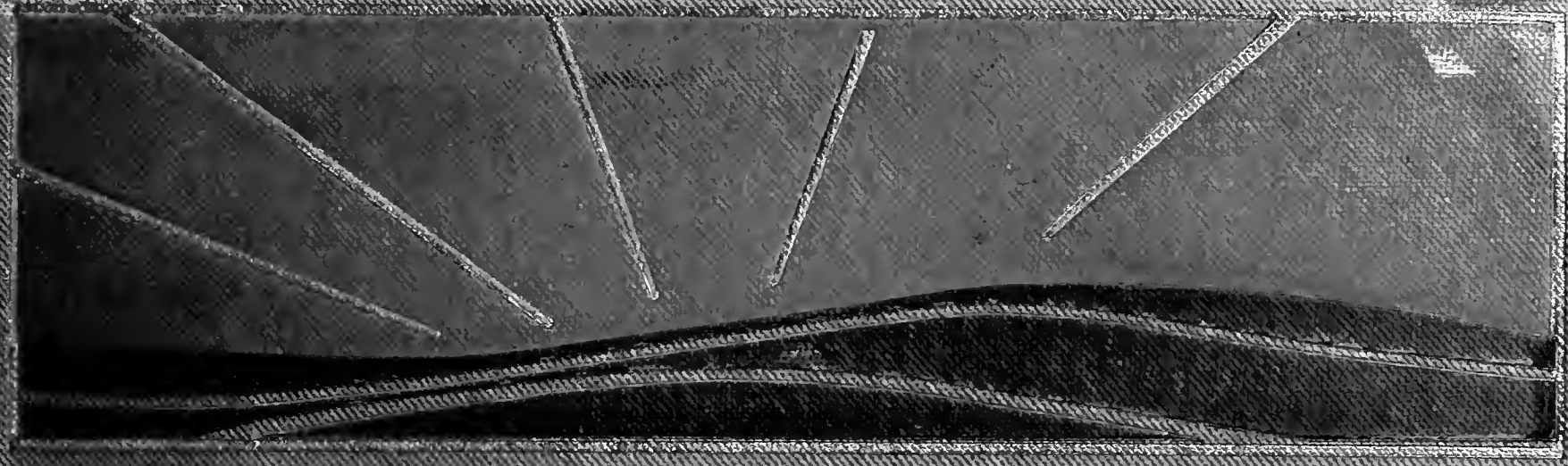

REFLECTED LIGHTS

FROM

"THE FACE OF THE DEEP"

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"Clothe us as Thy lilies."—*Page* 151.

Frontispiece.

REFLECTED LIGHTS

FROM

"THE FACE OF THE DEEP"

BY

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

SELECTED AND ARRANGED

BY

W. M. L. JAY

NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY
31 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET
1899

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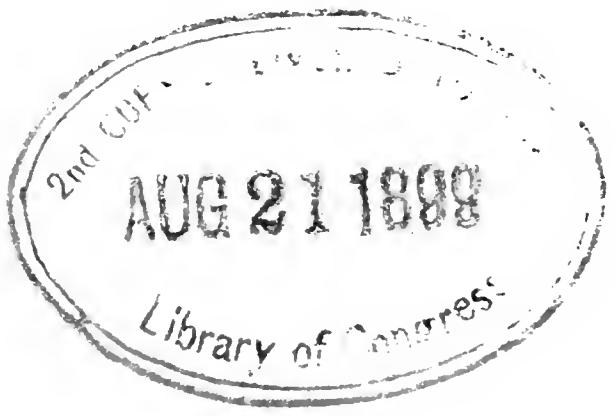

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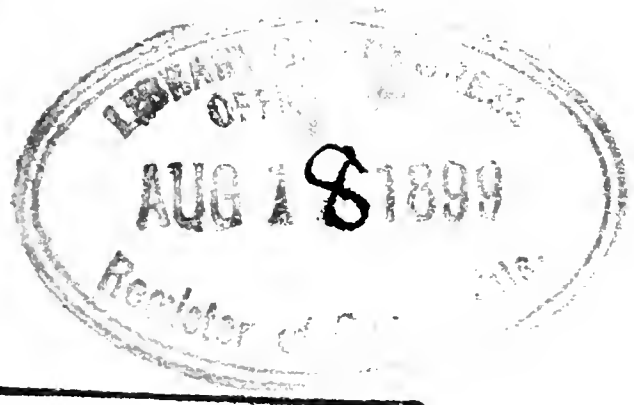

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PREFACE

THE devotional poems of Christina Rossetti have an assured place in Christian hearts, but her prose works are less known, though scarcely less deserving in their way. They are deeply spiritual, with an occasional quaintness of phrase and a spice of humor that remind the reader of the religious writers of earlier times. The principal one of these works, entitled *The Face of the Deep*, furnishes the bulk of the present volume. It is a running commentary on the Book of Revelations, the title being meant to indicate that Miss Rossetti did not claim to have made any profound or critical study of those deep waters, but only to have sought for the lessons that she believed were to be found on or near their surface by all who studied them diligently and prayerfully. Through the book are scattered some of the loveliest

lyrics and sonnets that she ever wrote. I have found the work so stimulating and helpful for myself that I dare to hope I have done a favor to others by bringing out into clearer view and easier reach many of the beautiful, inspiring, and comforting thoughts that are often hidden away among much matter for which an unleisured reader would have no time, and which a desultory one might find unattractive. Thus they become "Reflected Lights."

As before said, the greater part of these "Lights" are from *The Face of the Deep;* but with them, for the occasional illustration or carrying out of a particular thought, have been mingled a few from a smaller work of Christina Rossetti's, entitled, *Time Flies*, and also some brief extracts from her first volume of poems.

W. M. L. Jay.

New York, 1899.

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(*The sitting figure is said to be a likeness of Christina Rossetti.*)

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THE LIGHT OF LOVE

If love is not worth loving, then life is not
worth living,
Nor aught is worth remembering, but
well forgot ;
For store is not worth storing and gifts are
not worth giving,
If love is not.

What is the beginning? Love. What the course? Love still.
What the goal? The goal is Love on the happy hill.
Is there nothing then but Love, search we sky or earth?
There is nothing out of Love hath perpetual worth:
All things flag but only Love; all things fail or flee;
There is nothing left but Love worthy you or me.

Is love then the only crowned virtue? Yes, only love; inasmuch as the others, divorced from love, would not be virtues.

✠

Without love we shall never understand either God or His saints.

Love is the key of life and death,
Of hidden heavenly mystery;
Of all Christ is, of all He saith,
Love is the key.

As three times to His Saint He saith,
He saith to me, He saith to thee,
Breathing His grace-conferring breath,
"Lovest thou Me?"

Ah, Lord, I have such feeble faith,
Such feeble hope to comfort me,
But love it is, as strong as death,
And I love Thee.

✠

"*Love is the fulfilling of the Law.*"

Love is alone the worthy law of love:
All other laws have presupposed a taint:
Love is the law from kindled saint to saint,
From lamb to lamb, from tender dove to dove:
Love is the motive of all things that move
Harmonious by free will without constraint:
Love learns and teaches: love shall man acquaint
With all he lacks—which all his lack is love.

Whoso breaks the law at one point is guilty of all. Defective love is defective

all over, yet very probably it is particularly defective at some one point : if so, that is an obvious point to take in hand first. For practical purposes (if we mean to be practical) efforts should be concentrated rather than diffused ; and commence reformation somewhere we must, on pain of otherwise achieving it nowhere. Every inch of waste ground may equally need weeding, yet not the fabled Briareus himself could weed the whole simultaneously at one swoop.

Love, to be love, must walk Thy way
And work Thy will ;
Or, if Thou say, "Lie still,"
Lie still and pray.

Love will not mar her peaceful face
With cares undue,—
Faithless and hopeless too
And out of place.

Love here hath vast beatitude ;
What shall be hers
Where there is no more curse,
But all is good ?

Love from without cannot accomplish its own work, unless there be some response from love within.

Lord, dost Thou look on me, and will not I
Launch out my heart to Heaven to look on Thee?—
Here, if one loved me I should turn to see,
And often think on him and often sigh,
And by a tender friendship make reply
To love gratuitous poured forth on me,
And nurse a hope of happy days to be,
And mean "until we meet" in each "good-bye."
Lord, Thou dost look and love is in Thine eyes,
Thy heart is set upon me day and night,
Thou stoopest low to set me far above:
O Lord, that I may love Thee make me wise;
That I may see and love Thee grant me sight;
And give me love that I may give Thee love.

While we pray for love, let us act as if already possessed of love.

✠

Thy lovely saints do bring Thee love,
Incense and joy and gold,
Fair star with star, fair dove with dove,
Beloved by Thee of old.
I, Master, neither star nor dove,
Have brought Thee sins and tears;
Yet I, too, bring a little love
Amid my flaws and fears;—
A trembling love that faints and fails,
Yet still is love of Thee,—
A wondering love that hopes and hails
Thy boundless love of me;
Love kindling faith and pure desire,
Love following on to bliss—
A spark, O Jesus, from Thy fire,
A drop from Thine abyss.

"Love all for Jesus, but Jesus for Himself," writes a master of the science of love.

And whatever may be doubtful, this remains certain: every man who loves God a little, is loved by Him much; every man

who loves God much, is loved by Him more.

✠

Any who pray and love enjoy already no stinted blessing. Even to will to love is to love.

Dost thou not will, poor soul? Yet I receive
The inner unseen longings of the soul;
I guide them towards Me; I control
And charm hearts till they grieve.
If thou desire, it yet shall come to pass,
Though thou but wish indeed to choose
My love,—
For I have power in earth and heaven above.

The will to love Him He accepts and quickens into love: the faintest emotion of love towards Him He acknowledges and is ready to confirm and develop.

✠

Because Love is the fountain, I discern
The stream as love; for what but love should flow
From Fountain Love? not bitter from the sweet!

Where love is, there comes sorrow
To-day or else to-morrow;
Endure the mood,
Love only means our good.

Where love is, there comes pleasure,
With or withouten measure,
Early or late
Cheering the sorriest state.

Who would not choose a sorrow
Love's self will cheer to-morrow ?—
One day of sorrow,
Then such a long to-morrow!

✠

How little must I love the world ? How much may I love it ?

Love it to the fulness of thy heart's desire, so thou love it with self-sacrifice: for thus to love it is after the mind of God, the pattern of Christ: "*God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*"

O Lord, seek us, O Lord, find us
In Thy patient care;

Be Thy love before, behind us,
  Round us, everywhere;
Lest the god of this world blind us,
  Lest he speak us fair,
Lest he forge a chain to bind us,
  Lest he bait a snare.
Turn not from us, call to mind us,
  Find, embrace us, bear;
Be Thy love before, behind us,
  Round us, everywhere.

✠

O ye who taste that Love is sweet,
Set waymarks for the doubtful feet
That stumble on in search of it.

Sing notes of love, that some who hear
Far off, inert, may lend an ear,
Rise up and wonder and draw near.

Lead lives of love, that others who
Behold your lives may kindle too
With love, and cast their lots with you.

O Gracious Lord God, who deignest to make of man Thy mirror, that we in one another may behold Thine Image and love Thyself; unto everyone of us grant, I be-

seech Thee, thus to love and thus to be beloved.

✠

Loveless faith is dead, being alone. Loveless hope leads to shame. Loveless obedience makes fair the outside, but within is rottenness.

"I was hungry and thou feddest Me;
Yea, thou gavest drink to slake my thirst."
"O Lord, what love-gift can I offer Thee
Who hast loved me first?"

"Feed My hungry brethren for My sake;
Give them drink for love of them and Me:
Love them as I loved thee when Bread I brake
In pure love of thee."

"Yea, Lord, I will serve them by Thy grace,
Love Thee, seek Thee in them, wait and pray;
Yet would I love Thee, Lord, face to face,
Heart to heart, one day."

"Let to-day fulfil its daily task;
Fill thy heart and hand to them and Me:
To-morrow thou shalt ask, and shalt not ask
Half I keep for thee."

✠

To whom does a man give himself? To one whom he loves as himself. Such is the standard of self-gift, and Christ—Very Man no less than Very God—will not fall short of it.

O Lord, I cannot plead my love of Thee;
I plead Thy love of me;—
The shallow conduit hails the unfathomed sea.

✠

"*He that loved us*" thereby wins our love; and forthwith by virtue of love faith lives, hope is justified, obedience is enfranchised.

Because Thy love hath sought me,
All mine is Thine and Thine is mine.
Because Thy blood hath bought me,
I will not be mine own, but Thine.

"O Lord, I cannot plead my love of Thee."—*Page* 12.

I lift my heart to Thy heart—
  Thy heart, sole resting-place for mine:
Shall Thy heart crave for my heart,
  And shall not mine crave back for Thine?

✠

Faith discerns, embraces. Hope anticipates, aspires. Fear curbs, spurs. Love curbs, spurs, anticipates, aspires, embraces, cleaves unto, unites. Love is the panoply of graces.

Everything that is born must die;
  Everything that can sigh may sing;
Rocks in equal balance low or high
  Everything.

Honey-comb is weighed against a sting;
  Hope and Fear take turns to touch the
    sky;
Height and depth respond alternating.

O my soul spread wings of love to fly,
  Wings of dove that soar on homebound
    wing;
Love trusts Love till Love shall justify
  Everything.

"*First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*"—Lord Jesus, since I can never deliver my brother, grant me at least never to wrong him. Enable us by love to serve one another, and to offer ourselves unto Thee.

Me and my gift, kind Lord, behold;
Be not extreme to test or sift;
Thy love can turn to fire and gold
Me and my gift.

If much were mine, then manifold
Should be the offering of my thrift;
I am but poor, yet love makes bold
Me and my gift.

✠

God accepts dues as gifts. Man receives gifts as dues.

✠

"*They that know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee.*"

Lord God of Hosts, most Holy and most High,
What made Thee tell Thy Name of Love to me?

What made Thee live our life ? what made
Thee die ?
" My love of thee."

O Lord, what is that best thing in the sky
Which makes heaven heaven as Thou
hast promised me ?—
Yea, makes it Christ to live, and gain to
die ?
" My love of thee."

We know not a millionth part of what Christ is to us, but perhaps we even less know what we are to Him.

✠

If Thou desire our love, who shall give us love wherewith to love Thee except Thou who art Love give it to us ? Helpless we are, and our helplessness appeals to Thee.

Lord, give me love that I may love Thee
much,
Yea, give me love that I may love Thee
more,
And all for love may worship and adore,
And touch Thee with love's consecrated
touch.

I halt to-day, be love my cheerful crutch,
My feet to plod—some day my wings to soar.

✠

"*He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*"

Our heaven must be within ourselves,
Our home and heaven the work of faith,
All through this race of life which shelves
Downward to death.

So faith shall build the boundary wall,
And hope shall plant the secret bower,
That both may show magnifical
With gem and flower.

While over all a dome must spread,
And love shall be that dome above;
And deep foundations must be laid,
And these are love.

✠

So long as eyes could see, and ears hear, and hands handle the Word of Life, Christ abode for the most part unseen, unheard, untouched; but when a cloud received Him out of sight, then it became possible

"When a cloud received Him out of sight."—*Page* 16.

for all mankind at all times and in all places to behold Him with the eye of faith, listen to Him with the ear of hope, hold Him fast and not let Him go with the hands of adoring love.

Lord God, we see not, yet we know,
By love we dwell with patience and desire,
And loving so and so desiring pray:
Thy will be done in earth as heaven to-day,
As yesterday it was, to-morrow so—
Love offering love on love's self-feeding fire.

Lord, give us, I beseech Thee, grace to love Thee whom now we see not, and for Thy sake to love all whom we see; and grant us one day to inherit the blessing of those who, not having seen, yet have believed and loved.

✠

My heart is yearning;
Behold my yearning heart,
And stoop low to satisfy
Its lonely, beseeching cry,
For Thou its fulness art.

Lord God Almighty, suffer us not to withdraw from the embrace of Thy love. Thy love our consolation, Thy love our strong safeguard, we greatly need. For oftentimes our contrarieties chill human love, leaving us lonely as sparrow on house-top, owl in desert, pelican in wilderness. Lord of patience and consolation, deign to fetch us back out of the loneliness of our perversity into meek charity with all.

✠

"*Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.*"—Good it is to hate what Christ hateth, better still to love what He loveth, and what He is. . . . If hatred be our strongest feature of Christ-likeness, well may we betake ourselves to dust and ashes, to repentance and first works; for, without love, to hate even the same object is to hate it out of a far different heart.

Extremes meet; therefore let us work round to hatred by way of love. A long round perhaps, but an absolutely safe one. Were we even to die in mid-pilgrimage, we might hope to be accepted according to

that we had, if not according to that we had not.

Love can make us like Saint Peter,
  Love can make us like Saint Paul,
Love can make us like the blessed
  Bosom friend of all—
Great Saint John—though we be small.

Love which clings and trusts and worships,
  Love which rises from a fall,
Love which, teaching glad obedience,
  Labors most of all—
Love makes great the great and small.

Dare we, then, aspire to become like Saint John? Wherefore not, when we are bidden and invited to become like Christ?

✠

"*My heart is sore pained within me; and the terrors of death have fallen upon me.*"

Our hands are slackened and our strength
    has failed; . . .
Faith faints, Hope faints, even Love him-
    self has paled.
Nay!—Love lifts up a face like any rose

Flushing and sweet above a thorny stem,
Softly protesting that the way he knows,
And as for Faith and Hope will carry them
Safe to the gate of New Jerusalem,
Where light shines full and where the palm-tree blows.

✠

Love understands the mystery, whereof
We can but spell a surface history:
Love knows, remembers; let us trust in Love:
Love understands the mystery.

Love weighs the event, the long pre-history,
Measures the depth beneath, the height above,
The mystery with the ante-mystery.

To love and to be grieved befits a dove
Silently telling her bead history:
Trust all to Love, be patient and approve:
Love understands the mystery.

THE LIGHT OF FAITH

Her eyes were like some fire-enshrining gem,
Were stately like the stars, and yet were tender;
Her figure charmed me like a windy stem
Quivering and drooped and slender.

. . . . . .

Then marked I how a chain sustained her form,
A chain of living links not made nor riven;
It stretched sheer up through lightning, wind, and storm,
And anchored fast in heaven.

Intelligence is required of some; faith is required of all.

Is it disappointing to be restricted to faith? Faith, the grace, is a higher endowment than intelligence, the gift.

Who knows? God knows: and what He knows
Is well and best:
The darkness hideth not from Him, but glows
Clear as the morning or the evening rose
Of east or west.

Wherefore man's strength is to sit still—
Not wasting care
To antedate to-morrow's good or ill,
Yet watching meekly, watching with good will,
Watching to prayer.

