

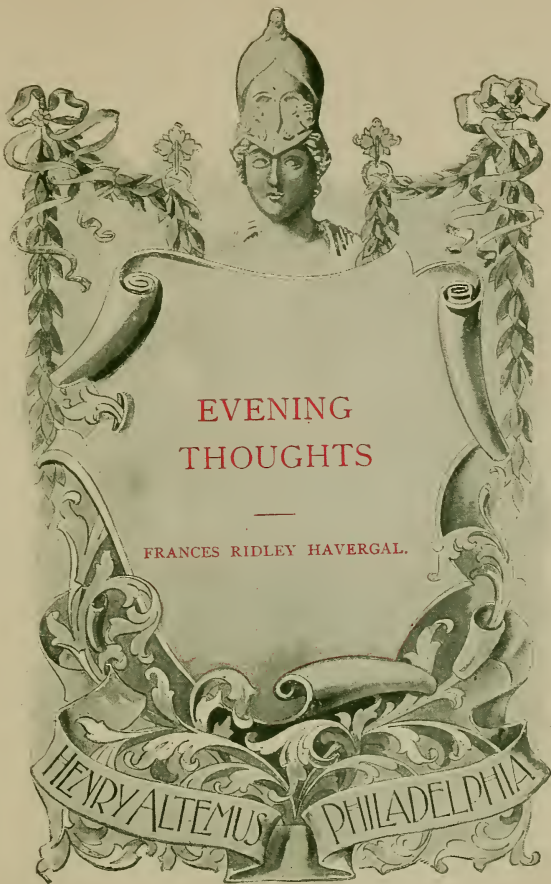


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EVENING
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HENRY ALTEMUS

PHILADELPHIA







EVENING
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**HENRY ALTEMUS, MANUFACTURER,
PHILADELPHIA.**

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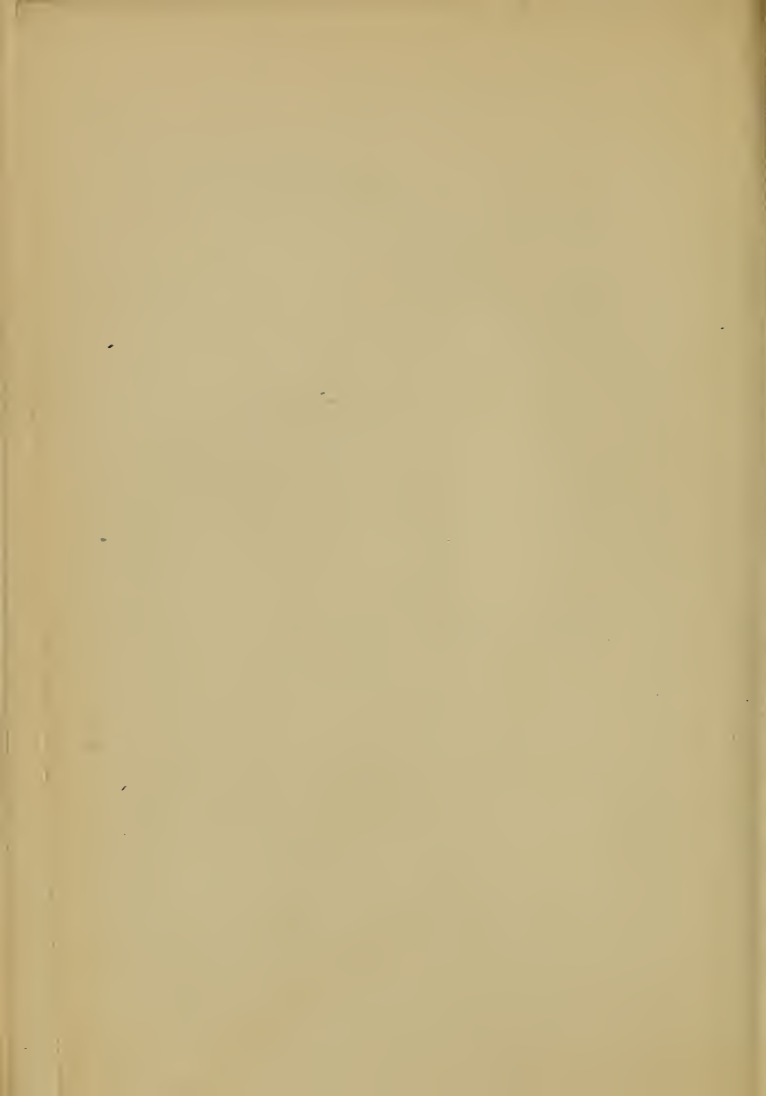
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EVENING THOUGHTS
FOR
THE KING'S GUESTS.



EVENING THOUGHTS

FIRST DAY.

The Royal Bounty.

‘And King Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty.’—1 KINGS x. 13.

ALL God’s goodness to us is humbling. The more He does for us, the more ready we are to say, ‘I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast shewed unto Thy servant.’¹ The weight of a great answer to prayer seems almost too much for us.² The grace of it is ‘too wonderful’³ for us. It throws up in such startling relief the disproportion between our little, poor, feeble cry, and the great shining response of God’s heart and hand, that we can only say: ‘Who am I, O Lord God, that Thou hast brought me hitherto? Is this the manner of man, O Lord God?’⁴

But it is more humbling still, when we stand face to face with great things which the Lord hath done for us and given us,⁵ which we never asked at all,⁶ never even thought of asking—royal bounty, with which not even a prayer had to do. It is so hum-

¹ Gen. xxxii. 10.

⁴ 2 Sam. vii. 18.

² Luke v. 8, 9.

⁵ Ps. cxxvi. 3.

³ Job xlii. 3.

⁶ 1 Kings iii. 13.

bling to get a view of these, that Satan tries to set up a false humility to hinder us from standing still and considering how great things the Lord hath done for us;¹ thus he also contrives to defraud our generous God of the glory due unto His name.²

For, of course, we do not praise for what we will not recognize.

Let us try to baffle this device to-day, and give thanks for the overwhelming mercies³ for which we never asked. 'Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits.'⁴ Just think of them deliberately (they are far too many to think of all in a flash); and how many did we actually ask for? Even that poor little claim was never brought to bear on thousands of them.

⁵ To begin at the beginning, we certainly did not ask Him to choose us in Christ Jesus before the world began,⁶ and to predestinate us to be conformed to the image of His Son.⁷ Was not that 'royal bounty' indeed?

Then, we certainly did not ask Him to call us by His grace;⁸ for before that call, we could not have wished, much less asked, for it.⁹ Then, who taught us to pray,¹⁰ and put into our entirely corrupt and sinful hearts¹¹ any thought of asking Him for anything at all?¹² Was not all this 'royal bounty'?

Look back at our early prayers. Has He not more than granted them? did we even know how much He could do for us? did He not answer prayer

¹ 1 Sam. xii. 7, 24.

⁴ Ps. lxxviii. 19; ib. ciii. 2.

⁷ Rom. viii. 29.

¹⁰ Luke xi. 1.

² Ps. xxix. 2.

⁵ 2 Thess. ii. 13.

⁸ 2 Tim. i. 9.

¹¹ Job xxxvii. 19.

³ Isa. lxiii. 7.

⁶ Eph. i. 4.

⁹ Rom. i. 6.

¹² Rom. viii. 26.

by opening out new vistas of prayer before us, giving us grace to ask for more grace, faith to plead for more faith?¹ Why, it is *all* 'royal bounty' from beginning to end! And this is going on now, and will go on forever, when He has brought us with gladness and rejoicing into His own palace.² Not till then shall we understand about those riches of glory in Christ Jesus,³ out of which He is even now pouring out the supply of all our need.

The marginal reading is very beautiful; it is, 'that which he gave her *according to the hand* of King Solomon.' We may link this with David's grateful words: '*According to Thine own heart* hast Thou done all these great things;'⁴ and again: 'Thou hast dealt well with Thy servant, O Lord, *according to Thy word*.'⁵ His hand, His heart, His word—what an immeasurable measure of His bounty! The great *hand* that holds the ocean in its hollow⁶ is opened to satisfy our desire,⁷ and to go beyond that exceeding abundantly,⁸ giving us according to the *heart* that '*so loved the world*,'⁹ and according to the *word*¹⁰ which is so deep and full that all the saints that ever drew their hope and joy from it cannot fathom its ever upspringing fountain.

Perhaps nobody knows the Bible well enough to know the full significance of saying, '*Be it unto me according to Thy word*;'¹¹ how much less can we imagine what shall be the yet unrevealed royal bounty *according to His heart* of infinite love and

¹ John i. 16; Rom. i. 17; Luke xvii. 5.

⁸ Phil. iv. 19.

⁶ Isa. xl. 12.

⁹ John iii. 16.

⁴ 2 Sam. vii. 21.

⁷ Ps. cxlv. 16.

¹⁰ John iv. 11, 14.

² Ps. xlv. 15.

⁵ Ps. cxix. 65.

⁸ Eph. iii. 20.

¹¹ Luke i. 38.

hand of infinite power ! ‘What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.’¹ ‘And ye shall . . . be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you.’²

When this passing world is done,
When has sunk yon glaring sun,
When we stand with Christ in glory,
Looking o’er life’s finished story,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know—
Not till then—how much I owe!

R. M’CHEYNE.

¹ John xiii. 7.

Joel ii. 26.

SECOND DAY.

The Opened Treasure.

‘The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure.’—
DEUT. xxviii. 12.

WHEN the wise men ‘opened their treasures,’ they brought out gold and frankincense and myrrh.¹ When Jehovah opens unto us His good treasure, we shall see greater things than these.²

The context of this rich promise seems to make ‘the heaven’ the treasure-house; and in its primary and literal sense, the fertilizing rain is the first outpouring of the opened treasure, soon after expanded into beautiful details of the ‘precious things of heaven and . . . the precious things of the earth.’³ But the spiritual blessings are closely interwoven with the temporal in the whole passage, and the faithful Israelites who did not ‘look only for transitory promises’⁴ may well have claimed the opening of heavenly treasure through this promise.⁵

What shall He ‘open unto thee?’ In a word, ‘the unsearchable riches of Christ.’⁶ In Him

¹ Matt. ii. 11.

⁴ Deut. xxviii. 1-14.

² John i. 50.

⁵ Art. vii.

³ Deut. xxxiii. 13-16.

⁶ Eph. iii. 8.

'are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,'¹ but the Lord shall open them unto thee. Riches of goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering² shall be meted out in infinitely gracious proportion to our sins, and provocations, and repeated waywardness; exceeding riches³ of grace for all our poverty now, and riches in glory⁴ enough and to spare for all the needs of glorified capacities though all eternity. 'All are yours' in Him.⁵

Faith is the key to this infinite treasury, and in giving us faith⁶ He gives us treasure for treasure. He is ready to make us 'rich in faith,'⁷ and then still to 'increase our faith'⁸ 'unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding.'⁹ Ask for this golden key, and then put it into the Lord's hand, that He may turn it in the lock.

He shall open unto thee the good treasure not only of the living Word, but of the written word.¹⁰ This is indeed 'treasure to be desired,'¹¹ 'more to be desired than gold;'¹² and when Jehovah the Spirit opens this to us, we shall, we *do*, rejoice 'as one that findeth great spoil.'¹³ Christ, the true Wisdom, has said, 'I will fill their treasures,'¹⁴ and 'the chambers shall be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.'¹⁵ So that when He has done this we are 'made treasurers over treasuries,'¹⁶ and may 'bring forth out of' our 'treasure things new and old.'¹⁷

¹ Col. ii. 3.

⁴ Phil. iv. 19.

⁷ Jas. ii. 5.

¹⁰ Luke xxiv. 32.

¹³ Ps. cxix. 162.

¹⁶ Neh. xiii. 13.

² Rom. ii. 4.

⁵ 1 Cor. iii. 22.

⁸ Luke xvii. 5.

¹¹ Prov. xxi. 20.

¹⁴ Prov. viii. 21.

¹⁷ Matt. xiii. 52.

³ Eph. ii. 7.

⁶ Eph. ii. 8.

⁹ Col. ii. 2.

¹² Ps. xix. 10.

¹⁵ Prov. xxiv. 4.

It is only with God-given treasure that we can enrich others. When we want to give a word to another, it generally seems to come with more power if, instead of casting about for what we think likely to suit them, we simply hand over to them any treasure word which He has freshly given to ourselves. When He opens to us some shining bit of treasure, let us not forget: 'Freely ye have received, freely give.'¹

Also, let us not stand idly waiting for some further opening of the treasure,² but 'let there be search made in the king's treasure-house,'³ 'in the house of the rolls where the treasures were laid up,'⁴ where the 'decrees' and 'records' of our King are to be 'found.'⁵ They are truly 'hidden riches.'⁶ Neither must we trust in our own store of spiritual treasures, whether of memory, experience, or even of grace,⁷ for we shall soon come under the condemning word, 'O backsliding daughter, that trusted in her treasures!'⁸ No, it is only continual drawing from *His* good treasure that will profit us, even 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'⁹ And 'we have *this* treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.'¹⁰

¹ Matt. x. 8.

⁴ Ezra vi. 1.

⁷ Jer. xlviii. 7.

¹⁰ 2 Cor. iv. 7.

² Prov. ii. 4.

⁵ Ezra vi. 2.

⁸ Jer. xlix. 4.

³ Ezra v. 17.

⁶ Isa. xlv. 3.

⁹ 2 Cor. iv. 6.

THIRD DAY.

The King's Signature and Seal.

'The writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.'—ESTHER viii. 8.

SUCH is the writing which by God's great goodness is the glory of our land and the treasure of our hearts, full of exceeding great and precious promises,¹ of commands not less great and not less precious,² and of words of prophecy (which are only words of promise a little farther off) 'more sure' than the testimony of an apostle's senses to the excellent glory and the heavenly voice.³

It is written in the King's name. The living Word of God, who came to declare, to manifest, and to glorify the Father,⁴ has imprinted His own name upon the same testimony as written by the Spirit, and has given it to us as the 'word of God.'⁵

It is sealed with the King's ring. Sealing is a special work of the Holy Spirit, exercised in different ways;⁶ and how clearly has He sealed this great

¹ 2 Pet. i. 4.

² Ps. cxix. 97.

³ 2 Pet. i. 17-19.

⁴ John i. 1; ib. xvii. 4, 6, 26.

⁵ John xvii. 14.

⁶ Eph. i. 13, etc.

writing with the King's ring, engraved with His own image and superscription, the convincing token of its being indeed from Himself, and sent forth in unchangeable authority and power!¹

It is a double sealing, without and within²—first, the external and distinctly visible declaration that the writing is 'by the Holy Ghost ;'³ and then the all-convincing evidence that it is so by its effectual working⁴ in our own hearts with a power which, we know for ourselves, cannot be less than almighty and therefore divine.⁵

It is thus written in the King's name, and 'sealed with His own signet,'⁶ not only that we may know it to be His, but that we may have the right humbly, yet confidently, to show Him, so to speak, His own name and His own signet as our claim for the fulfilment of all contained therein.⁷ He will never fail to acknowledge them.

This royal writing 'may no man reverse.' The King Himself cannot reverse it, for He changes not;⁸ He 'cannot lie,'⁹ 'He cannot deny Himself ;'¹⁰ for unchangeable truth is not only an essential attribute, but the very essence of His Deity.¹¹ This one great 'cannot' is the security for all that He 'can' and will do. And if God 'cannot,' who can? All 'the craft and subtilty' of devil or man is powerless against one syllable of this royal writing. 'The word of our God shall stand for ever,'¹² and the hoarse recoil of every furious

¹ John xii. 48.

² 2 Sam. xxiii. 2.

³ Mark xii. 36; 1 Pet. i. 11.

⁴ 1 Thess. ii. 13.

⁵ Heb. iv. 12.

⁶ Dan. vi. 17.

⁷ Gen. xxxviii. 17, 18, 25, 26.

⁸ Mal. iii. 6.

⁹ Titus i. 2.

¹⁰ 2 Tim. ii. 13.

¹¹ John xiv. 6.

¹² Isa. xl. 8.

wave that is shattered into foam against this everlasting rock only murmurs, 'I cannot reverse it.'¹

And is it not a most blessed and comforting thought that we ourselves cannot reverse it, though this is the quarter from which we are practically most tempted to dread its reversal? For,² 'if we believe not, yet He abideth faithful.' All the earth-born or devil-breathed fogs and clouds of doubt, from the fall till this hour, have not been able to touch the splendor of one star that He has set in the unassailable firmament of His eternal truth.

All the promises of God are yea and Amen³—where?—'in Him,' the Son of God.⁴ He holds these stars in His right hand; He has held the great promise of eternal life for us⁵ since God gave it to Him for us before the world began, and every other is subincluded. And it is one of His offices 'to confirm the promises.'⁶ Signed, sealed, held, and confirmed thus, should not 'It is written' be enough for our present 'light, and gladness, and joy, and honour?'

Another clause of this beautiful verse is too striking to be passed over: 'Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring.'⁸ Does not this remind us of another writing of our King: 'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask *what ye will*, and it shall be done unto you.' He places His own name and His own signet at the disposal of His 'abiding' ones, and says:⁹

¹ Num. xxiii. 20.

⁴ 2 Tim. i. 1.

⁷ Esther viii. 16.

² 2 Tim. ii. 13.

⁶ John x. 28.

⁸ Esther viii. 8.

³ 2 Cor. i. 20.

⁶ Rom. xv. 8.

⁹ Isa. xlv. 11.

‘Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons, and concerning the work of My hands *command ye Me.*’¹ ‘Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee.’ Should not this encourage us in intercession? Perhaps we are saying, like Esther,² ‘How can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?’ Have we as yet *fully* availed ourselves of ‘the King’s name,’ and ‘the King’s ring?’

For He hath given us a changeless writing,
Royal decrees that light and gladness bring,
Signed with His name in glorious inditing,
Sealed on our hearts with His own signet ring.

¹ Job xxii. 28.

² Esther viii. 6.

FOURTH DAY.

The Candour of Christ.

‘Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?’—JOHN iv. 29.

YES! it is not merely a vague general belief in Christ as the Teacher who ‘will tell *us* all things’¹ which suffices for heart conviction of ‘the reality of Jesus Christ,’ but the individual knowledge of Him as the Searcher who ‘told *me* all things that ever I did.’² This was what led the woman of Samaria to exclaim, ‘Is not this the Christ?’ this was to her the irresistible proof of His Messiahship.

What about ourselves? If we know anything of true intercourse with the Lord Jesus our experience will not be unlike hers.³ When He who ‘searches Jerusalem with candles’⁴ turns the keen flame of His eyes upon the dark corners of our hearts, and flashes their far-reaching, all-revealing beam upon even the far-off and long-forgotten windings of our lives; when in His light we see the darkness, and in His purity we see the sin that has been, or that

¹ John iv. 25.

³ Zeph. i. 12.

² John iv. 29.

⁴ Rev. ii. 18, 23.

is; when He 'declareth unto man what is his thought,'¹ and then convinces that 'as he thinketh in his heart, so *is* he,'² *then* we know for ourselves that He 'with whom we have to do'³ is 'indeed the Christ.'⁴

He does not merely *show* us; it is something more than that. It is not merely an invisible hand drawing away a veil from hidden scenes, and a light brought to bear upon them, so that we can see them if we will; it is more personal, more terrible, and yet more tender than that. He *tells* us what we have done; and, if we listen, the telling will be very clear, very thorough, very unmistakable.

At first we are tempted not to listen at all; we shrink from the still small voice which tells us such startlingly unwelcome things.

Many feel what one expressed: 'Whenever I *do* think about it, I feel so horribly bad that I don't like to think any more.' Ah, 'if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day,'⁵ that it was not mere 'thinking about it,' but the voice of the Saviour beginning to tell thee what would have cleared the way for 'the things which belong unto thy peace,'⁶ what blessing might not the patient and willing listening have brought! Oh, do not stifle the voice, do not fancy it is only uncomfortable thoughts which you will not encourage lest they should make you low-spirited! Instead of that, ask Him to let His voice sound louder and clearer, and believe 'that the goodness of God leadeth thee to

¹ Amos iv. 13.

⁴ John iv. 42.

² Prov. xxiii. 7.

⁵ Luke xix. 42.

³ Heb. iv. 13.

⁶ Isa. xlvi. 18.

repentance.¹ Only listen, and He will tell you not only all things that ever *you* did, but all things which He has done for you. He never leaves off in the middle of all He has to tell, unless we wilfully interrupt Him.

Perhaps we have gone through all this, and known the humbling blessedness of being searched and 'told,'² and then pardoned and cleansed;³ and now again there is something not right. We hardly know what,⁴ only there is a misgiving, a dim, vague uneasiness;⁵ we 'really don't know of anything in particular,'⁶ and yet there is something unsatisfied and unsatisfactory. There is nothing for it but to come to our Messiah afresh, and ask Him to tell us what we have done, or are doing, which is not in accordance with His will.⁷ It will be useless coming if we are not sincerely purposed to let Him tell us what He will, and not merely what we expect;⁸ or if we hush up the first word of an unwelcome whisper, and say, 'Oh, *that* can't have anything to do with it!' or, 'I am all right *there*, at any rate!' We must simply say, 'Master, say on;⁹ and perhaps He will then show us, as He did Simon,¹⁰ that we have not done Him the true and loving service which some poor despised one has rendered.

Oh, never shrink from the probings of our beloved Physician.¹¹ Dearer and dearer will the hand become as we yield to it.¹² Sweeter and sweeter will

¹ Rom. ii. 4.

