

Thought for the Day – Wednesday 16th March

By Revd John Marshall

Dead and Buried from the Sorrows of God and other poems

GA Studdert Kennedy Hodder and Stoughton

I have borne my cross through Flanders
Through the broken heart of France.
I have borne it through the deserts of the East;
I have wandered, faint and longing,
Through the human hosts that, thronging,
Swarmed to glut their grinning idols with a feast.

I was crucified in Cambrai,
And again outside Bapaume;
I was scourged for miles along the Albert Road,
I was driven, pierced and bleeding,
With a million maggots feeding
On the body that I carried as my load.

I have craved a cup of water,
Just a drop to quench my thirst,
As the routed armies ran to keep the pace;
But no soldier made reply
As the maddened host swept by,
And a sweating struggler kicked me in the face.

There's no ecstasy of torture
That the devils e'er devised
That my soul has not endured unto the last,

As I bore my cross of sorrow,
For the glory of tomorrow,
Through the wilderness of battles that is past.

Yet my heart was still unbroken,
And my hope was still unquenched,
Till I bore my cross to Paris through the crowd.
Soldiers pieced me on the Aisne,
But 'twas by the river Seine
That the statesmen brake my legs and made my shroud.

There they wrapped my mangled body
In fine linen of fair words,
With the perfume of a sweetly scented lie,
And they laid it in the tomb
Of the golden-mirrored room,
'Mid the many-fountained Garden of Versailles

With a thousand scraps of paper
They made fast the open door,
And the wise men of the Council saw it sealed,
With the seal of subtle lying
They made certain of my dying
Lest the torment of the people should be healed.

Then they set a guard of soldiers
Night and day beside the Tomb,
Where the Body of the Prince of Peace is laid,
And the captains of the nations

Keep the sentries to their stations
Lest the statesman's trust from Satan be betrayed.

For it isn't steel and iron
That men use to kill their God,
But the poison of a smooth and slimy tongue.
Steel and iron tear the body,
But it's oily sham and shoddy
That have trampled down God's Spirit in the dung.

What do you think of this fierce, meditative poem?