Some rising or some setting ray
From east or west
If not to-day, why then another day—

Will light each dove upon her homeward
way
Safe to her nest.

✠

"*I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven.*"—If we will not look, we should not behold even though a door were opened in heaven for our enlightenment. . . . Let us not, until we have looked, despair of seeing somewhat. Having looked, we shall not despair.

Beyond the darkness, light; beyond the
scathe,
Healing; beyond the cross a palm-branch
tree;
Beyond death, life;—on evidence of faith
I lift mine eyes to see.

Whether natural or spiritual, the eyes that look are the eyes likely to see.

Two things I ask of Thee;
Deny not me!—
Eyesight and light
Thy blessed face to see.

Though his eyes be sealed against sun and moon, he is not blind who sees Christ.

The longest and keenest trials of time become comparatively petty, trivial, inconsiderable, when strong faith weighs and measures them.

Tumult and trouble, trouble and toil,
Yet peace withal in a painful heart;
Never a grudge and never a broil,
And ever the better part!

✠

"*Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.*"— If I would explain to my own comprehension how this can be, I should not succeed. . . . The existence of evil silences me. I cannot understand; I can only trust.

Nevertheless for practical purposes all is clear as the day. All things are and were created for the Divine good pleasure. Therefore I, for one, am capable of pleasing God, and it becomes me strenuously and gladly to do so. Because He hath no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, it becomes me to turn myself and live. I am bound myself to please God in the

manner He appoints. I am not bound to account for His will and pleasure at large.

Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?
Yea, Lord, although Thou say me nay.
Shall not His will be life and light ?
Yea, Lord, although Thou slay.

✠

The shortest day of the year, the day which, having least light, has light sufficient, harmonizes with the apostle [Saint Thomas] whose faith indeed ran short, yet by Christ's help lasted out.

Light at its lowest ebb can increase, so long as its source is the sun, for the sun faileth not.

Faith at its dimmest spark can rekindle, so long as it keeps Christ in view, for much more than the natural sun, that Sun of Righteousness faileth not.

✠

"*And He went forth conquering and to conquer.*"—Experience attests "conquering"; faith protests "and to conquer."

Experience bears noble witness; but faith, yet more noble, meets God as it were halfway and becomes His herald.

Experience follows and gives thanks; faith precedes and offers praise. Experience keeps pace with time; Faith, outstripping time, forestalls eternity. Faith is the Elias of virtues, girt up and running before her advancing King. Faith is the Saint John Baptist of graces, her joy is fulfilled without sight.

✠

"*Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.*"—Perhaps for us the main point of that text roots itself in the word *will.* None predicates of him *he can* or *he ought:* he alone says, and says only, *I will.* He says not, I do; for far from him be lying lips and a deceitful tongue. He says, *I will:* and the man who has the will to say, *I will*, has latent within him the power to bring to pass by God's assisting grace the purpose of that good will. His dew is as the dew of herbs, his earth has cast out her dead.

Although to-day He prunes my twigs with pain,
Yet doth His blood nourish my heart and root;
To-morrow I shall put forth buds again,
And clothe myself with fruit.

✠

Faith, though feeling companionless in a faithless generation, because unwitting of God's seven thousand like-minded ones, must endure.

Yet still the light of righteousness beams pure,
Beams to me from the world of far-off day,—
Lord, who hast called them happy that endure,
Lord, make me such as they!

✠

"Faith, whose is the promise to remove mountains, will not fear though the earth be removed and the mountains cast into the midst of the sea." Faith will not fear. Hope will look up and lift the head. If now they abide, then also may they abide;

yet neither now nor then, except in company with Love. Faith surmounts fear. Hope overbalances fear. Love casts out fear.

Faith and Hope look beyond the "little moment, until the indignation be overpast," and contemplate the final consummation.

Light above light, and bliss beyond bliss,
Whom words cannot utter, lo, Who is this?
As a King with many crowns He stands,
And our names are graven on His hands;
As a Priest, with God-uplifted eyes,
He offers for us His Sacrifice;
As the Lamb of God for sinners slain,
That we too may live He lives again;
As our Champion behold Him stand,
Strong to save us, at God's right hand.

✠

Unison is faultless, harmony is perfect. On earth the possibility of harmony entails the corresponding possibility of discord. Yet even on earth, whoever chooses and has faith can keep himself in time and tune, which will be an apt prelude for keeping time and tune in heaven.

Tune me, O Lord, into one harmony
With Thee, one full, responsive, vibrant chord;
Unto Thy praise, all love and melody,
Tune me, O Lord.

✠

"*Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*"

Whatso it be, howso it be, Amen.
Blessed it is, believing, not to see:
Now, God knows all that is, and we shall, then,
Whatso it be.

THE LIGHT OF HOPE

O PASSING Angel, speed me with a song,
A melody of heaven to reach my heart,
And rouse me to the race and make me
strong!

To stint patience stints hope at one remove. Patience is irksome, experience tedious; but then without hope, which is their result, life were a living death.

Experience bows a sweet, contented face,
  Still setting to her seal that God is true:
  Beneath the sun, she knows, is nothing new,
All things that go return with measured pace,—
Winds, rivers, man's still recommencing race;—
  While Hope beyond earth's circle strains her view,
  Past sun and moon and rain, and rainbow too,
Enamored of unseen, eternal grace.
Experience saith: "My God doth all things well,"
  And for the morrow taketh little care,
  Such peace and patience garrison her soul;

While Hope, who never yet hath
touched the goal,
With arms flung forth and backward
floating hair,
Touches, embraces, hugs the invisible.

✠

Nothing but the love of God can justify an indomitable hope.

As froth on the face of the deep,
As foam on the crest of the sea,
As dreams at the waking of sleep,
As gourd of a day and a night,
As harvest that no man shall reap,
As vintage that never shall be,
Is hope if it cling not aright
O my God, unto Thee.

✠

. . . Hope, like the rainbow, can be evoked out of clouds and gloom to supply a bridge between earth and heaven, but can only be evoked by the sun-like love of God.

Who looks on Thee looks full on his desire;
Who looks on Thee looks full on Very Love;

"Hope, . . . with arms flung forth and backward floating hair."
—*Page* 34.

Looking he answers well, "What lack
I yet?"
His heat and cold wait not on earthly fire,
His wealth is not on earth to lose or
get,—
Earth reels, but he has stored his store
above.

✠

"*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*"

. . . Lord God, in whom our trust
and peace,
Our love and our desire grow bright with
hope,
Lift us above this transitory scope
Of earth, these pleasures that begin and
cease,
This moon which wanes, these seasons
which decrease:
We turn to Thee, as on an eastern slope
Wheat feels the dawn beneath night's
lingering scope,
Bending and stretching sunward ere it sees.

If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

That which I chose, I choose;
  That which I willed, I will;
That which I once refused, I still refuse,—
  O hope deferred, be still!

That which I chose and choose
  And will is Jesu's will:
He hath not lost his life who seemed to lose,—
  O hope deferred, hope still.

✠

Earth is a race-course, not a goal. Instead of mansions she pitches tents. Her nearest approach to a permanent abode is the grave.

Hail, garden of confident hope!
  Where sweet seeds are quickening in darkness and cold:
    For how sweet and how young will they be
  When they pierce through the mould.
Balm, woodbine, and heliotrope,

There watch and there wait out of sight
for their Sun;
While the Sun which they see not doth see
Each and all one by one.

✠

"*Behold, I make all things new.*"—Yet to each of us be Thou the same, and be each soul to Thee the same.

New creatures; the Creator still the same
For ever and for ever; therefore we
Win hope from God's unsearchable decree,
And glorify His still unchanging Name.
We too are still the same; and still our claim,
Our trust, our stay, is Jesus, none but He.

✠

What is good must often be given up in favor of something better. Who would perpetuate blossom and forego fruit?

Bury Hope out of sight,
No book for it and no bell;

It never could bear the light
  Even while growing and well;
Think now if it could bear
The light on its face of care,
And grey scattered hair. . . .

No grave for Hope in the earth,
  But deep in that silent soul
Which rang no bell for its birth,
  And rings no funeral toll.
Cover its once bright head;
Nor odours nor tears be shed:
It lived once, it is dead. . . .

Shall many wail it? Not so.
  Shall one bewail it? Not one.
Thus it hath been from long ago,
  Thus it shall be 'neath the sun.
O fleet sun, make haste to flee!
O rivers, fill up the sea!
O Death, set the dying free!

The sun nor loiters nor speeds;
  The rivers run as they ran,
Through clouds or through windy reeds
  All run as when all began.
Only Death turns at our cries;—

Lo, the Hope we buried with sighs
Alive in Death's eyes!

✠

We dwell upon terrors of judgment, let us also dwell upon its hopes. It will have a great sound of a trumpet, and the trumpet-blast is music. It will be with clouds, and God Almighty has set His bow in the cloud. It will bring to sight angels. It will bring back saints, the particular saints we, having loved and lost, long for.

Yet, after all, these are but minor hopes. It will bring back Christ, our supreme Hope, or else our supreme Fear. But the hope is in Him, the fear is in ourselves.

From ourselves and from our fear, Good Lord, deliver us.

✠

Hope is the counterpoise of fear
While night enthrals us here.

Fear hath a startled eye that holds a tear:
Hope hath an upward glance, for dawn
draws near
With sunshine and with cheer.
Fear, gazing earthwards, spies a bier;

And sets herself to rear
A lamentable tomb where leaves drop
sere . . .
Hope chants a funeral hymn so sweet and
clear
He seems true chanticleer
Of resurrection and of all things dear
In the oncoming, endless year.

Fear ballasts hope, hope buoys up fear—
And both befit us here.

✠

"*It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.*"

A life of hope deferred too often is
A life of wasted opportunities, . . .
Yet hope is but the flower and not the root:
And hope is still the flower and not the
fruit :—
Arise and sow and weed, a day shall come
When also thou shalt keep thy Harvest
Home.

✠

"*Ye shall receive a crown of glory.*"—
We may hope to see in celestial crowns

every possible adornment of all possible crowns—gracefulness of leaves, loveliness of flowers, endearment (if I may call it so) of tendrils, permanence of gold, lustre and tint of jewels. Meanwhile, because our dear Lord — flower of humankind and comparable with fine gold (although fine gold sufficeth not to compare with Him— was contented on earth to be crowned with a crown of thorns, let us be patient, contented, thankful, to wait on in hopes of a crown of glory.

Lord, grant us grace to rest upon Thy Word,
To rest in hope until we see Thy face;
To rest through toil untroubled and unstirred,
Lord, grant us grace.

Ah, songs which flesh and blood have never heard,
And cannot hear, songs of the silent place
Where rest remains! Lord, slake our hope deferred,
Lord, grant us grace.

My God, Who hast revealed to us Hope as a most opportune grace, endow us with it as our own anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast. Keep us by holy hope from presumption as it were a waterspout, and from despair as it were a quicksand, that we wreck not ourselves by the one or in the other!

THE LIGHT OF PATIENCE

PATIENCE wears no crown, but acts as a crown to her fellow virtues.

✠

"Fill high and deep!"—"But how?
The goblets all are broken."—
"Nay, then, have patience now;
For this is but a token
We soon shall have no need
Of such to cheer us;
The palm-branches decreed
And crowns to be our meed
Are very near us."

Holy Scripture bids us run with patience the race that is set before us. One might have anticipated that energy or zeal would be the word; but no, it is patience. Our race is for life or death, yet must it be run peacefully.

Patience is its own reward. It preoccupies the soul with a sort of satisfaction which suppresses insatiable craving, vain endeavour, rebellious desire. It keeps the will steadfast, the mind disengaged, the heart quiet.

Patience, having little or nothing, yet possesses all things; for through faith and patience the elect inherit the promises. . . . Draw freely, generously, hopefully, upon patience; for the more we draw upon it, so much is the strain upon it lessened.

O Lord, fulfill Thy will,
Be the days few or many, good or ill;

Prolong them, to suffice
For offering up ourselves Thy sacrifice;
Shorten them if Thou wilt,
To make in righteousness an end of guilt.
Yea, they will not be long
To souls who learn to sing a patient song;
Yea, short they will not be
To souls on tiptoe to flee home to Thee.
O Lord, fulfil Thy will;
Make Thy will ours, and keep us patient still,
Be the days few or many, good or ill.

✠

Patience is a grace, but is it also a privilege?

Yes, surely. The patient soul, lord of itself, sits imperturbable amid the jars of life, and serene under its frets. "*Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*" Hence we may infer that where patience is perfect, nought else will remain imperfect.

Grant us, O Lord, that patience and that faith—
Faith's patience imperturbable in Thee,

Hope's patience till the long-drawn
shadows flee,
Love's patience unresentful of all scathe.
Verily we need patience breath by breath,—
Patience while Faith holds up her glass
to see,
While Hope toils yoked in Fear's co-
partnery,
And Love goes softly on the way to death.
How gracious and how perfecting a grace
Must patience be on which those others
wait!—
Faith with suspended rapture in her face,
Hope firm and careful, hand in hand
with Fear,
Love—ah, good Love, who would not
antedate
God's will, but saith: Good is it to be
here.

✠

Patience goes with sorrow, not with joy. And by a natural instinct sorrow ranges itself with darkness, not with light. But eyes that have been supernaturalized recognize, not literally only but likewise in a figure, how darkness reveals more

luminaries than does the day;—to the day appertains a single sun, to the night innumerable, incalculable, by man's perception inexhaustible stars. This is one of nature's revelations, attested by experience. God grant us to receive the parallel revelation of grace: then whatever befalls us will by His blessing work in us patience, and our patience will work in us experience, and our experience hope.

Moreover, we must not so dwell on our sore need of patience as to overlook faith, or still worse to overlook love.

Patience must dwell with Love, for Love and Sorrow
Have pitched their tent together here;
Love all alone will build a house to-morrow,
And Sorrow not be near.

To-day for Love's sake hope, still hope in Sorrow,
Rest in her shade and hold her dear;
To-day she nurses thee; and lo! to-morrow
Love only will be near.

"Did those three alone see the star?"—*Page* 145.

"*Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee.*"—Let the "it" in question be my allotment, my field, my garden. . . . Thorns should stir up my faith to look up to Him whom all men pierced. Thistles should teach me to exercise patience; it will tax patience to weed out what can be extirpated, it will strain patience to put up with the remainder.

And lo! the lot is fallen unto me in a fair ground; faith is cheaply bought by many a thorn-wound, and patience by many a thistle-prick.

Nerve us with patience, Lord, to toil or rest,
Toiling at rest on our allotted level,
Unsnared, unscarred by world or flesh or devil,
Fulfilling the good will of Thy behest;
Not careful here to hoard, not here to revel,
But waiting for our pleasure and our zest
Beyond the fading splendor of the west,
Beyond this death-struck life and death-lier evil.

It needs profound patience, patience born of love, and sustained by love, to achieve final perseverance.

It seems an easy thing,
Mayhap, one day to sing,
Yet the next day
We cannot sing nor say.

Keep silence with good heart
While silence fits our part;
Another day
We shall both sing and say.

Keep silence, counting time
To strike in at the time:
Prepare to sound,
Our part is coming round!

Cannot we sing or say ?
In silence let us pray,
And meditate
Our love-song while we wait.

Obedience is the fruit of faith; patience, the bloom on the fruit.

"*There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.*"

Sweetness of rest when Thou sheddest rest,
Sweetness of patience till then,—
Only the will of God is best
For all the millions of men;
For all the millions on earth to-day,
On earth and under the earth,
Waiting for earth to vanish away,
Waiting to come to the birth.

The "all-glorious within" can afford to wait patiently for clothing of "wrought gold."

By grace we may dwell loftily below while we await the call to go up higher.

✠

What is most irritating teaches patience, if we will be taught.

Therefore in patience I possess my soul,
Yea, therefore as a flint I set my face,
To pluck down, to build up again the whole,—
But in a distant place.

These thorns are sharp, yet I can tread on
them;
This cup is loathsome, yet He makes it
sweet;
My face is steadfast towards Jerusalem,
My heart remembers it. . . .

Although to-day I walk in tedious ways,
To-day His staff is turned into a rod,
Yet will I wait for Him the appointed days
And stay upon my God.

✠

Patience it is that worketh experience: no wonder that a vast amount of human experience is limited!

✠

"*Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*"—Hold fast for one thing the word of Christ's patience. To let go patience would entail forfeit of both praise and promise.

That which as yet "thou hast" is not thy crown, but on it depends thy crown.

✠

Every course of life, at any level, affords scope for patience; let us not despond as

if destined to stick fast in patience and there come to an end; the fault is mine if my patience shoot not up into experience, or if my experience bud and blossom not into hope.

THE LIGHT OF HUMILITY

"*Before honor is humility.*"

WHERE Humility lays deep the low-lying foundation, the superincumbent structure can safely and permanently tower aloft unto heaven.

Graces are the safest gifts to rejoice in: yet even as to graces joy has a dangerous side. It might seem safe for the humble to rejoice in humility; but then, the humble soul, discerning defect where others observe excellence, is of all men slow to exult over his own gifts.

It is safer to rejoice in the Giver than the gift.

Give me the lowest place; not that I dare
  Ask for that lowest place, but Thou hast
    died
That I might live and share
  Thy glory by Thy side.

Give me the lowest place ; or if for me
  That lowest place too high, make one
    more low,
Where I may sit and see
  My God, and love Thee so.

✠

How safe it is for me to be set low on a lowly level and one bounded by a misty ho-

rizon, so that thence I can explore neither depth nor distance to any great extent!

As violets so be I recluse and sweet,
  Cheerful as daisies unaccounted rare,
Still sunward gazing from a lowly seat,
  Still sweetening wintry air.

While half-awakened Spring lags incomplete,
  While lofty forest-trees tower bleak and bare,
Daisies and violets own remotest heat,
  And bloom and make them fair.

✠

To sit on thrones is an exaltation, to wear crowns a dignity. To fall prostrate in worship is a loftier exaltation, to cast down tributary crowns an enhanced dignity. Blessed it is to receive, still more blessed to give.

Once I thought to sit so high
In the palace of the sky!
Now I thank God for His grace
If I may fill the lowest place.

Once I thought to scale so soon
Heights above the changing moon;

Now I thank God for delay,
To-day—it yet is called to-day.

✠

Equality tends to humble pride: *proud* humility may plant itself in the lowest place; only *humble* humility can revel and rejoice in sitting altogether undistinguished among peers.

✠

Content to come, content to go,
Content to wrestle or to race,
Content to know or not to know,
Each in his place;

Lord, grant us grace to love Thee so,
That glad of heart and glad of face,
At last we may sit high or low,
Each in his place,

Where pleasures flow as rivers flow,
And loss has left no barren trace,
And all that are, are perfect so,
Each in his place.