² Ps. xciv. 12.

³ Ps. xxxii. 1.

⁴ 2 Sam. xxi. 1.

⁵ Job xv. 11.

⁶ Job x. 2.

⁷ Ps. cxxxix. 23; Matt. vii. 21.

⁸ Job xiii. 22, 23.

⁹ Luke vii. 40.

¹⁰ Luke vii. 44, 45, 46.

¹¹ Matt. ix. 12.

¹² Job v. 18.

be the proofs that He is our own *faithful* Friend,
who only wounds that He may perfectly heal.¹

Only this I know, I tell Him all my doubts, and griefs, and
fears;

Oh, how patiently He listens, and my drooping soul He
cheers!

Do you think He ne'er reproves me? What a false friend
He would be,

If He never, never told me of the sins which He must see!
Do you think that I could love Him half so well, or as I ought,
If He did not tell me plainly of each sinful deed and thought?
No! He is very faithful, and that makes me trust Him more;
For I know that He *does* love me, though He wounds me very
sore.

ELLEN LAKSHMI GOREH.

¹ Prov. xxvii. 6.

FIFTH DAY.

From Death Unto Life.

‘Is passed from death unto life.’—JOHN v. 24.

TWO distinct states with nothing between. No broad space between the two where we may stand, leading to the one or to the other; only a boundary line too fine to balance upon. Not many steps—not even two or three from one to the other, but one step *from* death *unto* life;¹ the foot lifted *from* the hollow crust over the volcanic fire, and set *upon* the Rock of salvation.²

How tremendously important to know whether this step is taken; but how clear and simple the test: ‘He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.’ Are you trembling and down-hearted, wanting some very strong consolation for your very weak faith?³ Lay hold of this.⁴ See how the rope is let down low enough to meet the hand which you can scarcely lift.⁵

‘He that heareth My word.’ Can you say you

¹ Acts xxvi. 18.

⁴ 1 Tim. vi. 12.

² Ps. xl. 2.

⁵ Heb. xii. 12.

³ Heb. vi. 18.

have *not* heard? You have heard His word *as* His word, recognizing it as such, receiving it 'not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God.'¹ It 'is come unto you,' because it 'is sent' unto you.² The word of Jesus is heard by your innermost self, and you would not be hearing and recognizing it if you were still dead. A marble statue hears not.

'And believeth on Him that sent Me.' 'But that is the very question,' you say; 'if I were sure I believed, I should know I had everlasting life.'³ Why should you know? Because He says so, and you could not but believe what He says. Then listen now to what He says: 'The father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.'⁴ Do you *not* believe this? Did the Father *not* send the Son? Did He *not* so love the world?⁵ Let the very recoil from such plain English of unbelief show you the sin and folly of doubting any more. You do hear His word, you do believe on the Father who sent the Son to be your Saviour,⁶ will you not now believe that Jesus means what He says in threefold assurance: 'Hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life?'⁷

Not 'is passing,' but 'is passed;' a fact whose full blessedness cannot be fully realized here, while we only 'know in part'⁸ God's great gift of eternal life,⁹ but not affected by varying degrees of realization.¹⁰

¹ 1 Thess. ii. 13.

⁴ 1 John iv. 14.

⁷ John v. 24.

¹⁰ 2 Tim. ii. 13.

² Col. i. 6.

⁵ John iii. 16.

⁸ 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

³ John vi. 47.

⁶ John xvi. 9.

⁹ Rom. vi. 23.

See your position,—or rather, take His word about it,—and give Him thanks—oh, give Him thanks—for having lifted you in your blindness and helplessness over that solemn boundary line when you could not even step over it. ‘Sing . . . for the Lord hath done it;’¹ and when you begin to sing and to praise,² the Lord’s own ambushments of promises will start up before your eyes (*there* all the time, only you did not see them), and the shadowy hosts of fears and doubts shall flee away, and you shall ‘*know*’ that you have passed from death unto life.³

From death—cold, dark, hopeless, useless, loveless; the death in trespasses and sins;⁴ the death that lives (strange paradox) forever in the lake of fire⁵—unto life with its ever-increasing abundance;⁶ life crowned with light and love; life upon which only a shadow of death can ever pass, and that only the shadow of the portal of eternal glory;⁷ life in Jesus, life for Jesus, life with Jesus.

This is your position now—made nigh instead of far off;⁸ reconciled to God instead of ‘enemies in your mind;’⁹ found instead of lost;¹⁰ fellow-citizens with the saints instead of strangers and foreigners;¹¹ sometimes darkness, but now light in the Lord;¹² passed from death unto life. And all because Jesus passed from life unto death, even the death of the cross, for you;¹³ because it was the Father’s will that He should come as the only re-

¹ Isa. xliv. 23.

⁴ Eph. ii. 1.

⁷ Ps. xxiii. 4.

¹⁰ Luke xv. 32.

¹³ Phil. ii. 8.

² 2 Chron. xx. 22.

⁵ Rev. xx. 14.

⁸ Eph. ii. 13.

¹¹ Eph. ii. 19.

³ 1 John iii. 14.

⁶ John x. 10.

⁹ Col. i. 21.

¹² Eph. v. 8.

quired 'sacrifice for sin ;'¹ and He, our Lord Jesus Christ, was 'content to do it.'²

There is life for a look at the Crucified One ;
There is life at this moment for thee ;
Then look, sinner—look unto Him, and be saved—
Unto Him who was nailed to the tree.

Oh, doubt not thy welcome, since God has declared
There remaineth no more to be done ;
That once in the end of the world he appeared,
And completed the work He begun.

But take, with rejoicing, from Jesus at once,
The life everlasting He gives :
And know with assurance, thou never canst die,
Since Jesus, thy righteousness, lives.

A. M. HULL.

¹Ps. xl. 9, P. B. V.

²Ps. xl. 10.

SIXTH DAY.

Justified.

‘And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.’—ACTS xiii. 39.

‘AND.’ For justification does not come first. The robe of righteousness¹ is not put on until the sinner is ‘purged from his old sins.’² So this is God’s order—first, ‘Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins;’ and then, ‘By Him all that believed are justified.’

But ‘in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.’³ ‘For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.’⁴ But we have *not* ‘obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us.’⁵ So ‘that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident;’⁶ for ‘by the deeds of the law there shall *no* flesh be justified in His sight.’⁷ ‘How then can man be justified with God?’⁸ ‘The law was our schoolmaster to bring

¹ Isa. lvi. 10.

⁴ Rom. ii. 13.

⁷ Rom. iii. 20.

² Pet. i. 9.

⁶ Dan. ix. 10.

⁸ Job xxv. 4.

³ Ps. cxliii. 2.

⁶ Gal. iii. 11.

us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.¹

This glorious justification by faith is sevenfold. We are justified, 1. '*By His grace*'²—the grace of God the Father, one of whose most wonderful titles is, 'The Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.'³ 2. '*By His blood*'⁴—that precious blood which has to do with every stage of our redemption and effectuated salvation; from the writing of our names 'in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,'⁵ till the chorus of the 'new song'⁶ is full in heaven. 3. '*By the Righteousness of One*' (of the One), 'by the obedience of One';⁷ by which the free gift, the unspeakable gift of eternal life—nay, of Christ Himself to be our life⁸—'came upon all men unto justification of life. 4. '*By the resurrection* of Jesus our Lord, who 'was raised again for our justification,' the grand token that our Substitute had indeed fulfilled all righteousness for us.¹⁰

'For God released our Surety
To show the work was done.'¹¹

5. '*By His knowledge* shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities.'¹² For true faith is founded upon the knowledge of Him, and 'this is life eternal.'¹³ 6. '*By faith*; just *only* believing God's word, and accepting God's way about it.'¹⁴ 7. '*By works*; because these are the

¹ Gal. iii. 24.

⁴ Rom. v. 9.

⁷ Rom. v. 18, 19.

¹⁰ Matt. iii. 15.

¹³ John xvii. 3.

² Rom. iii. 24.

⁵ Rev. xiii. 8.

⁸ Col. iii. 4.

¹¹ John xix. 30.

¹⁴ Rom. v. 1.

³ Rom. iii. 26.

⁶ Rev. v. 9.

⁹ Rom. iv. 24, 25.

¹² Isa. liii. 11.

necessary and inseparable evidence that faith is not mere fancy or talk.¹ We *are* 'justified by faith without the deeds of the law,'² the old dead galvanic struggle to do duties and keep outward obligations; but *not* without works, which 'do spring out necessarily from a true and lively faith;' for 'faith without works is *dead*.'³

'Therefore, being justified by faith,' what then?
 1. 'We have peace with God.'⁴ 2. 'We shall be saved from wrath through Him.'⁵ 3. We are made heirs of eternal life.⁶ 4. We shall be glorified by Him and with Him for ever.⁷

What about my own part and lot in the matter? Whom does God thus justify? and may I hope to be among them? He begins indeed at the lowest depth, so that none may be shut out; for He 'would justify the heathen through faith,'⁸ and He 'justifieth the ungodly.'⁹ The publican who could only cry, 'God be merciful to me the sinner,'¹⁰ was justified. I can come in here, at all events.

But how shall I be actually and effectually justified *now*? Let God speak and I will listen:¹¹ 'Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto *all* and upon *all* them that believe:¹² for there is no difference.' 'By Him all that believe *are* justified.'¹³ 'I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord.' Do I? 'Lord, I *believe*.'¹⁴ Then His righteousness is upon me, and I *am* justi-

¹ Jas. ii. 24.

³ Jas. ii. 26.

⁶ Titus iii. 7.

⁸ Heb. vii. 25; Gal. ii. 8.

¹¹ Ps. lxxxv. 8.

¹⁴ Mark ix. 24.

² Rom. iii. 28; Gal. ii. 16; ib. v. 4.

⁴ Rom. v. 1.

⁷ Rom. viii. 30; John xvii. 22.

⁹ Rom. iv. 5.

¹² Rom. iii. 22.

⁵ Rom. v. 9.

¹⁰ Luke xviii. 14.

¹³ Acts xiii. 39.

fied. 'Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ.'¹ And now, 'He is *near* that justifieth me.'² 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.'³

By the grace of God the Father, thou art freely justified,—⁴
 Through the great redemption purchased by the blood of Him
 who died,—⁵
 By His life, for thee fulfilling God's command exceeding
 broad,—⁶
 By His glorious resurrection, seal and signet of our God.⁷

Therefore, justified for ever by the faith which He hath
 given,⁸
 Peace, and joy, and hope abounding smooth thy trial-path to
 heaven:⁹
 Unto Him betrothed for ever, who thy life shall crown and
 bless,¹⁰
 By His name thou shalt be called, Christ, 'The Lord our
 Righteousness.'¹¹

¹ Gal. ii. 16.² Isa. l. 8.³ Rom. viii. 33.⁴ Rom. iii. 24.⁵ Rom. v. 9.⁶ Rom. x. 4.⁷ Rom. iv. 25.⁸ Rom. v. 1.⁹ Rom. xv. 13.¹⁰ Hos. ii. 19.¹¹ Jer. xxxiii. 16.

SEVENTH DAY.

The Royal Wine.

‘Thy love is better than wine.’—CANT. i. 2.

WINE is the symbol of earthly joy; and who that has had but one sip of the love of Christ does not know this ‘royal wine,’¹ this true ‘wine of the kingdom,’² to be better than the best joy that the world can give! How much more, then, when deeper and fuller draughts are the daily portion, as we ‘follow on to know’³ the love ‘which passeth knowledge!’⁴ It is the privilege not of a favoured few, but of ‘*all* saints,’ to comprehend something of what is incomprehensible.⁵

1. The breadth, contrasted with the narrowness of earthly love and all its joy. Perhaps it is not so much by looking at His love to all the redeemed ones whom no man can number,⁶ that we realize this, as by seeing that the love of Jesus was broad enough to reach and include ‘even me.’ ‘Who loved *me*;⁷’ is not that more incomprehensible than that He loved all the saints and angels?

¹ Esther i. 7.

² John xiv. 27.

³ Hos. vi. 3.

⁴ Eph. iii. 19.

⁵ Eph. iii. 18.

⁶ Rev. vii. 9.

⁷ Gen. xxvii. 38; Gal. ii. 20.

2. The length, contrasted with the passing shortness of the longest earthly love and joy. What is the length? 'Unto the end.'¹ And even that is not the full measure, for His immeasurable love is everlasting;² and when inconceivable ages have passed, we shall be no nearer 'the end' than now.

3. The depth, contrasted with the shallowness which is always felt, however disguised, in the world's best.³ Down to the very depth of our fall went that wonderful love of Christ, to the depth of our sin, to the depth of our need, to the depth of those caverns of our own strange inner being which we ourselves cannot fathom, and which only His love can fill.

4. The height, contrasted with the lowness and littleness of all that is represented by the world's wine. This all ends in self, which is like a low vaulted roof, keeping down every possibility of rising; and so the earthly joy can take but a bat-like flight, always checked, always limited, in dusk and darkness. But the love of Christ breaks through the vaulting, and leads us up into the free sky above, expanding to the very throne of Jehovah, and drawing us 'still upward'⁴ to the infinite heights of glory. Is there any height beyond, 'As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you'⁵ These measures (so to speak) of Christ's love are those of the unsearchable perfection of God Himself. 'It is as high as heaven, deeper than hell'⁶ (thank God

¹ 1 John ii. 17; 1 Cor. vii. 29-31; John xiii. 1.

³ Prov. xiv. 13; Eccles. ii. 10, 11; John iv. 13.

⁶ John xv. 9.

² Jer. xxxi. 3.

⁴ Ezek. xli. 7.

⁶ Job xi. 7-9.

for that word deeper), 'longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.'

For whom is this love? Oh how glad we are that it is not for the worthy and the faithful, so that we must be shut out, but for His own, *though* the chief of sinners!¹ It is 'the love of the Lord toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.' Has it been so with us, that we have been looking away from Jesus to heart-idols and 'other lords,'² and loving some earthly 'flagons of wine'—other love, other pleasures, other joys, 'other things,' which are *not* Jesus Christ's? Then only think of 'the love of the Lord toward' *us!* Well may we say, 'Thy love to me was wonderful,'³ and own it to be 'better than wine,' 'above my chief joy.'⁴ He proved His love to you and me to be 'strong as death;' and when all God's waves and billows went over Him, the many waters could not quench it.⁵

In His love and in His pity He redeemed us; in the same love He bears us and carries us all the day long.⁶ He 'loveth at *all* times,'⁷ and that includes this present moment; now, while your eye is on this page, His eye of love is looking on you, and the folds of His banner of love are overshadowing you.⁸

Is there even a feeble pulse of love to Him? He meets it with, 'I love them that love Me.'⁹ 'I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.' And

¹ 1 Tim. i. 15.

⁴ Ps. cxxxvii. 6.

⁶ Isa. lxiii. 9; ib. xlvi. 4.

⁹ Prov. viii. 17.

² Isa. xxvi. 13.

⁵ Cant. viii. 6; Ps. xlii. 7; Cant. viii. 7.

⁷ Prov. xvii. 17.

³ 2 Sam. i. 26.

⁸ Cant. viii. 7.

⁸ Cant. ii. 4.

so surely as the bride says, 'Thy love is better than wine,' so surely does the heavenly Bridegroom respond with incomprehensible condescension: 'How fair is *thy* love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is *thy* love than wine.'¹ May this love of Christ constrain us to live unto Him 'who loved me and gave Himself for me.'²

O Christ, He is the fountain,
 The deep, sweet well of love!
 The streams on earth I've tasted,
 More deep I'll drink above.
 There to an ocean-fulness
 His mercy doth expand,
 Where glory, glory dwelleth
 In Immanuel's land.

Oh! I am my Beloved's,
 And my Beloved is mine!
 He brings a poor vile sinner
 Into 'His house of wine.'
 I stand upon His merits;
 I know no safer stand,
 Not e'en where glory dwelleth
 In Immanuel's land.

A. B. COUSIN.

¹ Cant. iv. 10.

² Gal. ii. 20.

EIGHTH DAY.

The Gift of Peace.

‘My peace I give unto you.’—JOHN xiv. 27.

‘**P**EACE I leave with you’ is much; ‘My peace I give unto you’ is more. The added word tells the fathomless marvel of the gift—‘My peace.’ Not merely ‘peace with God;’¹ Christ has made that by the blood of His cross, and being justified by faith we have it through Him.² But after we are thus reconciled, the enmity and the separation being ended, Jesus has a gift for us from His own treasures; and this is its special and wonderful value, that it is *His very own*.³ How we value a gift which was the giver’s own possession! what a special token of intimate friendship we feel it to be! To others we give what we have made or purchased; it is only to very near and dear ones that we give what has been our own personal enjoyment or use. And so Jesus gives us not only peace made and peace purchased, but a share in His very own peace,—divine, eternal, incomprehensible peace,—which dwells in His own heart as God, and which shone

¹ Col i. 20.

² Rom. v. 1.

³ Ps. lxxviii. 18.

in splendour of calmness through His life as man. No wonder that it 'passeth all understanding.'¹

But how? Why does the sap flow from the vine to the branch? Simply because the branch is joined to the vine.² Then the sap flows into it by the very law of its nature. So, being joined to our Lord Jesus by faith, that which is His becomes ours, and flows into us by the very law of our spiritual life. If there were no hindrance, it would indeed flow as a river.³ Then how earnestly we should seek to have every barrier removed to the inflowing of such a gift! Let it be our prayer that He would clear the way for it, that He would take away all the unbelief, all the self, all the hidden cloggings of the channel.

Then He will give a sevenfold blessing:⁴ 'My peace,' 'My joy,' 'My love,' at once and always, now and for ever; 'My grace' and 'My strength' for all the needs of our pilgrimage; 'My rest' and 'My glory' for all the grand sweet home-life of eternity with Him.

Thy reign is perfect peace,
Not mine, but Thine;
A stream that cannot cease,
For its fountain is Thy heart. Oh, depth unknown!
Thou givest of Thine own,
Pouring from Thine, and filling mine.

¹ Phil. iv. 7.

³ Isa. xlvi. 18.

² John xv. 5.

⁴ John xv. 10, 11.

NINTH DAY.

The Abiding Joy.

‘These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.’—JOHN XV. II.

WHO that has known anything of joy in the Lord but has asked, ‘But will it last?’ And why has the question been so often the very beginning of its not lasting? Because we have either asked it of ourselves or of others, and not of the Lord only. His own answers to this continually recurring question are so different from the cautious, chilling, saddening ones which His children so often give. They are absolute, full, reiterated. We little realize how unscriptural we are when we meet His good gift of joy to ourselves or to others with a doubtful, and therefore faithless, ‘*If it lasts!*’

‘To the law and to the testimony,’¹ O happy Christian! there you shall find true and abundant answer to your only shadow on the brightness of the joy. So long as you believe your Lord’s word about it, so long it *will* last.² So soon as you ask of other counsellors, and believe their word instead,

¹ Isa. viii. 20.

² Isa. vii. 9.

so soon it will fail. Jesus meets your difficulty explicitly. He has provided against it by giving the very reason why He spoke the gracious words of His last discourse, 'That My joy might *remain* in you.'¹ Is not this exactly what we were afraid to hope, what seemed too good to be true, that it 'might *remain*'? And lest we should think that this abiding joy only meant some moderate measure of qualified joy, He adds, 'And that your joy may be *full*,'² repeating in the next chapter, and intensifying it in the next. And lest we might think this was said with reference only to an exceptional case, He inspired His beloved disciple to echo the words in his *general* epistle: 'That your joy may be full,' and 'the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you.'

Never in His word are we told anything contradicting or explaining away this precious and reiterated promise. All through we are brightly pointed not merely to hope of permanence, but to increase. 'The meek shall increase (not merely shall keep up) their joy in the Lord.'³ There are mingled promises and commands as to growth and increase in grace, knowledge, love, strength, and peace, and does not increase of these imply and ensure joy?⁴ Is joy to be the *only* fruit of the Spirit of which it may not be said that it 'sprang up and *increased*'?⁵

When it is suggested that we 'cannot' (some even say, 'must not') 'expect to be always joyful,' remember that 'it is written,' 'Rejoice in the Lord'

¹ John xv. 11.² John xvi. 24.³ Isa. xxix. 19.⁴ 2 Pet. iii. 18; Col. i. 10; 1 Thess. iii. 12; iv. 10; Isa. xl. 29; ib. ix. 7;⁵ Mark iv. 8.

Gal. v. 22.

(not 'sometimes,' but) '*alway*.'¹ 'As sorrowful, yet *alway* rejoicing.'² When we are told that 'it would not even be good for us,' remember that 'it is written again,' 'The joy of the Lord is your strength.' Perhaps in that word 'of' lies the whole secret of lasting joy; for it is more than even 'joy *in* the Lord:' it is His own joy flowing into the soul that is joined to Himself, which alone can 'remain' in us, not even our joy in Him. 'That they might have *My* joy fulfilled in themselves.'³ Let us, then, seek not the stream, but the fountain; not primarily the joy, but that real and living union with Jesus by which His joy becomes ours.

Let us not, either for ourselves or others, acquiesce in disobedience to any of His commandments. See how absolute they are! 'Serve the Lord with gladness';⁴ 'Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous,'⁵ and many others. Turn to the terribly distinct condemnation, 'Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, . . . therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, . . . and He shall put a yoke of iron on thy neck until He have destroyed thee.'⁶

No one need be cast down because they cannot *yet* tell of abiding joy, or because others cannot tell of it. Thank God, our experience is not the measure of His promises; they are all yea and Amen in Christ Jesus,⁷ and our varying, short-falling experience touches neither their faithfulness nor their fulness. Forget the things which are behind, and

¹ Phil. iv. 4.

