

## Column

Mrs. Lyndon Baines Johnson, better known as Lady Bird, once called Forsythia the "harbinger of spring". She was right. The yellow flowering shrub is a sure sign that the death of winter is about over.

Even so, don't put your house plants out just yet. More cold weather is almost certain to come.

If you think about it, you can draw a correlation between the appearance of Forsythia in bloom and Easter. Jesus' resurrection was a sign and pledge that the death of winter was drawing to an end.

But there is a period in between Easter and the final abolition of death. We might liken this period to the one between the time the Forsythia bursts forth in bloom and the time when all the trees of the forest receive their new dress.

During this period, there are almost certain to be some wintery blasts. Many will remember that the Blizzard of '93 came in the middle of March.

Just so, we should not be surprised at the storms of this present age. People still die, sin still seems to have the upper hand and despots of this world still use their ultimate weapon of death.

Yet, the Christian knows that the decisive battle has been fought, death itself has been defeated, the rightful King has landed, the Forsythia has blossomed.

And just as there are some tasks that can and must be done in the garden before spring arrives in its fullness, so there are for the Christian in this age theologians call "the already and not yet".

What might some of these be? If we know our Bibles, we know they include announcing the risen Jesus as the true Lord and summoning people everywhere to faith and obedience, living distinctive lives of beauty and holiness and implementing the values of the Kingdom in this present age.

Let's learn from the Forsythia and be about our Lord's business.

*O God, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us thy mercy; that, thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal: Grant this, O Heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord. Amen. (The Book of Common Prayer)*

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