"*Many that are first shall be last.*"—For the present, meanwhile, every one occupies his own level, and on that particular level occurs his personal temptation. It is

easier, often, to stoop low than to stoop slightly: in the former case all see and acknowledge the condescension; in the latter many may not admit that there is any condescension at all.

"*Mind not high things.*"—Since at the day of final reckoning insignificance will not screen the small, or importance exempt the great, or gold ransom the rich, or penury excuse the poor, or liberty furnish an escape to the free, or chains exonerate the bond,—since all these will clearly count as nothing then, not as chaff on the wind, not as dust in the balance,—from *now* appraising mole-hills as mountains, Good Lord, deliver us!

Lord, I am feeble and of mean account,
Thou who dost condescend as well as mount,
Stoop Thou Thyself to me,
And grant me grace to hear and grace to see.

Lord, if Thou grant me grace to hear and see
Thy very Self who stoopest thus to me,

I make but slight account
Of aught beside whereby to sink or mount.

✠

"*I am the least in my father's house.*"

The least, if so I am,
  If so, less than the least,—
May I reach heaven to glorify the Lamb,
  And sit down at the feast.

I fear, and I am small,
  Whence I am of good cheer;
For I who hear Thee call, have heard Thee call
  To Thee the small who fear.

✠

What is most overbearing teaches humility, if we will learn.

Not to be first: how hard to learn
  That lifelong lesson of the past;
Line graven on line and stroke on stroke,
  But, thank God, learned at last!

So now in patience I possess
  My soul year after tedious year,

Content to take the lowest place—
The place assigned me here.

Yet sometimes, when I feel my strength
Most weak, and life most burdensome,
I lift mine eyes up to the hills
From whence my help shall come:

Yea, sometimes still I lift my heart
To the archangelic trumpet-burst,
When all deep secrets shall be shown,
And many last be first.

✠

Lord, bring me low:
For Thou wert lowly in Thy blessed heart:
Lord, keep me so.

Grant us grace to ascend to heaven by that way of humility whereby Thou descendedst.

To descend penitently into the valley of humiliation, to descend obediently and with good courage into the valley of the shadow of death, is to ascend the hill of the Lord. To excavate the foundation forwards the erection of the temple.

"Thus pondering, I glanced downward on the grass."—*Page* 148.

THE LIGHT OF OBEDIENCE

OBEDIENCE is the key of knowledge.

Holy fear incites faith to humility, hope to prudence, love to obedience. Faith without humility presumes, hope without prudence misleads, love without obedience —there is no genuine love without obedience !

Fear hath least grace, but great expediency;
Faith and humility show grave and strong;
Prudence and hope mount equally;
Obedience marches marshalling their throng,—
Goes first, goes last, to left hand or to right;
And all the six uplift a pilgrim's song:
By day they rest not, nor they rest by night,
While Love within them, with them, over them,
Weans them and woos them from the dark to light.

Words are chaff; obedience is grain. I must beware of polished corners which form no part of the sole Temple, of fair-seeming superstructures which are not founded upon the one only Rock; of spiritualism which is not spirituality; of indifferentism to truth simulating charity; of charity degraded to an investment.

✠

It is well to fear and obey; it is ill to fear instead of obeying.

✠

A further beatitude comforts us in those Divine words of promise: "*If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.*" For by implication they take account of doubt and ignorance as being no bar to obedience, and therefore as being no irremovable bar to knowledge.

Obedience they enjoin upon us at once; all else may stand over.

Now many have said, and for the time being have said honestly, "I do not know"; or even, "I cannot believe."

But who ever said honestly, "I cannot obey"?

Obey to the limit of knowledge, and in all probability obedience will extend knowledge.

✠

"*In the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.*" — Obstinate disobedience sifted, meted, weighed, is the unerring measure of that vengeance which God measures to it.

Utmost obedience is no measure of that blessing which God measures to it.

✠

Obedience is the key of knowledge. That was a master-stroke of guile by which the serpent cajoled Eve into believing disobedience to be the key of knowledge. For that which disobedience teaches us is false, either in its essence or in its aspect as regards ourselves.

Wherefore since disobedience unlocks not truth, whatsoever it unlocks is thereby certified as falsity.

For each key fits its own lock and no other.

✠

When amid the luminous obscurity of prophecy insight fails, obedience remains.

Though knowledge fail, and sight be dim,
And way and end not understood,
Though life be masked with doubt's gray film,
Obedience is good.

We might all sit down contented and complacent in ignorance, if only ignorant of our ignorance. If the Tree of Knowledge had been planted anywhere except in Eden, Eve might contentedly have obeyed through ignorance; but what was demanded of her was to obey of set purpose. What was demanded of her is what still is demanded of us.

THE LIGHT OF WISDOM

To be in one mind with God is universal knowledge in embryo.

"*Be not wise in your own conceits.*"—
Ignorance with humility can serve and please God: knowledge without humility cannot. Thus humble ignorance secures the essentials of wisdom, whilst unhumble knowledge is folly.

Would humble knowledge not be better than humble ignorance?

Yes, if granted; no, if denied.

Lord Jesus Christ, our Wisdom and our Rest,
Who wisely dost reveal and wisely hide,
Grant us such grace in wisdom to abide
According to Thy will whose will is best:
Contented with Thine uttermost behest,
Too sweet for envy and too high for pride,
All simple-souled, dove-hearted, and dove-eyed,
Soft-voiced, and satisfied in humble nest.

The subtlest and profoundest of men cannot explain mysteries; the simplest person can appropriate and exult in them. A revealed, unexplained mystery is my Tree of Knowledge, accessible whilst forbidden,—a theme for prayer, not a bait for curiosity. Ignorance by virtue of good will takes rank as a part of obedience.

Childlike souls know much that they understand not; and what is required of them is not to understand but to know.

✠

Wisdom and love and rest—each holy soul
Hath these to-day while day is only night;
What shall souls have when morning brings to light
Love, wisdom, rest, God's treasure stored above?
Palm shall they have and harp and aureole,
Wisdom, rest, love—and lo, the whole is love!

✠

Whether any given knowledge will prove profitable or unprofitable is a question by itself, independent of any debate as to its

authenticity. . . . Knowledge and wisdom are quite distinct, though not necessarily sundered. Again: in the same sense that some see and yet see not, hear and yet hear not, so some may be said to know without knowing. . . . Unassimilated truth avails nothing.

✠

"*And they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*"—These celestial impersonations of knowledge appear to have only one object of contemplation — God Almighty. Thus have they attained to all that they do know. That same school of cherubim is open to men, —is open to me.

Love loveth Thee, and Wisdom loveth Thee;
The love that loveth Thee sits satisfied:
Wisdom that loveth Thee grows million-eyed,
Learning what was, and is, and is to be.
Wisdom and love are glad of all they see;
Their heart is deep, their hope is not denied;

They rock at rest on time's unresting
tide,
And wait to rest through long eternity.

✠

Because Christ, being Wisdom, is the Word, and, being the Truth, is the Word, therefore Christians must speak words of wisdom and truth, or else must keep silence. Gifts become a curse and no blessing when divorced from graces. Imagine a gift of tongues without either wisdom or truth!

Lord, who knowest my foolishness, give me wisdom and truth in my heart, that out of the abundance of my heart my mouth may speak worthily.

Grant us such grace that we may work
Thy will,
And speak Thy words and walk before
Thy face,
Profound and calm like waters deep and
still;
Grant us such grace.

Lord, pardon and amend us whenever we doubt, misunderstand, misstate. Suffer

"One sorrow more."—*Page* 160.

us not to go astray. Suffer us not to mislead each other. Make us, I beseech Thee, so one with Thyself, that cleaving unto Thee we may accept all truth though we cannot express it, and be replenished with wisdom however scant our knowledge, and speak gracious words, or keep gracious silence in our daily walk with Thee and with one another. Amen.

✠

Neither knowledge nor ignorance is of first importance to Bible students: grace is our paramount need,—Divine grace rather than any human gift. Acquirements and deficiencies sink to one dead level when lacking grace.

The Bible is open to all,—not so the Book of Life. The Bible, then, is what man needs at present, however curiosity may hanker after the other. Profit now by the Bible, and hereafter the Book of Life will not be closed to thee. The Bible is well worth prolonged study, and the Book of Life of prolonged expectation. And already in the Bible man holds the key to the Book of Life.

Ignorance is often a safeguard and a privilege. It is better to avoid doubts than to reject them. To study a difficulty is often to incur one.

I must beware lest my own curiosity be morbid, perverse, unbridled. To-day the monstrous may be simply abnormal; to-morrow it may be "the mystery of iniquity."

If ignorance breed humility, it will not debar from wisdom. If ignorance betake itself to prayer, it will lay hold on grace.

From knowledge that is foolishness, Good Lord, deliver us.

From ignorance that is blindness, Good Lord, deliver us.

✠

Evil knowledge need not harm us whilst it is involuntary, but to court it without justifying cause is to court death, as Eve courted death by by-path of knowledge. . . . It becomes a matter of conscience what poems and novels to read.

What! has sin never a lofty, heroic side?

Never the sin, though sometimes the sinner. The sinner may a while exhibit

traces of that lofty heroism which nature richly bestows and grace can transfigure to sanctity; but such birthright nobility when divorced from God can no more endure than a severed vine-branch can maintain its luxuriance.

As to gaze down a precipice seems to fascinate the spectator towards a shattering fall, so is it spiritually dangerous to gaze on excessive wickedness, lest its immeasurable scale should fascinate us as if it were colossal without being monstrous.

To gaze at sin for any purpose except learning to avoid it, has a dangerous side. It was the serpent fascinated Eve when they met face to face, not Eve the serpent.

It is wiser to remain ignorant than to learn evil. Evil knowledge acquired in one evil moment of curiosity may harass and haunt us to the end of our time.

And how after the end of our time?

✠

Ah, Lord, Lord, if my heart were right
with Thine,
As Thine with mine, then should I rest
resigned,

Awaiting knowledge with a quiet mind
Because of heavenly wisdom's anodyne.
Then would Thy love be more to me
than wine,
Then should I seek, being sure at length
to find.

✠

"*The foolish said unto the wise . . .*
Our lamps are gone out."

From lamps going out, gone out; from any light that shineth not to the glory of the Heavenly Father, . . .

From earthly gain which is heavenly loss,
Deliver us, deliver all men, good Lord.

THE LIGHT OF ENCOURAGEMENT

EVERYTHING may have a bright side; everything may be a vehicle or a channel of good, or an imperfect form of good, or good excessive,—except sin. Thus pain, suffering, privation, death, may be good producers.

"*A merry heart is a continual feast*":
Then take we life and all things in good part;
To fast grows festive while we keep at least
A merry heart.

Well pleased with nature and well pleased with art,
A merry heart makes cheer for man and beast,
And fancies music in a creaking cart.

Some day, a restful heart whose toils have ceased,
A heavenly heart gone home from earthly mart:—
To-day, blow wind from west or east,
A merry heart.

✠

"*The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it.*"—Whilst man needs sun and moon, he has them; so long

as he needs them he will have them. This is a sample of the providential bounty lavished upon him without stint or failure, —an antidote for his cares and fears, a reassurance of his hope. "*Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him.*"

✠

A lantern may be so placed as to hide its light. But alas! such withholding amounts not to neutrality, but to evil influence; the lantern which does not cast light casts shadow.

On the other hand and for our encouragement, good influence may be at work where the result may not be traceable on earth or in time, but only in heaven and throughout eternity. I have read of a date-palm which lived a long time green but barren. One year without apparent cause it bore fruit. Wherefore? Because out of sight a kindred palm had come to shed its fructifying pollen, and this the wind bore to impregnate the barren tree.

✠

Is it worth while to live,
Rejoice and grieve,

Hope, fear, and die?
Man with man, truth with lie?

Is it worth while to live?—
Be of good cheer;
Love casts out fear:
Rise up, achieve.

✠

"*Seek, and ye shall find.*"—The merchantman who found the pearl of great price was one who sought for goodly pearls; not one who never sought at all.

✠

"*Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.*"

I, being weak and timid, would fain serve God without great terrors or tortures; but I comprehend that among His most noble and ardent lovers some are so rapt out of themselves in Jesus Christ that terrors appal them not, nor tortures abate their spirit. God is good in their height and in my lowness, accepting the one and not having rejected the other.

As flames that consume the mountains, as winds that coerce the sea,
Thy men of renown show forth Thy might in the clutch of death;
Down they go into silence, yet the trump of the Jubilee
Swells not Thy praise as swells it the breathless pause of their breath.

What is the flame of their fire, if so I may catch the flame?
What the strength of their strength, if also I may wax strong?
The flaming fire of their strength is the love of Jesu's Name,
In whom their death is life, their silence utters a song.

✠

"*The Spirit and the Bride say, Come.*"—This Call which cries "Come," and addresses "whosoever will," is a call to refreshment, solace, overflowing plenty, boundless, endless supply, sustenance of immortality. A call without stint, without bar.

Yet some Christians traverse the world

like walking funerals rather than like wedding-guests!

✠

"Thou hast a little strength."

"Why not much strength?"—"God knoweth."

"Were it not better to have more?"—"Not while God assigns no more."

"With much, much could be done."—"With little, all can be done."

"Give much, and I will glorify the Giver."—"Given much while disdaining little, and thou wouldst glorify thyself or Satan."

"O wretched man that I am!"—"Pray God to mend thee, and He will mend all else for thee."

"Yet fain would I, like an angel, excel in strength."—"Safer for thee, like St. Paul, in weakness to be strong."

✠

In proportion to man's peril is God's succor.

✠

"The fields are white to harvest, look and see,

Are white abundantly;
The full-orbed harvest moon shines clear,
Be of good cheer.''

'' Ah, woe is me!
I have no heart for harvest time,
Grown sick with hope deferred from chime
to chime.''

'' But Christ can give thee heart who
loveth thee,
Can set thee in the eternal ecstasy
Of His great jubilee. . .
Who knocketh at His door
He welcomes evermore.
Kneel down before
That open door
(The time is short), and smite
Thy breast, and pray with all thy might.''

'' What shall I say ? ''

'' Nay, pray.
Though one but say ' Thy will be done,'
He hath not lost his day
At set of sun.''

What real connection is there between stars and night more than between stars and day? Earth's shadows approach them not in their high places; nor, so far as we can trace, affect them in any way, or do aught in their regard beyond revealing them to mortal ken. Our perception varies, not their lustre.

✠

"*The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.*"—Any wilderness whither God sends His beloved is sure to turn out a place of safety and of food convenient, if not of flowers. And were it possible for one single soul to take up its abode in Heaven against the Divine will, Heaven itself would be found thenceforward a stronghold, not of peace but of unrest. There is no peace outside the peace of God.

✠

Great is their grace who, instead of choosing their offering, simply offer what they have; as Jacob of old in extremity of danger took of that which came to his hand for a present.

"Lord, what have I that I may offer Thee?
Look, Lord, I pray Thee, look and see."

"What is it thou hast got?—
Nay, child, what is it thou hast not?
Thou hast all gifts that I have given thee:
Offer them all to Me,
The great ones and the small,—
I will accept them all. . .
I crave not thine, but thee."

"Ah, Lord, Who lovest me,
Such as I have now give I Thee."

✠

"*Faithful unto death.*"—We often think of it as if it must demand a long as well as an unflinching effort; and so indeed it may demand, but we know not whether it will. One moment may suffice, for aught that we know to the contrary. One moment's effort: the weakest might undertake so much!

Or if ever so long a strain be required, God's strength is always stronger than strong enough.

"The widow who cast two mites into the treasury by so doing became rich."—*Page* 160.

"*In them is filled up the wrath of God.*"
—The wrath of God admits of being filled up; nowhere do we read of His mercy being filled up.

Seven vials hold Thy wrath, but what can hold
Thy mercy save Thine own infinitude,
Boundlessly overflowing with all good,
All loving-kindness, all delights untold ?

✠

"*I came not to send peace, but a sword.*"—
Yet a sword of Christ's sending brings peace when welcomed for His sake, and faced in His strength. Or even though the sword be Satan's sword, yet to ourselves it will be the sword of the Lord if whilst being slain we trust in Him.

✠

If all things really do work together for good to them that love God, then amongst "all things" cannot but be included accidents and losses: whence to fret over such must be either to quarrel with a blessing, or to pass sentence on ourselves as not entitled to it.

"*That ye, being rooted and grounded in hope, may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.*"

"Can I know it?" "Nay."
"Shall I know it?" "Yea,
When all mists have cleared away
For ever and for aye."

"Why not then to-day?"
"Who hath said thee nay?
Lift a hopeful heart and pray
In a humble way."

✠

Privileges entail responsibilities: to be denied the privilege is to be spared the responsibility.

Well may we thank God for our exemptions.

✠

"*It is appointed unto men once to die; but after this the judgment.*"

So brief a life, and then an endless grief
Or endless joy,—
So brief a life, then ruin or relief,—
What solace, what annoy

Of time needs dwelling on ?
  It is, it was,
It is done
  While we sigh "Alas!"

Yet saints are singing in a happy hope,
  Forecasting pleasure,—
Bright eyes of faith enlarging all their scope:
  Saints love beyond time's measure.
Where love is, there is bliss
  That will not pass;
Where love is
  Dies away "Alas!"

✠

"*In everything give thanks.*"

Give thanks to-day, and let to-morrow take
  Heed to itself; to-day imports thee more;
    To-morrow may not dawn like yesterday:
  Until that unknown morrow go thy way,
Suffer and work and strive for Jesus' sake,—
  Who tells thee what to-morrow keeps in store ?

Those who finally inherit all things guaranteed to any soul, must while probation endured have had within themselves at least the germ of every grace everywhere developed. A surmise full of joy when the thralls of lifelong involuntary disadvantages are in question:—"*Out of prison he cometh to reign.*"

✠

A Christian hero whose ship was about to sink, encouraged his crew by pointing out that heaven is as near the sea as the land. Our assigned level is our nearest point to heaven.

✠

An overthrow which redounds to the glory of God is not defeat, but victory. Nor indeed is such an overthrow a genuine overthrow, any more than prostration is a fall, or self-sacrifice destruction. Bear witness, Gethsemane and Calvary!

✠

"*Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*"—That tremendous endowment of Free-Will which can even say nay to God

Almighty, is able tenfold to say nay to the "strong man armed." Nothing outside myself can destroy me by main force and in my own despite.

✠

To press forward towards all the great things which may yet be ours, annuls the pang caused by lesser matters we have missed. It is so even as concerns glories terrestrial compared among themselves. How beyond all comparison does any comparison appear when terrestrial glories are set against celestial!

✠

"*The day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.*"—One third taken, two thirds left. Better to lose a third and be thankful, than to retain the whole and be thankless. It is sadly amiss never to perceive how much sunshine gilds our mortal day until that brightness is diminished.