⁴ Ps. c. 2.

⁷ 2 Cor. i. 20.

² 2 Cor. vi. 10.

⁶ Ps. xcvi. 12.

³ John xvii. 13.

⁶ Deut. xxviii. 47, 48.

press on to firmer grasp and fuller reception of Christ and His joy.¹ Then it shall be always ‘praise . . . more and more,’ ‘more grace,’ ‘grace for grace,’² ‘from strength to strength,’³—yes, even ‘from glory to glory.’⁴ Then you shall indeed ‘hold fast the confidence and the *rejoicing* of the hope firm unto the end.’⁵

May I earnestly ask every reader who is saying, ‘Will it last?’ to seek ‘out of the book of the Lord’ for themselves; taking a concordance, and looking out, under the words, Joy, Rejoice, Gladness, etc., the overwhelming reiterations of promises and commands which can leave them in no doubt as to God’s answer.

¹ Phil. iii. 13.

⁴ 2 Cor. iii. 18.

² Jas. iv. 6.

⁵ Heb. iii. 6.

³ Ps. lxxxiv. 7.

TENTH DAY.

The Sure Afterward.

‘ Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous : nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.’
—HEB. xii. 11.

THERE are some promises which we are apt to reserve for great occasions, and thus lose the continual comfort of them. Perhaps we read this one with a sigh, and say : ‘ How beautiful this is for those whom the Lord is really chastening ! I almost think I should not mind that, if such a promise might then be mine. But the things that try me are only little things that turn up every day to trouble and depress me.’ Well, now, does the Lord specify what degree of trouble, or what kind of trouble, is great enough to make up a claim to the promise ? And if He does not, why should you ? He only defines it as ‘ not joyous, but grievous.’ Perhaps there have been a dozen different things to-day which were ‘ not joyous, but grievous ’ to you. And though you feel ashamed of feeling them so much, and hardly like to own to their having been so trying, and would not think of dignify-



ing them as 'chastening,' yet, if they come under the Lord's definition, He not only knows all about them, but they were, every one of them, chastenings from His hand; neither to be despised and called 'just nothing,' when all the while they *did* 'grieve' you; nor to be wearied of; because they are working out blessing to you and glory to Him. Every one of them has been an unrecognized token of His love and interest in you; for 'whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth.'¹

Next, do not let us reserve this promise for chastenings in the aggregate. Notice the singular pronoun, 'Nevertheless, afterward *IT* yieldeth,' not '*they* yield.' Does not this indicate that every separate chastening has its own special 'afterward'? We think of trials as intended to do us good in the long-run, and in a general sort of way; but the Lord says of each one, '*It* yieldeth.' Apply this to 'the present.' The particular annoyance which befell you this morning; the vexatious words which met your ear and 'grieved' your spirit; the disappointment which was His appointment for to-day; the slight but hindering ailment; the presence of some one who is 'a grief of mind' to you; whatever this day seemeth not joyous, but grievous, is linked in 'the good pleasure of His goodness,'² with a corresponding afterward of 'peaceable fruit;' the very seed from which, if you only do not choke it, this shall spring and ripen.

If we set ourselves to watch the Lord's dealings with us, we shall often be able to detect a most beau-

¹ Heb. xii. 6.

² 2 Thess. i. 11.

tiful correspondence and proportion between each individual 'chastening' and its own resulting 'afterward.' The habit of thus watching and expecting will be very comforting, and a great help to quiet trust when some new chastening is sent: for then we shall simply consider it as the herald and earnest of a new 'afterward.'

Lastly, do not let us reserve this promise for some far future time. The Lord did not say '*a long while* afterward,' and do not let us gratuitously insert it. It rather implies that, as soon as the chastening is over, the peaceable fruit shall appear 'unto the glory and praise of God.'¹ So let us look out for the 'afterward' as soon as the pressure is past. This immediate expectation will bring its own blessing if we can say, 'My expectation is from Him,'² and not from any fruit-bearing qualities of our own; for only 'from Me is thy fruit found.'³ Fruit from Him will also be fruit unto Him.

What shall Thine afterward be, O Lord?
 I wonder, and wait to see
 (While to thy chastening hand I bow)
 What peaceable fruit may be ripening now,
 Ripening fast for Thee!

¹ Phil. i. 11.

² Ps. lxii. 5.

³ Hos. xiv. 8.

ELEVENTH DAY.

No Hurt.

‘Nothing shall by any means hurt you.’—LUKE x. 19.

IS not this one of those very strong promises which we are apt to think are worded a little *too* strongly, and off which we ‘take a great discount’? Now, instead of daring a ‘Yea, hath God said’?¹ let us just take *all* the comfort and rest and gladness of it for ourselves. Let us believe every word, just as our beloved Master uttered it to the simple-hearted seventy who were so surprised to find His name so much more powerful than they expected.

Nothing! If He said ‘nothing,’ have we any right to add, ‘Yes, but *except . . .*’? Nothing can hurt those who are joined to Christ, ‘for with me thou shalt be in safeguard,’² unless anything could be found which should separate us from Him. And ‘who shall separate us?’³ Earthly tribulations, even the most terrible, shall not do it, for ‘in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.’⁴ Yet a farther reaching and,

¹ Gen. iii. 1.

³ Rom. viii. 35.

² 1 Sam. xxii. 23.

⁴ Rom. viii. 37.

indeed, entirely exhaustive list is given, none of which, 'nor *any* other creature, shall be able to separate us.' Let us take everything that possibly could hurt us to that list, and see for ourselves if it is not included, and then rejoice in the conclusion, based and built upon Christ's bare word, but buttressed and battlemented by this splendid utterance of His inspired apostle that it is indeed so—'nothing shall by any means hurt you.'

But He who knows our little faith never gives an isolated promise. He leaves us no chance of overlooking or misunderstanding any one, except by wilful neglect, because it is always confirmed in other parts of His word. So He has given the same strong consolation in other terms. 'The Lord shall preserve thee from *all* evil' (do you believe *that*?). 'There shall *no* evil happen to the just.'¹ 'In seven (troubles) there shall no evil touch thee.'² Then see how He individualized it to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, even *in* the burning fiery furnace, 'They have no hurt;' to Daniel among the lions, 'They have not hurt me;' to St. Paul among turbulent men with a care-nought governor, 'No man shall set on thee to hurt thee.'³ We are not likely to be more exposed to 'hurt' than these, and we have the same God, 'who keepeth His promise for ever.'⁴ He is the 'wall of fire round about ⁵ us; and what fortification so impenetrable—nay, so unapproachable! And 'He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye'⁶—the very least touch is felt by the Lord, who loves us and is

¹ Prov. xii. 21.

⁴ Ps. cxlvi. 6.

² Job v. 19.

⁵ Zech. ii. 5.

³ Acts xviii. 10.

⁶ Zech. ii. 8.

mighty to save! Well may He say, 'And who is he that will harm you?'

'Nothing shall by *any* means hurt you,' for 'no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper;'¹ man's curse shall be turned into God's blessing. Jehovah Himself, watering His vineyard every moment, says: 'Lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.'² Again, the promise, with a solemn condition, takes an even stronger form: 'Whoso keepeth the commandment shall *feel* no evil thing.'³

Is not all this enough? It might well be, but His wonderful love has yet more to say—not only that nothing shall hurt us, but that all things work together for our good;⁴ not merely *shall* work, but actually *are* working. All things, if it *means* all things, must include exactly those very things, whatever they may be, which you and I are tempted to think will hurt us, or, at least, *may* hurt us. Now will we this evening trust our own ideas, or Christ's word? One or other must be mistaken. Which is it? Christ, my own Master, my Lord and my God, has given a promise which meets every fear; therefore, 'I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for Thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety,'⁵ and 'nothing shall by any means hurt' me.

¹ Isa. liv. 17.

⁴ Rom. viii. 28.

² Isa. xxvii. 3.

⁵ Ps. iv. 8.

³ Eccles. viii. 5.

TWELFTH DAY.

The Putting Forth of the Sheep.

‘When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them.’—JOHN x. 4.

WHAT gives the Alpine climber confidence in wild, lonely, difficult passes or ascents, when he has ‘not passed this way heretofore’?¹ It is that his guide has been there before; and also that in every present step over unknown and possibly treacherous ice or snow, his guide ‘goeth before.’²

It is to Christ’s ‘own sheep’ that this promise applies; simply those who believe and hear His voice. It is when *He* putteth them forth that it comes true; not when they put themselves forth, or when they let a ‘stranger’³ lure them forth, or such traitors as self-cowardice or impatience drive them forth.

Sometimes it is a literal putting forth. We have been in a sheltered nook of the fold, and we are sent to live where it is windier and wilder. The

¹ Josh. iii. 4.

² Isa. xlv. 2.

³ John x. 26, 27; ib. x. 3.

home nest is stirred up,¹ and we have to go (it may be only for a few days, it may be for years, it may be for the rest of our lives) into less congenial surroundings, to live with fresh people, or in a different position, or in a new neighborhood. We do not put ourselves forth, we would rather stay; but it has to be. But Jesus 'goeth before.' He prepares the earthly as well as the heavenly places for us. He will be there when we get to the new place. He went in the way before to search us out a place to pitch our tents in² (and perhaps we were forgetting that they were tents and not palaces).³ If we wilfully persisted in staying where we were when He said, 'Arise and depart, for this is not your rest,'⁴ we should find that Presence was gone which only could cause us to rest. He is not *sending* us forth away from Him, but only *putting* us forth with His own gentle hand, saying, 'Rise up, My love, and come away,'⁵ 'Come with Me.'

Sometimes it is putting forth into service. We had such a nice little quiet shady corner in the vineyard, down among the tender grapes, with such easy little weedings and waterings to attend to. And then the Master comes and draws us out into the thick of the work, and puts us into a part of the field where we never should have thought of going, and puts larger tools into our hands, that we may do more at a stroke. And we know we are not sufficient for these things,⁶ and the very tools seem too heavy for us, and the glare too dazzling, and the vines too tall. Ah! but would we really go

¹ Deut. xxii. 11.² Deut. i. 33.³ Heb. xiii. 14.⁴ Micah ii. 10.⁵ Cant ii. 10: ib. iv. 8.⁶ 2 Cor. ii. 16.

back? He would not be in the old shady corner with us now; for when He put us forth He went before us, and it is only by close following that we can abide with Him. Without Him we could do nothing if we perversely and fearfully ran back to our old work. With Him, 'through Christ which strengtheneth' us, we 'can do all things' in the new work. Not our power, but His presence will carry us through.¹

Sometimes it is putting forth into the rough places of suffering, whether from temptation, pain, 'or any adversity.' Not one step here but Jesus has gone before us; and He still goeth before us, often so very close before us, that even by the still waters² we never seemed so near Him. 'He Himself hath suffered, being tempted.'³ How strangely comforting to remember that He has passed even *that* way before us! 'The things which *He* suffered' include and cover, and stretch wide on every side beyond, all possible 'sufferings of this present time.'⁴ It is in patient suffering, rather than in doing, that we are specially called 'to follow His steps.'⁵ 'The footsteps of Thine anointed have lain through reproach,' and 'the reproach of Thy servants' is no light part of 'the fellowship of His sufferings.' How specially tender the Master's hand is when it is laid upon us to put us forth into *any* path of suffering! How specially precious, then, to know that it is indeed His own doing!

Sooner or later, perhaps again and again, He puts forth His own sheep into a position of greater sep-

¹ Zech. iv. 6.

² Ps. xxiii. 2.

³ Heb. ii. 18.

⁴ Rom. viii. 18.

⁵ 1 Pet. ii. 21.

aration—forth from an outer into an inner circle, always nearer and nearer to the great Centre. Let us watch very sensitively for such leading. Every hesitation to yield to His gentle separation from the world results in heart separation from Him. When He thus goeth before, shall we risk being left behind?

He will put forth His own sheep at last into the path which none of them shall ever tread alone, because He trod it alone. 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me.'¹ Our 'Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the Lord hath said.'² Jesus knows every single step of that valley; and when His people enter it, they will surely find that 'their King shall pass before them;'³ and the Comforter will say, 'He it is that doth go before thee.'⁴

THIRTEENTH DAY.

Safe Stepping.

'Thy foot shall not stumble.'—PROV. iii. 23,

MANY a Christian says: 'I shall be kept from falling at last; but, of course, I shall stumble continually by the way.' But 'have ye not read

¹ Ps. xxiii. 4.

³ Micah ii. 13.

² Deut. xxxi. 3.

⁴ Deut. xxxi. 8.

this Scripture, 'Thy foot shall *not* stumble' ?¹ And if we have only once read it, ought not the 'of course' to be put over on the other side? for 'hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?'² 'And the Scripture *cannot* be broken.'³

'But as a matter of fact we do stumble, and though he riseth up again, yet even the just man falleth seven times.'⁴ Of course we do; and this is entirely accounted for by the other 'of course.' God gives us a promise, and, instead of humbly saying, 'Be it unto me according to Thy word,'⁵ we either altogether overlook or deliberately refuse to believe it; and then, 'of course,' we get no fulfilment of it. The measure of the promise is God's faithfulness; the measure of its realization is our faith. Perhaps we have not even cried, 'Help Thou mine unbelief' as to this promise, much less said, 'Lord, I believe.'⁶

It does not stand alone; it is reiterated and varied. He knew our constant, momentary need of it. He knew that without it we *must* stumble, and fall too; that we have not the least power to take one step without a stumble—or, rather, that we have no power to take one single onward step at all. And He knew that Satan's surest device to make us stumble would be to make us believe that 'it can't be helped.' We have thought that, if we have not said it.

But 'what saith the Scripture?'⁷ 'When thou runnest' (the likeliest pace for a slip), 'thou shalt not stumble.'⁸ 'He will not suffer thy foot to be

¹ Mark xii. 10.⁴ Prov. xxiv. 16.⁷ Rom. iv. 3.² Num. xxiii. 19.⁵ Luke i. 38.⁸ Prov. iv. 12.³ John x. 35.⁶ Mark ix. 24.

moved.¹ 'He will keep the feet of His saints.'² 'He led them . . . that they should not stumble.'³ *Can* we say, 'Yea, hath God said?'⁴ to all this? Leave that to Satan; it is no comment for God's children to make upon His precious promises. If we do not use the power of faith, we find the neutralizing power of unbelief.

'But how *can* I keep from stumbling?' You cannot keep from stumbling at all; but He is 'able to keep you from falling,'⁵ which in the Greek is strongly and distinctly 'without *stumbling*.' The least confidence in, or expectation from, yourself not only leads to inevitable stumbling, but is itself a grievous fall. But again we are met with the very promise we need to escape this snare: 'For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.'⁶

'Still, *how* shall I be kept?' Jesus Himself has answered: 'If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth *not*, because he seeth the light of this world.'⁷ 'Walk in the light,' 'looking unto Jesus,' and so shall we be 'kept by the power of God through faith.'

We tell a little child to look where it steps and pick its way; but Christ's little children are to do just the opposite: they are to look away to Him. 'Let thine eyes look,' not down, but 'right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.'⁸ Why? Because 'He it is that doth go before thee,'⁹ and it

¹ Ps. cxxi. 3.⁴ Gen. iii. 1.⁷ John xi. 9.² 1 Sam. ii. 9.⁵ Jude 24.⁸ Prov. iv. 25.³ Isa. lxiii. 13.⁶ Prov. iii. 26.⁹ Deut. xxxi. 8.

is on Him, the Light of the world, that the gaze must be fixed.

‘Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved,¹ let us use them. Let us turn them into prayers of faith. ‘Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip *not*’² (did David add the whisper, ‘But nevertheless, of course, they *will* slip’?). ‘Hold Thou me up, and I *shall* be safe.’ ‘When I said, My foot slippeth; Thy mercy, O Lord, *held* me up’ (not ‘*picked* me up’).³

Then comes the New Testament echo: ‘Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.’⁴ But take ‘all the counsel of God;’⁵ for this, too, is needed: ‘And thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear.’

Now if these promises are worth the paper they are written on, ought we not to believe and accept and give thanks for them, and go on our way rejoicing, claiming His promise not once for all, not for to-morrow, but always for the *next* step of the way? ‘Thy foot shall *not* stumble!’ Jesus is now ‘upholding all things by the word of His power;’⁶ shall our unbelief make us the exception? Shall we not rather say, ‘Uphold *me*, according to Thy word’?⁷

Look away to Jesus,
 Look away from all!
 Then we shall not stumble,
 Then we need not fall.

¹ 2 Cor. vii. 1.

⁴ Rom. xiv. 4.

⁷ Ps. cxix. 116.

² Ps. xvii. 5.

⁵ Acts xx. 27.

³ Ps. cxix. 117; ib. xciv. 18.

⁶ Heb. i. 3.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

Thine.

‘I am Thine.’—Ps. cxix. 94.

THIS is a wonderful stone for the sling of faith. It will slay any Goliath of temptation, if we only sling it out boldly and determinately at him.

When self tempts us (and we know how often that is), let it be met with ‘not your own,’¹ and then look straight away to Jesus with ‘I am *Thine*.’

If the world tries some lure, old or new, remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said :² ‘If ye were of the world, the world would love his own ;³ . . . but I have chosen you out of the world ;’⁴ and lest the world should claim us as ‘his own,’ look away to Jesus, and say, ‘I am *Thine*.’

Is it sin, subtle and strong and secret, that claims our obedience? Acknowledge that ‘ye *were* the servants of sin ;’ but now, ‘being made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness,’⁵ and conquer with the faith-shout, ‘I am *Thine* !’

Is it a terrible hand-to-hand fight with Satan himself, making a desperate effort to reassert his old power? Tell the prince of this world that he hath *nothing* in Jesus,⁶ and that you are ‘in Him that is

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 19.

⁴ John xvii. 16.

² Acts xx. 35.

⁵ Rom. vi. 17, 18.

³ John xv. 19.

⁶ John xiv. 30.

true,¹ a member of His body, His very own ; and see if he is not forced to flee at the sound of your confident ' I am Thine ! '

But after all, ' I am Thine ' is only an echo, varying in clearness according to faith's atmosphere and our nearness to the original voice. Yes, it is only the echo of ' Thou art Mine,'² falling in its mighty music on the responsive, because Spirit-prepared, heart. This note of heavenly music never originated with any earthly rock. It is only when God sends forth the Spirit of His Son in our hearts that we cry, ' Abba, Father.'³ It was when the anointed but not yet openly crowned king had gone out to meet Amasai, and the Spirit came upon him, that he said, ' Thine are we, David.' Therefore do not overlook the Voice, in the gladness of the echo. Listen, and you will hear it falling from the mysterious heights of high-priestly intercession: ' They are Thine. And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine.'⁴

This is no vague and general belonging to Christ, but full of specific realities of relationship. ' I am Thine ' means, ' Truly I am Thy servant.'⁵ I am one of Thy ' dear children.'⁶ I am Thy chosen soldier.⁷ I am Thy ransomed one.⁸ I am Thy ' own sheep.' I am Thy witness. I am Thy friend.⁹ And all these are but amens to His own condescending declarations. He says we are all these, and we have only to say, ' Yes, Lord, so I am.' Why should we ever contradict Him ?

¹ John v. 20.

⁴ John xvii. 9, 10.

⁷ 2 Tim. ii. 4.

² Isa. xlili. 1.

⁶ Ps. cxvi. 16.

⁸ Isa. xxxv. 10.

³ Rom. viii. 15.

⁶ Eph. v. 1.

⁹ John x. 4.

In deeper humility and stronger faith let us listen further to the voice of our Beloved, as He breathes names of incomprehensible condescension and love. Shall we contradict Him *here*, in the tenderest outflow of His divine affection, and say, 'Not so, Lord'? Shall we not rather adoringly listen, and let Him say even to us in our depths of utter unworthiness, 'My sister, My spouse,' 'My love, My dove, My undefiled,' answering only with a wondering, yet unquestioning, 'I *am* Thine,' 'I am all that Thou choosest to say that I am'?

The echo may vary and falter (though it is nothing short of atrocious ingratitude and unbelief when it does), but the Voice never varies or falters. He does not say, 'Thou art Mine' to-day, and reverse or weaken it to-morrow. We are 'a people unto Thee *for ever*,' and why grieve His love by doubting His word, and giving way to a very fidget of faithlessness? Love that is everlasting *cannot* be ephemeral; it *is* everlasting, and what can we say more?

The more we by faith and experience realize that we are His own in life and death, the more willing we shall be that He should do what He will with His own, and the more sure we shall be that He will do the very best with it, and make the very most of it. May we increasingly find the strength and rest of this our God-given claim upon God. 'I am Thine, save me!'¹ And 'He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love.'²

¹ Ps. cxix. 94.

² Zeph. iii. 17.

‘Not your own!’ but His ye are,
 Who hath paid a price untold
 For your life, exceeding far
 All earth’s store of gems and gold.
 With the precious blood of Christ,
 Ransom-treasure all unpriced,
 Full redemption is procured,
 Full salvation is assured.

‘Not your own!’ but His by right,
 His peculiar treasure now,
 Fair and precious in His sight,
 Purchased jewels for His brow.
 He will keep what thus He sought,
 Safely guard the dearly bought,
 Cherish that which He did choose,
 Always love and never lose.

