

Thought for the day - Tuesday 15th November 2022

By Revd John Marshall

Lucy Whitmell Christ in Flanders

We had forgotten You, or very nearly ----
You did not seem to touch us very nearly ---
Of course we thought about You now and then
Especially in any time of trouble ---
We knew that You were good in time of trouble ---
But we are very ordinary men.

And there were always other things to think of ---
There's lots of things a man has got to think of ---
His work, his home, his pleasure and his wife.
And so we only thought of You on Sunday ---
Sometimes, perhaps not even on a Sunday ---
Because there's always lots to fill one's life.

And, all the while, in street or lane or byway ---
In country lane , in city street, or byway ---
You walked among us, and we did not see.
Your feet were bleeding as You walked our pavements ---
How did we miss Your footprints on our pavements? ---
Can there be other folk as blind as we?

Now we remember: over here in Flanders ---
(It isn't strange to think of You in Flanders) ---
This hideous warfare seems to make things clear.
We never thought about You much in England ---

But now that we are far away from England.
We have no doubts, we know that you are here.

You helped us pass the jest along the trenches ---
Where in cold blood, we waited in the trenches ---
You touched its ribaldry and made it fine.
You stood beside us in our pain and weakness ---
We're glad to think You understand our weakness ---
Sometimes it helps us not to whine.

We think about You kneeling in the Garden ---
Ah! God the agony of that dread Garden ---
We know You prayed for us upon the cross
If anything could make us glad to bear it ---
'Twould be the knowledge that You willed to bear it ---
Pain --- death --- the uttermost of human loss.

Though we forget You --- You will not forget us ---
We feel so sure that You will not forget us ---
But stay with us until this dream is past.
And so we ask for courage, strength and pardon ---
Especially, I think, we ask for pardon ---
And that You'll stand beside us to the last.

From Hear My Cry – words for when there are no words
Bible Society

I thought this poem seemed very modern but it appeared in the Spectator on
September 11th 1915.

It could have been inspired by her nephew William Augustus Portman Foster.