A curtailed day is still a day, with daylight opportunities.

LIGHT FOR LABOR

THE harvest-moon shines full and clear,
The harvest-time is near,
Be of good cheer.

. . . . .

Not wearied though the work be wearisome,
Nor fainting though the time be almost past.

Each act of dutiful service, though for its performance the elect soul abases itself, yet raises the soul to a loftier level and augments its glory. . . . Indeed, neither ascent nor descent comes any longer into question when Christ is felt to be that true and only Centre to which all living life gravitates.

✠

Nothing on earth is a substitute for duty, be that duty what it may. Affliction cannot exempt us, nor great searchings of heart nor poverty. These are conditions under which to work; not workers in our stead.

Lord, carry me.—Nay, but I grant thee strength
To walk and work thy way to heaven at length.—

Lord, I am tired.—He hath not much desired
The goal, who at the starting-point is tired.—

Lord, dost Thou care? — Yea, for thy
gain or loss
So much I cared it brought Me to the
Cross.—

Lord, I believe; help Thou mine un-
belief.—
Good is the word; but rise, for life is brief.

✠

Each duty, office, vocation, is God's gift whether to man or angel. Man indulges in choices, recoils, and preferences; some gifts he styles trials, some, burdens. Angels seem to see and feel no differences between calling and calling, opportunity and opportunity. Angels doubtless estimate the gift by the Giver; men too often the Giver by the gift;—not, that is, by the intrinsic value of the gift, but rather by their own taste or distaste for it.

✠

"*I will give to every one of you according to your works.*"—What other standard would I crave than this of work? for work is voluntary, within my own option to do or leave undone.

What I do, I will to do; what I leave undone, I will to leave undone. Who, then, is it that betrayeth me: Lord, is it I? It is I.

✠

This world is not my orchard for fruit nor my garden for flowers. It is, however, my only field whence to raise a harvest.

"But if my lot be sand, where nothing grows?"
Nay, who hath said it? Tune a thankful psalm;
For though thy desert bloom not as the rose,
It yet can rear thy palm.

✠

"*And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying: Rise, and measure the temple of God.*"—A reed—the emblem of weakness—becomes consecrated as the measure of what is holy. Christ accepts our weakness, not accounting it as weakness, but associating it with His own holiness and strength. . . . When we shrink from the holiness of our

calling, privileges, vocation, there is comfort for us in the reed. For not the strength of iron, nor the indestructibility of gold, was employed for the measurement of the temple, but the frailty of the reed.

Am I frailer than other reeds, verily a bruised reed? Yet "*a bruised reed will He not break.*"

✠

Much good work has been hindered by such anxiety to do better as deters one from promptly doing one's best. When we so set our hearts on doing well that practically we do nothing, we are paralyzed not by humility, but by pride. If in such a temper we succeeded in making our light to shine, it would shine not in glorification of our Father, but of ourselves. . . . Why then not begin?

"From pride and vain-glory, Good Lord, deliver us."

Can anything be sadder than work left unfinished? Yes; work never begun. "Well begun is half done," says our English proverb. True, the final verdict depends upon the ending; but neither good

nor bad ending can ensue except from some manner of beginning. A bad beginning may be retrieved and a good ending achieved. No beginning, no ending.

It is bad to work loiteringly; it may be worse to loiter instead of beginning to work at all.

✠

Suppose our duty of the moment is to write: why do we not write?

Because we cannot summon anything original, or striking, or picturesque, or eloquent, or brilliant.

But is a subject set before us?

It is.

Is it true?

It is.

Do we understand it?

Up to a certain point we do.

Is it worthy of meditation?

Yes, and prayerfully.

Is it worthy of exposition?

Yes, indeed.

Why not then begin?

✠

At any rate, let us inquire what we pro-

pose to do instead of grappling with that distasteful duty. Are we inclined to pray ?

No, for that would end in our having to set about the evaded task.

Or to praise and give thanks ?

No, for we have not put on our armor, much less are we taking it off.

Or to meditate ?

No, for meditation would harp on the silenced string.

What then ?

✠

Earth holds heaven in the bud; our perfection there has to be developed out of our imperfection here. Neither in heaven nor on earth, neither to-day nor to-morrow, neither by God nor by man, will grapes be gathered of thorns or figs of thistles.

✠

No slur attaches to any lawful condition or pursuit: what God hath made He is graciously willing to bear. A terrestrial crown may become the nucleus of a crown celestial.

"Sweet Spring must fail, and fail the choir of Spring,
But wisdom shall burn on when the lesser lights are gone."

—*Page* 144.

Every variety of perversity is possible to free will. Some sinners work, and their work is their sin; others work not, and their sin consists in their not working. Yet not to work is in some sort to work amiss: "He that gathereth not with Me scattereth."

✠

How did Noah build his ark?

We may fairly assume that he built it openly, avowedly, without any subterfuges or pretences whatever.

Now we Christians are (or ought to be) building arks "to the saving of our souls." How many of us are building them in unabashed openness and honesty, neither parading our religion nor keeping it under lock and key?

✠

What we can do, do; what we cannot, trust God to do.

Till one tries, it is easy to fancy one's self doing everything; when one tries, it is not difficult to despair of doing anything. Neither delusion will do us ultimate harm if we so let these extremes meet as to

curb, balance, counteract each other. Presumption should at least fight lustily; despondency should at least pray earnestly. Genuine prayer in conjunction with genuine fighting must sooner or later overthrow presumption and dissipate despondency.

Through burden and heat of the day,
  How weary the hands and the feet
That labor with scarcely a stay
  Through burden and heat!
  Tired toiler, whose sleep shall be sweet,
Kneel down,—it will rest thee to pray,—
  Then forward, for daylight is fleet:
Cool shadows grow lengthening and gray,
  Cool twilight will soon be complete:—
What matters this wearisome way
  Through burden and heat?

✠

"*Their works do follow them.*"—The slothful servant desires to rest without labor; the good and faithful servant after labor. . . . But there is such a thing as unproductive labor, strenuously to be eschewed on pain of having no works at the critical moment.

Fire must one day try every man's work, of what sort it is.

✠

"*And unto one he gave ten talents, to another two, and to another one.*"—The talents vouchsafed me I must use and improve thankfully; the gifts withheld I must forego ungrudgingly and thankfully.

✠

Sloth may accompany a great many amiable tempers and skin-deep charms, but sloth runs no race.

And a race is the one thing set before us.

Too short a century of dreams,
One day of work sufficient length,—
Why should not you, why should not I
Attain heroic strength ?

✠

"*And there fell . . . a great hail . . . every stone about the weight of a talent.*"—Divine gifts are called by our Master "talents." Every gift must turn to the recipient's impoverishment unless it

be so used as to secure the true riches; of goodly talents misused nothing will remain at last but the avenging weight. "Every stone about the weight of a talent"—of a talent I have done amiss with, or done nothing with? God forbid.

✠

It is wise to obey in fear, foolish to fear to obey; wise to worship trembling, foolish to tremble instead of worshipping. A talent must neither be misused nor laid away unused.

There awaits in every direction abundant good to be done, if only we have the will patiently to do it, first counting the cost. For, though no literal mountain obstruct our path, mountainous opposition may obstruct us; and if it please not God to remove it, then in His strength, weary and heartsore as we may be, we must surmount it, "looking unto Jesus."

✠

It is over. What is over?—
Nay, how much is over truly!
Harvest days we toiled to sow for;

Now the sheaves are gathered newly,
Now the wheat is garnered duly.

It suffices. What suffices ?—
All suffices, reckoned rightly:
Spring shall bloom where now the ice is,
Roses make the bramble sightly,
And the quickening sun shine brightly,
And my garden teem with spices.

LIGHT ON THE DAILY PATH

O Thou, the Life of living and of dead,
Who givest more the more Thyself hast given,
Suffice us as Thy saints Thou hast sufficed;
That, beautified, replenished, comforted,
Still gazing off from earth and up to heaven,
We may pursue Thy steps, Lord Jesus Christ.

"*There is no new thing under the sun.*"—
But sanctified human instinct sets its hope above the sun; and while contentedly walking in the old paths of daily duty and discipline, knowing that for to-day the old is better, yet waits and hastens forward to be renewed and strengthened to sustain a new perfection. "*New things do I declare: before they spring forth do I tell you of them.*"

Up, my drowsing eyes!
  Up, my sinking heart!
Up to Jesus Christ arise!
  Claim your part
In all raptures of the skies!

Yet a little while,
  Yet a little way,
Saints shall reap and rest and smile
  All the day:
Up! let 's trudge another mile!

It has been said that whatever may or may not constitute a good translation, it cannot consist in turning a good poem into a bad one. Christians need a searching self-sifting on this point. They translate God's law into the universal language of mankind; all sorts of men read them and in some sort cannot but read them. They too often resemble translations of the letter in defiance of the spirit; their good poem has become unpoetical.

✠

Our gifts, talents, opportunities, are a trust vested in us for the definite purpose of glorifying God, benefiting man, working out our own salvation. Ours are,—then mine are.

✠

Interruptions are vexatious.

Granted : but what is an interruption ?

An interruption is something, is anything, which breaks in upon our occupation of the moment.

Now, our occupations spring ?—From within, for they are the outcome of our own will.

And interruptions arrive?—From without. Obviously from without, otherwise we should ward them off.

Our occupation, then, is that which we select: our interruption is that which is sent us.

But hence it would appear that the occupation may be wilful, while the interruption must be Providential.

A startling view of occupations and interruptions!

Ah, but that which is frivolous, selfish, idle, intrusive, is clearly not Providential.

As regards the doer, no: as regards the sufferer, yes.

✠

"*I would thou wert either cold or hot.*"—If a merry heart is a continual feast, a lukewarm heart is a continual lack. Worse still; it is a centre of spiritual creeping paralysis: a hairbreadth less of live man to-day, a hairbreadth less to-morrow, until, unless the strong hand of Divine Grace should arrest decay, the dying man of so many days becomes the corpse of the ultimate morrow.

O Lord, who extendedst mercy to him who, believing, craved help in his unbelief, extend mercy to all who, half-alive, crave help in their half-deadness.

✠

Suspense is preparation, and should be utilized as preparation. That it should be attests that it can be. . . . Suspense tempts one to do nothing; it ought contrariwise to stir up one to do everything.

During suspense we can prepare ourselves only for anything by preparing ourselves for everything. The prepared man secures "a happy issue" out of suspense, whatever that issue may be. But the unprepared man—— ?

✠

It is marvellous what openings seem to invite our neighbor to lead forlorn hopes, storm breaches, grapple with sanitary, or social, or spiritual, or what-not foes. Yet more marvellous is it that we do not see our own way even to bringing up the rear of a hopeful hope!

During this probational period not some influences only, but all influences as they touch us, become our trials, tests, temptations, assayed by which we stand or fall, are found wanting or not wanting, as genuinely as will be the case with us in the last tremendous Day of Account. . . . Over and over again we have been judged and condemned or else acquitted; over and over again we have stood or fallen to our own Master.

Not the Last Day alone, every day is a Judgment Day.

Day and night the Accuser makes no pause,
Day and night protest the Righteous Laws,
Good and Evil witness to man's flaws.

Day and night our Jesu makes no pause,
Pleads His own fulfilment of all laws,
Veils with His perfections mortal flaws.

✠

A gloomy Christian is like a cloud before the rainbow was vouchsafed. But the heavenliest sort of a Christian exhibits

more bow than cloud, walking the world in a continual thanksgiving; and "a joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful."

"*Thanks be to Him that sat on the throne.*"—To overflow with thankfulness is virtually to render thanks. Thankless thanks, on the contrary, are no thanks at all. . . . True knowledge adores, thanks, and ever follows on to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

Derived life praises its Fountain; imparted life its Bestower; life which begins yet ends not, the Endless Life which sustains it endless.

✠

We must be congruous members of our Divine Head if we desire to share His beatitude; we must tread the same steps if we aspire to the same goal.

Wherefore to serve becomes a privilege; to lack, an endowment; to think simply, a profitable exercise; to be sensible of weakness, a safeguard; to undergo shame, a medicine; to endure provocations, a stimulus to prayer.

"If I pray not at the hour of prayer, the hour passes."—*Page* 117.

This reverses the world's judgment; but the world and its lust are to pass away.

✠

Shrink as we may from facing the consequences of our faults, yet lost opportunities are and must remain lost. If I pray not at the hour of prayer, the hour passes and I have not prayed. If I pray not the appointed prayer at the appointed moment, the moment passes and I have not prayed.

The done is done once and for ever: the undone remains undone and past doing. The eleventh hour of man's long working-day closes; that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath draws on.

✠

Dirt has been defined as "matter out of place." Some faults, where actually placed, are faults; placed elsewhere they might develop into virtues.

Let obstinacy cleave to the right side, covetousness hanker after the best gifts, rashness launch out into ventures of faith, timidity fear not them that can kill the body, but only Him who can destroy both

soul and body; and then obstinacy, covetousness, rashness, timidity, may look up and lift their heads, for their redemption draweth nigh.

✠

The sinner's own fault. So it was. . . .
Clearly his own fault. Yet I think
My fault in part, who did not pray,
But lagged and would not lead the way:
I, haply, proved his missing link.
God help us both to mend and pray!

A few are charged to do judgment; every one, without exception, is charged to do mercy. I may doubt if I am one of a few; I cannot doubt whether I am one of every one.

✠

In performing my daily duties I must strive against the spirit of a frightened slave, and must aim instead at the conformed will of a loving child. I ought to shrink more sensitively from sin than from punishment.

✠

There is one temple whereof I am custodian and votaress; of its services, devo-

tions, worship, I alone shall have to render an account: "*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*"

O Christ the Lamb, O Holy Ghost the Dove,
Reveal the Almighty Father unto us,
That we may tread Thy courts felicitous,
Loving who loves us, for our God is Love.

✠

"*He that watereth shall be watered also himself.*"—Our neighbor languishes, is weak, wavers, is ready to perish: whoso strives, by prayer or by any other conceivable agency, to uphold him shall himself be upheld.

"*Am I my brother's keeper?*" Yes.

✠

Intercessory prayer is truly our Gate Beautiful: outside it sits the halting multitude of our brethren and sisters; we, by God's blessing on our weak walk and endeavor, can enter the Temple through that gate, and not we ourselves alone, but bringing others with us. Blessed are they

who, frequenting that gate, enter by it into the presence of God; they are making ready for a future day whereon to enter into His presence through a Gate of Pearl.

✠

To walk in Christ's incomparable footsteps is both easy and difficult. The easiness lies in our surroundings, the difficulty in ourselves. Flesh is weak, and spirit is too often unwilling, otherwise any neighborhood might become to us holy as Palestine. There waits in every direction good to be done, and He "went about doing good."

✠

A fall is not a signal to lie wallowing, but to rise.

It is not the signal I should choose, yet it is the signal I have chosen.

Having chosen it wrongly, let me at least obey it rightly.

✠

Angels see us though we see them not; they hear us though we hear them not.

Open-faced angels are no more angels than angels unawares.

Lord, whomsoever Thou shalt send to me,
Let that same be
Mine Angel predilect;
Veiled or unveiled, benignant or austere;
Thine, therefore mine, elect.

✠

God's chastisement is always good: my response may be either good or evil.

On what does my response depend? On my own will.

✠

To perform a duty from a motive which is not wrong may prove a step toward performing it from the motive which is right. To leave it unperformed seems the last contrivance adapted to result in its performance.

✠

"*I saw a new heavens and a new earth.*" —Meanwhile the first heaven and the first earth make up our present lot. Of those others God giveth us not yet so much as to set a foot on, although He promises them to us for a possession. The temporary heaven and earth, above, around, beneath

us, import us now, supply now things convenient for us. These we are bound to use, and by no means to misuse or neglect. "*He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much.*"

✠

"*When He shall appear, we shall be like Him.*"—Day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment, the Divine likeness should be developing in each of us. The progressive work may be hidden,—

"Who ever saw the earliest rose open her sweet breast?"—

and well is it that from our too self-conscious eyes it is hidden!—but none the less, line upon line, here a little and there a little, the transfiguring process must be going on. Or else, woe is us! the latent likeness is inevitably weakening, diminishing, even if not yet ready to vanish away.

✠

Shall I choose my good things here or hereafter?

Shall I choose sweet that turns to bitterness? or bitter that turns to sweetness?

Shall I choose life that leads to death? or death that leads to life?

Shall I choose—nay, what *am* I choosing?

✠

When speculation fails, resort to practice.

✠

Every Christian is at least a minor missionary. Example preaches more powerfully than words; intercession converts as mightily as sermons; alms supply the sinews of that war whose weapons are not carnal.

✠

Whoso judges harshly is sure to judge amiss. . . . Judge not thy neighbor's walk except to follow or to lead him.

✠

It is well to pray for others as for ourselves, but to mistrust ourselves rather than others. Myself in some degree I am bound to know and am bound to judge.

To value our neighbor's good gifts in such a manner as to sympathize with their misuse, is so far to share in the misuse though not at all in the gifts. It is to go halves not even in a bubble investment, but simply in an impending bankruptcy.

✠

"*A just man falleth seven times and ariseth up again.*"—Full of comfort as is this text, its comfort hath yet a limit. We must not rearrange the proverb and say: He that falleth seven times is a just man. . . . Not the fall but the arising forms our clue to his identity. Not any number of falls, few or many, but that same number of arisings proves him just.

The just man at his sixth fall is perhaps less likely to quote the proverb than is the unjust man at his eighth!

✠

"*Unstable as water.*"—One only process is there which renders water stable in itself —the process of freezing. If we be "watery" characters, we may not improbably need chills and shadows of life to harden us; full, unbroken, cloudless

sunshine might evaporate us altogether, so that even if sought our place should nowhere be found.

✠

Let us be provoked to good works by those with whom we cannot altogether agree, yet who in many ways set us a pattern. Why exclusively peer after defects while virtues stare us in the face ?

✠

In every precept of duty a consequent glory is bound up. The great things we are forbidden to ask for ourselves bear no proportion to the good things which God layeth up for them that love Him.

So lips say; but does conduct say so ?

Lord, if not hitherto, henceforward.

✠

If I long to improve my brother, the first step towards doing so is to improve myself.

✠

Living branches are borne by the root, and through the root only can have commerce with the earth. What cannot be

compassed or indulged in as by Christ's member, is unfit to be compassed or indulged in at all.

✠

"*Here is not your rest.*"—Foothold we must needs have—at least until we be made equal unto the angels—but let us pray against roothold. A foot may spurn the ground it cannot choose but tread; a root grasps and holds fast the soil whence it sucks subsistence, and whence oftentimes it cannot be wrenched except to die.