FIFTEENTH DAY.

Unto Thee for Ever.

‘What one nation in the earth is like Thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to Himself, and to make Him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for Thy land, before Thy people, which Thou redeemedst to Thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? For Thou hast confirmed to Thyself Thy people Israel to be a people unto Thee for ever: and Thou, Lord, art become their God.’—2 SAM. vii. 23, 24.

ONE thought, containing three thoughts, seems to pervade this epitome of the history of God’s people. The one thought is ‘Unto Thee!’ The

three thoughts contained in it are—Redeemed, Separated, Confirmed unto Thee.

Let us take them in order. 1. God 'went to redeem' His people. It was no easy sitting still, no costless fiat: 'Thou *wentest forth* for the salvation of Thy people, even for salvation with Thine anointed.'¹ These 'goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity,'² and we have seen by faith these 'goings of my God, my King.'³

It was not only to purchase them out of bondage and death, as one might buy a captive thrush on a winter evening, and let it loose into the hungry cold, and think no more about it; it was to redeem them unto Himself, to be His own portion and inheritance and treasure and delight, to be a 'people near unto Him,' to be the objects on which all His divine love might be poured out, to be the very opportunity of His joy.

His glory and our good were inseparably joined in it. He did it 'to make Him a name;' and we may reverently say, that even the very Name which is above every name⁴ could not have been the crown of the exaltation of the Son of God but for this.

He also did it because He would 'do *for you* great things and terrible,'—great things in mercy, 'terrible things in righteousness,'—bringing all His sublimely balanced attributes to bear on His great work 'for *you*.' 'Before His people,' that we might see, and know, and believe, and praise.

2. This redemption to Himself necessarily involved separation 'from Egypt, from the nations

¹ Hab. iii. 13.

³ Ps. lxxviii. 24.

² Micah v. 2, margin.

⁴ Phil. ii. 9.

and their gods.' We cannot have the 'to' without the 'from,' any more than we could go to the equator and not come away from the arctic regions. And the test and proof of the 'to Thee' lies in the 'from Egypt.' But what do we want with Egypt? what is there to attract us to the house of bondage and its old taskmasters? Did we not have enough of them? and shall we not gratefully accept redemption 'from the nations,' 'out of' them, from the tyranny of 'the customs of the people,' 'from our vain conversation,'¹ and say henceforth, 'Thy people shall be my people'?² 'What have I to do any more with idols,'³ when God Himself has redeemed me 'from their gods'? Yes, *has* redeemed me, for He says so. 'Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it!' He 'gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity.'⁴

3. How magnificently God seals all His transactions! So He has not only redeemed and separated us unto Himself, but 'Thou hast *confirmed to Thyself* Thy people Israel.' He, not we. His hands laid the foundation, and His hands shall also finish it. He stablisheth us in Christ, and He 'hath also sealed us.' He 'shall also confirm you to the end';⁵ your life shall be one great Confirmation Day of continual defending and strengthening and blessing; He avouching you this day and every day to be His peculiar people, 'as He hath promised,' and establishing you an holy people unto Himself, and you avouching the Lord to be your God and to walk in His ways.

¹ 1 Pet. i. 18.

⁴ Titus ii. 14.

² Ruth i. 16.

⁵ 1 Cor. i. 8.

³ Hos. xiv. 8.

Not 'this day, only' for we are confirmed to Him 'to be a people unto Thee for ever.' 'Thine for ever!' 'For I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever;'¹ so, having done this, it must be 'for ever!' Fling this at the enemy when he tempts you to doubt your complete and eternal redemption—'Unto Thee for ever!' when he tempts you to regret or tamper with your separation—'Unto Thee for ever!' when he tempts you to quiver about your confirmation 'to the end'—'Unto Thee for ever!'

For 'the Lord is faithful.'² 'And now, O Lord God, the word that Thou hast spoken . . . establish it for ever, and do as Thou hast said.'³

In full and glad surrender,
 I give myself to Thee,
 Thine utterly and only,
 And evermore to be.
 O Son of God, who lovest me,
 I will be Thine alone,
 And all I have and all I am
 Shall henceforth be Thine own.

¹ Eccles. iii. 14.

² 2 Thess. iii. 3.

³ 2 Sam. vii. 25.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

Captive Thoughts.

‘Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.’—2 COR. x. 5.

ARE there any tyrants more harassing than our own thoughts? Control of deeds and words seems a small thing in comparison; but have we not been apt to fancy that we really can’t help our thoughts? Instead of our dominating them, they have dominated us; and we have not expected, nor even thought it possible, to be set free from the manifold tyranny of vain thoughts, and still less of wandering thoughts. Yet, all the time, *here* has been God’s word about this hopeless, helpless matter, only *where* has been our faith?

It is very strong language that the inspiring Spirit uses here—not ‘thoughts’ in general, but definitely, and with no room for distressing exceptions, ‘*every* thought.’¹ Must it not be glorious rest to have *every* thought of day and night brought into sweet, quiet, complete captivity to Jesus, entirely ‘obedient to the faith,’² to His holy and loving influence, to His beautiful and perfect law? We should not have dared to hope or dream of such a rest unto our souls; we should not have guessed it included in that prom-

¹ Ps. xciv. 19.

² Acts vi. 7.

ise to those who take the yoke of Christ upon them ; and if we could find one text stating that it was not any part of God's infinitely gracious purposes for us, we should only say, 'Of course, for it stands to reason it could not be !'

To reason, perhaps, but not to faith ; for words cannot be plainer than these in which St. Paul sets forth this marvellous privilege not of himself personally, but of all God's children, if they are only willing and simply believing in the matter. For while 'the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus'¹ is the measure of the fulness of His promises, 'according to your faith'² is the appointed measure of their reception and benefit by ourselves. 'Lord, increase *our* faith.'³

But there is an order in their effectual working, and we must not begin at the wrong end. Before this triumph-leading of every thought can take place, there is the 'casting down imaginations,'⁴ or, as in the more correct margin, 'reasonings.' As long as we are reasoning about a promise, we never know its reality. It is not God's way. It is the humble who hear thereof and are glad.⁵ Have we not found it so? Did we *ever* receive the powerful fulfilment of *any* promise so long as we argued and reasoned, whether with our own hearts or with others, and said, 'How can these things be?'⁶ Has it not always been, that we had to lay down our arms and accept God's thought and God's way instead of our own ideas, and be willing that He should 'speak the word only,' and believe it as little children believe

¹ Phil. iv. 19.

⁴ 2 Cor. x. 5.

² Matt. ix. 29.

⁵ Ps. xxxiv. 2.

³ Luke xvii. 5.

⁶ John iii. 9.

our promises? Then, *never* till then, the promise and the privilege became ours not only in potentiality but in actuality. Now, how is it that we do not *yet* understand, and apply the same principle to every promise or privilege which as yet we see only afar off? It is the old way and the only way: 'Who through faith . . . obtain promises.'¹

It is a solemn thought that the alternative of 'the obedience of Christ'² is disobedience. Thoughts that are not brought into the one are in the other; for 'the thought of foolishness is *sin*,'³ nothing less or lighter; and when the Holy Spirit 'declareth unto man what is his thought,' unsuspected sin and unrecognized guilt come terribly to light. But 'how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?'⁴ The Conqueror, the always triumphing Saviour, stands at the door and knocks; shall we not 'open unto Him *immediately*,' and *now* cast down the reasonings which hinder His present triumph, and yield up to Him 'who alone *can* order them' the unruly will and affections, and deliver into His victorious hands the unmanageable thought-garrison (reserving no private slaves, who would quickly again become our masters), and then let Him dwell in our hearts by faith as absolute Captain of our salvation?⁵ Then He will garrison our hearts with the peace of God which passeth all understanding.⁶

Let every thought
Be captive brought,
Lord Jesus Christ, to Thine own sweet obedience;

¹ Heb. xi. 33.
⁴ Jer. iv. 17.

² 2 Cor. x. 6.
⁶ Heb. ii. 10.

³ Prov. xxiv. 9.
⁶ Phil. iv. 7.

That I may know,
 In ebbless flow,
 The perfect peace of full and pure allegiance.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

The Imagination of the Thoughts of the Heart.

‘Keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of Thy people, and prepare (margin, stablish) their heart unto Thee.’—I CHRON. xxix. 18.

THE words are probably more familiar to us in another connection: ‘And God saw . . . that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.’¹ There is Satan’s work through the fall; now let us look at God’s work through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.²

What was to be kept for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart? Something that God had put there; for you cannot keep a thing in any place till it is first put there. The people had responded to the appeal of their king, ‘Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?’³ As the expression of this service, they had offered willingly and rejoicingly to the Lord. What they had offered was all His own: ‘Of thine

¹ Gen. vi. 5.

² Rom. iii. 24.

³ 1 Chron. xxix. 5.

own have we given Thee.¹ And David acknowledges that it was all of Him that they were enabled (margin, obtained strength) 'to offer so willingly after this sort.' Was all this consecration and joy to be a thing of a day? Nay! in his grand inspired prayer, David, foreshadowing the Royal Intercessor, by whom alone we 'offer up spiritual sacrifices,' prays, 'O Lord God, keep this *for ever* in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of Thy people.'

Now, does not this precisely meet the fear, the desire, and the need of our souls? I may have yielded myself unto God to-day, I may have sincerely presented myself a living sacrifice to Him² to-day, but what about to-morrow? My heart is so treacherous, I dare not trust it, I cannot even know it. Who that has consecrated himself to the Lord has not had some such thought! In too many instances, the thought is brooded over till it grows into doubt of His power; and then, of course, we begin to sink, for only by faith do we stand or walk in the bright path of consecration. Doubt indulged soon becomes doubt realized.

He who by His free grace and mighty power put it into our hearts must be equally willing and able to keep it there. If He can keep it there for one day,—nay, for one hour,—He can keep it—how long? Two days? A whole year? What saith the Scripture? '*For Ever.*' Yes, but He only; not ourselves. We cannot 'keep' it one minute. The more totally we distrust our own ability to put or to

¹ 1 Chron. xxix. 14.

² Rom. vi. 13; ib. xii. 1.

keep any right thing whatever in our minds, the more we shall see that we may and must totally trust His power.

There is real comfort in knowing that *every* imagination of the thoughts of the natural heart is *only* evil continually, because this shows how really He is working in us when we find Him putting and keeping holy things in our minds. We may be quite sure no Godward thought comes natural to us ; but His new covenant is : ' I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts. ' ¹

The words are very remarkable and far-reaching. We feel that they go to the very depths, that it is our *whole* mental being which is to be thus pervaded with the incense of consecration ; not that it is to be kept only in some inner recess of the heart, and not equally so in the mental consciousness. ' Keep this for ever in the *imagination*, ' so that the mind (margin, imagination) may be stayed on Thee, and the keeping in perfect peace may result. ² Just the very thing that seems most curbless, the mental lightning that seems too quick for us ! The flashing wings that used to bear us too swiftly whither we would not, shall be folded over the golden purpose of consecration. ' In the imagination of the *thoughts*. ' ' Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. ' And then the peace of God enters in to garrison the heart and *thoughts* (for it is the same word, here translated ' mind '). ' In the imagination of the thoughts of the *heart*, ' the very central self, the inner citadel of the soul.

¹ Heb. viii. 8-10.

² Isa. xxvi. 3.

That shall be 'established with grace,' stablished unblameable in holiness, 'fixed' so that it shall sing and give praise; for Thou, Lord, 'hast heard the desire of the humble: Thou wilt establish their heart.'

We rejoice in His omniscience; for, because 'the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts,'¹ we are fully persuaded that what He has promised He is able also to perform.²

'Only for Jesus!' Lord, keep it for ever
 Sealed on the heart and engraved on the life;
 Pulse of all gladness, and nerve of endeavour,
 Secret of rest, and the strength of our strife.



EIGHTEENTH DAY.



The Everlasting Service.

'And he shall serve him for ever.'—Ex. xxi. 6.

A PROMISE only differenced from a threat by one thing, love! But that makes all the difference.

To those who are still 'enemies in their minds,'³ the prospect of serving for ever would be anything but pleasant. But when the enmity is slain by the

¹ 1 Chron xxviii. 9.

² Rom. iv. 21.

³ Col. i. 21.

cross of Christ,¹ and all things are become new,² and the love of Christ constraineth,³ then it is among the brightest of our many bright anticipations, and everlasting joy and everlasting service become almost synonymous.

Rest is sweet, but service (in proportion to our love) is sweeter still. Those who have served much here cannot but anticipate the fuller and more perfect service above. Those who have to do little more than 'stand and wait' here, will perhaps revel even more than others in the new experience of active service, coming at once, as it were, into its full delight.

The Hebrew servant had trial of his master's service for six years, and in the seventh he might go out free if he would. But then, 'if the servant shall plainly say' (plainly, avowedly, no mistake about it), 'I love my master, . . . I *will* not go out free,' then, publicly and legally, he was sealed to his service 'for ever.' It all depended on the love. He would say, 'I will not go away from thee;⁴ because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee.'

How this meets our case, dear fellow-servants! We do not want to 'go away from' Jesus, because we love Him; and we love His house too,—not only, 'the house of God' with which so much of our service is connected, but 'His own house,' the 'spiritual house,' 'the blessed company of all faithful people.'

And are we not 'well' with Him? Where else

¹ Eph. ii. 16.

³ 2 Cor. v. 14.

² 2 Cor. v. 17.

⁴ Deut. xv. 16.

so well? where else anything but *ill*? Has He not dealt well with His servants?¹ What a chorus it would be if we all spoke out, and said, 'I love my Master, and it hath been well for me with Him'! Why *don't* we speak out, and let people know what a Master He is, and what a happy service His is? Who is to speak out, if *we* have not a word to say about it! Let us stand up for Jesus and His service, every one of us!

Perhaps, when we do speak out, we shall realize the joy of this promise as never before. It was not till the servant had owned his love, and given up 'the rest of his time in the flesh,' and had his ear bored, that the word was spoken, 'He shall serve him for ever;'² and it is only the loving and consecrated heart that leaps up for joy at the heavenly prospect: 'And His servants shall serve Him.'³

Think about it a little. What will it be to be able at last to express not only all the love we now feel, but all the perfected love of infinitely enlarged capability of loving in the equally perfected service of equally enlarged capability of serving?—able to show Jesus a love which would burst our hearts if poured into them now! Able to put all the new rapture of praise into living action for Him! Able to go on serving Him day and night,⁴ without any weariness in it, and never a hateful shadow of weariness of it; without any interruptions; without any mistakes at all; without any thinking how much better some one else could have done it, or how much better we ought to have done it; above all,

¹ Ps. cxix. 65.

³ Rev. xxii. 3.

² Ex. xxi. 6.

⁴ Rev. vii. 15.

without the least mixture of sin in motive or deed—pure, perfect service of Him whom we love and see face to face! What *can* be more joyful?

We are not told much about it, we could not understand it now; the secrets of this wonderful service will only be told when we are brought to His house above, and see what are the heavenly ‘good works which God hath before ordained’ (margin, *prepared*) for us.

How full of surprises the new service will be!—new powers, new and entirely congenial fellow-workers, new spheres, new ministries; only two things not new, if our earthly service has been true,—no new power, and no new end and aim, but the same, even His power and His glory! Then shall come the full accomplishment of the Messianic prophecy: ‘A seed *shall* serve Him;’¹ and still we shall say (only I think we shall *sing* it), ‘Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.’² ‘Whose I am and whom I serve’ *for ever!*³

My Lord hath met my longing
 With word of golden tone,
 That I shall serve for ever
 Himself, Himself alone.
 ‘Shall serve him,’—and ‘for ever!’
 Oh hope most sure, most fair!
 The perfect love outpouring,
 In perfect service there!

¹ Ps. xxii. 30.

² Matt. vi. 13.

³ Acts xxvii. 23.

NINETEENTH DAY.

Most Blessed for Ever.

‘Thou hast made him most blessed for ever, Thou hast made him exceeding glad with Thy countenance.’—Ps. xxi. 6.

PROBABLY every one who reads this has at least one of those golden links to heaven which God’s own hand has forged from our earthly treasures. It may be that the very nearest and dearest that had been given are now taken away. And how often ‘no relation, only a dear friend’ is an ‘only’ of heart-crushing emphasis!

Human comfort goes for very little in this; but let us lay our hearts open to the comfort wherewith we are comforted of God¹ Himself about it.

There is not much directly to ourselves; He knew that the truest and sweetest comfort would come by looking not at our loss, but at their gain.

Whatever this gain is, it is all His own actual and immediate doing. ‘*Thou* hast made him’ (read here the name of the very one for whom we are mourning) ‘most blessed.’

‘Most!’ How shall we reach that thought? Make a shining stairway of every bright beatitude in the Bible, blessed upon blessed, within and also far beyond our own experience. And when we

¹ 2 Cor. i. 4.

have built them up till they reach unto heaven, still this 'most blessed' is beyond, out of our sight, in the unapproachable glory of God Himself. It will always be 'most,' for it is 'for ever'—everlasting light without a shadow, everlasting songs without a minor.

No more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.¹ 'And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.'² No more sunsets, no more days of mourning. The troubling of the wicked and the voice of the oppressor ceased for ever.³ No more memory of troubles; no more tears. No more anything that defileth! All this only the negative side of our dear one's present blessedness.

Then, the rest for the weary one, the keeping of the sabbath that remaineth, and yet the service free and perfect and perpetual. The crowns of life, of righteousness, and of glory. The great reward in heaven, full of love-surprise to the consciously unprofitable servant. The far more exceeding weight of glory⁴ borne by some to whom the grasshopper had been a burden.⁵

The scene of all the blessedness,—the better country, the continuing city, the King's palace, the Father's house, the prepared mansions (perhaps full of contrasts to the past pilgrimage)—all summed up in the transcendent simplicity and sublimity of His words, 'That where I am, *there* ye may be also.'

The music! What will all the harps of heaven

¹ Rev. xxi. 4.
⁴ 2 Cor. iv. 17.

² Isa. xxxiii. 24.
⁵ Eccles. xii. 5.

³ Job iii. 17, 18.

be to the thrill of the One Voice, saying, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father!' ¹ and, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' ² Our dear ones *have heard that!* and that one word of the King must have made them *most* blessed for ever.

But more yet. 'Thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.' 'Hast,' for it is done. At this moment they *are* exceeding glad, and the certainty of it stills every quiver of our selfish love. The glory and joy of our Lord Christ are revealed to them, and they are 'glad also with exceeding joy,' ³ rejoicing together with Jesus.

How can they help reflecting His Divine joy when they see it no longer by faith and afar off, but visibly, actually 'face to face!' ⁴ nay, more, 'eye to eye,' that very closest approach of tenderest intercourse too deep for words. They see Him 'as He is;' in all His beauty and love and glory; through no veil, no glass, no tear-mist.

The prayer for them, 'The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee,' ⁵ is altogether fulfilled, and they are 'full of joy with Thy countenance.' And *every* other prayer we ever prayed for them is fulfilled exceeding abundantly, above all we asked or thought. We may not pray any more for them, because God has not left one possibility of blessedness unstowed.

'Breaking the narrow prayers that may
Befit your narrow hearts, away
In His broad, loving will.'

—E. B. Browning.

¹ Matt. xxv. 34.
⁴ 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

² Matt. xxv. 21, 23.
⁵ Num. vi. 26.

³ Luke xv. 6.

God Himself, their exceeding joy, has done and is doing His very best for them. 'Even so, Father!'¹

For I know
That they who are not lost, but gone before,
Are only waiting till I come; for death
Has only parted us a little while,
And has not severed e'en the finest strand
In the eternal cable of our love:
The very strain has twined it closer still,
And added strength. The music of their lives
Is nowise stilled, but blended so with songs
Around the throne of God, that our poor ears
No longer hear it.

TWENTIETH DAY.

Do Thou for Me.

'Do Thou for Me.'—Ps. cix. 21.

THE Psalmist does not say what he wanted God to do for him. He leaves it open. So this most restful prayer is left open for all perplexed hearts to appropriate 'according to their several necessities.' And so we leave it open for God to fill up in His own way.

Only a trusting heart can pray this prayer at all:

¹ Matt. xi. 26.

the very utterance of it is an act of faith. We could not ask any one whom we did not know intimately and trust implicitly to 'do' for us, without even suggesting what.

Only a self-emptied heart can pray it. It is when we have come to the end of our own resources, or rather, come to see that we never had any at all, that we are willing to accept the fact that we can 'do nothing,' and to let God do everything for us.

Only a loving heart can pray it. For nobody likes another to take them and their affairs in hand, and 'do' for them, unless that other is cordially loved. We might submit to it, but we should not like it, and certainly should not seek it.

So, if we have caught at this little prayer as being just what we want, just what it seems a real rest to say, I think it shows that we do trust in Him and not in ourselves, and that we do love Him really and truly. There is sure to be a preface to this prayer. 'Neither know *we* what to do.'¹ Perhaps we have been shrinking from being brought to this. Rather let us give thanks for it. It is the step down from the drifting wreck on to the ladder still hanging at the side. Will another step be down into the dark water? Go on, a little lower still, fear not! The next is, 'We know not what we should pray for.'² Now we have reached the lowest step. What next? 'Do Thou for me.' This is the step into the captain's boat. Now He will cut loose from the wreck of our efforts, ladder and all will be left behind, and we have nothing to do but to 'sit still' and let Him

¹ 2 Chron. xx. 12.

