

*“All the trumpets sounded for him on the other side”*

—PILGRIM’S PROGRESS

# The Pilgrim

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## *Lenten Remembering*

February, 1969

Very soon now I shall again walk up the hill behind my house to go to the chapel on Wednesday evenings... It will be Lent again and as the shadows of early evening fall over the campus the chapel lights will shine in singular compassion to welcome us forlorn children of the twentieth century to a few moments of silence and singing... We will come from all over the campus — part of a procession which is longer than any other in the history of man... Ahead of me, almost lost in the distance of time, are people like Adam, Moses, David, Isaiah, Peter, John, Paul, Augustine, and Luther... Behind me in the procession are these young men and women who go to school here... A host of others, too, whose names I don’t know... The great procession whose beginning and end is a cross... Walking in such a line, I remember some things which need remembering...

I look at the trees and remember... Here in my town the trees are tall and straight... The elms and maples of Indiana... Long ago, in the Garden, they were gnarled and short... The olive trees of Palestine... There is no moon tonight, but long ago through the twisted branches of the olive trees the Paschal moon lighted the twisted hands of Him to whom we shall sing tonight... Never in all their years of heat and cold have the olive trees seen a stranger thing... He and the eleven who were left after one had gone into the night by another way had come to the hill of olive trees for the last time... Eight rested in one place, and three slept in another place... Only for Him there was no rest... Tortured hands, lips moving in agony, great drops of blood dripping into the dust from which man had come, and to which one Man had to return so that there might be a higher destiny for all others... The trees He had created and the moon He had set in its course heard His crying in the night... A strange story... The same pen that told us how a great army of angels honored with their carols God made a Child now tells us how one angel came and strengthened God made Man, despised and forsaken of all other men...

## THE CRESSET

I remember, in our angry and prideful time, other things, too... Only twice in the story which we shall hear again tonight did He utter a meek reproach... Once to Peter: "Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst not thou watch one hour?"... Once to the man who had left the Upper Room too early and too late: "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?"... Man in every sin of mind and heart will forever deserve one or the other of these reproaches... To sleep while He does His work in the world, to betray Him with a kiss — these were new sins that night... Since then, however, they have been done a thousand times.

I remember Peter... Under the olive trees he had his moment of blind bravery... He forgot, as I so often forget, that the plans of God are not to be helped or hindered by the sword.. .The ear which he severed from the head of Malchus, the servant of the high priest, was immediately mended by the suffering Servant of God: "Put up again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."... Peter learned that later in life... The old, beautiful legend of *Quo Vadis* tells the story:

Peter, outworn,  
And menaced by the sword,  
Shook off the dust of Rome;  
And, as he fled,  
Met One, with eager face,  
Hastening cityward,  
And, to his vast amaze,  
It was the Lord.

"Lord, whither goest Thou?"  
He cried, importunate,  
And Christ replied —  
    "Peter, I suffer loss,  
    I go to take thy place,  
    To bear thy cross."  
Then Peter bowed his head,  
Discomfited;  
There, at the Master's feet,  
Found grace complete,

THE CRESSET

And courage, and new faith,  
And turned — with Him,  
to Death.

So we —  
Whene'er we fail  
Of our full duty,  
Cast on Him our load —  
    Who suffered sore for us,  
    Who frail flesh wore for us,  
    Who all things bore for us —  
On Christ, the Lord.