✠

"*As the doves to their windows.*"—Let us strive to rise above our natural and far above our present level, for the farthest view is from the loftiest standpoint. Doves at windows command a much wider horizon than moles on hillocks; whilst a mole who takes his ease or grubs inside a hillock—what chance has he of seeing?

✠

"A molten or graven image" of gold or silver is strictly and literally reproduced

nowadays and for us moderns, although in altered guise, in the current coin of the realm. It depends upon myself whether I make it my minister or my idol.

✠

"*Unto our God kings and priests.*"— Each of us is king, with subject self to rule; priest with leprous self to examine and judge.

✠

"*Here we have no continuing city.*"— Earth is a racecourse, not a goal. Instead of mansions she pitches tents. Her nearest approach to a permanent abode is the grave.

Oh, what is earth, that we should build
Our houses here, and seek concealed
Poor treasures, and add field to field,
And heap to heap and store to store,—
Still grasping and still seeking more,
While step by step Death nears the door?

Earth is small compared with space. And space is small compared with infinity. Let us not lose our soul to gain the world —the smallest of all three areas!

To look back at the past is oftentimes the best guarantee for the future.

Looking back along life's trodden way,
Gleams and greenness linger on the track;
Distance melts and mellows all to-day,
Looking back.

Rose and purple and a silvery gray—
Is *that* the cloud we called so black?
Evening harmonizes all to-day,
Looking back.

Foolish feet, so prone to halt or stray,
Foolish heart, so restive on the rack!
Yesterday we sighed, but not to-day
Looking back.

✠

"*Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God.*"

Thou art Thyself mine aim, O Lord my King;
Stretch forth Thy hand to save my soul;
What matters more or less of journeying?
While I touch Thee I touch my goal.

LIGHT THROUGH SHADOWS

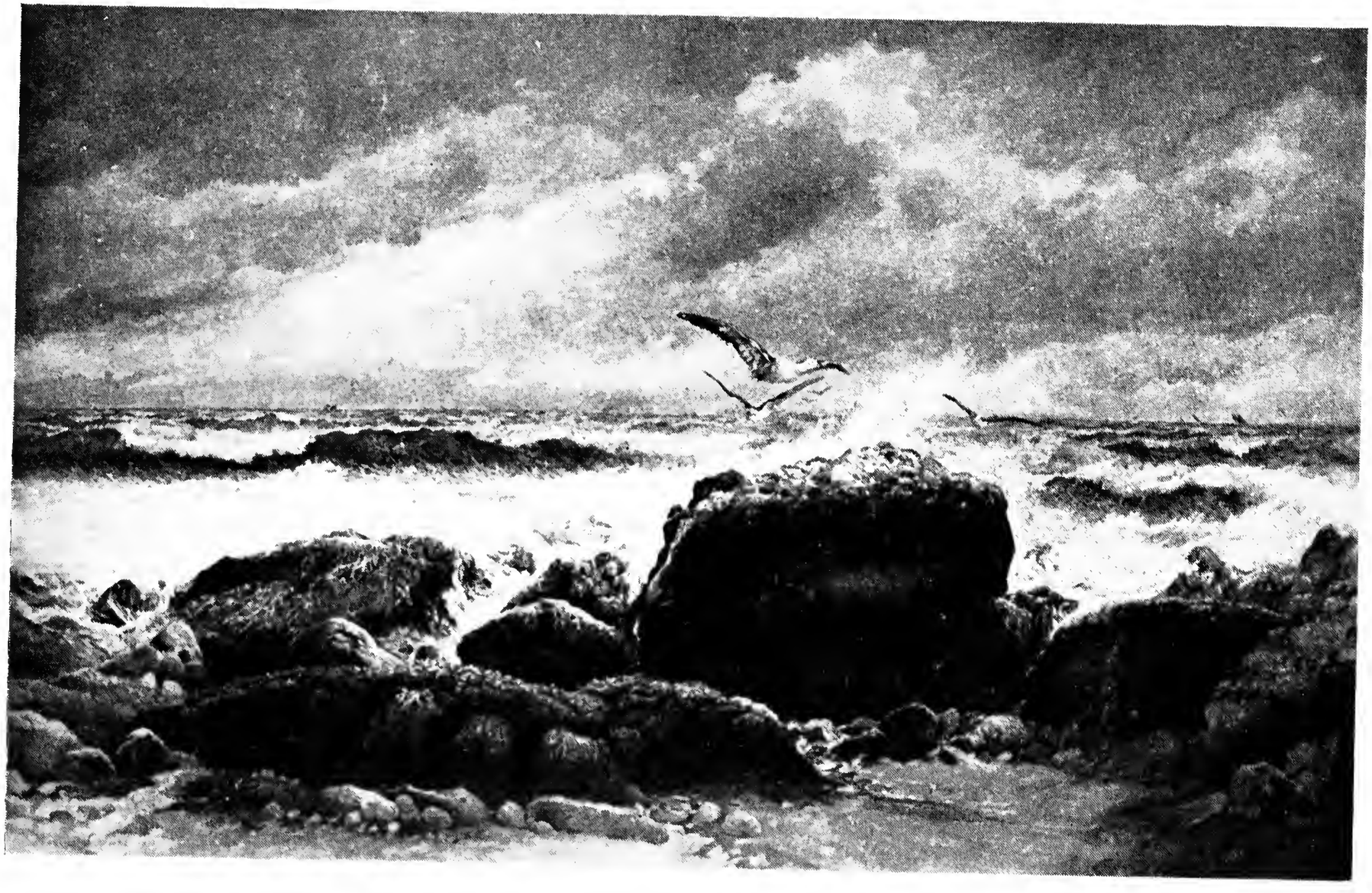
SHADOWS befit probation. Whilst set in their midst I must thankfully utilize them.

✠

Shadows to-day, while shadows show God's will,

. . . . . .

Whose marvels and whose mysteries fulfil
Their course, and deep in darkness serve Him still.



"'*And there was no more sea.*' And wherefore not the sea?"—*Page* 153.

Only a substance can cast a shadow. To-day while daylight lasts let us study the shadows vouchsafed us; when our night falls, for us they will vanish. Hezekiah had his faith confirmed by a shadow. The "shadow of Peter passing by" was not lightly to be regarded.

Let us sit down amid Divinely cast shadows with great delight; it is good for us to be here.

Lie still, my restive heart, lie still;
God's word to thee saith: "Wait and bear."
The good which He appoints is good,
The good which He denies were ill,—
Yea, subtle comfort is thy care,
Thy hurt a help not understood.

A shadowed life is no hardship to loving souls consciously abiding under the shadow of the Almighty; weary indeed would this

world's land be without the shadow of that Great Rock!

✠

Tribulation—that is, *sifting*—sifting reclaims and releases good from bad, while aught of good remains. "*Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them which are exercised thereby.*"

Sorrow hath a double voice,
  Sharp to-day but sweet to-morrow;
Wait in patience, hope, rejoice,
  Tried friends of sorrow.

Pleasure hath a double taste,
  Sweet to-day but sharp to-morrow;
Friends of pleasure, rise in haste,
  Make friends with sorrow.

Pleasure set aside to-day
  Comes again to rule to-morrow;
Welcomed sorrow will not stay—
  Farewell to sorrow!

We have all seen a literal fire pale and dwindle under strong sunshine, but, when screened off into comparative darkness, regain color and recover strength. Thus sunshine of earthly happiness may easily prove too exhausting for some souls. And then it will be the good hand of our God upon them which sends darkness of sorrow—even, if need be, darkness of death.

✠

Are we beset by shadows? Let us resolutely walk in them; for by sitting down we should never emerge from them.

Shadows to-day, while shadows show God's will:
Light were not good except He sent us light;
Shadows to-day because this day is night,
Whose marvels and whose mysteries fulfil
Their course, and deep in darkness serve Him still.

✠

"*Ye shall have tribulation ten days.*"—There is comfort in the certainty that

though the limit of my trial may be hidden from me, by God that limit is prefixed and is all along well known; the end is planned and adjusted from the beginning. . . . Ten days of darkness may shine to the glory of God, like ten lamps of wise virgins who with oil in their lamps go forth to meet the bridegroom. Ten days of trial should be treasured more than ten pieces of silver; holy souls should take jealous heed lest one be wasted or lost. Ten days are as ten servants entrusted with ten pounds capable of multiplication.

✠

Good is human sorrow, for it makes mortal men so far like Christ, who learnt sorrow for their sakes.

All is good which bears the stamp of a Divine likeness.

If grief be such a looking-glass as shows
Christ's face and man's in some sort made alike,
Then grief is pleasure with a subtle taste:
Wherefore should any fret or faint or haste?

Grief is not grievous to a soul that knows
Christ comes, and listens for that hour
to strike.

Presumably for most of us tribulation rather than ease constructs the safe road and the firm stepping-stone. Better to be taught by thorns of the wilderness and briars, than in no wise to be taught.

Be our pangs schoolmasters to bring us to Christ!

✠

Hourly, momentarily, there come to me mercies or chastisements. The chastisements themselves are veiled mercies, as it were veiled angels. The mercies that I name chastisements are no less merciful than those which at once I recognize as mercies,—no less so if filially I bow my will to the Divine Will.

Lo, thou mine Angel with transfigured face,
Brimful of grace,
Brimful of love for me!
Did I misdoubt thee all that weary while ?

How light a heart befits one whose burden the Almighty deigns to carry with him!

Sorrow of saints is sorrow of a day,
Gladness of saints is gladness evermore;
Send on thy hope, send on thy will before,
To chant God's praise along the narrow way.

✠

"*Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.*"—And by God's grace he can, while life lasts, in whatever smoke, fly upward.

To fly up on any terms, on any wings, must be beneficial.

✠

Joy is but sorrow
While we know
It ends to-morrow:
Even so!
Joy with lifted veil
Shows a face as pale
As the fair, changing moon, so fair and frail.

Pain is but pleasure
  If we know
It heaps up treasure:
  Even so!
Turn, transfigured Pain,
Sweetheart, turn again,
For fair art thou as moonrise after rain.

LIGHT FROM NATURE

To him that hath ears to hear, any good creature of God may convey a message.

The merest grass
Along the wayside where we pass,
Lichen and moss and sturdy weed,
Tell of His love who sends the dew,
The rain and sunshine too,
To nourish one small seed.

"*And God saw that it was good.*"—And though the things which are seen are temporal, yet a work of the Creator is, and cannot but be, so great that neither the profoundest nor most illuminated saint, nor all the saints summed up together, will have exhausted the teaching of things visible, even when the hour comes for them to give place to things now invisible.

✠

"*All things are double one against another.*"—Everything cognizable by the senses may be utilized as symbol or parable. To such an exercise some minds seem strongly drawn. . . . To them matter suggests the immaterial; time, eternity.

Lord, grant us eyes to see
Within the seed a tree,
  Within the glowing egg a bird,
    Within the shroud a butterfly;

Till, taught by such, we see
Beyond all creatures Thee,
And hearken for Thy tender word
And hear it: "Fear not, it is I."

✠

The present heaven and the present earth must pass away, but meanwhile they praise God. The sea must be no more to-morrow, yet to-day it magnifies its Maker.

Heaven and earth and sea are jubilant,
Jubilant all things that dwell therein;
Filled to fullest overflow they chant,
Still roll onward, swell,
Still begin
Never-flagging praise interminable.

Thou who must fall silent in a while,
Chant thy sweetest, gladdest best at once;
Sun thyself to-day, keep peace and smile;
By love upward send
Orisons,
Accounting love thy lot, and love thine end.

✠

"*The people that stood by and heard it,*

"The poppy saith, . . .
'Yet juice of subtle virtue lies
Within my cup of curious dyes.'"—*Page* 143.

said that it thundered; others said an angel spake to Him."—One notices a storm; another discerns an angel. One hears thunder; another divines a message. Well it is, in default of better, to skim the surface and learn a little; though better it is, God willing, to search in the depths and learn much.

Flowers preach to us if we will hear:
The rose saith in the dewy morn,
"I am most fair;
Yet all my loveliness is born
Upon a thorn."
The poppy saith amid the corn:
"Let but my scarlet head appear
And I am held in scorn;
Yet juice of subtle virtue lies
Within my cup of curious dyes."
The lilies say: "Behold how we
Preach, without words, of purity."
The violets whisper from the shade
Which their own leaves have made:
"Men scent our fragrance on the air,
Yet take no heed
Of humble lessons we would read."

But not alone the fairest flowers:
The merest grass
Along the roadside where we pass,
Lichen and moss and sturdy weed,
Tell of His love who sends the dew,
The rain and sunshine too,
To nourish one small seed.

✠

All that we see rejoices in the sunshine,
All that we hear makes merry in the Spring;
God grant us such a mind, to be glad after our kind,
And to sing
His praises evermore for everything!

Much that we see must vanish with the sunshine,
Sweet Spring must fail, and fail the choir of Spring;
But Wisdom shall burn on when the lesser lights are gone,
And shall sing
God's praises evermore for everything.

✠

"*The heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together.*"—Meanwhile it is spread

out above all human-kind as an open scroll declaring the glory of God.

Our Lord is designated as the "Sun of Righteousness" by a Prophet. The sun, without a peer, rules over the planetary system. But Christ, with "lips full of grace," deigns to call Himself "the Bright and Morning Star"; which star solitary in office and in dignity lights up hope for the darkened world and promises and ushers in day after night. . . . Turning to a parable of nature, we perceive that the bright and morning star which renews our gladness is none other than the sweet, calm evening star of our twilight solace.

✠

Popular tradition fixes the number of the Wise Men at three.

Did those three alone see the star? Presumably not. Did others, seeing, arise? We read of none such. Faith and good-will made all the difference between seer and seer.

As then, so now.

The starry heavens are so far like their and our Maker that they answer and in-

struct each man according to his honest intention, his tolerated stumbling-block, his bosom-idol, as the case may be.

To some they say nothing. Some they address through the intellect exclusively. While to Magi (that is, to wise men) they declare the glory of God, and show His handiwork.

✠

"*They shall shine as the stars.*"—The star floats in heaven, and has no contact with the earth except by sending thither its own radiance. Earth-born clouds stop at an immeasurable distance below its altitude. . . .

Christians are called to be like stars—luminous, steadfast, majestic, attractive.

Lord, grant us calm, if calm can set forth
Thee,
Or tempest, if a tempest set Thee forth,
Wind from the east or west or south or
north,
Or congelation of an icy sea; . . .
Still let the earth abide to set Thee forth,
Or vanish like a smoke to set forth Thee.

Let us encourage ourselves, though He slay, us yet to trust Him, by help of some of those parables of nature familiar to us all, which speak of life reborn from lifelessness or from death or from decay,—a leafless tree, a chrysalis, a buried seed, an egg.

The twig sprouteth,
The moth outeth,
The plant springeth,
The bird singeth:
Though little we sing to-day,
Yet are we better than they;
Though growing with scarce a showing,
Yet, please God, we are growing.

The twig teacheth,
The moth preacheth,
The plant vaunteth,
The bird chaunteth
God's mercy overflowing,
Merciful past man's knowing.
Please God to keep us growing
Till the awful day of mowing!

Behold in heaven a floating, dazzling cloud,
So dazzling that I could but cry, Alas!
Alas, because I felt how low I was;
Alas, within my spirit if not loud,
Foreviewing my last breathless bed and shroud:
Thus pondering, I glanced downward on the grass;
And the grass bowed when airs of heaven would pass,
Lifting itself again when it had bowed.
That grass spake comfort; weak it was and low,
Yet strong enough and high enough to bend
In homage at a message from the sky:
As the grass did and prospered, so will I;—
Though knowing little, doing what I know,
And strong in patient weakness till the end.

✠

"*Behold, He cometh with clouds.*" But we know not whether at that supreme moment any one will even notice clouds. *Now* is our time to avail ourselves of them

if we aim at living by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Each common cloud may serve to remind us of the Ascension and of the clouds of the second Advent. Also of the great cloud of witnesses who already compass us about, . . . who perhaps will then become as nothing to us when we stand face to face with Christ our Judge: "*At the brightness of His presence His clouds removed.*"

✠

The hills are tipped with sunshine, while I walk
In shadows dim and cold;
The unawakened rose sleeps on her stalk
In a bud's fold,
Until the sun flood all the world with gold.

The hills are crowned with glory, and the glow
Flows widening down apace;
Unto the sunny hilltops I, set low,
Lift a tired face,—
Ah, happy rose, content to wait for grace!

How tired a face, how tired a brain, how
tired
A heart I lift, who long
For something never felt but still de-
sired,—
Sunshine and song—
Song where the choirs of sunny heaven
stand choired.

✠

"*The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.*"—Or if this fallen world's wilderness never rejoice, nor its desert ever blossom, yet wherever Holy Church abides, she herself is "a garden inclosed": where even one holy soul sojourns there blooms "a lily among thorns."

"*He shall grow as the lily.*"—Whiteness of purity, greenness of hope, a comely aspect, a head uplifted: once in their passion the martyrs became as lilies among thorns, and now in their rest they are beautiful as lilies in the garden of their Beloved. Is it not "to gather lilies" when He takes home His own unto Himself? Is it not "to feed among the lilies"

when He sups with them and they with Him ?

Clothe us as Thy lilies of a day,
As the lilies Thou accountest fair,—
Lilies of Thy making,
Of Thy love partaking,
Filling with free fragrance earth and air:
Thou who gatherest lilies, gather us and wear.

✠

Color seems to be simply an analysis of light; if so, the withdrawal of light involves no mere disappearance of color, but its absolute absence.

By an awful parallel this suggests how "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life." Cut off from the Dayspring of color, there can be no color; from the Source of goodness, no goodness; from the Fountain of grace, no grace; from the Root of life, no life.

Colorless light paints the rainbow—all color being latent in it.

Light colorless doth color all things else:
Where light dwells pleasure dwells,
And peace excels.
Then rise and shine
Thou shadowed soul of mine,
And let a cheerful rainbow make thee fine.

✠

The saints are strangers and pilgrims, dwellers in tents, sojourners as all our fathers were. They resemble air-plants rather than earth-plants, yet are by no means tossed about by every wind.

Yet earth was very good in days of old,
And earth is lovely still;
Still for the sacred flock she spreads the fold,
For Sion rears the hill.

She spreads the harvest-field where angels reap,
And lo! the crop is white;
She spreads God's acre where the happy sleep
All night, that is not night.

Earth may not pass till heaven shall pass
away,
Nor heaven may be renewed
Except with earth; and once more in that
day
Earth shall be very good.

✠

"*And there was no more sea.*"—And wherefore not the sea?

Because the sea nourished and brought up no harvest. It bore no fruits which remain; it wrought no works which follow it. It was moreover originally constructed as a passage, not as an abode; across it man toiled in rowing to the haven where he would be, but itself never was and never could become that haven. Thus it presents to us a picture of all that must be left behind.