² Rom. viii. 26.

take us to our 'desired haven,' probably steering quite a different course from anything we should have thought best. Not seldom '*immediately* the ship is at the land whither' we went.

What may we, from His own word, expect in answer to this wide petition?

1. 'What His soul desireth, even that He doeth.'¹ Contrast this with our constantly felt inability to do a hundredth part of what we desire to do for those we love. Think of what God's desires must be for us, whom He so loves, that He spared not His own Son.² '*That He doeth!*'

2. 'He performeth the thing that is appointed for me.'³ This is wonderfully inclusive; one should read over all the epistles to get a view of the things present and future, seen and unseen, the grace and the glory that He has appointed for us. It includes also all the 'good works which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them.' It will not be our performance of them, but His; for He 'worketh in you to will and to do,'⁴ and 'Thou also hast wrought all our works in us.'⁵

3. The beautiful old translation says, He 'shall perform the cause which I have in hand.'⁶ Does not that make it very real to us to-day? Just the very thing that 'I have in hand,' my own particular bit of work to-day—this cause that I cannot manage, this thing that I undertook in miscalculation of my own powers, *this* is what I may ask Him to do 'for

¹ Job xxiii. 13.

⁴ Phil. ii. 13.

² Rom. viii. 32.

⁵ Isa. xxvi. 12.

³ Job xxiii. 14.

⁶ Ps. lvii. 2.

me,' and rest assured that He will perform it. 'The wise and their works are in the hand of God!'

4. He 'performeth all things for me.'¹ Does He mean as much as this? Well, He has caused it to be written for us 'that we might have hope;'² and what more do we want? Then *let* Him do it. *Let* Him perform all things for us.

Not some things, but *all* things; or the very things which we think there is no particular need for Him to perform will be all failures—wood, hay, and stubble to be burnt up. One by one let us claim this wonderful word; 'the thing of a day in his day,' 'as the matter shall require,' being always brought to Him with the God-given petition, 'Do Thou for me.'

Do not wait to feel very much 'oppressed' before you say, 'O Lord, undertake for me.'³ Far better say that at first than at last, as we have too often done! Bring the prayer in one hand, and the promises in the other, joining them in the faith-clasp of 'Do as Thou hast said!'⁴ And put both the hands into the hand of Him whom the Father heareth always, saying, 'Do Thou for me, O Lord God, for Thy name's sake,' for the sake of Jehovah-Jesus, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, yet the Saviour of sinners.

¹ Ps. lvii. 2.

³ Isa. xxxviii. 14.

² Rom. xv. 4.

⁴ 2 Sam. vii. 2.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

Marvellously Helped.

‘Marvellously helped.’—2 CHRON. xxvi. 15.

UZZIAH seems to have been the type of a variously busy and successful man. He had all sorts of irons in the fire. So many energetic interests and tastes, with both faculty and opportunity for developing them, must have made his life much more agreeable and lively than most royal careers. His architecture and his agriculture, his war organizations and his engineering, spread his name far abroad. For ‘as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper.’ Yet the end of his story is a strange contrast—a leper, dwelling in a several house, and cut off from the house of the Lord.

Where was the turning-point? Probably in the words, ‘He strengthened *himself* exceedingly.’ It had been God’s help and strength before, and he had risen very high. Then he thought he was strong, and he was brought fearfully low.

‘Marvellously helped *till* he was strong.’ Then who would not be always weak, that they might be always ‘marvellously helped!’

‘Marvellously!’ For is it not wonderful that God should help us at all? Have we not wondered hundreds of times at the singular help He has

given? If we have not, what ungrateful blindness! For He has been giving it ever since we were helpless babies. 'Through Thee have I been holden up ever since I was born.'¹ How much of His help has been forgotten or altogether unnoticed.

The very little things, the microscopical helpings, often seem most marvellous of all, when we consider that it was Jehovah Himself who stooped to the tiny need of a moment. And the greater matters prove themselves to be the Lord's doing, just because they are so marvellous in our eyes.

Why should we fear being brought to some depth of perplexity and trouble when we know He will be true to His name, and be 'our Help,' so that we shall be even 'men wondered at' because so marvellously helped!

It is not a mere expression. The Bible always means what it says; and so the help to Uzziah, and the same help with which God makes us to prosper, is literally 'marvellous.' We do wonder at it, or ought to wonder at it. Wonder is one of the God-given faculties which distinguish us from the beasts that perish. And He gives us grand scope for its happy exercise not merely in His works in general, but in His dealings with us in particular. But wonder is always founded upon observation. We do not wonder at that which we do not observe. So, if we have not wondered very much at the help He has given us, it is because we have not noticed, nor considered very much, how great things He hath done for us.

¹ Ps. lxxi. 6, P. B. V.

Let us turn our special attention to it each day. We are wanting help of all kinds all day long ; now just observe how He gives it ! Even if nothing the least unusual happens, the *opened* and *watching* eye will see that the whole day is one sweet story of marvellous help. And perhaps the greatest marvel will be, that He has helped us to *see* His help after very much practical blindness to it. And then the marvelling will rise into praising 'the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you.'¹

The times of marvellous help are times of danger. 'When thou hast eaten and art full, . . . and all that thou hast is multiplied,' 'beware lest' 'then thy heart be lifted up.'² 'When he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction.'³ Unclasp the ivy from the elm, and it is prostrate at once. Thank God, if He keeps us realizing, amidst the busiest work, and the pleasantest success, that we have no power *at all* of ourselves to help ourselves ! Then there will be nothing to hinder His 'continual help.' As long as we say quite unreservedly, 'My help cometh from the Lord,'⁴ the help will come. As long as we are saying, 'Thou art my help,' 'He *is* our help,' 'a very present help.' Then we shall not 'be holpen with a *little* help,' which is too often all we really expect from our omnipotent Helper, just because we do not feel that we have '*no* might.' Peter was a good swimmer, but he did not say, 'Lord, help me to swim !' He said, 'Lord, *save* me !'⁵ and so the Master's help

¹ Joel ii. 26.

² Deut. viii. 11-14.

³ 2 Chron. xxvi. 16.

⁴ Ps. cxxi. 2.

⁵ Matt. xiv. 30, 31.

was instant and complete. 'Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.'¹

The Lord *hath* done great things for thee!
 All through the fledged days
 Jehovah hath dealt wondrously;
 Lift up thy heart and praise!
 For greater things thine eyes shall see,
 Child of His loving choice!
 The Lord *will* do great things for thee;
 Fear not, be glad, rejoice!

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

Thou Understandest.

'Thou understandest my thought.'—Ps. cxxxix. 2.

WHO does not know what it is to be misunderstood? Perhaps no one ever is always and perfectly understood, because so few Christians are like their Master in having the spirit of '*quickness* understanding.'² But this does not make it the less trying to you; and you do not feel able to say with St. Paul, 'With me it is a very small thing.'³ But this precious Word, which meets every need, gives you a stepping-stone which is quite enough to ena-

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 9.

² Isa. xi. 3.

³ 1 Cor. iv. 3.

ble you to reach that brave position, if you will only stand on it. 'Thou understandest my thought.'

Even if others 'daily mistake' your words, He understands your thought, and is not this infinitely better? He Himself, your ever-loving, ever-present Father, understands. He understands perfectly just what and just when others do not. Not your actions merely, but your thought—the central self which no words can reveal to others. 'All my desire is before Thee.'¹ He understands how you desired to do the right thing when others thought you did the wrong thing. He understands how His poor weak child wants to please Him, and secretly mourns over grieving Him. 'Thou understandest' seems to go even a step further than the great comfort of 'Thou knowest.' 'His understanding is infinite.'²

Perhaps you cannot even understand yourself, saying, 'How can a man then understand his own way?'³ Even this He meets, for 'He declareth unto man what is His thought.'⁴ But are you willing to let Him do this? He may show you that those who have, as you suppose, misunderstood you, may have guessed right after all. He may show you that your desire was not so honest, your motives not so single as you fancied; that there was self-will where you only recognized resolution, sin where you only recognized infirmity or mistake. *Let* Him search, let Him 'declare' it unto you. For then He will declare another mes-

¹ Ps. xxxviii. 9.

³ Prov. xx. 24.

² Ps. cxlvii. 5.

⁴ Amos iv. 13.

sage to you: 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.'¹

Then, when all is clear between Him and you, 'nothing between' (and let that '*when*' be '*now!*'), how sweet you will find it in the light of His forgiveness, and the new strength of His cleansing, to look up and say, '*Thou understandest!*' and wait patiently for Him to let you be understood or misunderstood, just as He will, even as Jesus did. For who was ever so misunderstood as He?

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

The Proof of This Purpose.

'No man can come unto me, except it were given him of my Father.'—JOHN vi. 65.

PERHAPS we have hardly counted this as any part of the royal comfort of our King. And yet it is full of 'strong consolation.'²

¹ 1 John i. 7.

² Heb. vi. 18.

If some of us were asked, 'How do you know you have everlasting life?' we might say, 'Because God has promised it.'¹ But how do you know He has promised it to you? And then if we answered, not conventionally, nor what we think we ought to say, but honestly what we think, we might say, 'Because I have believed and have come to Jesus.'² And this looks like resting our hope of salvation upon something that we have done, upon the fact of our having consciously believed and consciously 'come.' And then, of course, any whirlwind of doubt will raise dust enough to obscure that fact and all the comfort of it.

Yet there is grand comfort not in it, but in the glorious chain of which even this little human link is first forged and then held by Jehovah's own hand. Apart from this, it is worth nothing at all.

Do not shrink from the words; do not dare to explain them away; the Faithful and True Witness spoke them, the Holy Ghost has recorded them for ever: 'No man *can* come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father.'³ There it stands; reiterated and strengthened instead of softened, because many even of His disciples murmured at it. So our coming to Jesus was not of ourselves; it was the gift of God.⁴

How did the gift operate? Not by driving, but by drawing. 'No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me, draw him.'⁵ Here comes in the great 'Whosoever *will*.'⁶ For unless

¹ 1 John ii. 25.

⁴ Eph. ii. 8.

² John iii. 16.

⁵ John vi. 44.

³ John vi. 60-66.

⁶ Rev. xxii. 17.

and until the Father drew us, no mortal born of Adam ever wanted to come to Jesus. There was nothing else for it; He *had* to draw us, or we never should have thought of wishing to come; nay, we should have gone on distinctly willing *not* to come, remaining aliens and enemies. Oh, the terrible depth of depravity revealed by that keen sword-word, 'Ye *will not* come to Me that ye might have life.'¹ Settle it, then, that you never wanted to come till He drew you, and praise Him for thus beginning at the very beginning with you. You were not ready for the 'whosoever will' before. But no one ever had a glimmer of a *will* to come, but that shining 'whosoever'² flashed its world-wide splendour for their opening eyes.

By your will, now being wrought upon more and more by His Spirit, the Father drew you, 'with cords of a man, with bands of love.'³ Just examine now,—was it not so? was it with anything *but* loving-kindness that He drew you? Remember the way by which He led you;⁴ it may have been hedged with thorns, but was it not 'paved with love?' were not the very stones laid 'with fair colours?'⁵ Can you help seeing 'the loving-kindnesses of the Lord' all along? and what were they lavished for, but to draw you?

That being acknowledged, what next? Loving-kindness is the fruit and expression and absolute proof of everlasting love. There is no escape from this magnificent conclusion,—'Yea, I have loved thee' (personally *thee*) 'with an everlasting love,'

¹ John v. 40.
⁴ Deut. viii. 2.

² John iii. 15, 16.
⁵ Isa. liv. 11.

³ Hos. xi. 4.

for ‘*therefore* with loving-kindness have I drawn thee’ (personally *thee*).¹ The coming was personal and individual; it may have been ‘in the press,’² but we had nothing to do with the rest of the throng; we know in ourselves that we, you and I, individually, have come. That personal coming was because of God the Father’s personal drawing. I do not know how He drew you, you do not know how He drew me; but without it most certainly neither you nor I ever could have come, because we never *would* have come. This personal drawing by personal loving-kindness was because of personal and individual everlasting love. Coming only because drawn, drawn only because loved! Here we reach, and rest on, the firm foundation of the electing love of God in Christ, proved by His drawing, resulting in our coming! When we know that this sun is shining in the heaven of heavens, should we be watching every flicker of our little farthing candle of faith?

From no less fountain such a stream could flow,
 No other root could yield so fair a flower:
 Had He not loved, He had not drawn us so;
 Had He not drawn, we had nor will nor power
 To rise, to come,—the Saviour had passed by
 Where we in blindness sat without one care or cry.

¹ Jer. xxxi. 3.

² Mark v. 27.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

The Garnering of the Least Grain.

‘I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.’—AMOS ix. 9.

THERE is double comfort here, as to *others* and as to *ourselves*.

As to others,—have not some of us had a scarcely detected notion, as if to some extent the salvation of others depended upon our efforts? Of course, we never put it in so many words; but has there not been something of a feeling that if we tried very hard to win a soul we should succeed, and if we did not try quite enough it would get lost? And this has made our service anxious and burdensome.

But what says Christ? ‘All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me.’¹ They shall come, for the Father will draw them, and Jesus will attract them, and the Holy Spirit will lead them. And the purpose precedes the promise, even as the promise precedes the call, and the call precedes the coming. Thus God first planned and proposed the ark for the salvation of Noah from the flood. Then He said, ‘Thou shalt come into the ark.’² Long after

¹ John vi. 37.

² Gen. vi. 13, 16; ib. ver. 18.

that, when all things were ready, He said, 'Come thou and all thy house into the ark.'¹ And then Noah went in; and then 'the Lord shut him in.'²

Now let us, in our work, practically trust our Lord as to His purposes, promises, and calls; quite satisfied that He 'will work, and who shall let it?'³ that He will not accidentally miss anybody, or lose anything of all that the Father hath given Him, for this is the Father's own will.⁴

It may seem a great trial of trust very often, but who is it that we have to trust thus unquestioningly and quietly? Jesus Christ! Cannot we trust Him whom the Father trusted with the tremendous work of redemption? Shall He not do right? Cannot we trust the Good Shepherd about His own sheep? Why should it actually seem harder to trust Him about His own affairs than about our own? 'Trust in Him at *all* times,'⁵ includes the time when we almost fancy the salvation of a dear one depends on our little bits of prayers and efforts. Not that this trust will tend to easy-going idleness. It never does this when it is real. The deepest trust leads to the most powerful action. It is the silencing oil that makes the machine obey the motive power with greatest readiness and result.

Then the comfort for ourselves. Satan has desired to have us, that he may sift us as wheat;⁶ but the Lord Himself keeps the sieve in His own hand, and pledges His word that not the least grain shall fall on the earth.⁷

¹ Gen. vii. 1.

⁴ John vi. 39.

⁷ Amos ix. 9.

² Gen. vii. 7, 16.

⁵ Ps. lxii. 8.

³ Isa. xliii. 13.

⁶ Luke xxii. 31.

We are so glad of that word, 'not the *least*;' not even me, though less than the least of all saints,¹ though feeling as if my only claim upon Christ Jesus is that I am the chief of sinners.²

'Not the least grain;' for He says, 'Ye shall be gathered one by one.' Think of His hand gathering you separately and individually out of His million-sheaved harvest; gathering you, one by one always, into His garner, even in that tremendous day of sifting, when He shall thoroughly purge His floor.³ You may feel a little overlooked sometimes now; only one among so very many, and perhaps not first nor even second in anybody's love, or care, or interest, but He is watching His 'least grains' all the time. A flock of sheep look most uninterestingly alike and hopelessly undistinguishable to us, but a good shepherd knows every one quite well. Yes, the Good Shepherd calleth His own sheep by name here,⁴ and 'in Zion every one of them appeareth before God.'⁵

For as He said at first, 'All that the Father giveth Me *shall come* to Me;'⁶ so He says they '*shall come* from the east and west'⁷ to receive the eternal welcome to the great feast of His kingdom; His 'sons *shall come* from far,'⁸ 'they *shall come* up with acceptance;' till every one (and that means you and I) has heard His own 'Come, ye blessed of My Father,'⁹ and has come into the fulness of all that He has prepared for us.

¹ Eph. iii. 8.

⁴ John x. 3.

⁷ Matt. viii. 11.

² 1 Tim. i. 15.

⁵ Ps. lxxxiv. 7.

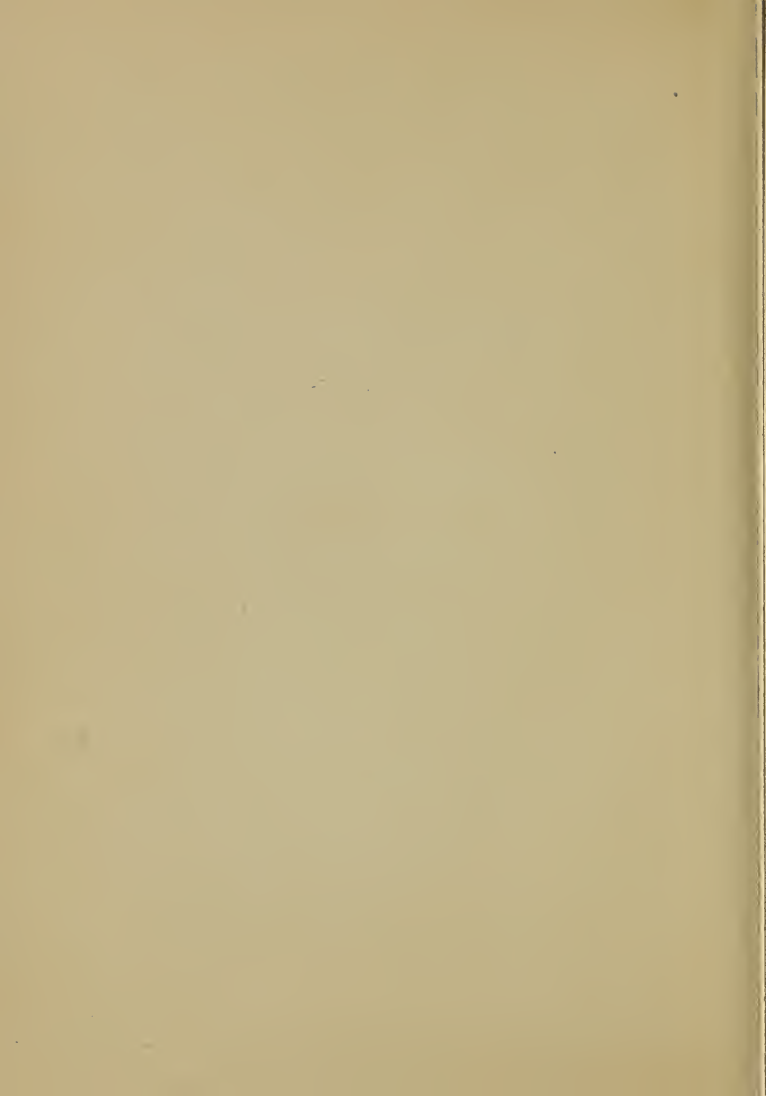
⁸ Isa. lx. 4, 7.

³ Matt. iii. 12.

⁶ John vi. 37.

⁹ Matt. xxv. 34.





Our Saviour and our King,
 Enthroned and crowned above,
 Shall with exceeding gladness bring
 The children of His love.

All that the Father gave
 His glory shall behold;
 Not one whom Jesus came to save
 Is missing from His fold.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

Vindication.

‘And they shall know.’—EZEK. vi. 10; xxxvi. 38, etc.

‘IF they only knew!’ How often we say or think this when ‘they’ misunderstand and misjudge a person, a position, or an action, just because ‘they’ do not know what we know! How we chafe against their speaking evil of things which they know not, and most of all when ‘they’ speak wrongly or unworthily of a person whom we know much better than ‘they’ do! Ah! if they only knew!

This grieving sense of the injustice of ignorance rises to a feeling which needs much tempering of faith and patience when we see our God Himself misunderstood and misjudged. Oh, how they ‘daily mistake’ His words and His character, and how it

does pain us! How we do want them to know what He is, even so far as we are privileged to know Him! How every word which shows they do not know His exceeding great love and absolute goodness, and the sublime balancing of all His attributes, jars upon us and distresses us, and causes a quick up-glance of His little children who have *known* the Father, and an involuntary closer nestling of their hand in His, as if they wanted to give Him fresh assurance of their love and confidence, just because these others do *not* know Him!

What an added grandeur it gives to our anticipations of the day when every eye shall see Him, that He, our Father, will be *known* at last to be what He is, and that Jesus, our Lord and Master, will be seen in His own glory, and can never, never be misunderstood any more? One revels in the thought of this great and eternal vindication of Him whom we love; His ways, His works, His word all justified, and Himself revealed to the silenced universe, henceforth only to receive honour and glory and blessing! It seems as if we should almost forget our own share in the glory and joy of His coming in this transcendent satisfaction.

‘And they *shall* know!’ It is one of the shining threads that run all through the Bible, a supply indeed for the heart’s desire of those who delight in the Lord. It is never long out of sight, judgments and mercies being alike sent for this great purpose, that men may know that Jehovah is Most High over all the earth. For this the waters of the Red Sea receded and returned again; for this Jordan was dried up; for this Goliath was delivered into David’s

hand ; for this 185,000 of the Assyrians were smitten by God's angel ; and many more instances. Throughout Ezekiel it seems the very keyword, recurring seventy-five times as the divine reason of divine doings, that they may 'know that I am the Lord.'¹ Is there not a peculiar solace in this ?

