

**THE
BRAZEN SERPENT**

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The brazen serpent by John A. McClorey

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JOHN A. MCCLOREY

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BRAZEN SERPENT**

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BY

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INTRODUCTION

One of the paradoxes of Christianity is the obliviousness of most so-called Christians with regard to Christ. Christ stands before men to show them how to live; and few consider Him. Isaias said of Him: "A Child is given to us, the Prince of Peace." But the majority of men will not be led by the Child nor accept His peace. They are sufficient unto themselves. They can play the game of life without His direction. He will do for pietists but not for practical men of the world. He is relegated to the church. He has little place in the office, the workshop and society. He will do for the moment of death but not for the busy years of life. The thought of Him is to be an occasional distraction from business, a pleasant bit of spiritual sentiment, a casual ethereal indulgence, a rare luxury, like the reading of poetry or the contemplation of the stars; like being impressed by the ocean or awed by a mountain or charmed by a strain of music or regaled by the fragrance

of a flower. But tell the generality of men that the spirit of Christ is to permeate the flesh and blood, the bone, sinews and nerves of their daily lives in the world, and they will wonder. Tell them that Christ is to be with them when they make love and when they make war; when they dance and when they fight; when they work and when they rest; at their feasts as well as at their fasts, and they will wonder. They forget that Christ went through the phases of a human life to show them how to live. Oh! if Christ were a vivid reality to us how little hardness toward labor there would be among employers! How little sullen violence among laborers! How little ill-feeling in the home! How little frivolous indulgence among the rich! How little complaining among the poor! If Christ's spirit had been abroad the European war would not have occurred. But because men were too earthly and selfish; readier to make claims than to make concessions; fonder of rights than of charity; more willing to take than to give, therefore we see what we see! Christ is the Teacher and Leader of men; and if they will not enjoy His peace they must endure their own wars; if they will not follow Him to

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heaven they must choose the alternative of hell.

When the Hebrews of old were being bitten by fiery serpents Moses raised aloft among them a brazen serpent upon a staff, a symbol of Our Saviour on the cross. He bade the multitude look at it for their healing. Those who obeyed were cured; those who refused obedience perished of their wounds. For centuries the Church in the midst of stricken humanity has been pointing to the Figure upon the Cross. Those who raise their eyes to It and accept It are saved; those who knowingly decline this easy requirement are lost.

The purpose of these sermons, preached in St. Peter and Paul's (Jesuit) Church, Detroit, Michigan, was to help in the work of perpetuating the saving office of Moses and the Church.

THE AUTHOR.

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HEROD AND JOHN THE BAPTIST

St. Matthew, ch. 14 vs. 1-13.

“At that time Herod, the Tetrarch, heard the fame of Jesus. And he said to his servants: This is John the Baptist, he is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works show forth themselves in him. For Herod had apprehended John, and bound him, and put him into prison, because of Herodias, his brother’s wife. For John said to him: It is not lawful for thee to have her. And having a mind to put him to death, he feared the people, because they esteemed him as a prophet. But on Herod’s birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised, with an oath, to give her whatsoever she would ask of him. But she, being instructed before by her mother, said: Give me here in a dish, the head of John the Baptist. And the King was struck sad. Yet because of his oath, and them that sat with him at the table, he commanded it to be given. And he sent and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a dish; and it was given to the damsel, and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came and took the body, and buried him, and came and told Jesus. Which, when Jesus had heard, he retired from thence by a boat, into a desert place apart.”