

**WHAT IS A  
CHRISTIAN? A BOOK  
FOR THE TIMES**

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What is a Christian? A book for the times by John Walker Powell

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WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?



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# WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

*A Book for the Times*

BY

JOHN WALKER POWELL

AUTHOR OF "THE POETS' VISION OF MAN"

"THE SILENCES OF THE MASTER"

"HIM THAT OVERCOMETH"

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To  
THE MEMORY OF  
MY FATHER  
A FRONTIER METHODIST PREACHER  
OF THE OLD SCHOOL  
AND OF  
MY MOTHER  
A SIMPLE CHRISTIAN

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## INTRODUCTION

THE war in Europe has caused great searchings of heart among thoughtful people the world over, who are asking if this is all we have to show for nineteen centuries of Christian teaching. Browning's lines come to mind, of the Christ

"Whose sad face on the cross sees only this,  
After the passion of a thousand years."

President Eliot declares the Christian ethics a failure. John Galsworthy announces the death of mystical Christianity. A writer in the *Century* discusses the collapse of the church. The man in the street is asking, "Is the Christian ideal indeed practicable, or must the world go back in the end to the ancient doctrine that Might makes Right?"

The magazines in particular have been filled with discussions of this sort. It is true that as the first shock of the great catastrophe

has passed away and men have begun little by little to find themselves and to think more or less clearly, the problem is seen to be less acute than was at first supposed.

The great war is seen to be no isolated phenomenon, but merely the culmination of a long period of incubation.

The brutality of militarism appears on second thought to be not much worse than the brutality of industrialism.

Nevertheless the twentieth century has been rudely startled out of its complacency, and the world has been driven to look to the foundations of its thinking; to ask the meaning of its ultimate ideals, its fundamental principles.

While the discussion concerning the breakdown of Christianity was at its height, one of the popular magazines in a moment of unusual insight propounded the far-reaching query, "What is a Christian?" How far may one lag behind his Master in thought and practice without forfeiting his right to the title?