His word, too, shall be vindicated, for 'ye shall *know* that I the Lord have spoken it.'²

His ways shall be vindicated, for 'ye shall *know* that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it.'³ 'Thou *shalt* know hereafter.'⁴

His house shall be vindicated, for He will answer the prayers ascending from it, 'that they may *know* that thy name is called upon this house.'

And He will not leave His own children out of the great vindication ; for 'the hand of the Lord shall be known toward His servants.'⁵ 'All that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.'⁶ More than that, the whole world shall '*know* that Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me,'⁷ and 'I will make them . . . to know that I have loved thee.'⁸ Is not this superabounding compensation for any tiny share we may now have in the world-wide misunderstanding of our Father's wisdom and our Saviour's love ?

'And they shall know,' is not only for those who do not know at all ; for 'at that day *ye* shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you,'—revelations of the mysteries of Godhead and

¹ Ezek. xv. 7, etc.

⁴ John xiii. 7.

⁷ John xvii. 23.

² Ezek. xvii. 21.

⁶ Isa. lxvi. 14

⁸ Rev. iii. 9.

³ Ezek. xiv. 23.

⁶ Isa. lxi. 9.

of the ineffable union of Christ with His people, which have not yet entered into our hearts to conceive. 'Then shall *we* know (if we follow on to know) the Lord.'¹ 'For now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.'²

Oh! the joy to see Thee reigning,
Thee, my own belovèd Lord!
Every tongue Thy name confessing,
Worship, honour, glory, blessing,
Brought to Thee with glad accord!
Thee, my Master and my Friend,
Vindicated and enthroned,
Unto earth's remotest end,
Glorified, adored, and owned!

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

Wakeful Hours.

'Thou holdest mine eyes waking.'—Ps. lxxvii. 4.

IF we could always say, night after night, 'I will both lay me down in peace and sleep,'³ receiving in full measure the Lord's quiet gift to His beloved, we should not learn the disguised sweetness of this special word for the wakeful ones. When the wearisome nights come, it is hushing to know that they are appointed. But this is something

¹ Hos. vi. 3.

² 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

³ Ps. iv. 8.

nearer and closer-bringing, something individual and personal ; not only an appointment, but an act of our Father : 'Thou *holdest* mine eyes waking.'¹ It is *not* that He is merely not giving us sleep ; it is not a denial, but a different dealing. Every moment that the tired eyes are sleepless, it is because our Father is holding them waking. It seems so natural to say, 'How I wish I could go to sleep !' Yet even that restless wish may be soothed by the happy confidence in our Father's hand, which will not relax its 'hold' upon the weary eyelids until the right moment has come to let them fall in slumber.

Ah ! but we say, 'It is not only *wish*, I really *want* sleep.' Well ; wanting it is one thing, and needing it is another. For He is pledged to supply 'all our *need*, not all our *notions*.' And if He holds our eyes waking, we may rest assured that, so long as He does so, it is not sleep but wakefulness that is our true need.

Now, if we first simply submit ourselves to the appointed wakefulness, instead of getting fidgeted because we cannot go to sleep, the resting in His will, even in this little thing, will bring a certain blessing. And the perfect learning of this little page in the great lesson-book of our Father's will, will make others easier and clearer.

Then, let us remember that He does nothing without a purpose, and that no dealing is meant to be resultless. So it is well to pray that we may make the most of the wakeful hours, that they may

¹ Ps. xxiii. 14.

be no more wasted ones than if we were up and dressed. They are His hours, for 'the night also is Thine.'¹ It will cost no more mental effort (nor so much) to ask Him to let them be holy hours, filled with His calming presence, than to let the mind run upon the thousand 'other things' which seem to find even busier entrance during the night.

' With thoughts of Christ and things divine
Fill up this foolish heart of mine.'

It is an opportunity for proving the real power of the Holy Spirit to be greater than that of the Tempter. And He will without fail exert it, when sought for Christ's sake. He will teach us to commune with our own heart upon our bed, or perhaps simply to 'be still,'² which is, after all, the hardest and yet the sweetest lesson. He will bring to our remembrance many a word that Jesus has said, and even 'the night shall be light about'³ us in the serene radiance of such remembering. He will so apply the word of God that the promise shall be fulfilled: 'When thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.'⁴ He will tune the silent hours, and give songs in the night, which shall blend in the Father's ear with the unheard melodies of angels.

Can we say, 'With my soul have I desired Thee in the night'⁵ and, 'By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loveth'⁶ Then he will fulfil that desire; the very wakefulness should be recognized as His direct dealing, and we may say,

¹ Ps. lxxiv. 16.

⁴ Prov. vi. 22.

² Ps. iv. 4.

⁵ Isa. xxvi. 9.

³ Ps. cxxxix. 11.

⁶ Cant. iii. 1, 4.

‘Thou hast visited me in the night.’¹ It is not an angel that comes to you as to Elijah, and arouses you from slumber, but the Lord of angels. He watches while you sleep, and when you are awake you are still with Him who died for you, that whether you wake or sleep, both literally and figuratively, you should live together with Him.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

Midnight Rememberings.

‘When I remember Thee upon my bed.’—Ps. lxiii. 6.

MEMORY is never so busy as in the quiet time while we are waiting for sleep; and never, perhaps, are we more tempted to useless recollections and idle reveries than ‘in the night watches.’ Perhaps we have regretfully struggled against them; perhaps yielded to effortless indulgence in them, and thought we could not help it, and were hardly responsible for ‘vain thoughts’ at such times. But here is full help and bright hope. This night let us ‘remember Thee.’ We can only remember what we already know; oh praise Him then, that we have material for memory!

There is enough for all the wakeful nights of a

¹ Ps. xvii. 3.

lifetime in the one word 'Thee.' It leads us straight to 'His own self;' dwelling on that one word, faith, hope, and love, wake up and feed and grow. Then the holy remembrance, wrought by His Spirit, widens. For 'we will remember the *name* of the Lord our God,'¹ in its sweet and manifold revelations. 'I will remember the *years*' and 'the *works* of the Lord.' 'Surely I will remember Thy *wonders* of old.'² Most of all 'we will remember Thy *love*,' the everlasting love of our Father, the 'exceeding great love of our Master and only Saviour,' the gracious, touching love of our Comforter. And the remembrance of all this love will include that of its grand act and proof, 'Thou shalt remember that . . . Jehovah thy God redeemed thee.'³

Perhaps we know what it is to feel peculiarly weary-hearted and dispirited 'on our beds.' But when we say, 'O my God, my soul is cast down within me;' let us add at once, '*Therefore* will I remember Thee.'⁴

And what then? what comes of thus remembering Him? 'My soul' (yes, your soul) 'shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips: *when* I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches.'⁵ What can be a sweeter, fuller promise than this!—our heart's desire fulfilled in abundant satisfaction and joyful power of praise! Yet there is a promise sweeter and more thrilling still to the loving, longing heart. 'Thou meetest

¹ Ps. xx. 7.
⁴ Ps. xlii. 6.

² Ps. lxxvii. 10, 11.
⁵ Ps. lxiii. 5, 6.

³ Deut. xv. 15.

. . . those that remember Thee in Thy ways.¹ And so, this very night, as you put away the profitless musings and memories, and remember Him upon your bed, He will keep His word and meet you. The darkness shall be verily the shadow of His wing, for your feeble, yet Spirit-given remembrance, shall be met by His real and actual presence, for ‘hath He said and shall He not do it?’² Let us pray that this night ‘the desire of our soul’ may be ‘to Thy name, and to *the remembrance of Thee.*’³

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

The Bright Side of Growing Older.

‘And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.’—JOB xi. 17.

I SUPPOSE nobody ever did naturally like the idea of getting older, after they had at least ‘left school.’ There is a sense of oppression and depression about it. The irresistible, inevitable onward march of moments and years without the possibility of one instant’s pause—a march that, even while on the uphill side of life, is leading to the downhill side—casts an autumn-like shadow over even many a spring-birthday; for perhaps this

¹ Isa. lxiv. 5.

² Num. xxiii. 19.

³ Isa. xxvi. 8.

is never more vividly felt than when one is only passing from May to June,—sometimes earlier still. But how surely the Bible gives us the bright side of everything! In this case it gives three bright sides of a fact, which, without it, could not help being gloomy.

First, it opens the sure prospect of *increasing brightness* to those who have begun to walk in the light. Even if the sun of our life has reached the apparent zenith, and we have known a very noon-day of mental and spiritual being, it is no poetic 'western shadows' that are to lengthen upon our way, but 'our age is to be *clearer* than the noon-day.'¹ How suggestive that word is! The light, though intenser and nearer, shall dazzle less; 'in Thy light shall we *see* light,'² be able to bear much more of it, see it more clearly, see all else by it more clearly, reflect it more clearly. We should have said, 'At evening-time there shall be shadow;' God says, 'At evening-time there shall be light.'³

Also we are not to look for a very dismal afternoon of life with only some final sunset glow; for He says it 'shineth more and more unto the perfect day';⁴ and 'more and more' leaves no dark intervals; we are to expect a continually brightening path. 'The future is one vista of brightness and blessedness' to those who are willing only 'to walk in the light.' Just think, when you are seven, or ten, or twenty years older, that will only mean seven, or ten, or twenty years' more experience of His love and faithfulness, more light of the knowl-

¹ Job xi. 17.

² Ps. xxxvi. 9.

³ Zech. xiv. 7.

⁴ Prov. iv. 18.

edge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; and *still* the 'more and more unto the *perfect* day,'¹ will be opening out before us! We are 'confident of this very thing!'²

The second bright side is *increasing fruitfulness*. Do not let us confuse between works and fruit. Many a saint in the land of Beulah is not able to *do* anything at all, and yet is bringing forth fruit unto God beyond the busiest workers. So that even when we come to the days when 'the strong men shall bow themselves,'³ there may be more pleasant fruits for our Master, riper and fuller and sweeter, than ever before. For 'they shall still bring forth fruit in old age;'⁴ and the man that simply 'trusteth in the Lord' 'shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.'⁵

Some of the fruits of the Spirit seem to be especially and peculiarly characteristic of sanctified older years; and do we not want to bring them *all* forth? Look at the splendid ripeness of Abraham's 'faith' in his old age; the grandeur of Moses' 'meekness,' when he went up the mountain alone to die; the mellowness of St. Paul's 'joy' in his later epistles; and the wonderful 'gentleness' of St. John, which makes us almost forget his early character of 'a son of thunder,' wanting to call down God's lightnings of wrath. And 'the same Spirit' is given to us, that we too may bring forth 'fruit that may abound,'⁶ and always 'more fruit.'⁷

The third bright side is brightest of all: '*Even*

¹ Prov. iv. 18.

² Phil. i. 6.

³ Eccles. xii. 3.

⁴ Ps. xcii. 14.

⁵ Jer. xvii. 7, 8.

⁶ Phil. iv. 17.

⁷ John xv. 2.

*to your old age, I am He;*¹ always the same Jehovah-Jesus; with us 'all the days,' bearing and carrying us 'all the days;' reiterating His promise — 'even to hoar hairs will I carry you . . . ; even I will carry and will deliver you,'² just as He carried the lambs in His bosom.³ For we shall always be His little children, and 'doubtless'⁴ He will always be our Father. The rush of years cannot touch this!

Fear not the westering shadows,
 O Children of the Day!
 For brighter still and brighter,
 Shall be your homeward way.
 Resplendent as the morning,
 With fuller glow and power,
 And clearer than the noonday,
 Shall be your evening hour.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

The Earnests of More and More.

'He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.'—JOEL ii. 23.

GOD keeps writing a commentary on His Word in the volume of our own experience. That

¹ Isa. xlvi. 4.

³ Isa. xl. 11.

² Isa. lxiii. 9; ib. xlvi. 4.

⁴ Isa. lxiii. 16.

is, in so far as we put that volume into His hands, and do not think to fill it with our own scribble. We are not to undervalue or neglect this commentary, but to use it as John Newton did, when he wrote—

‘ His love in time past forbids me to think
He’ll leave me at last in trouble to sink ;
Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review
Confirms His good pleasure to help me quite through.’

The keywords of what the Spirit writes in it are, ‘ He hath,’ and therefore ‘ He will.’ Every record of love bears the great signatures, ‘ I am the Lord, I change not ;’¹ ‘ Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.’² Every Hitherto of grace and help is a Henceforth of more grace and more help. Every experience of the realities of faith widens the horizon of the possibilities of faith. Every realized promise is the stepping-stone to one yet unrealized.

This principle (and it is a very delightful one) of arguing from what God has done for us to what He will do for us, comes up perpetually in all parts of His word. If He *hath* given us the former rain, it is the pledge and proof that ‘ He *will* cause to come down for us the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain ;’³ the blessing already given shall be continued or repeated, and a fuller future one shall be certainly added. Manoah’s wife argued well: ‘ If the Lord were pleased to kill us, He would not . . . have showed us all these things, nor told us such things as these.’⁴ Oh consider *what* things

¹ Mal. iii. 6.

² Heb. xiii. 8.

³ Joel ii. 26.

⁴ Judges xiii. 23.

the Lord has shown and told you and me ! are they not abounding proofs of His purposes towards us ? David made frequent use of the thought, arguing from the less to the greater : ' The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.'¹ St. Paul gives a close parallel, rising from temporal to spiritual deliverance : ' I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work.'²

' Who delivered us from so great a death and doth deliver ; in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us.'³

' The Lord *hath* heard the voice of my supplication ; the Lord *will* receive my prayer.'⁴ ' The Lord *hath* dealt bountifully with me,' comes first ; then follows, ' Deal bountifully with Thy servant ;' and then, ' Thou *shalt* deal bountifully with me.' ' The Lord *hath* done great things for us, whereof we are glad,'⁵ leads us on to the prophecy, ' Be glad and rejoice, for the Lord *will* do great things.'⁶

The same argument is used in prayer. ' Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of Thy people, . . . as Thou *hast* forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.'⁷ ' Thou *hast* delivered my soul from death ; *wilt* Thou *not* deliver my feet from falling ?'⁸ So in the lovely typical request of Achsah to her father, ' Give me a blessing ; for thou *hast* given me a south land ; give me also springs of water.'⁹

¹ 1 Sam. xvii. 37.

⁴ Ps. vi. 9.

⁷ Num. xiv. 19.

² 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18.

⁵ Ps. cxxvi. 3.

⁸ Ps. lvi. 13.

³ 2 Cor. i. 10.

⁶ Joel ii. 21.

⁹ Judges i. 15.

Turn now to the basis of such expressions of trust and petition. 'He that spared not His own Son,'—there is the entirely incontrovertible fact of what He hath done: 'shall He with Him also freely give us all things,'¹—there is the inspired conclusion of what He will do. 'Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.'² 'He which *hath* begun a good work in you *will* perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.'³ For how true is the type, both as to each individual temple of the Holy Ghost, and 'all the building that groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: '⁴—'The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, his hands shall also finish it,'⁵—'His own house, whose house are we.'⁶ Our Lord Jesus Christ endorses it in the very amen of His great prayer: 'I *have* declared unto them Thy name, and *will* declare it.'⁷ Only let us simply receive and believe what He shows us and tells us, and then to every Nathanael who comes to Him, He will say, 'Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these'⁸ Then we shall have, personally and indeed, 'showers of blessing.'⁹

Unto him that hath Thou givest
 Ever more abundantly;
 Lord, I live because Thou livest,
Therefore give more life to me,
 Therefore speed me in the race,
 Therefore let me grow in grace.

¹ Rom. viii. 32.

⁴ Eph. ii. 21.

⁷ John xvii. 26.

² John xiii. 1.

⁶ Zech. iv. 9.

⁸ John i. 50.

³ Phil. i. 6.

⁶ Heb. iii. 6.

⁵ Ezek. xxxiv. 26.

THIRTIETH DAY.

The Perpetual Presence.

‘Lo, I am with you *always*.’—MATT. xxviii. 20.

SOME of us think and say a good deal about ‘a sense of His presence;’ sometimes rejoicing in it, sometimes going mourning all the day long because we have it not; praying for it, and not always seeming to receive what we ask; measuring our own position, and sometimes even that of others, by it; now on the heights, now in the depths about it. And all this April-like gleam and gloom instead of steady summer glow, because we are turning our attention upon the *sense* of His presence, instead of the changeless *reality* of it!

All our trouble and disappointment about it is met by His own simple word, and vanishes in the simple faith that grasps it. For if Jesus says simply and absolutely, ‘Lo, I *am* with you *always*,’ what have we to do with feeling or ‘sense’ about it? We have only to *believe* it, and to *recollect* it. And it is only by thus believing and recollecting that we can realize it.

It comes practically to this: Are you a disciple of the Lord Jesus at all? If so, He says to you, ‘I am with you *always*.’ That overflows all the regrets of the past and all the possibilities of the future, and most certainly includes the present.

Therefore, at this very moment, as surely as your eyes rest on this page, so surely is the Lord Jesus with you. 'I *am*,' is neither 'I *was*,' nor 'I *will* be.' It is always abreast of our lives, always encompassing us with salvation. It is a splendid perpetual '*Now*.' It always means 'I am with you *now*,' or it would cease to be 'I am' and 'always.'

Is it not too bad to turn round upon that gracious presence, the Lord Jesus Christ's own personal presence here and now, and, without one note of faith or whisper of thanksgiving, say, 'Yes, but I don't realize it!' Then it is, after all, not the presence, but the realization that you are seeking—the shadow, not the substance! Honestly, it is so! For you have such absolute assurance of the reality, put into the very plainest words of promise that divine love could devise, that you dare not make Him a liar and say, 'No! He is *not* with me!' All you *can* say is, 'I don't feel a *sense* of His presence.' Well, then, be ashamed of doubting your beloved Master's faithfulness, and 'never open thy mouth any more'¹ in His presence about it. For those doubting, desponding words were said *in His presence*. He was *there, with* you, while you said or thought them. What must He have thought of them!

As the first hindrance to realization is not believing His promise, so the second is not *recollecting* it, not 'keeping it in memory.'² If we were always recollecting, we should be always realizing. But we go forth from faith to forgetfulness, and there

¹ Ezek. xvi. 63.

² 1 Cor. xv. 2.

seems no help for it. Neither is there, in ourselves. But 'in Me is thine help.'¹ Jesus Himself had provided against this before He gave the promise. He said that the Holy Spirit should bring all things to our remembrance.² It is no use laying the blame on our poor memories, when the Almighty Spirit is sent that He may strengthen them. Let us make real use of this promise, and we shall certainly find it sufficient for the need it meets. He can, and He will, give us that holy and blessed recollectedness, which can make us dwell in an atmosphere of remembrance of His presence and promises, through which all other things may pass and move without removing it.

Unbelief and forgetfulness are the only shadows which can come between us and His presence; though, when they have once made the separation, there is room for all others. Otherwise, though all the shadows of earth fell around, none could fall between; and their very darkness could only intensify the brightness of the pavilion in which we dwell, the Secret of His Presence. They could not touch what one has called 'the unutterable joy of shadowless communion.'

What shall we say to our Lord to-night? He says, 'I *am* with you alway.' Shall we not put away all the captious contradictoriness of quotations of our imperfect and double-fettered experience, and say to Him, lovingly, confidently, and gratefully, 'Thou *art* with me!' ³

¹ Hos. xiii. 9.

² John xiv. 26.

³ Ps. xxiii. 4.

‘I am with thee!’ He hath said it,
 In His truth and tender grace!
 Sealed the promise, grandly spoken,
 With how many a mighty token
 Of His love and faithfulness!

‘I am with thee!’ With thee always
 All the nights and ‘all the days;’
 Never failing, never frowning,
 With His loving-kindness crowning,
 ‘Tuning all thy life to praise.



THIRTY-FIRST DAY.



The Fame=excelling Reality.

‘Thou exceedest the fame that I heard.’—2 CHRON. ix. 6.

THOU! Lord Jesus! for whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.¹ Thou! who hast loved me and washed me from my sins in Thine own blood. Thou! who hast given Thyself for me. Thou! who hast redeemed me, called me, drawn me, waited for me. Thou! who hast given me Thy Holy Spirit to testify of Thee. Thou! whose life is mine, and with whom my life is entwined, so that nothing shall separate or entwine it. ‘*Thou exceedest the fame that I heard!*’

¹ Ps. lxxiii. 25.

Yet I heard a great fame of Thee. They told me Thou wert gracious. They told me as much as they could put into words. And they said, 'Come and see.'¹ I tried to come, but I could not see. My eyes were holden,² though Thou wast 'not far.'³ Then I heard what Thou wast to others, and I knew that Thou wast the same Lord. But now I believe, not because of their saying, for I have heard Thee myself, and know that Thou art indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world—my Saviour. Thee, 'whom I shall see for myself,'⁴ I now know for myself; my Lord and my God.⁵

I did not understand how there could be satisfaction here and now. It seemed necessarily future, in the very nature of things. It seemed, in spite of Thy promises, that the soul could never be filled with anything but heaven. But Thou fillest, Thou satisfiest it.

Now it wonderingly rejoiceth,
Finds in Thee unearthly bliss,
Rests in Thy divine perfection,
And is satisfied with this.

Altogether fair and lovely,
Evermore the same to me;
Precious, infinite Lord Jesus,
I am satisfied with Thee!

—Jean S. Pigott.

For Thou *exceedest* the fame that I heard. I find in Thee more than I heard, more than I expected,

¹ John i. 46.

⁴ Job xix. 27.

² Luke xxiv. 16.

⁵ John xx. 28.