All tears done away with the bitter unquiet
sea,
Death done away from among the living
at last;
Men shall say of sorrow (love grant it to
thee and me!)—
At last, "It is past!"

O sights of our lovely earth, O sound of
our earthly sea,
Speak to me of Paradise, of all blessed
saints to me;
Or keep silence touching them, and speak
to my heart alone
Of the Saint of saints, the King of kings,
the Lamb on the throne.

THE LIGHT OF SACRIFICE

GIVE thou wings to my riches, and bid them fly as eagles toward heaven. . . . For earthly gold, which though it be tried seven times in the fire, perisheth, give me such imperishable gold as Thou usest for New Jerusalem and crowns of Thy saints triumphant.

"The 'rich young man' turned away sorrowful."—*Page* 157.

Self-conceit blinds; self-will destroys; self-oblation consecrates; self-sacrifice saves. "*Whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.*"

My God, wilt Thou accept, and will not we
  Give aught to Thee?
The kept we lose, the offered we retain
Or find again.

Yet if our gift were lost, we well might lose
  All for Thy use,—
Well lost for Thee, whose love is all for us
  Gratuitous.

✠

The "rich young man" turned away sorrowful. Yet if he had stayed to sift those unexpected words of grace, he might have thanked God and taken courage. "*Sell . . . and give*"; it is not merely "give" but "sell" also: the spiritual price would have remained to the obedient

seller, and have been invested in the secure treasury. The material gift he might retain at the longest for a lifetime; its intangible, substantial price for ever and ever.

I see the pity of it that the Young Ruler appreciated not, so far as is recorded, his unique chance. I see it as regards him; what see I as regards myself? If I see it as regards myself, what then *do* I?

✠

Whoso barters earthly gold for meat for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, clothing for the destitute—any good gift for any forlorn soul or body—shall find it after many days refined into the glass-like gold of the eternal city. A profitable exchange and a goodly!

The gold of that land is good. The gold which I offer Thee must be purified in the fire—fire of self-denial, of self-sacrifice, of love.

✠

What we have experienced, felt, done, bears witness to what we have not yet experienced, felt, done. The self-surrenders

of earth rehearse in their rapturous triumph the all-surrendering self-surrender of heaven. The best gifts are those which can be given back to the Giver. Them it is generous to covet earnestly.

Crouch lowest to spring highest. Disperse abroad and give to the poor, so shall thy riches make themselves wings and fly as eagles towards heaven. Strip off thine ornaments now, that they may become chains about thy neck hereafter. To-night turn from the west in its fading purple, and set thy face steadfastly toward the east, where, out of darkness, golden glory and roses of a dawn that sets not will be revealed.

✠

Shall others go up from the extreme outposts of peril, the heights and depths of difficulty,—they the forlorn hope of the Christian army, they the violent whose violence the kingdom of heaven suffers,—and will not we go up from our peaceable habitations, sure dwellings, quiet resting-places? Forbid it, honor! forbid it, shame!

"One sorrow more! I thought the tale complete."
He bore amiss who grudges what he bore:
Stretch out thy hands and urge thy feet to meet
One sorrow more.

Yea, make thy count for two or three or four:
The kind Physician will not slack to treat
His patient while there 's rankling in the sore.

Bear up in anguish, ease will yet be sweet;
Bear up all day, for night has rest in store:
Christ bears thy burden with thee, rise and greet
One sorrow more.

✠

Neither is all wealth poor nor all poverty rich. The widow who cast two mites into the treasury by so doing became rich, but had she kept them she would have remained simply "a poor widow." God

then sat in the congregation of princes visibly as Judge; still He sits invisibly; yet a little while and again He will sit visibly. Now He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver; then He will acknowledge every gift He has purified and accepted. God will be no man's debtor.

Then will come to light, transfigured, every offering in righteousness:—the gold, frankincense, myrrh, of wise men; the boats and nets of fishermen; the money of the exchanger; the loaves and small fishes of disciples; the ointment and alabaster box of loving women; houses, lands, a cup of cold water. All riches which have spread wings and flown away as eagles towards heaven shall then reappear as treasures in heaven.

Beloved, yield thy time to God, for He
Will make eternity thy recompense;
Give all thy substance for His love, and be
Beatified past earth's experience.

✠

"*Hold fast that which is good.*"—Shall we fill our hands with possessions which

are not worth holding fast? Hands emptied by showing mercy to the poor are set free to hold fast what God will require of us; hearts emptied of self are prepared to receive and retain all He will demand: —that which is good, with the Thessalonians; the apostolic form of sound words, with Timothy; our profession, and confidence, and rejoicing of hope firm unto the end, with all faithful Christians.

✠

Christ is our fountainhead and our abyss; we begin in Him, we end in Him. What He maketh us, we are; what He bestoweth on us, we possess. We, as it were, pour and empty ourselves and our treasures into Him, yet we enrich Him not; what have we that we have not received? The gifts He gives us are and remain His; we only, ourselves, unless we abide in Him, retain neither life nor portion.

O Lord, what can I give, except Thou first furnish it? All is of Thy bounty, and but for Thine own gifts we can have no gift for Thee. I beseech Thee to give us

each some good gift, and receive it back as our gift to Thee.

✠

When the pinch of famine comes, they will be prepared to bear it who already for charity's sake have learned and practised to suffer hunger. They who have kept the Fast of God's choosing by dealing their bread to the hungry, will even in extremity know Whom they have trusted.

THE LIGHT OF PENITENCE

O JESUS, gone so far apart
  Only my heart can follow Thee,
That look which pierced St. Peter's heart
  Turn now on me.

Thou who dost search me through and
      through,
  And mark the crooked ways I went,
Look on me, Lord, and make me too
  Thy penitent.

Innocence hedged in Eden; sin breaking in through that hedge disparadised Paradise, so far as mortal man was concerned.

Guilt hedges in the world; penitence breaking in through that hedge recovers and re-enters Paradise, now made the anteroom of Heaven.

Can peach renew lost bloom,
Or violet lost perfume ?
Or sullied snow turn white
As overnight ?

Man cannot compass it, but never fear;
The leper Naaman
Shows what God will and can;—
God who worked there is working here.

✠

To me, to most of us, the heritage of penitence is of more practical importance than the heritage of innocence.

Innocence we cannot recover, but purity and guilelessness we, by God's help, may: and if these graces have led the innocent to glory, us also they may yet lead to glory.

Whiteness most white: ah, to be clean again
In mine own sight and God's most holy sight!
To reach through any flood of fire or pain
Whiteness most white!

Lord, not to-day; yet some day bliss for bane
Give me; for mortal frailty give me might;
Give innocence for guilt, and for my stain
Whiteness most white.

✠

Repentance is the particular form of obedience practicable by even the most imperfect.

Lord, I repent; help Thou mine impenitence!

Whoso hath anguish is not dead in sin, . . .
Red heat of conflagration may begin,
Melt that hard heart, burn out the dross within;
Permeate with glory the new man entire,

"Whiteness most white: ah, to be clean again!"—*Page* 168.

Crown him with fire, mould for his hands
a lyre
Of fiery strings to sound with those who
win.
Anguish is anguish, yet potential bliss,
Pangs of desire are birth-throes of de-
light:
Those citizens felt such who walk in
white,
And meet but no more sunder with a kiss;
Who fathom still unfathomed mysteries,
And love, adore, rejoice, with all their
might.

✠

Good Lord, to-day
I scarce find breath to say:
Scourge, but receive me!
For stripes are hard to bear, but worse
Thy intolerable curse,
So do not leave me!

Good Lord, lean down
In pity, though Thou frown;
Smite, but retrieve me;
For so Thou hold me up to stand
And kiss Thy smiting hand,
It less will grieve me.

"*To him that overcometh will I give . . . a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*"

"Lord, shall there be a secret between Thee and me?"

"Soul, is there not now already a secret between Me and thee? I know thy name now, whether thou be Impenitent Sinner or Sinful Penitent. I know it now, but none other knoweth it fully; neither dost thou fully know it. Hereafter, if thou be of those who overcome, thou shalt know even as thou art known."

"Lord, I pray Thee, make me now what it will please Thee to call me then!"

Before the beginning Thou didst see the end,
Before the birthday the deathbed was seen of Thee;
Cleanse what I cannot cleanse, mend what I cannot mend,
O Lord All-merciful, be merciful to me!
While the end is drawing nigh I know not my end,

Birth I recall not, my death I cannot
foresee;
O God, arise to defend, arise to befriend,
O Lord All-merciful, be merciful to me!

✠

On the dead for whom Thou diedst, Lord Jesus, have mercy.

Ont he living, for whom Thou ever livest, have mercy.

Thou who wast arraigned before an unjust judge, O Incorruptible Judge, have mercy.

Thou who knowest what is in man, O Son of Man, have mercy:

On the great, mercy: on the small, mercy.

Thou who art unlike us in Thy sinlessness, on us sinners have mercy.

Thou who art like us in Thy Humanity, on us Thy brethren and sisters, have mercy.

And whatsoever we lack, let us not lack Thy mercy. Amen.

✠

My faith burns low, my hope burns low,
Only my heart's desire cries out in me,—

By the deep thunder of its want and woe
Cries out to Thee.

Lord, Thou art life, though I be dead,
Love's fire Thou art, however cold I be;
Nor heaven have I, nor place to lay my head,
Nor home—but Thee.

✠

"*The books were opened.*"—My page in the Book of Works is to me awful; . . . it is my life's record without oversights, without false entries or suppressions: any good set down accurately as good; all evil, unless erased by Divine Compassion, set down accurately as evil. Nothing is there but what I have genuinely endeavored, compassed, done, been. I meant it all, though I meant not to meet it again face to face.

Blot out our evil works from Thy Book of Works, and have mercy, O God! Write our names in Thy Book of Life, and have mercy. Amen.

✠

There is no Divine promise which penitence may not claim; no height, no depth of Divine Love secluded from penitence.

I dare not then say simply, Penitence may;—I am driven to say with self-mistrust and trembling, Penitence *must*, on pain of ultimate rejection, recover purity and guilelessness.

My God, my God, have mercy on my sin,
For it is great; and if I should begin
To tell it all, the day would be too small
To tell it in.

My God, Thou wilt have mercy on my sin
For Thy love's sake; yea, if I should begin
To tell *this* all, the day would be too small
To tell it in!

✠

Loss is never simply recouped; the precise forfeit is not restored. Loss may remain irretrievable, or it may be more than compensated.

Trembling before Thee we fall down to adore Thee,
Shamefaced and trembling we lift our eyes to Thee:

O First and with the last! annul our ruined
past,
Rebuild us to Thy glory, set us free
From sin and from sorrow to fall down and
worship Thee.
Full of pity view us, stretch Thy sceptre to
us,
Bid us live that we may give ourselves to
Thee;
O Faithful Lord and True! stand up for
us and do,
Make us lovely, make us new, set us free,
Heart and soul and spirit, to bring all and
worship Thee.

LIGHT FROM THE CROSS

If we could forget the Tree of Life, can we forget that tree of death whereon Christ hung so that He might become our Life ?

What is it Jesus saith unto the soul ?—
"Take up thy cross, and come and follow Me."
One word He saith to all men, none may be
Without a cross, yet hope to reach the goal.
Then heave it bravely up, and brace thy whole
Body to bear, it will not weigh on thee
Past strength; or if it crush thee to thy knee,
Take heart of grace, for grace shall be thy dole.

No cross, no crown; no humiliation, no glory:—Such is the rule for fallen man. And Christ, who took upon Himself our nature and calls us brethren, exempted not Himself from the common lot. He willed thus to become like us; we by following Him shall in our turn put on a measure of His likeness. To-day He denies not His beloved crosses and humiliations: to-mor-

row what will He deny to them whom He invests with crowns and glory? "*What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor?*"

✠

The Bride is exhibited as arraying herself "in fine linen, bright and pure." Righteous acts have woven that lustrous linen, acts of all saints from the beginning to the end. Spotless and radiant now, it has been steeped in tears and bleached in the heat of the day; woven and at length without flaw from the top throughout, it forms one fair unbroken web; but held up to that light which manifests all works, behold! its warp and woof have not been wrought into a perfect whole except by the interweaving of cross threads—of crosses.

The acts and crosses of every day, your acts and crosses and my own, are capable of reappearing in that achieved glory.

✠

Every cross after its kind: the one Cross has ramified into unnumbered crosses.

Thy Cross cruciferous doth flower in all
And every cross, dear Lord, assigned to us;
Our lowly statured crosses, Thine, how tall . . .
Thy Cross alone life-giving, glorious!
For love of Thine souls love their own when small,
Easy, and light, or great and ponderous.

✠

"*The city lieth four-square.*"—That city's angles therefore are right angles. Turn such angles inward from circumference to centre, and they form a perfect cross.

The cross is the nucleus of heaven. Already faith beholds it thus, and loves it for that which it is, and for that which shall unfold from it. Angles inward, the cross of probation; angles outward, the square of perfection.

✠

Deeds wrought in God become eminently glorious when wrought under stress of sorrow with patience, with faith, hope, and charity. Such affliction will turn to

gladness, such sifting and testing will certify, such poverty will enrich.

Lord, what have I to offer?—sickening fear
And a heart-breaking loss.
Are these the cross Thou givest me?—then dear
I will account this cross.

✠

"*Even as I also overcame.*"—It is Thou, Lord, who sayest, "Even as I"; for which of us had dared to say it? Thou overcamest in our stead, and happy are we if we overcome in Thy strength. Thou overcamest for us without our help, and Thou wilt overcome in us and by us except we hinder.

✠

I bore with thee long, weary days and nights,
Through many pangs of heart, through many tears;
I bore with thee—thy hardness, coldness, slights—
For three-and-thirty years.

Who else had dared for thee what I have
dared ?
I plunged the depth most deep from bliss
above;
I not my flesh, I not my spirit spared,—
Give thou Me love for love.

Nailed to the racking cross—than bed of
down
More dear, whereon to stretch Myself
and sleep,—
So did I win a kingdom,—share my crown;
A harvest,—come and reap.

✠

"*No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*"—The cross we have shouldered we must not lay down. The burnt sacrifice we have become we must continue to be, though offered on a slow fire. Nor dare we say: "It is finished," until Christ Himself shall say concerning us: "It is finished."

✠

Thou who didst hang upon a barren tree,
My God, for me,

Though I till now be barren, now at length,
Lord, give me strength
To bring forth fruit to Thee.

Thou who didst bear for me the crown of thorn,
Spitting and scorn,
Though I till now have put forth thorns, yet now
Strengthen me Thou,
That better fruit be borne.

✠

"*Not quickened except it die.*"—Every seed after its kind: the Corn of Wheat which died is replenishing the world's wide harvest-field.

LIGHT FOR THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

If Christ hath died, His brethren well may
die,
Sing in the gate of death, lay by
This life without a sigh.

Parallels cannot converge. If Christ, the Life, occupy and pervade us, death cannot annex us. Death may run alongside of us all our days, and hold out hands of invitation to seduce us, or clench fists and raise an outcry as if it could do us a mischief; but death and Christ's members tend to different points; and there is nothing it can really effect to harm us so long as we cleave to Christ by faith, lean on Him by faith, hold Him fast and not let Him go by love.

It is not death, O Christ, to die for Thee;
Nor is that silence of a silent land
Which speaks Thy praise so all may understand.
Darkness of death makes Thy dear lovers see
Thyself who wast and art, and art to be . . . .
Death is not death, and therefore do I hope,

Nor silence silence, and I therefore sing
A very humble, hopeful, quiet psalm,—
Searching my heart-field for an offering.

✠

"*To-day*," said our Lord, "*shalt thou be with me in paradise.*"

Heaven is not far, though far the sky
Overarching earth and main;
It takes not long to live and die,
Die, revive, and live again.

And on the birthday of life immortal, anguish of pain shall be forgotten for joy of being born into the eternal world.

✠

If Christ had not died, it might have appeared almost the chief of human exemptions not to die; but since Christ elected to die, which of us would dare choose not to die, as though to be less Christlike could be more excellent?

If Christ hath died, His brethren well may die,
Sing in the gate of death, lay by

"If Christ hath died, His brethren well may die."—*Page* 186.

This life without a sigh:
For Christ hath died, and it is good to die,
To sleep whenso He lays us by,
Then wake without a sigh.

✠

"*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.*"—Blessed the death, be it what it may, whereby one by one the long, not half-recorded series of the elect die in the Lord,—workers wearing out inch by inch; the sick wrung by agony or burdened with long-drawn weariness; men suffering the more because strength holds out, women the more because weakness shrinks; children in their degree but spared foresight. We understand at a glance how blessed it is for these to "die in the Lord."

Yea; and blessed also it is for these, and such as these, to live! Life is their work-day, and their works will follow them.

✠

All weareth, all wasteth,
All flitteth, all hasteth,

All of flesh and time;
Sound, sweet heavenly chime,
Ring in the unutterable, eternal prime.

Man hopeth, man feareth,
Man droopeth:—Christ cheereth,
Compassing release,
Compassing with peace,
Promising rest where strife and anguish cease.

Saints waking, saints sleeping,
Rest well in safe keeping;—
Well they rest to-day,
While they work and pray,—
But their to-morrow's rest what tongue shall say?

✠

Sometimes the harvest is white and garnered before the harvest months are fulfilled. Sometimes it stands unreaped long after we would fain have chanted harvest-home. Thank God that "the reapers are the angels" and not our short-sighted selves, and that not even angels may reap unsent.

Bitter is it to long for life and die; more bitter is it to long for death and it cometh not. Christ in His boundless mercy preserve us through bitterness of life from bitterness of death.

Bitterness that may turn to sweetness is better than sweetness that must turn to bitterness.

Nothing which can end is unbearable.

✠

Man cannot fully live "except first he die."

To seek death is sinful; yet to desire it may be saintly.

From rebellious death, sudden death, lifeless death, good Lord, deliver us.

✠

"Seek Him that . . . turneth the shadow of death into the Morning."

O Christ, the Resurrection and the Life, Light of the world and of every man that cometh into the world, call Thy dead out of darkness of death into light of life. Say once again, "Let there be light," and there shall be light.

O Christ our Light, whom even in darkness we
(So we look up) discern and gaze upon,
O Christ, Thou loveliest Light that ever shone,
Thou Light of light, Fount of all lights that be,
Grant us clear vision of Thy light to see!

✠

"*The keys . . . of death.*"—No key need be preserved to the end were the door not at last to be reopened. Many times opened to admit, once for all it will be opened to release. "*There is hope in thine end.*"

The goal in sight! Look up and sing,
Set faces full against the light,
Welcome with rapturous welcoming
The goal in sight.

Let be the left, let be the right;
Straight forward make your foosteps ring
A loud alarum through the night.

Death hunts you, but is reft of sting;
Your bed is green, your shroud is white:

Hail, Life and Death and all that bring
The goal in sight!

