

O Christians dear, assembled here,  
I have good news for thee:  
The scriptures tell, instruct us well  
Of how we're meant to be.

Christ Jesu more, now as before,  
Has left us not alone;  
He stands with us, he prays for us.  
He is our cornerstone,

As our Lord and his faithful band  
Prepared them once to sup.  
Tradition said they each instead  
Should wash his hand and cup.

Their thoughts were filled with what God willed,  
To spread God's love about,  
And not with laws, which give men cause  
To fear, and then to doubt.

But others there began to stare,  
And our dear Lord did scold.  
They asked him why he would deny  
Traditions from of old.

The law's intent was to prevent  
The Hebrews to forget  
Just who they were and whose they were,  
And waywardness regret.

God loves them so, and let it show  
By many faithful acts.  
This history is there to see  
Among our Bible's facts.

The time it passed, it could not last,  
That law alone confess  
the closeness to the God they knew,  
And bring them righteousness.

The prophets warned about these thorns  
That sprout amidst the corn,  
And hide from view what's really true  
Behind a veil forlorn.

'Twas God's command that they should stand  
Apart and holy be;  
To be like him, without a whim  
Of mean hypocrisy.

But some found best to put to test  
The faith of those thy met  
According to the law they knew  
And judged them with a threat.

So on that day, as Mark did say,  
Confronted they our Lord,  
And told him plain they did disdain  
His heresy untoward.

But his response he gave at once,  
And pointed out their flaw:  
Their ritual, which once was full,  
Now empty was, as law.

God's new command, throughout the Land  
Was set in love alone:  
To love the one who vict'ry won,  
And neighbor as our own.

And, oh, the cost, when love is lost  
Within tradition's rite,  
When those in need, ignored through greed,  
Are lonely in their plight.

Our Christian plan itself is grand  
With ritual and rite.  
We ought beware and need take care,  
And keep our Lord in sight.

Else all we say this Sabbath Day  
Be empty words and moot,  
And all should see our liturgy  
As proof of foul repute.

When we would hold to all these bold  
Practices we invent,  
And with them play, we too must stay  
Devoted to repent.

The Psalmist's song rejects all wrong  
From those who would abide  
Atop the hill, God's holy hill,  
where those in truth reside.

So judgement hence is consequence  
Of what we choose to say,  
When for our gain we leave a stain,  
Our darkness on display.

Oh, Christians dear, assembled here,  
I have a task for you:  
You've heard the word from Christ the Lord,  
To ponder and review.

Now do you think, is there a link,  
To our identity?  
Are we so vile as to defile,  
Or do you disagree?

Is it a fact, our hearts are black,  
And must be overthrown?  
Does evil lurk behind each work  
Our human life has known?

Has Christ confessed, as some suggest,  
An evil twin we bear  
Who makes us sin from deep within,  
Whom judgment cannot spare?

Or have we been in goodness then  
Created after all?  
But vulnerable, susceptible,  
To evil's tempting call.

Is our offense a learned pretense  
From living in the world?  
A broken place, a true disgrace,  
Where wickedness has whirled.

By image true, both me and you,  
are fashioned first from God,  
Does wicked way all love decay  
and innocence defraud?

Would Eve have sinned undisciplined,  
Would there have been a fall  
Had there not been a serpent in  
The garden after all?

But nonetheless, our God will bless,  
As Brother James has writ,  
The ones who choose and don't refuse  
In righteousness to sit.

Should we choose love, our God above  
Will take us by the hand,  
And give us worth, and lead us forth,  
Into the promised Land.

So hear and learn, at ev'ry turn  
How Jesus his life led,  
And do as he, if victory  
Is what you choose instead.

But if you fail, in your travail,  
To do your best for God,  
With mercy sweet he'll wash your feet  
From dust through which you've trod.

For tempted we will always be,  
No matter what our place;  
In predicament our lives are spent,  
In need of gifts of grace.

If first fruits we are meant to be  
Of God's creative dream,  
Do not defile by voice or style.  
Let love then be thy theme.

Religion's aim, its only claim,  
Is to bring truth to light;  
To pull the veil and to prevail  
O'er darkness and its might.

If we could find our savior's mind,  
His truth would set us free;  
We'd find in love the precepts of  
The Law of Liberty.

With meekness dear we persevere  
Our faith's great joy to share:  
Pursue this thread and bow your head  
To join me in this prayer:

I thank you, Lord, that in your word  
You've promised me this day.  
O, give me strength, throughout its length,  
To do your will, I pray.

The morning sun, O faithful one,  
Illuminates my heart;  
O, give me sight to see your light,  
That I might do my part.

I would discern at ev'ry turn  
Your purpose and intent;  
O, share with me your mystery  
Before this time is spent.

Abide with me and make me free  
As way leads on to way;  
O, lend your voice to shape my choice  
Of how to serve today.

I feel you near, and have no fear  
Of worthlessness or strife;  
O, guide my hands to work your plans,  
And consecrate my life. Amen