight added to the already great burden of life, some extra restrictive rule about duty, some painful devotion to observances, some draconian restriction and impediment to all that is joyous and free in the world? Is life not hard and sorrowful enough without being fettered with yet *another* yoke?

It is astounding how so glaring a *misunderstanding* of this plain sentence should ever have passed into currency.

Did you ever stop to ask what a yoke is really for? Is it to be a burden to the animal that wears it? It is just the opposite. It serves to *lighten* its burden.



# PAX VOBISCUM

Attached to the oxen in any other way than by a yoke, the plough would be intolerable. Worked by means of a yoke, it is light. A yoke is not an instrument of torture; it is an instrument of mercy. It is not a malicious contrivance for making work hard; it is a compassionate device to make hard labor light.

It is not meant to give pain, but to relieve pain.

And yet people speak of the yoke of Christ as if it were a slavery, and look upon those who wear it as objects of sympathy.

For generations we have had homilies on "The Yoke of Christ" -- some *delighting* in portraying its excessive demands; some seeking in these demands the marks of its divinity; others *apologizing* for it, and toning it down; still others assuring us that although it is, granted, quite a bad thing, it is not to be compared with the positive *blessings* of Christianity.

# PAX VOBISCUM

How many, especially among the young, has this one misunderstood phrase driven forever away from the kingdom of God?

Instead of making Christ attractive, it makes Him out as a taskmaster; narrowing life by petty restrictions, calling for self-denial where none is necessary, making misery a virtue under the call that it is the yoke of Christ, and happiness criminal because it now and then evades it.

According to this conception, Christians are at best the victims of a depressing fate; their life is a penance; and their hope for the next world purchased by a slow martyrdom in this.

The mistake has arisen from taking the word "yoke" here in the same sense as in the expressions "under the yoke," or "wear the yoke in his youth."

# PAX VOBISCUM

But in Christ's illustration it is not the jugum of the Roman soldier\*, but the simple "harness" or "ox-collar" of the Eastern peasant. It is the literal wooden yoke that He, with His own hands in the carpenter shop, had probably often made.

\*[Having to "pass under the yoke" – a door-like opening made from three spears -- was regarded by Roman soldiers as a sign of capitulation and defeat. The practice gave birth to the word *subjugate*, meaning to subdue or conquer, from the Latin words *sub*, under, and *jugum*, a yoke.]

He knew the difference between a smooth yoke and a rough one, a bad fit and a good fit; the difference it made to the patient animal which had to wear it. The rough yoke galled, and the burden was heavy; the smooth yoke caused no pain, and the load was lightly drawn.

# PAX VOBISCUM

The badly fitted harness was a misery; the well-fitted collar was "easy."

And what was the "burden"? It was *not* some special burden laid upon the Christian, some unique infliction that they alone must bear. It was what *all* of us bear.

It was simply life, human life itself, the general burden of life which all must carry with them from the cradle to the grave.

Christ saw that humanity bore life painfully. To some it was a weariness, to others a failure, to many a tragedy, to all a struggle and a pain.

How to carry this burden of life had been the whole world's problem. It is *still* the whole world's problem.

And here is Christ's solution: "Carry it as I do. Take life as I take it.

# PAX VOBISCUM

Look at it from *My* point of view. Interpret it through *My* principles. Take *My* yoke and learn of *Me*, and you will find it easy.

For *My* yoke is easy, works easily, sits right upon the shoulders, and therefore *My* burden is light.”

There is no suggestion here that religion will absolve any man from bearing burdens. That would be to absolve him from living, since it is life itself that is the burden.

What Christianity does propose is to make it tolerable. Christ's yoke is simply His secret for the alleviation of human suffering, His prescription for the best and happiest method of living.

Men harness themselves to the work and stress of the world in clumsy and unnatural ways. The harness they put on is antiquated.

# PAX VOBISCUM

A rough, ill-fitting collar at the best, they make its strain and friction grind past enduring, by placing it where the neck is most sensitive; and by continuous irritation this sensitiveness increases until the whole nature is quick and sore.

This is the origin, among other things, of a disease called "touchiness" -- a disease that, in spite of its innocent name, is one of the gravest sources of restlessness in the world. [See **Good Temper** in *The Greatest Thing in the World*].