✠

He who was made like unto us knoweth whereof we are made. He feels with us as well as for us; He died, as we all must die; He lives again, as by His grace we all may rise to life everlasting. . . . His death and His life as it were salute us:

O ye dead, believe on Me and ye shall live; O ye living, believe and ye shall never die.

LIGHT FROM PARADISE

Oh, for the grapes of the True Vine
  Growing in Paradise,
Whose tendrils join the Tree of Life
  To that which maketh wise,—
Growing beside the Living Well
  Whose sweetest waters rise
  Where tears are wiped from tearful eyes.

"I believe in the Communion of Saints."

Lord, make me one with Thine own faithful ones,
Thy saints who love Thee and are loved by Thee,
Till the day break and the shadows flee,—
At one with them in alms and orisons,
At one with him who toils and him who runs,
And him who yearns for union yet to be,
At one with all who throng the crystal sea
And wait the setting of our moons and suns.
Ah, my belovèd ones gone on before,
Who looked not back with hand upon the plough,
If beautiful to me while still in sight,
How beautiful must be your aspects now!
Your unknown, well-known aspects in that light
Which clouds shall never cloud for evermore!

In the perfected Communion of Saints, surely the general glory of all will satisfy, no less than the special glory proper to each will recreate. I could no more imagine a perfected saint so immersed in universal love as to be rapt out of the particular, than so absorbed in particular love as to be estranged from the universal.

One with another, soul with soul,
  They kindle, fire from fire;
Friends watch us who have touched the goal;
  They urge us, Come up Higher.
With them shall rest our waysore feet,
  With them is built our home,
With Christ. They sweet, but He most sweet,
  Sweeter than honeycomb.

There no more parting, no more pain,
  The distant ones brought near,
The lost so long are found again—
  Long lost but longer dear:
Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard,
  Nor heart conceived that rest,—

With them our good things long deferred,
With Jesus Christ our Best.

✠

It is a comfortable and Divine promise that "when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Recognition, then, is one revealed point of Christ-likeness: He recognizing us, we must all recognize Him. And because "every one that is perfect shall be as His Master," surely that supreme beatific recognition involves all congruous blessed recognitions; Christ recognizing us all, we should so far be un-Christlike if we recognized not each other.

Each with his own, not with another's heart,
Each with his own, not with another's face,—
O faces unforgotten, if to part
Wrung sore, what will it be to re-embrace!

✠

"*A friend loveth at all times.*"—Let us thank God that this blessed text is without

limitation. Once loving, we cannot love too long. Death and the grave need make no difference. "Out of sight, *in* mind," would be a proverb worthy of Christians.

Safe where I cannot lie yet,
  Safe where I hope to lie too,
Safe from the fume and the fret—
  You and you,
Whom I never forget.

Safe from the frost and the snow,
  Safe from the storm and the sun,
Safe where the seeds wait to grow
  One by one,
And to come back in blow.

✠

In that veiled land saints abide. Some saints who loved us on earth are there, saints whom we loved and love. If we call, they do not answer. Surely one reason why they neither appear nor audibly respond to our desolate cry may be that, if it is hard for us now to love supremely God whom we see not, it would be yet harder were those who, even in His eyes,

are lovely and desirable, to woo us heaven-ward with unforgotten familiar human tenderness.

This separation to them is not grievous, and for us it is safe.

If I should say, "My heart is in a grave,"
I turn away from Jesus risen to save;
I slight that death He died for me;
I, too, deny to see
His beauty and desirability.
O Lord, whose heart is deeper than my heart,
Draw mine to worship where Thou art.

✠

Who would wish back the saints upon our rough
Wearisome road?
Wish back a breathless soul
Just at the goal?
My soul, praise God
For all dear souls who have enough.

I would not fetch one back to hope with me
A hope deferred,

To taste a cup that slips
From thirsting lips:
Hath he not heard
And seen what was to hear and see ?

How could I stand to answer the rebuke,
If one should say:
" O friend of little faith,
Good was my death,
And good my day
Of rest, and good the sleep I took " ?

✠

Hidden from the darkness of our mortal sight,
Hidden in the Paradise of lovely light,
Hidden in God's presence, worshipped face to face,
Hidden in the sanctuary of Christ's embrace :
Up, O Wills! to track him home amid the blest;
Up, O Hearts! to know him in the joy of rest;
Where no darkness more shall hide him from our sight,

"Unspotted lambs to follow the one Lamb."—*Page* 201.

Where we shall be love with love and light
with light,
Worshipping our God together face to face,
Wishless in the sanctuary of Christ's em-
brace.

✠

These babes: speech was scarcely in their mouths, much less guile. On earth their feet could barely have trotted or tottered after a literal lamb. . . . Who now beholds them sees them "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." Hath He gone up to glory? so have they: to dominion and power? so have they. Their grace is eternized, their lustre eternized, their feet rank with wings, their speech has become song.

Unspotted lambs to follow the one Lamb,
Unspotted doves to follow the one
Dove;
To whom Love saith, "Be with Me where
I am,"
And lo! their answer unto Love is love.

For though I know not any note they
know,

Nor know one word of all their song above,
I know Love speaks to them, and so
I know the answer unto Love is love.

✠

"The Paradise of God":—were it not
"of God" it would not be Paradise.

Joy to thee, Paradise,
Garden and goal and nest!
Made green for wearied eyes;
Much softer than the breast
Of mother-dove clad in a rainbow's dyes.

All precious souls are there
Most safe, elect by grace,
All tears are wiped forever from their face:
Untired in prayer
They wait and praise,
Hidden for a little space.

Boughs of the Living Vine,
They spread in summer-shine
Green leaf with leaf:
Sap of the Royal Vine, it stirs like wine
In all, both less and chief.

Sing to the Lord,
  All spirits of all flesh, sing!
For He hath not abhorred
  Our low estate nor scorned our offering:
  Shout to our King.

✠

There is dignity, joy, comfort, a present blessing, and a future beatitude in the Communion of Saints.

To us each unforgotten memory saith:
  "Learn as we learned in life's sufficient school;
  Work as we worked in patience of our rule;
Walk as we walked, much less by sight than faith;
Hope as we hoped despite our slips and scathe,
  Fearful in joy and confident in dule.
I know not if they see us or can see;
  But if they see us in our painful day,
    How, looking back to earth from Paradise,
    Do tears not gather in those loving eyes?—

Ah, happy eyes! whose tears are wiped
away
Whether or not you bear to look on me.

So may my soul nurse patience day by day,
Watch on and pray,
Obedient and at peace;
Living a quiet life in hope, in faith,
Loving till death,
When life, not love, shall cease.

✠

O Lord God Omniscient, I thank Thee on behalf of all those who have not felt or who no longer are called on to endure the pang of bereavement. I thank Thee for ourselves, who humbly trust that some we love rest safely in Paradise. Whom grant us grace to follow. Amen.

LIGHT FROM TIME

Be wise betimes, and with the bee
Suck sweets from prickly tree,
To last when earth's are flown;
So God well pleased will own
Your work, and bless not time alone
But ripe eternity.

What is Time? It is not subtracted from Eternity; neither is it substituted awhile for Eternity. Perhaps I shall not mislead my own thoughts by defining it as that condition or aspect of Eternity which consists with the possibility of probation.

Time seems not short
  If so I call to mind
  Its vast prerogative to loose or bind,
And rear and strike amort
  All humankind.

Time seems not long
  If I peer out and see
  Sphere within sphere, Time in Eternity,
And hear the alternate song
  Cry endlessly.

✠

"*There shall be no night there.*"—Days which alternate with nights make up time, —time fraught with danger at its best.

This temporal mortal life needs restrictions as it were both by day and night.

This is twilight that we know,
  Scarcely night and scarcely day;
This hath been from long ago
  Shed around man's way.

This is twilight: be it so,—
  Suited to our strength our day;
Let us follow on to know,
  Patient by the way.

✠

Heaven and earth alike are chronometers.

Heaven marks time in light, by the motion of luminaries.

Earth marks time in darkness, by the variation of shadows.

To these chronometers of nature art adds clocks, with faces easily discernible and voices insistently audible.

Nature and art combine to keep time for us, and yet . . . we lose time, we waste time, we kill time, we do anything

and everything with time except "redeem the time."

Yet time is short and swift, and never returns.

(If time is short, many tempers are yet shorter!)

Our life is long.—Not so wise angels say,
Who watch us waste it, trembling while they weigh
Against eternity one squandered day.

Our life is long.—Not so the saints protest,
Filled full of consolation and of rest:
"Short ill, long good, one long unending best."

Our life is long.—Christ's word sounds different:
"Night cometh; no more work when day is spent."
Repent and work to-day; work and repent.

✠

In so far as time is long, I comprehend that it suffices for the work of salvation. In so far as it is short, I comprehend that it contains not one superfluous moment.

Heaven's chimes are slow, but sure to strike at last;
Earth's sands are slow, but surely dropping through;
And much we have to suffer, much to do,
Before the time be past.

Chimes that keep time are neither slow nor fast;
Not many are the numbered sands nor few;
A time to suffer, and a time to do,
And then the time is past.

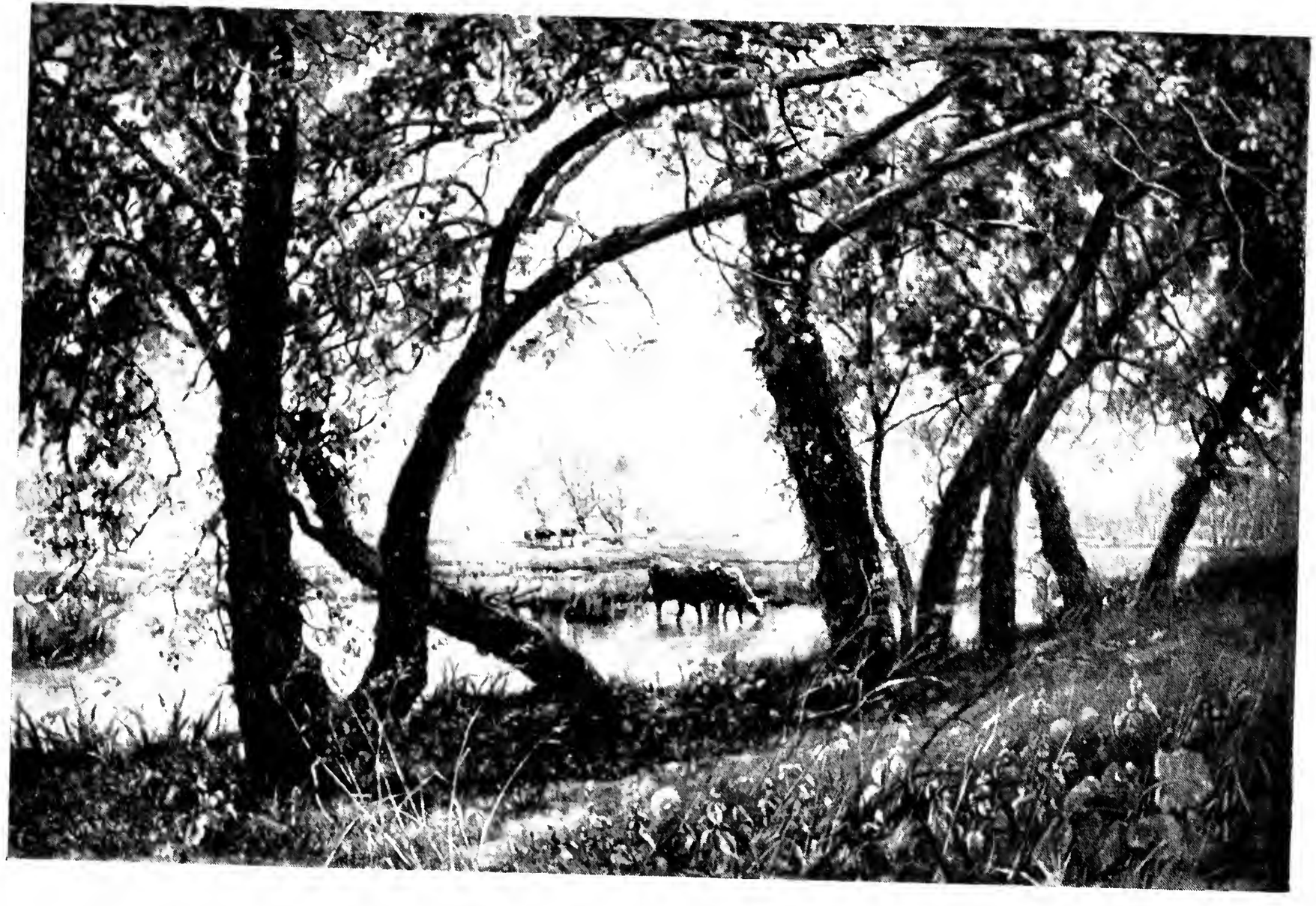
✠

Much of earth will find no entrance into heaven. Not sin alone; things which have been allowable, inevitable, even expedient, will yet have to perish in the using. To cling tenaciously to such as these, then, is disproportionate; to cling passionately is idolatrous.

From building on the sand, and not on the rock; from gaining though it were the whole world and losing our own soul,

Deliver us, Lord Jesus.

From cleaving to anything apart from



"Though the things which are seen are temporal, yet ——."—*Page* 210.

Thee, from loving anything incompatible with Thee,
Deliver us, Lord Jesus.

Time passeth away with its pleasure and pain,
Its garlands of cypress and bay,
With wealth and with want, with a balm and a bane,
Time passeth away.

Eternity cometh to stay,
Eternity stayeth to go not again:
Eternity barring the way,

Arresting all courses of planet or main,
Arresting who plan or who pray,
Arresting creation,—while, grand in its wane,
Time passeth away.

✠

"*Till I come.*"—How long is that "till"? We cannot compute its days, weeks, months, years. But this we know: the remainder of time is the extent of that "till"; all eternity is the fulness of the

thereafter. Is time long? It may seem so, until it ends. Is eternity long? It is so, for it ends not.

Short is time, and only time is bleak;
  Gauge the exceeding height thou hast to
    climb;
Long eternity is nigh to seek,—
  Short is time.

✠

"*Behold, I come quickly.*"—Not the creature of time, but only the Lord of time and eternity can pronounce upon what is or is not quickly brought to pass. At eighteen we think a year long, at eighty we think it short: what terminable duration would seem long to us, what such duration would not seem short, if we had already passed out of time into eternity? Wherefore only He who saith "quickly" can define "quickly."

✠

"*And the angel . . . sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever . . . that there should be time no longer.*"

Time lengthening, in the lengthening
seemeth long,
But ended time will seem a little space,—
A little while from morn to evensong,
A little while that ran a rapid race,
A little while when once Eternity
Denies proportion to the other's pace:
Eternity to be and be and be,
Ever beginning, never ending still,
Still undiminished far as thought can see.

✠

"*From Him which is, and which was, and which is to come.*"—Parallel with creatures, with time, with all beginnings and all ends, abides the eternal "is." We, creatures of time, who might instinctively have written "was—is—is to come," are thus helped, not indeed to understand, but to adore, the inconceivable, eternal, absolute unchangeableness of God.

Lo, if our God be love through heaven's
long day,
Love is He through our mortal pilgrim-
age,

Love was He through all eons that are told:
We change, but Thou remainest; for Thine age
Is, Was, and Is to come, nor new, nor old:
We change, but Thou remainest, yea and yea!

LIGHT FROM ETERNITY

FEEL sure that heaven will be better than earth; and that if any earthly good reappear not there, it will be superseded, not lost.

I will not look unto the sun
  Which setteth night by night;
In the untrodden courts of heaven
  My crown shall be more bright:
Lo, in the New Jerusalem,
  Founded and built aright,
  My very feet shall tread on light.

We live after a sort, but all the while we are dying. We who dying live can form no true conception of what the true, full, unstricken, undying life will be. Life, though along with many pleasures and alleviations, is now a matter of pains and aches, hunger and thirst, faintness and weariness;—this is the life we experience. That other life will not be such; we realize not yet what it shall be.

What will it be, O my soul, what will it be
To touch the long-raced-for goal, to handle
and see!
To rest in the joy of joys, in the joy of the
blest,
To rest and revive and rejoice, to rejoice
and to rest!

✠

Earth at its loftiest and loveliest is still only earth: and though God's appointment makes it "good for us to be here," in

itself and compared with the lowest place
in heaven earth is not good.

We know not when, we know not where,
  We know not what that world will be,
But this we know: it will be fair
  To see.

With heart athirst and thirsty face
  We know and know not what shall be;—
Christ Jesus bring us of His grace
  To see!

Christ Jesus bring us of His grace
  Beyond all prayers our hope can pray,
One day to see Him face to face,—
  One day.

✠

"*I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire.*"—Fire is added not to consume, but is "mingled" with that sea to illuminate, flash, augment beauty; even as the fiery, milky opal would not be half itself without its spark. For Redemption now exceeds Creation, and the fiery trial through which the elect have pressed after

Christ, being past as a trial, endures as a perpetual splendor. None but victors stand upon that sea.

An untroubled sea, or it could not be of glass; a pure sea, or it could not be of crystal.

✠

"*And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God.*"—New Jerusalem has been gathered from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven; stone by stone, soul by soul, here a little and there a little. Laps of luxury, fires of temptation, ease of riches, squalor of destitution, mountains of difficulty, valleys of humiliation,—each has sent up its prefixed weight, number, measure, nothing lacking, nothing over. . . . Behold her, and also thyself, O thou called to be a saint! Her perfections are thy birthright; thou art what she was; what she is thou mayest become.

A lovely city in a lovely land,
Whose citizens are lovely, and whose King
Is Very Love. . . .

A bower of roses is not half so sweet,
A cave of diamonds doth not glitter so,
Nor Lebanon is fruitful set thereby:
And thither thou, beloved, and thither I
May set our heart and set our face, and go
Faint yet pursuing home on tireless feet.

✠

What will it be at last for citizens of all cities upon earth to see a "holy" city! Truly as yet this also "eye hath not seen"; nor is so much as one material foundation-stone laid of such.

Nevertheless whoever seeks citizenship at last in that all-holy city must now day by day watch, pray, labor, agonize, it may be, to sanctify his allotted dwelling in his present "mean city."

"*The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal*"—there. Here, human works and ways are deplorably out of relative proportion. Pride towers, Anger spurns barriers, Avarice burrows, Lust saps limits, Gluttony overheaps the measure, Sloth drones out of time.

Yet length, breadth, height, are settled quantities not amenable to mortal whims and ways. O Man, O Woman, whether thou be acute-angled or obtuse-angled, accommodate thyself betimes to thine optional habitat; for if thou fit not thyself to it by rectification of every line and angle, it will not fit itself to thee by so much as a hairbreadth. Meanwhile be of good cheer. "*Twelve thousand furlongs*" may suffice thee for space. If here thou must be squeezed and stretched to bring thee into shape, look outward and upward to the ensuing amplitude.