³ Acts xvii. 27.

‘more than all.’ The excellency of the knowledge of Thee, Christ Jesus my Lord, not only includes all other treasures of wisdom and knowledge, but outshines them all. Every other fame that I heard has had some touch of disappointment; imagination could always flash beyond reality, even if actual expectation, quieted by experience, had kept within the mark. But ‘now I see’¹ that Thou exceedest all that God-given mental powers can reach; every glimpse is but an opening vista, all the music is but a prelude; what I know of Thee only magnifies the yet unknown. All the God-implanted craving for something beyond, all the instinct for the infinite, is met, responded to, satisfied in Thee. There is no part of my being but finds its full scope and its true sphere in Thee.

Thou exceedest all that I heard in every respect. No one could tell me what Thy pardoning love, Thy patience, Thy long-suffering would be to me. No one could tell me how Thy strength, Thy grace, Thy marvellous help would fit into the least as well as the greatest of my continual needs. No one could tell me what grace was poured into Thy lips for me.² Thou art *All to each* of Thy children; a complete and all excelling Christ to every one, as if it were only for each one. Thy secret is with each.³ Thou givest the white stone and the new name which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.⁴ And if Thou exceedest all that I heard, now and here amid the shadows and the veils, how

¹ John ix. 25.

² Ps. xxv. 14.

³ Ps. xlv. 2.

⁴ Rev. ii. 17.

far more exceeding will be Thy unshadowed and unveiled glory! Lord Jesus, I bless Thee for Thy promised eternity. For I shall need it all to praise Thee, that Thou exceedest the fame that I heard!

EVENING MELODIES



FIRST DAY.

Consecration Hymn.

‘Here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee.’

TAKE my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.

Take my moments and my days ;
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.

Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and ‘beautiful’ for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King.

Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold ;
Not a mite would I withhold.

Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine ;
It shall be no longer mine.

Take my heart, it *is* Thine own ;
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love ; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store.

Take myself, and I will be
Ever, *only*, ALL for Thee.



SECOND DAY.



Set Apart.

‘ Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself.’—Ps. iv. 3.

I.

SET apart for Jesus !
Is not this enough,
Though the desert prospect
Open wild and rough ?
Set apart for His delight,
Chosen for His holy pleasure,
Sealed to be His special treasure !
Could we choose a nobler joy?—and would we if
we might ?

II.

Set apart to serve Him !
 Ministers of light,
 Standing in His presence,
 Ready day or night !
 Chosen for the service blest,
 He would have us always willing,
 Like the angel host fulfilling
 Swiftly and rejoicingly each recognized behest.

III.

Set apart to praise Him,
 Set apart for this !
 Have the blessed angels
 Any truer bliss ?
 Soft the prelude, though so clear :
 Isolated tones are trembling ;
 But the chosen choir, assembling,
 Soon shall sing together, while the universe shall
 hear.

IV.

Set apart to love Him,
 And His love to know !
 Not to waste affection
 On a passing show.
 Called to give Him life and heart,
 Called to pour the hidden treasure,
 That none other claims to measure,
 Into His belovèd hand ! thrice blessèd 'set apart !'

V.

Set apart for ever
 For Himself alone!
 Now we see our calling,
 Gloriously shown.
 Owing, with no secret dread,
 This our holy separation,
 Now the crown of consecration
 Of the Lord our God shall rest upon our willing
 head!¹

 THIRD DAY.

The Secret of a Happy Day.

'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.'—
 Ps. xxv. 14.

I.

JUST to let thy Father do
 What He will;
 Just to know that He is true,
 And be still.
 Just to follow hour by hour
 As He leadeth;
 Just to draw the moment's power
 As it needeth.

¹ Num. vi. 7.

Just to trust Him, this is all !
 Then the day will surely be
 Peaceful, whatsoe'er befall,
 Bright and blessèd, calm and free.

II.

Just to let Him speak to thee
 Through His Word,
 Watching, that His voice may be
 Clearly heard.
 Just to tell Him everything
 As it rises,
 And at once to Him to bring
 All surprises.
 Just to listen, and to stay
 Where you cannot miss His voice.
 This is all ! and thus to-day,
 Communing, you shall rejoice.

III.

Just to ask Him what to do
 All the day,
 And to make you quick and true
 To obey.
 Just to know the needed grace
 He bestoweth,
 Every bar of time and place
 Overfloweth.
 Just to take thy orders straight
 From the Master's own command.
 Blessèd day ! when thus we wait
 Always at our Sovereign's hand.

IV.

Just to recollect His love,
 Always true ;
 Always shining from above,
 Always new.
 Just to recognize its light,
 All-enfolding ;
 Just to claim its present might,
 All-upholding.
 Just to know it as thine own,
 That no power can take away.
 Is not this enough alone
 For the gladness of the day ?

V.

Just to trust, and yet to ask
 Guidance still ;
 Take the training or the task,
 As He will.
 Just to take the loss or gain,
 As He sends it ;
 Just to take the joy or pain,
 As He lends it.
 He who formed thee for His praise
 Will not miss the gracious aim ;
 So to-day and all thy days
 Shall be moulded for the same.

VI.

Just to leave in His dear hand
 Little things,
 All we cannot understand,
 All that stings.

Just to let Him take the care
 Sorely pressing,
 Finding all we let Him bear
 Changed to blessing.
 This is all! and yet the way
 Marked by Him who loves thee best;
 Secret of a happy day,
 Secret of His promised rest.

FOURTH DAY.

The Unfailing One.

'He faileth not.'—ZEPH. iii. 5.

I.

HE who hath led, will lead
 All through the wilderness;
 He who hath fed, will feed;
 He who hath blessed, will bless.
 He who hath heard thy cry,
 Will never close His ear;
 He who hath marked thy faintest sigh,
 Will not forget thy tear.
 He loveth always, faileth never;
 So rest on Him, to-day, for ever!

II.

He who hath made thee whole
 Will heal thee day by day;
 He who hath spoken to thy soul
 Hath many things to say.

He who hath gently taught
 Yet more will make thee know ;
 He who so wondrously hath wrought
 Yet greater things will show.
 He loveth always, faileth never ;
 So rest on Him, to-day, for ever !

III.

He who hath made thee nigh
 Will draw thee nearer still ;
 He who hath given the first supply
 Will satisfy and fill.
 He who hath given thee grace
 Yet more and more will send ;
 He who hath set thee in the race
 Will speed thee to the end.
 He loveth always, faileth never ;
 So rest on Him, to-day, for ever !

IV.

He who hath won thy heart
 Will keep it true and free ;
 He who hath shown thee what thou art
 Will show Himself to thee.
 He who hath bid thee live,
 And made thy life His own,
 Life more abundantly will give,
 And keep it His alone ;
 He loveth always, faileth never ;
 So rest on Him, to-day, for ever !

V.

Then trust Him for to-day
 As thine unfailing Friend,
 And let Him lead thee all the way,
 Who loveth to the end.
 And let the morrow rest
 In His belovèd hand ;
 His good is better than our best,
 As we shall understand,—
 If, trusting Him who faileth never,
 We rest on Him, to-day, for ever !

 FIFTH DAY.

On the Lord's Side.

'Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse.'—
 1 CHRON. xii. 18.

I.

WHO is on the Lord's side ?
 Who will serve the King ?
 Who will be His helpers,
 Other lives to bring ?
 Who will leave the world's side ?
 Who will face the foe ?
 Who is on the Lord's side ?
 Who for Him will go ?

Response. By Thy call of mercy,
 By Thy grace divine,
 We are on the Lord's side;
 Saviour, we are Thine.

II.

Not for weight of glory,
 Not for crown and palm,
 Enter we the army,
 Raise the warrior-psalm;
 But for Love that claimeth
 Lives for whom He died:
 He whom Jesus nameth
Must be on His side.

Response. By Thy love constraining,
 By Thy grace divine,
 We are on the Lord's side;
 Saviour, we are Thine.

III.

Jesus, Thou hast bought us,
 Not with gold or gem,
 But with Thine own life-blood,
 For Thy diadem.
 With Thy blessing filling
 Each who comes to Thee,
 Thou hast made us willing,
 Thou hast made us free.

Response. By Thy grand redemption,
 By Thy grace divine,
 We are on the Lord's side;
 Saviour, we are Thine.

IV.

Fierce may be the conflict,
 Strong may be the foe,
 But the King's own army
 None can overthrow.
 Round His standard ranging,
 Victory is secure,
 For His truth unchanging
 Makes the triumph sure.

Response. Joyfully enlisting
 By thy grace divine,
 We are on the Lord's side ;
 Saviour, we are Thine.

V.

Chosen to be soldiers
 In an alien land ;
 ' Chosen, called, and faithful,'
 For our Captain's band ;
 In the service royal
 Let us not grow cold ;
 Let us be right loyal,
 Noble, true, and bold.

Response. Master, Thou wilt keep us,
 By Thy grace divine,
 Always on the Lord's side,
 Saviour, always Thine.

SIXTH DAY.

True-hearted, Whole-hearted.

I.

TRUE-HEARTED, whole-hearted, faithful and
 loyal,
 King of our lives, by Thy grace we will be !
 Under Thy standard, exalted and royal,
 Strong in Thy strength, we will battle for Thee !

II.

True-hearted, whole-hearted ! Fullest allegiance
 Yielding henceforth to our glorious King ;
 Valiant endeavour and loving obedience
 Freely and joyously now would we bring.

III.

True-hearted ! Saviour, Thou knowest our story ;
 Weak are the hearts that we lay at Thy feet,
 Sinful and treacherous ! yet, for Thy glory,
 Heal them, and cleanse them from sin and deceit.

IV.

Whole-hearted ! Saviour, belovèd and glorious,
 Take Thy great power, and reign Thou alone,
 Over our wills and affections victorious,
 Freely surrendered, and wholly Thine own.

V.

Half-hearted, false-hearted! Heed we the warning!
 Only the whole can be perfectly true;
 Bring the whole offering, all timid thought scorning,
 True-hearted only if whole-hearted too.

VI.

Half-hearted! Saviour, shall aught be withholden,
 Giving Thee part who hast given us all?
 Blessings outpouring, and promises golden
 Pledging, with never reserve or recall.

VII.

Half-hearted! Master, shall any who know Thee
 Grudge Thee their lives, who hast laid down
 Thine own?
 Nay; we would offer the hearts that we owe
 Thee,—
 Live for Thy love and Thy glory alone.

VIII.

Sisters, dear sisters, the call is resounding,
 Will ye not echo the silver refrain,
 Mighty and sweet, and in gladness abounding,—
 'True-hearted, whole-hearted!' ringing again?

IX.

Jesus is with us, His rest is before us,
 Brightly His standard is waving above.
 Brothers, dear brothers, in gathering chorus,
 Peel out the watchword of courage and love!

X.

Peal out the watchword, and silence it never,
 Song of our spirits, rejoicing and free !
 ‘ True-hearted, whole-hearted, now and for ever,
 King of our lives, by Thy grace we will be ! ’

 SEVENTH DAY.

‘ By Thy Cross and Passion. ’

‘ He hath given us rest by His sorrow, and life by His death. ’
 —JOHN BUNYAN.

I.

WHAT hast Thou done for me, Omighty Friend,
 Who lovest to the end !
 Reveal Thyself, that I may now behold !
 Thy love unknown, untold,
 Bearing the curse, and made a curse for me,
 That blessed and made a blessing I might be.

II.

Oh, Thou wast crowned with thorns, that I might
 wear
 A crown of glory fair ;
 ‘ Exceeding sorrowful, ’ that I might be
 Exceeding glad in Thee ;
 ‘ Rejected and despised, ’ that I might stand
 Accepted and complete on Thy right hand.

III.

Wounded for my transgression, stricken sore,
That I might 'sin no more ;'
Weak, that I might be always strong in Thee ;
Bound, that I might be free ;
Acquaint with grief, that I might only know
Fulness of joy in everlasting flow.

IV.

Thine was the chastisement, with no release,
That mine might be the peace ;
The bruising and the cruel stripes were Thine,
That healing might be mine ;
Thine was the sentence and the condemnation,
Mine the acquittal and the full salvation.

V.

For Thee revilings, and a mocking throng,
For me the angel-song ;
For Thee the frown, the hiding of God's face,
For me His smile of grace ;
Sorrows of hell and bitterest death for Thee,
And heaven and everlasting life for me.

VI.

Thy cross and passion, and Thy precious death,
While I have mortal breath,
Shall be my spring of love and work and praise,
The life of all my days ;
Till all this mystery of love supreme
Be solved in glory—glory's endless theme !

EIGHTH DAY.

The Opened Fountain.

'A fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. . .
Wounded in the house of My friends.'—ZECH. xiii. 1, 6.

I.

AND I have wounded Thee—oh, wounded
Thee!—

Wounded the dear, dear Hand that holds me
fast!

Oh, to recall the word! That cannot be!

Oh, to unthink the thought that out of reach
hath passed!

II.

Sorrow and bitter grief replace my bliss;

I could not wish that any joy should be;

There is no room for any thought but this,

That I have sinned—have sinned—have wounded
Thee!

III.

How *could* I grieve Thee so! Thou couldst have
kept;

My fall was not the failure of Thy word.

Thy promise hath no flaw, no dire 'except,'

To neutralize the grace so royally conferred.

IV.

Oh, the exceeding sinfulness of sin!
 Tenfold exceeding in the love-lit light
 Of Thy sufficient grace, without, within,
 Enough for every need, in never-conquered
 might!

V.

With all the shame, with all the keen distress,
 Quick, 'waiting not,' I flee to Thee again;
 Close to the wound, belovèd Lord, I press,
 That Thine own precious blood may overflow the
 stain.

VI.

O *precious* blood! Lord, let it rest on me!
 I ask not only pardon from my King,
 But cleansing from my Priest. I come to Thee
 Just as I came at first,—a sinful, helpless thing.

VII.

Oh, cleanse me now! My Lord, I cannot stay
 For evening shadows and a silent hour:
Now I have sinned, and *now*, with no delay,
 I claim Thy promise and its total power.

VIII.

O Saviour, bid me 'go and sin no more,'
 And keep me always 'neath the mighty flow
 Of Thy perpetual fountain; I implore
 That Thy perpetual cleansing I may fully know.

NINTH DAY.

The Precious Blood of Jesus:

I.

PRECIOUS, precious blood of Jesus,
Shed on Calvary ;
Shed for rebels, shed for sinners,
Shed for me.

II.

Precious blood, that hath redeemed us !
All the price is paid ;
Perfect pardon now is offered,
Peace is made.

III.

Precious, precious blood of Jesus,
Let it make thee whole ;
Let it flow in mighty cleansing
O'er thy soul.

IV.

Though thy sins are red like crimson,
Deep in scarlet glow,
Jesus' precious blood can make them
White as snow.

V.

Now the holiest with boldness
We may enter in,
For the open fountain cleanseth
From all sin.

VI.

Precious blood ! by this we conquer
In the fiercest fight,
Sin and Satan overcoming
By its might.

VII.

Precious, precious blood of Jesus,
Ever flowing free !
O believe it, O receive it,
'Tis for thee !

VIII.

Precious blood, whose full atonement
Makes us nigh to God !
Precious blood, our song of glory,
Praise and laud !

My life's best wine for Thee, my heart's best gold
 (Worthless, yet all I have), for very shame
 That Thou should'st tell me, calling me by
 name,—
 'Thus saith Jehovah, I remember thee!'

IV.

My Lord, dost Thou remember this of me,
 The day of Thine own power?
 The love of *mine* espousals sweet,
 The laying wholly at thy feet
 Of heart and life, in that glad, willing hour?
 That love was Thine—I gave Thee but Thine own,
 And yet the Voice falls from the emerald throne,—
 'Thus saith Jehovah, I remember thee!'

V.

My Lord, dost Thou remember *this* of me?
 Forgetting every fall,
 Forgetting all the treacherous days,
 Forgetting all the wandering ways,
 With fulness of forgiveness covering all;
 Casting these memories, a hideous store,
 Into the crimson sea, for evermore,
 And only saying, 'I remember thee!'

VI.

My Lord, art Thou indeed remembering me?
 Then let me not forget!
 Oh, be Thy kindness all the way,
 Thy everlasting love to-day,

In sweet perpetual remembrance set
 Before my view, to fill my marvelling gaze,
 And stir my love, and lift my life to praise,
 Because Thou sayest, 'I remember thee!'

ELEVENTH DAY.

Knowing.

I.

I KNOW the crimson stain of sin,
 Defiling all without, within ;
 But now rejoicingly I know
 That He has washed me white as snow.
 I praise Him for the cleansing tide,
 Because I know that Jesus died.

II.

I know the helpless, hopeless plaint,
 'The whole head sick, the whole heart faint ;
 But now I trust His touch of grace,
 That meets so perfectly my case,
 So tenderly, so truly deals ;
 Because I know that Jesus heals.

III.

I know the pang of forfeit breath,
 When life in sin was life in death ;

But now I know His life is mine,
And nothing shall that cord untwine,
Rejoicing in the life He gives,
Because I know that Jesus lives. \

IV.

I know how anxious thought can press,
I know the weight of carefulness ;
But now I know the sweet reward
Of casting all upon my Lord,
No longer bearing what He bears,
Because I know that Jesus cares.

V.

I know the sorrow that is known
To the tear-burdened heart alone ;
But now I know its full relief
Through Him who was acquaint with **grief**,
And peace through every trial flows,
Because I know that Jesus knows.

VI.

I know the gloom amid the mirth,
The longing for the love of earth ;
But now I know the Love that fills,
That gladdens, blesses, crowns and stills,
That nothing mars and nothing moves,—
I know, I know that Jesus loves !

VII.

I know the shrinking and the fear,
When all seems wrong, and nothing clear ;

But now I gaze upon His throne,
 And faith sees all His foes o'erthrown,
 And I can wait till He explains,
 Because I know that Jesus reigns.

TWELFTH DAY.

Trusting Jesus.

I.

I AM trusting Thee, Lord Jesus,
 Trusting only Thee ;
 Trusting Thee for full salvation,
 Great and free.

II.

I am trusting Thee for pardon ;
 At Thy feet I bow,
 For Thy grace and tender mercy,
 Trusting now.

III.

I am trusting Thee for cleansing
 In the crimson flood ;
 Trusting Thee to make me holy
 By Thy blood.

IV.

I am trusting Thee to guide me ;
Thou alone shalt lead !
Every day and hour supplying
All my need.

V.

I am trusting Thee for power ;
Thine can never fail !
Words which Thou Thyself shalt give me,
Must prevail.

VI.

I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus ;
Never let me fall !
I am trusting Thee for ever,
And for all.

THIRTEENTH DAY.

Looking unto Jesus.

I.

LOOKING unto Jesus !
Battle-shout of faith,
Shield o'er all the armour,
Free from scar or scathe.

Standard of salvation,
In our hearts unfurled,
Let its elevation
Overcome the world !

II.

Look away to Jesus !
Look away from all ;
Then we need not stumble,
Then we shall not fall.
From each snare that lureth
Foe or phantom grim,
Safety this ensureth :
Look away to Him.

III.

Looking into Jesus !
Wonderingly we trace
Heights of power and glory,
Depths of love and grace.
Vistas far unfolding,
Ever stretch before,
As we gaze, beholding
Ever more and more.

IV.

Looking up to Jesus
On the emerald throne !
Faith shall pierce the heavens
Where our King is gone.
Lord, on Thee depending,
Now, continually,
Heart and mind ascending,
Let us dwell with Thee.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

Shining.

I.

ARE you *shining* for Jesus, dear one?
You have given your heart to Him;
But is the light strong within it,
Or is it but pale and dim?
Can *everybody* see it,—
That Jesus is all to you?
That your love to Him is burning
With radiance warm and true?
Is the seal upon your forehead,
So that it *must* be known
That you are 'all for Jesus,'—
That your heart is all His own?

II.

Are you shining for Jesus, dear one?
You remember the first sweet ray,
When the sun arose upon you
And brought the gladsome day;
When you heard the gospel message,
And Jesus Himself drew near,
And helped you to trust Him simply,
And took away your fear:

When the darkness and the shadows
Fled like a weary night,
And you felt that you could praise Him,
And everything seemed bright.

III.

Are you shining for Jesus, dear one,
So that the holy light
May enter the hearts of others,
And make them glad and bright?
Have you spoken a word for Jesus,
And told to some around,
Who do not care about Him,
What a Saviour *you* have found?
Have you lifted the lamp for others,
That has guided your own glad feet?
Have you echoed the loving message,
That seemed to you so sweet?

IV.

Are you shining for Jesus, dear one,—
Shining for Him all day,
Letting the light burn always
Along the varied way?
Always,—when those beside you
Are walking in the dark?
Always,—when no one is helping,
Or heeding your tiny spark?
Not idly letting it flicker
In every passing breeze
Of pleasure or temptation,
Of trouble or of ease?

V.

Are you shining for Jesus, dear one,—
 Shining just everywhere,
 Not only in easy places,
 Not only just here or there?
 Shining in happy gatherings,
 Where all are loved and known?
 Shining where all are strangers?
 Shining when quite alone?
 Shining at home, and making
 True sunshine all around?
 Shining abroad, and faithful—
 Perhaps among faithless—found?

VI.

Are you shining for *Jesus*, dear one,
 Not for yourself at all?
 Not because dear ones, watching,
 Would grieve if your lamp should fall?
 Shining because you are walking
 In the Sun's unclouded rays,
 And you cannot help reflecting
 The light on which you gaze?
 Shining because it shineth
 So warm and bright above,
 That you *must* let out the gladness,
 And you *must* show forth the love?