Touchiness, when it becomes chronic, is a morbid condition of the inward disposition. It is self-love inflamed to the acute point; *conceit with a hair-trigger*.

The cure is to *shift* the yoke to some *other* place; to let people and things touch us through some new and perhaps as yet unused part of our nature; to become meek and lowly in heart while the old nature is becoming atrophied from want of use.

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It is the beautiful work of Christianity everywhere to adjust the burden of life to those who bear it, and them to *it*. It has an absolutely miraculous ability to heal. Without doing any violence to human nature it sets it right with life; harmonizing it with all surrounding things, and restoring those who are jaded by the fatigue and dust of the world with a new grace for living.

By altering our perspective on life and changing the proportions of things, its function in lightening the our load is altogether unique.

The weight of a load depends upon the attraction of the earth. But suppose the attraction of the earth were removed? A ton on some other planet, where the attraction of gravity is less, does not weigh *half* a ton.

# PAX VOBISCUM

Now Christianity removes the attraction of the earth; and this is one way in which it diminishes our burden. It makes us citizens of another world.

What was a ton yesterday is not even a half a ton today. So without changing one's circumstances, merely by offering a wider horizon and a different standard, it alters the whole aspect of the world.

Christianity as *Christ taught* is the truest philosophy of life ever taught.

But let us be quite sure when we speak of Christianity that we mean *Christ's* Christianity.

Other *versions* are either caricatures, or exaggerations, or misunderstandings, or shortsighted and surface readings. For the most part their attainment is hopeless and the results wretched.



# PAX VOBISCUM

But I care not who the persons are, or through what vale of tears they have passed, or are about to pass, there is a new life for them along this path.

## HOW FRUITS GROW

Were Rest my subject, there are other things I should wish to say about it, and other kinds of Rest of which I should like to speak. But that is not my subject.

My theme is that the Christian experiences are not the work of magic, but come under the law of Cause and Effect. And I have chosen Rest only as a single illustration of the working of that principle.

If there were time I might next run over all the Christian experiences in turn, and show how the same wide law applies to each.

# PAX VOBISCUM

But I think it may serve the better purpose if I leave this further exercise to you.

I know no Bible study that you will find more full of fruit, or which will take you nearer to the ways of God, or make the Christian life itself more solid and more sure. I shall add only a single other illustration of what I mean, before I close.

Where does Joy come from? I knew a Sunday Scholar whose conception of Joy was that it was a thing made in lumps and kept somewhere in Heaven, and that when people prayed for it, pieces were somehow let down and fitted into their souls.

Views as infantile and materialistic as these are all too often held by people who ought to know better.

In reality, Joy is as much a matter of Cause and Effect as pain. No one can get Joy by merely asking for it.

# PAX VOBISCUM

It is one of the ripest fruits of the Christian life, and, like all fruits, must be grown.

There is a very clever trick in India called the mango-trick. A seed is put in the ground and covered up, and after various incantations a fully grown mango bush appears within five minutes. I never met anyone who knew how the thing was done, but I never met anyone who believed it to be anything more than a conjuring trick.

The world is pretty unanimous now in its belief in the orderliness of Nature. Men may not know *how* fruits grow, but they do know that they cannot grow in five minutes.

Some lives have not even a stalk on which fruits could hang -- even if they *did* grow in five minutes. Some have never planted one healthy seed of Joy in all their lives; and others who may have planted a seed or two have lived so little in sunshine that the seeds could never come to maturity.

# PAX VOBISCUM

Where, then, is joy? Christ put His teaching upon this subject into one of the most exquisite of His parables. I should in any instance have appealed to His teaching here, as in the case of Rest, for I do not wish you to think I am speaking words of my own. But it so happens that He has dealt with it in words of unusual fullness.

I need not recall the whole illustration. It is the parable of the Vine. Did you ever think why Christ spoke that parable? He did not mean it merely as some comments concerning general truths. It was not simply a statement of the mystical union, and the doctrine of an indwelling Christ. It was that; but it was more.

After He had said it, He did what was not an unusual thing when He was teaching His greatest lessons. He turned to the disciples and said He would tell them *why* He had spoken it. It was to tell them how to get Joy.

# PAX VOBISCUM

"These things have I spoken unto you," He said, "that My Joy might remain in you and that your Joy might be full."

It was a specific and deliberate communication of His secret for Happiness.

