

Entitlement

For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake.

2 Cor. 4:11

Christ is entitled to Gethsemane;
Paul, to his super-Corinthian tribulations;
Joseph, to his fusillade;
Spencer, to bereavement, hardship, surgery.
Those who seek martyrdom
reward themselves with self-glory;
those who do not seek it,
but face it when presented,
are graciously given title;
and the more Christian they become,
the more able they will be
to profit from sickness,
persecution,
or death.

It is not suggested
that we pray to obtain adversity
(the Lord asked for the cup to be removed);
but that we should find virtue in it,
and feel gratitude for it.

Gazing at the ceiling from a hospital bed,
looking in vain from an asylum window,
under interrogation, on the rack,
tied to the stake, to a graveside,
we receive no badge, no medal,
except a bruised body,
a submissive mind,
and a contrite spirit.

The distinction's unsought,
but accepted as a mark of worthiness:
to be numbered with the Lord
as his retainer in the ranks of suffering—
an entitlement.

—Arthur Henry King
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