VII.

Are you shining for Jesus, dear one?
 Or is there a little sigh

That the lamp His love had lighted
 Does not burn clear and high?
 Is the heavenly crown that waits you,
 Still, still without a star,
 Because your light was hidden,
 And sent no rays afar?
 Do you feel you have not loved Him
 With a love right brave and loyal,
 But have faintly fought and followed
 His banner bright and royal?

VIII.

Oh, come again to Jesus!
 Come as you came at first,
 And tell Him all that hinders,
 And tell Him all the worst;
 And take His sweet forgiveness
 As you took it once before,
 And hear His kind voice saying,
 'Peace! go, and sin no more!'
 Then ask for grace and courage
 His name to glorify,
 That never more His precious light
 Your dimness may deny.

IX.

Then rise, and, 'watching daily,'
 Ask Him your lamp to trim
 With the fresh oil He giveth,
 That it may not burn dim.
 Yes, rise and shine for Jesus!
 Be brave, and bright, and true

To the true and loving Saviour,
 Who gave Himself for you.
 Oh, shine for Jesus, dear one,
 And henceforth be your way
 Bright with the light that shineth
 Unto the perfect day !

FIFTEENTH DAY.

Growing.

I.

UNTO him that hath, Thou givest
 Ever 'more abundantly,'
 Lord, I live because Thou livest,
 Therefore give more life to me ;
 Therefore speed me in the race ;
 Therefore let me grow in grace.

II.

Deepen all Thy work, O Master,
 Strengthen every downward root,
 Only do Thou ripen faster,
 More and more, Thy pleasant fruit.
 Purge me, prune me, self abase,
 Only let me grow in grace.

III.

Jcsus, grace for grace outpouring,
 Show me ever greater things ;

Raise me higher, sunward soaring,
Mounting as on eagle-wings.
By the brightness of Thy face,
Jesus, let me grow in grace.

IV.

Let me grow by sun and shower,
Every moment water me ;
Make me really hour by hour
More and more conformed to Thee.
That Thy loving eye may trace,
Day by day, my growth in grace.

V.

Let me then be always growing,
Never, never standing still ;
Listening, learning, better knowing
Thee and Thy most blessèd will.
Till I reach Thy holy place,
Daily let me grow in grace.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

Resting.

'This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing.'—ISA. xxviii. 12.

I.

RESTING on the faithfulness of Christ our
 Lord;
 Resting on the fulness of His own sure word;
 Resting on His power, on His love untold;
 Resting on His covenant secured of old.

II.

Resting 'neath His guiding hand for untracked
 days;
 Resting 'neath His shadow from the noontide rays;
 Resting at the eventide beneath His wing;
 In the fair pavilion of our Saviour King.

III.

Resting in the fortress while the foe is nigh;
 Resting in the lifeboat while the waves roll high;
 Resting in His chariot for the swift, glad race;
 Resting, always resting in His boundless grace.

IV.

Resting in the pastures, and beneath the Rock ;
 Resting by the waters where He leads His flock ;
 Resting, while we listen, at His glorious feet ;
 Resting in His very arms !—O rest complete !

V.

Resting and believing, let us onward press ;
 Resting in Himself, the Lord our Righteousness ;
 Resting and rejoicing, let His saved ones sing,
 Glory, glory, glory be to Christ our King !

 SEVENTEENTH DAY.

Filling.

‘ Filled with all the fulness of God. ’—EPH. iii. 19.

I.

HOLY Father, Thou hast spoken
 Words beyond our grasp of thought,—
 Words of grace and power unbroken,
 With mysterious glory fraught.

II.

Promise and command combining,
Doubt to chase and faith to lift ;
Self renouncing, all resigning,
We would claim this mighty gift.

III.

Take us, Lord, oh, take us truly,
Mind and soul and heart and will ;
Empty us and cleanse us throughly,
Then with all thy fulness fill

IV.

Lord, we ask it, hardly knowing
What this wondrous gift may be,
But fulfil to overflowing,—
Thy great meaning let us see.

V.

Make us in Thy royal palace
Vessels worthy for the King ;
From Thy fulness fill our chalice,
From Thy never-failing spring.

VI.

Father, by this blessèd filling,
Dwell Thyself in us, we pray ;
We are waiting, Thou art willing,
Fill us with Thyself to-day !

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

 Increase our Faith.

'Lord, increase our faith.'—LUKE xvii. 5.

I.

INCREASE our faith, beloved Lord !
 For Thou alone canst give
 The faith that takes Thee at Thy word,
 The faith by which we live.

II.

Increase our faith ! So weak are we,
 That we both may and must
 Commit our very faith to Thee,
 Entrust to Thee our trust.

III.

Increase our faith ! for there is yet
 Much land to be possessed ;
 And by no other strength we get
 Our heritage of rest.

IV.

Increase our faith ! On this broad shield
 'All' fiery darts be caught ;

We must be victors in the field
Where Thou for us hast fought.

V.

Increase our faith, that we may claim
Each starry promise sure,
And *always* triumph in Thy name,
And to the end endure.

VI.

Increase our faith, O Lord, we pray,
That we may not depart
From Thy commands, but *all* obey
With free and loyal heart.

VII.

Increase our faith—increase it still—
From heavenward hour to hour
And in us gloriously ‘fulfil
The work of faith with power.’

VIII.

Increase our faith, that never dim
Or trembling it may be,
Crowned with the ‘perfect peace’ of him
‘Whose mind is stayed on Thee.’

IX.

Increase our faith, for Thou hast prayed
That it should never fail;
Our steadfast anchorage is made
With Thee, within the veil.

X.

Increase our faith, that unto Thee
 More fruit may still abound ;
 That it may grow 'exceedingly,'
 And to Thy praise be found.

XI.

Increase our faith, O Saviour dear,
 By Thy sweet sovereign grace,
 Till, changing faith for vision clear,
 We see Thee face to face !

 NINETEENTH DAY.

'Nobody knows but Jesus.'

I.

'NOBODY knows but Jesus !'
 'Tis only the old refrain
 Of a quaint, pathetic slave-song,
 But it comes again and again.

II.

I only heard it quoted,
 And I do not know the rest ;
 But the music of the message
 Was wonderfully blessed.

III.

For it fell upon my spirit
Like sweetest twilight psalm,
When the breezy sunset waters
Die into starry calm.

IV.

'Nobody knows but Jesus !'
Is it not better so,
That no one else but Jesus,
My own dear Lord, should know ?

V.

When the sorrow is a secret
Between my Lord and me,
I learn the fuller measure
Of His quick sympathy.

VI.

Whether it be so heavy,
That dear ones could not bear
To know the bitter burden
They could not come and share ;

VII.

Whether it be so tiny,
That others could not see
Why it should be a trouble,
And seem so real to me ;

VIII.

Either, and both, I lay them
Down at my Master's feet,
And find them, alone with Jesus,
Mysteriously sweet.

IX.

Sweet, for they bring me closer
To the dearest, truest Friend ;
Sweet, for He comes the nearer,
As 'neath the cross I bend ;

X.

Sweet, for they are the channels
Through which His teachings flow ;
Sweet, for by these dark secrets
His heart of love I know.

XI.

'Nobody knows but Jesus !'
It is music for to-day,
And through the darkest hours
It will chime along the way.

XII.

'Nobody knows but Jesus !'
My Lord, I bless Thee now
For the sacred gift of sorrow
That no one knows but Thou.

TWENTIETH DAY.

He is Thy Life:

I.

JESUS, Thy life is mine!
Dwell evermore in me;
And let me see
That nothing can untwine
My life from Thine.

II.

Thy life in me be shown!
Lord, I would henceforth seek
To think and speak
Thy thoughts, Thy words alone,
No more my own.

III.

Thy love, Thy joy, Thy peace,
Continuously impart
Unto my heart
Fresh springs, that never cease
But still increase.

IV.

The blest reality
 Of resurrection power,
 Thy Church's dower,
 Life more abundantly,
 Lord, give to me!

V.

Thy fullest gift, O Lord,
 Now at Thy feet I claim,
 Through Thy dear name!
 And touch the rapturous chord
 Of praise forth poured.

VI.

Jesus, my life is Thine,
 And evermore shall be
 Hidden in Thee!
 For nothing can untwine
 Thy life from mine.

 TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

Enough.

I.

I AM so weak, dear Lord, I cannot stand
 One moment without Thee!
 But oh! the tenderness of Thine enfolding.

And oh ! the faithfulness of Thine upholding,
And oh ! the strength of Thy right hand !
That strength is enough for me !

II.

I am so needy, Lord, and yet I know
All fulness dwells in Thee ;
And hour by hour that never-failing treasure
Supplies and fills, in overflowing measure,
My least, my greatest need ; and so
Thy grace is enough for me !

III.

It is so sweet to trust Thy word alone :
I do not ask to see
The unveiling of Thy purpose, or the shining
Of future light on mysteries untwining :
Thy promise-roll is all my own,—
Thy word is enough for me !

IV.

The human heart asks love ; but now I know
That my heart hath from Thee
All real, and full, and marvellous affection,
So near, so human ; yet divine perfection
Thrills gloriously the mighty glow !
Thy love is enough for me !

V.

There were strange soul-depths, restless, vast, and
broad,
Unfathomed as the sea ;

An infinite craving for some infinite stilling;
 But now Thy perfect love is perfect filling!
 Lord Jesus Christ, my Lord, my God,
 Thou, Thou art enough for me!

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

All.

I.

GOD'S reiterated 'ALL!'
 O wondrous word of peace and power!
 Touching with its tuneful fall
 The rising of each hidden hour,
All the day.

II.

Only *all* His word believe,
All peace and joy your heart shall fill,
All things asked ye shall receive:
 This is thy Father's word and will,
For to-day.

III.

'*All* I have is thine,' saith He.
 '*All* things are yours,' He saith again;

All the promises for thee
 Are sealed with Jesus Christ's Amen,
 For to-day.

IV.

He shall *all* your need supply,
 And He will make *all* grace abound ;
Always all sufficiency
 In Him for *all* things shall be found,
 For to-day.

V.

All His work He shall fulfil,
All the good pleasure of His will,
 Keeping thee in *all* thy ways,
 And with thee always, '*all* the days,'
 And to-day!

 TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

Only.

I.

ONLY a mortal's powers,
 Weak at their fullest strength ;
 Only a few swift-flashing hours,
 Short at their fullest length.

II.

Only a page for the eye,
Only a word for the ear,
Only a smile, and by and by
Only a quiet tear.

III.

Only one heart to give,
Only one voice to use ;
Only one little life to live,
And only one to lose.

IV.

Poor is my best and small :
How could I dare divide ?
Surely my Lord shall have it all,
He shall not be denied !

V.

All ! for far more I owe
Than all I have to bring ;
All ! for my Saviour loves me so !
All ! for I love my King !

VI.

All ! for it is His own,
He gave the tiny store ;
All ! for it must be His alone ;
All ! for I have no more.

VII.

All ! for the last and least
 He stoopeth to uplift :
 The altar of my great High Priest
 Shall sanctify my gift.

 TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

My Master.

'I love my master ; . . . I will not go out free.
 And he shall serve him for ever.'—Ex. xxi. 5, 6.

I.

I LOVE, I love my Master,
 I will not go out free,
 For He is my Redeemer,
 He paid the price for me.

II.

I would not leave His service,
 It is so sweet and blest ;
 And in the weariest moments
 He gives the truest rest.

III.

I would not halve my service,
 His only it must be,—
 His *only*, who so loved me
 And gave Himself for me.

IV.

My Master shed His life-blood
My vassal life to win,
And save me from the bondage
Of tyrant self and sin.

V.

He chose me for His service,
And gave me power to choose
That blessed, 'perfect freedom'
Which I shall never lose :

VI.

For He hath met my longing
With word of golden tone,
That I shall serve for ever
Himself, Himself alone.

VII.

' Shall serve Him ' hour by hour,
For He will show me how ;
My Master is fulfilling
His promise even now !

VIII.

' Shall serve Him,' and ' for ever ;'
O hope most sure, most fair !
The perfect love outpouring
In perfect service there !



IX.

Rejoicing and adoring,
 Henceforth my song shall be :
 I love, I love my Master,
 I will not go out free !

 TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

Perfect Peace.

I.

LIKE a river glorious
 Is God's perfect peace,
 Over all victorious
 In its bright increase.
 Perfect—yet it floweth
 Fuller every day ;
 Perfect—yet it groweth
 Deeper all the way.

Chorus. Stayed upon Jehovah,
 Hearts are fully blest,
 Finding, as He promised,
 Perfect peace and rest.

II.

Hidden in the hollow
 Of His blessèd hand,

Never foe can follow,
Never traitor stand.
Not a surge of worry,
Not a shade of care,
Not a blast of hurry
Touch the spirit there.

Chorus. Stayed upon Jehovah,
Hearts are fully blest,
Finding, as He promised,
Perfect peace and rest.

III.

Every joy or trial
Falleth from above,
Traced upon our dial
By the Sun of Love.
We may trust Him solely
All for us to do ;
They who trust Him wholly,
Find Him wholly true.

Chorus. Stayed upon Jehovah,
Hearts are fully blest,
Finding, as He promised,
Perfect peace and rest.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

I am with Thee.

I.

‘ I AM with thee ! ’ He hath said it
In His truth and tender grace ;
Sealed the promise, grandly spoken,
With how many a mighty token
Of his love and faithfulness.

II.

He is with thee !—In thy dwelling,
Shielding thee from fear of ill ;
All thy burdens kindly bearing,
For thy dear ones gently caring,
Guarding, keeping, blessing still.

III.

He is with thee !—In thy service
He is with thee ‘ certainly,’
Filling with the Spirit’s power,
Giving in the needing hour
His own messages by thee.

IV.

He is with thee!—With thy spirit,
With thy lips, or with thy pen;
In the quiet preparation,
In the heart-bowed congregation,
Nevermore alone again!

V.

He is with thee!—With thee always,
All the nights and all the days;
Never failing, never frowning,
With His loving-kindness crowning,
Tuning all thy life to praise.

VI.

He is with thee!—Thine own Master,
Leading, loving to the end;
Brightening joy and lightening sorrow,
All to-day, yet *more* to-morrow,
King and Saviour, Lord and Friend.

VII.

He is with thee!—Yes, for ever,
Now, and through eternity;
Then with Him for ever dwelling,
Thou shalt share His joy excelling,
Thou with Christ and Christ with thee!

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

Trust and Distrust.

I.

DISTRUST thyself, but trust His grace ;
It is enough for thee !
In every trial thou shalt trace
Its all-sufficiency.

II.

Distrust thyself, but trust His strength ;
In Him thou shalt be strong :
His weakest ones may learn at length
A daily triumph-song.

III.

Distrust thyself, but trust His love ;
Rest in its changeless glow :
And life or death shall only prove
Its everlasting flow.

IV.

Distrust thyself, but trust alone
In Him, for all—for ever !
And joyously thy heart shall own
That Jesus faileth never.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

Without Carefulness.

‘I would have you without carefulness.’—I COR. vii. 32.

I.

MASTER! how shall I bless Thy name
For Thy tender love to me,
For the sweet enablings of Thy grace,
So sovereign, yet so free,
That have taught me to obey Thy word
And cast my care on Thee!

II.

They tell of weary burdens borne
For discipline of life,
Of long anxieties and doubts,
Of struggle and of strife,
Of a path of dim perplexities
With fears and shadows rife.

III.

Oh, I have trod that weary path,
With burdens not a few,
With shadowy faith that Thou wouldst lead
And help me safely through,
Trying to follow and obey,
And bear my burdens too.

IV.

Master! dear Master, Thou didst speak,
And yet I did not hear,
Or long ago I might have ceased
From every care and fear,
And gone rejoicing on my way
From brightening year to year.

V.

Just now and then some steeper slope
Would seem so hard to climb,
That I *must* cast my load on Thee;
And I left it for a time,
And wondered at the joy at heart,
Like sweetest Christmas chime.

VI.

A step or two on wingèd feet,
And then I turned to share
The burden Thou hadst taken up
Of ever-pressing care;
So that I would not leave with Thee
Of course I had to bear.

VII.

At last Thy precious precepts fell
On opened heart and ear,
A varied and repeated strain
I could not choose but hear,
Enlinking promise and command,
Like harp and clarion clear:

VIII.

‘No anxious thought upon thy brow
The watching world should see ;
No carefulness ! O child of God,
For *nothing* careful be !
But cast thou *all* thy care on Him
Who always cares for thee.’

IX.

Did not Thy loving Spirit come
In gentle, gracious shower,
To work Thy pleasure in my soul
In that bright, blessèd hour,
And to the word of strong command
Add faith and will and power?

X.

It was Thy word, it was Thy will—
That was enough for me !
Henceforth no care shall dim my trust,
For all is cast on Thee ;
Henceforth my inmost heart shall praise
The grace that set me free.

XI.

And now I find Thy promise true,
Of perfect peace and rest ;
I cannot sigh—I can but sing
While leaning on Thy breast,
And leaving everything to Thee,
Whose ways are always best.

XII.

I never thought it could be thus,—
Month after month to know
The river of Thy peace without
One ripple in its flow ;
Without one quiver in the trust,
One flicker in its glow.

XIII.

Oh, Thou hast done far more for me
Than I had asked or thought !
I stand and marvel to behold
What Thou, my Lord, hast wrought,
And wonder what glad lessons yet
I shall be daily taught.

XIV.

How shall I praise Thee, Saviour dear,
For this new life so sweet,
For taking all the care I laid
At Thy belovèd feet.
Keeping Thy hand upon my heart
To still each anxious beat !

XV.

I want to praise, with life renewed,
As I never praised before ;
With voice and pen, with song and speech,
To praise thee more and more,

And the gladness and the gratitude
Rejoicingly outpour.

XVI.

I long to praise Thee more, and yet
This is no care to me :
If Thou shalt fill my mouth with songs,
Then I will sing to Thee ;
And if my silence praise Thee best,
Then silent I will be.

XVII.

Yet if it be Thy will, dear Lord,
Oh, send me forth, to be
Thy messenger to careful hearts,
To bid them taste and see
How good Thou art to those who cast
All, all their care on Thee !

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

Thy Reign.

‘Righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.
ROM. xiv. 17.

I.

THY reign is righteousness,
 Not mine, but Thine!—
 A covering no less
 Than the broad, bright waves of Thy great sea,
 That roll triumphantly
 From line to pole, and pole to line;
 A reign where every rebel thought
 In sweet captivity
 To Thine obedience is brought.

II.

Thy reign is perfect peace;
 Not mine, but Thine!—
 A stream that cannot cease,
 For its fountain is Thy heart. O depth unknown!
 Thou givest of Thine own,
 Pouring from Thine and filling mine.
 The ‘noise of war’ hath passed away;
 God’s peace is on the throne,
 Ruling with undisputed sway.

III.

Thy reign is joy divine ;
Not mine, but Thine ;
Or else not any joy to me !
For a joy that flowed not from Thine own,
Since Thou hast reigned alone,
Were vacancy or misery.
O sunshine of Thy realm, how bright
This radiance from Thy throne,
Unspeakable in calmest light !

IV.

Thy reign shall still increase !
I claim Thy word,—
Let righteousness and peace
And joy in the Holy Ghost be found,
And more and more abound
In me, through Thee, O Christ my Lord ;
Take unto Thee Thy power, who art
My Sovereign, many-crowned !
Stablish Thy kingdom in my heart.

THIRTIETH DAY.

Tried, Precious, Sure.

JESUS
CHRIST { 'The Same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.'—
HEB. xiii. 8.
'A stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a
sure foundation.'—ISA. xxviii. 16.

I.

THROUGH the yesterday of ages,
Jesus, Thou hast been The Same ;
Through our own life's chequered pages,
Still the one dear changeless Name.
Well may we in Thee confide,
Faithful Saviour, proved and 'TRIED !'

II.

Joyfully we stand and witness
Thou art still to-day The Same ;
In Thy perfect, glorious fitness,
Meeting every need and claim.
Chiefest of ten thousand Thou !
Saviour, O most 'PRECIOUS,' now !

III.

Gazing down the far for ever,
Brighter glows the one sweet Name,

Steadfast radiance, paling never,
 Jesus, Jesus! still The Same.
 Evermore 'Thou shalt endure,'
 Our own Saviour, strong and 'SURE!'



THIRTY-FIRST DAY.



Just when Thou Wilt.

I.

JUST when Thou wilt, O Master, call,
 Or at the noon, or evening fall,
 Or in the dark, or in the light,—
 Just when Thou wilt, it must be right.

II.

Just when Thou wilt, O Saviour, come,
 Take me to dwell in Thy bright home!
 Or when the snows have crowned my head,
 Or ere it hath one silver thread.

III.

Just when Thou wilt, O Bridegroom, say,
 'Rise up, my love, and come away!'

Open to me Thy golden gate,
Just when Thou wilt, or soon, or late.

IV.

Just when Thou wilt—Thy time is best—
Thou shalt appoint my hour of rest,
Marked by the Sun of perfect love,
Shining unchangeably above.

V.

Just when Thou wilt!—no choice for me!
Life is a gift to use for Thee;
Death is a hushed and glorious tryst,
With Thee, my King, my Saviour, Christ!

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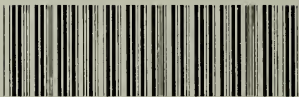
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