Go back over these verses, and you will find the Causes of this Effect, the spring, and the *only* spring, out of which true Happiness comes.

I am not going to analyze them in detail. I ask you to enter into the words yourself. Remember, in the first place, that the Vine was the Eastern symbol of Joy. It was its fruit that made glad the heart of man. Yet, however innocent that gladness -- for the juice of the grape was the common drink at every peasant's board -- the gladness was only a rough and passing thing.

# PAX VOBISCUM

This was not true happiness, and the vine of the Palestine vineyards was not the true vine. Christ was "the true Vine."

Here, then, is the ultimate source of Joy. Through whatever media it reaches us, all true Joy and Gladness find their source in Christ. By this, of course, is not meant that the actual Joy experienced is transferred from Christ's nature, or is something passed on from Him to us. What is passed on is His method of getting it.

There is, indeed, a sense in which we can share another's joy or another's sorrow. But that is another matter. Christ is the source of Joy to men in the same sense that He is the source of Rest.

His people share His life, and therefore share its consequences, and one of these is Joy. His method of living is one that in the nature of things produces Joy.

# PAX VOBISCUM

When He spoke of His Joy remaining with us He meant in part that the causes which produced it would *continue* to cause it. His followers, by emulating His life, would experience its accompaniments.

His Joy, His *kind* of Joy, would remain with them.

The medium through which this Joy comes is next explained: "He that abideth in Me, the same bringeth forth much fruit."

Fruit first, Joy next; the one the cause of the other. Fruit-bearing is the necessary antecedent; Joy is both the necessary consequent and the necessary accompaniment.

It lay partly in the bearing fruit, partly in the fellowship that made that possible.

# PAX VOBISCUM

Partly, Joy lay in constantly living in Christ's presence, with all that this implied of peace, of shelter, and of love; partly in the influence of that Life upon mind and character and will, and partly in the inspired dedication to live and work for others -- with all that it brings of self-transcendence and Joy in another's gain.

All these, in different ways and at different times, are sources of pure Happiness. Even the simplest of them -- to do good to and for other people, is an instant and infallible recipe for happiness.

*There is no mystery about Happiness whatever.* Put in the right ingredients and it *must* come out.

He that abideth in Him will bring forth much fruit; and bringing forth much fruit is Happiness.



# PAX VOBISCUM

The infallible recipe for Happiness, then, is to do good; and the infallible recipe for doing good is to abide in Christ.

The surest proof that all this is a plain matter of Cause and Effect is that men may try every other conceivable way of finding Happiness, and they will fail. Only the right cause in each case can produce the right effect.

Then are the Christian experiences of our own making? In the same sense in which grapes are of our own making, and no more. All fruits grow -- whether they grow in the soil or in the soul; whether they are the fruits of the wild grape or of the True Vine.

No one can *make* things grow. They can assist their growth -- by arranging all the circumstances and fulfilling all the conditions. But the growing is done by God.

# PAX VOBISCUM

Causes and effects are eternal arrangements, set in the constitution of the world; fixed beyond our ordering. What persons can do is place themselves in the midst of a chain of sequences.

Thus they can get things to grow: thus they themselves can grow. But the grower is the Spirit of God.

What more need I add but this -- test the method by experiment. Do not imagine that you have got these things because you know *how* to get them. As well try to feed upon a cookbook.

But I think I can promise that if you try this simple and natural way, you will not fail. Spend the time you have spent in *sighing* for fruits in *fulfilling the conditions* for their growth.

The fruits will come, *must* come.

# PAX VOBISCUM

We have paid attention to effects, to the mere experiences themselves; we have described them, extolled them, advised them, prayed for them -- done everything but find out what *caused* them. Henceforth let us deal with causes.

"To *be*," says Lotze [Rudolf Hermann Lotze: 1817--1881], "is to be in relations." About every other method of living the Christian life there is an uncertainty. About every other method of acquiring the Christian experiences there is a "perhaps." But in so far as this method is the way of nature, it *cannot* fail.

Its guarantee is the laws of the universe, and these are "the Hands of the Living God."

# PAX VOBISCUM

## THE TRUE VINE

John 15: 1 – 11 (King James Version)

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

# PAX VOBISCUM

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

If ye abide in me, and my word abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so ye shall be my disciples.

As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

# PAX VOBISCUM

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

PAX VOBISCUM