✠

"*The city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.*"—Earthly gold is opaque, heavenly gold translucent; yet a blessed alchemy resorted to betimes transmutes the baser into the more precious: "Give alms; provide yourselves . . . a treasure in the heavens that faileth not."

"Pure gold" and "clear glass" alike have stood the fire.

✠

"*The twelve gates were twelve pearls.*"—

Since in this world pearls are not to be clung to and delighted in, so by a figure even those celestial pearls show forth how God prepares better things for His dutiful children,—a gate is to be passed through, not to be resided in.

I long for pearls, but not from mundane sea;
I long for palms, but not from earthly mould;
Yet in all else I long for, long for Thee,
Thyself to hear and worship and behold, . . .
Or if not thus for Thee, yet Thee I pray
To make me long so.

The "gates" bear perpetual witness that man inhabits heaven not of right but of grace. The open gates bear permanent witness to human free will, still free even when made indefectible. "A brother or sister is not under bondage,"—love alone constrains such. The gate of Eden honors Law; the gates of New Jerusalem honor Love.

"*That great city . . . had a wall great and high.*"—That New Jerusalem has a wall expresses to me a local, distinct, defined heaven; not indiscriminate as were the waters before the formation of a continent, nor without form like void chaos; but a genuine home with recognizable features and amiabilities of a home meet for those who have weaned themselves from earth on the promise and faith of heaven.

Home by different ways, yet all
  Homeward bound through prayer and
    praise;
Young with old and great with small,
  Home by different ways.

✠

"*And the city had no need of the sun . . . for the glory of God did lighten it.*"—Be its plenary fulfilment far off or imminent, already man can bask in some farthest ray of this promised glory. Wean thyself from sensible objects, and thou shalt relish the unseen, untouched, unhandled. Look beyond the sun and moon, and thou shalt see greater things

than they. Stint bodily indulgence, and thou shalt enlarge spiritual capacity.

Lift up thine eyes to seek the invisible;
Stir up thy heart to choose the still unseen;
Strain up thy hope in glad, perpetual green
To scale the exceeding height where all saints dwell:
Saints, is it well with you ?—Yea, it is well.

✠

"*What are these which are arrayed in white robes?*"—In this world and from the children of this world such questions might mean: Are they common folk or gentry? learned or illiterate? vulgar or refined? worth or not worth knowing? The grave will give us a different view-point. There our shallow earthly question will receive its answer out of all mysteries and all knowledge.

If this be seemly and inevitable to-morrow, why not rectify and elevate our standard (my standard) to-day?

"Lift up thine eyes to seek the invisible."—*Page* 224.

As the voice of many waters all saints sing as one,
As the voice of an unclouded thundering;
Unswayed by the changing moon and unswayed by the sun,
As the voice of many waters all saints sing.

Where raiment is white of blood-steeped linen slowly spun,
Where crowns are golden of Love's own largessing,
Where eternally the ecstasy is but begun,
As the voice of many waters all saints sing.

A heaven of ceaseless music!—a monotonous heaven, a heaven of ceaseless, endless weariness, say some.

Is music monontonous? On the contrary, a monotone is not music. No single note, however ravishing, amounts to music; musical it may be, but not music. Change, succession, are of the essence of music. Therefore, when our Christian heaven is, by condescension to man's

limited conceptions, represented as a heaven of music, that very figure stamps it as a heaven not of monotony, but of variety. For in music one sound leads inevitably to a different sound; one harmony paves the way to a diverse harmony.

A heaven of music seems rather a heaven of endless progression, of inexhaustible variety, rather than of monotony.

✠

And wherefore have ye harps, and wherefore palms,
And wherefore crowns, O ye who walk in white?
"Because our happy hearts are chanting psalms,
Endless Te Deum for the ended fight;
While through the everlasting lapse of calms
We cast our crowns before the Lamb our Might."

✠

"*They rest not, . . . saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty.*"—I suppose by "rest not" we may understand cease not, pause not, flag not; their end-

less worship being an endless contentment, their labor a labor of love, their exploration of unfathomable mysteries as it were a skylark's ever-ascending flight.

Rapture and rest, desire and satisfaction, perfection and progress, may seem to clash to-day: to-morrow the paradoxes of earth may reappear as the demonstrations of heaven.

Once within, within for evermore:
There the long beatitudes begin;
Overflows the still unwasting store,
Once within.

✠

"*Surely I come quickly.*"—No hope or fear, faith or love of ours, is worthy to welcome Christ; yet woe is us if they welcome Him not. Woe is us if, amid and above the terror and clouds of His approach, we hail not His Presence as the very bow in the cloud.

And as sometimes a second bow, fainter, less perfect, farther off, appears in the train of the chief rainbow, so in His train will appear our lost beloved ones who loved us

much and Him much more,—a hem as it were to His garment, an outer edge to His glory, an overflow to our full cup of bliss.

Close, intimate, flawless as will be the communion of beatified saints with each other, still closer, more intimate, perfect, will be the communion between Christ and each saved soul. This is the supreme Fellowship which includes and entails the other; this is the supreme Union which the other is like unto.

Jesus alone: If thus it were to me,
Yet thus it cannot be;
Lord, I have all things if I have but Thee.

Jesus and all: Precious His bounties are,
Yet He more precious far:
Day's-eyes are many, one the Morning Star.

✠

"*They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; . . . for He hath prepared for them a city.*"

Lord, grant us eyes to see and ears to hear,
And souls to love and minds to understand,

And steadfast faces towards the Holy
Land,
And confidence of hope, and filial fear,
And citizenship where Thy saints appear
Before Thee heart in heart and hand
in hand.

Rule thyself: and already thou art king, freeman, citizen, of no mean city.

✠

No trace of solitude appears in the next life, the life that lives for ever. Whatever we know or know not about heaven, this beyond possibility of doubt is certified to us—it will contain a great multitude that no man can number, and these congregated into one body, one communion of saints. Nothing will ever any more separate them; not night, for there is no night there; not the sea, for they stand together upon that unearthly sea—"glass mingled with fire."

Lord, make us all love all, that when we
meet
Even myriads of earth's myriads round
Thy bar,

We may be glad as all true lovers are
Who, having parted, count reunion sweet,—
Safe gathered home around Thy blessed feet,
Come home by different paths from near and far.

For ever and ever, one by one, each soul a separate, self-conscious, loving, adoring, rejoicing entity: not a drop swallowed up in an ocean, a flame merged in a conflagration, but what it was that it is, and that it will be for ever and ever.

✠

If thus Thy saints have struggled home to peace,
Why should not I take heart to be as they ?
They too pent passions in a house of clay,
Fear and desire and pangs and ecstasies.

✠

"*And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne.*"

We know not a voice of that River,
If vocal or silent it be,
Where for ever and ever and ever
It flows to no sea.

Oh, goodly the banks of that River,
Oh, goodly the fruits that they bear,
Where for ever and ever and ever
It flows and is fair.

For lo, on each bank of that River
The Tree of Life life-giving grows,
Where for ever and ever and ever
The pure River flows.

✠

"Eye hath not seen": Yet man hath known and weighed
A hundred thousand marvels that have been:
What is it which the Word of Truth hath said
Eye hath not seen?

"Ear hath not heard": Yet harpings of delight,
Trumpets of triumph, song, and spoken word,—

Man knows them all: what lovelier, loftier might
Hath ear not heard ?

" Nor heart conceived ": Yet man hath now desired
Beyond all reach, beyond his hope believed,
Loved beyond death: what fire shall yet be fired
No heart conceived ?

" Deep calls to deep ": man's depth would be despair
But for God's greater depth. We sow to reap;
Have patience, wait, betake ourselves to prayer,—
Deep answers deep.

LIGHT HERE AND THERE

Be it good or ill, be it what you will,
It needs shall help me on my road.

Love still is love, whatever comes to pass.

"*I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.*"—We change, He changes not. Yet even in ourselves constitutional changeableness cannot annul a certain inherent unchangeableness, which so far corresponds with His in Whom we live and move and have our being; for "we are His offspring." His Immutability is reflected in our identity; as He cannot deny Himself, so we cannot deny ourselves. Rocks may fall on us, mountains cover us, but under rock and mountain remains the inextinguishable I.

✠

We need everything in Christ, nothing out of Christ: that is, we simply need Christ. To need is a blessed thing; to lack is quite a different thing. "*They that fear Him lack nothing.*"

In Thee God's promise is Amen and Yea:
What art Thou to us? Prize of every lot,

Shepherd and Door, our Life, and Truth,
and Way,—
Nay, Lord, what art Thou not ?

✠

"*There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.*"—I think one may view this silence as a figure of suspense. Reversing which proposition, I perceive that a Christian's suspense ought to present a figure of that silence. And if so, suspense should sustain my heart in heavenly peace even whilst fluttering over some spot of earth; and should become my method of worship when other modes fail me; and should be adopted by my free will whenever by God's will it befals me. . . . Faithful, loving suspense would be rich in evidence of things not seen and heard; and would neither hurry nor lag, but would contentedly maintain silence during its imposed half-hour.

A shorter time ? No, on pain of rashness. A longer time ? No, on pain of sullenness.

✠

God the Son clothed Himself with our

nature, to the intent that He might clothe us with His own.

Shall setting day win day that will not set?
  Poor price wert thou to spend thyself for Christ
  Had not His wealth thy poverty sufficed:
    Yet since He makes His garden of thy clod,
Water thy lily, rose, or violet,
  And offer up thy sweetness unto God.

✠

"*He said unto me: Write; for these words are true and faithful.*"—"True" is isolated, absolute, self-sufficient; "faithful" is relative, tenderly considerate. "True" is an announcement, "faithful" a promise.

In the Bible God condescends to employ multiform overtures of endearing graciousness, — wooing, beseeching, alluring, encouraging. We love beauty; He lavishes beauty on the sacred text. We desire knowledge; He tells us much, and promises that one day He will tell us all. We are conscious of feelings inexpressible and insatiable; He stirs up such feelings, at

once directing them and guaranteeing their ultimate satisfaction. He works upon us by what we can and by what we cannot utter; He appeals in us to what we can and what we cannot define.

O Lord Christ, who hast said: Take heed how ye hear.

Because Thou hast called us, give us grace to obey Thy call.

Because they that fear Thee lack nothing, give us grace to fear Thee.

Because they who seek Thee shall want no manner of thing that is good, give us grace to seek Thee until we find Thee.

Because Thou lovest them that love Thee, give us grace to love Thee.

Because Thou hast loved them that love Thee not, give us grace to love Thee: Amen.

✠

David exhorts us not to fret ourselves because of evil-doers: alas! he writes not down to the standard of those who fret themselves because of the upright.

From envy, hatred, and malice, Good Lord, deliver us.

It is folly to keep looking for discouragements away from our own misdeeds and shortcomings; yet if we do look around and do feel discouraged because neither clergy nor candidates for orders are all unselfish saints and undaunted heroes, can we hold ourselves altogether guiltless of their defects? May they not in turn look around and wonder that there are so few intercessors, so few to uphold the men "subject to like passions as we are," of whom we complain so fluently, and for whom we pray in stammers?

Let us pray.

✠

The Jerusalem of our day is Holy Church, the outward and visible Church Catholic. A net she is full of good and bad, a field green with tares and wheat, a floor laden with grain and chaff. In her the not-good are bad, the not-wheat is tares, the not-grain is chaff; in her they all are, but some of them are not of her; all borne with to-day, but some not to-morrow. Each of us inevitably is either good or else bad, is wheat or else a tare, is grain or else chaff.

A scandalous Christian is Satan's right hand to strengthen evil.

An inconsistent Christian is his left hand to weaken good.

✠

God made man, Satan unmade man, Christ remaketh man. Yet it is also true that man makes or unmakes himself by his own free-will.

From our foes protect us, from ourselves rescue us, Good Lord. Let not free-will turn to self-will and curse our blessings.

God harden me against myself,—
This coward with pathetic voice,
Who craves for ease and rest and joys;—

Myself, arch-traitor to myself,
My hollowest friend, my deadliest foe,
My clog, whatever road I go!

Yet One there is can curb myself,
Can roll the strangling load from me,
Break off the yoke, and set me free.

✠

In God's strength let us face the conse-

quences of our sins. For sins are worse than consequences.

Saints bewail unworthiness more than the penalty of unworthiness.

Worse was it for Babel to be built than to be destroyed.

✠

Empty space, neutral space, is impossible; it must be occupied by accumulating guilt or by repentance unto progressive amendment. Space is mine to-day by God's gift.

Lord, I repent; help mine impenitence.

✠

"*All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full.*"—Man is a still wider sea, a more insatiable abyss; this life and the resources of this life can never fill him.

✠

To know without experience is God-like. To know by experience is Christ-like. Christ being our Head, we His members, it beseems us to have the mind of Christ.

Lord, we are rivers running to Thy sea,
Our waves and ripples all derived from Thee;

A nothing we should have, a nothing be,
Except for Thee.

Sweet are the waters of Thy shoreless sea,
Make sweet our waters that make haste to Thee;
Pour in Thy sweetness that ourselves may be
Sweetness to Thee.

✠

Christ at His Ascension led captivity captive. Thenceforward voluntary captivity was constituted rebellion, so that not even towards God is the Christian spirit to be a spirit of bondage. "*If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*"

✠

Sand may curb excursiveness, but cannot serve for a foundation.

✠

There exists of the mezereon a certain foreign species whereof the inner bark resembles lace; insomuch that the women of the same region do actually make use of it for lace. . . . The plant becomes

our emblem of St. Peter's ideal matron "whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning . . . of putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart." The Creator of all good things has Himself decked a plant with hidden lace. Is the whole of our lace on the surface?

Reserve gems and pearls for immortality when thou shalt be as flawless as they. Adorn thyself meanwhile with flower-like graces: humility, the violet; innocence, the snowdrop; purity, the lily; with sweetness for a honeysuckle, with penitence for a fruitful thorn. To-day put on the garments of salvation prepared for thee, that to-morrow thou mayst be promoted to wear the garments of praise.

✠

Field-day harness and the parade-carrying of bows and arrows will profit a soldier nothing in the day of battle.

✠

"Lent."—Good as it is to understand one's own language, I feel neither incited

nor helped to observe Lent by being referred to a German root.

But when once (however erroneously) I connect the word with a loan,—that which, being lent, not bestowed, will some day be withdrawn,—then it sounds an alarm in my ears:

Forty chances to be used or abused.

Forty appeals to be responded to or resisted.

Forty battles to be lost or won.

Forty days to be utilized or wasted.

And then the account to be closed, and the result registered!

It is good to be last, not first,
  Pending the present distress;
It is good to hunger and thirst,
  So it be for righteousness.

It is good to spend and be spent,
  It is good to watch and to pray,—
Life and Death make a goodly Lent
  So it leads us to Easter Day.

✠

Though we might hesitate to define idolatry as the only sin, yet has every sin its

idolatrous side; be the sin what it may, its commission is something that is preferred before God.

✠

[Thy trouble] is a surface scourge: kiss the rod, and thou shalt abide as the profound sea whose surface is lashed and ploughed by winds, but whose depths repose in unbroken calm.

(Alas for shallow persons who are all surface!)

✠

Lord Jesus, grant that sweetness may acquaint us with such bitterness as Thou approvest, and that bitterness may be to us safeguard, not destroyer, of sweetness; until the bitterness of death pass and the sweetness of life eternal ensue, according to Thy will.

Half-bitterness we know, we know half-sweetness;
This world is all on wax, on wane;
When shall completeness round time's incompleteness,
Fulfilling joy, fulfilling pain?—

Lo, while we ask, life rolleth on in fleetness
To finished loss or finished gain!

✠

Perhaps our lot is cast in a narrow, galling groove. Yet better this, surely, than that we should dribble in all directions into mere slush and mire, come to worse than nothing ourselves, and swamp our neighborhood.

✠

To over-cultivate, develop, double a flower, destroys its fruitfulness. Such double flowers have no future.

✠

Dost thou thyself ask, "What good shall my life do me?" Resolve that, God speeding thee, it *shall* do thee good—to be numbered among the nations of the saved; and thou too shalt one day say, It is enough.

When all the overwork of life
Is finished once, and, fallen asleep,
We shrink no more beneath the knife,
But, having sown, prepare to reap:

Delivered from the crossway rough,
  Delivered from the thorny scourge,
  Delivered from the tossing surge,
Then shall we find (please God!) it is
      enough.

Not in this world of hope deferred,
  This world of perishable stuff;
Eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard,
  Nor heart conceived that full "enough":
Here moans the separating sea,
  Here harvests fail, here breaks the heart;
  There God shall join and no man part,
All one in Christ, so one (please God!)
      with me.

✠

"*The same shall be clothed with white raiment.*"—And how beautiful is whiteness for a garment! . . . Nevertheless whiteness is not an absence but rather a compendium of color. All tints, when united in a perfectly balanced harmony resolve themselves into whiteness, and consequently all tints can be re-developed from whiteness. Thus colorless light paints the rainbow. All color being latent in it, we

finally discern in its train every lovely hue and gradation of hues.

If thus it is with one word characteristic of heaven, how know we that it is not so with every word ?

✠

"*Let him that is athirst come.*"—Christ's word is pledged, the well of water is springing up to everlasting life, — what doth hinder ?

Nothing doth hinder, unless it be that I thirst not, neither go thither to draw. Free is the gift, but I also am free to accept or decline it.

"*I will give unto him that is athirst of the water of life freely.*"—The gift, being free, cannot be claimed; yet being by promise, the promise can be claimed. To desire the gift is to desire the terms of the gift. If I thirst not, at least let me thirst to thirst!

✠

A race it is—this life of ours—yet only to attain a goal, not to outrun competitors. On the contrary there is scarcely a greater

help to one's own running than to lend a hand to a halting brother or sister.

Oh, if our brother's blood cry out at us!
How shall we meet Thee who hast loved us all,
Thee whom we never loved, not loving him?
The unloving cannot chant with Seraphim,
Bear harp of gold or palm victorious,
Or face the vision beatifical.

✠

This present life is the first stage of the future, ever-during life. Strength, beauty, dignity, loveliness, delight, may be added, but added only to what we are, never to what we are not. What we essentially are in this world, that we shall be in the other; what here we absolutely are not, we shall not be there.

✠

Concerning Himself God proclaimed of old: "*I am that I am*"; and man's inherent feeling of personality seems in some

sort to attest and correspond to this revelation. I am what God constituted me, so that however I may have modified myself, yet do I remain the same I: it is I who live, it is I who must die, it is I who must arise again at the last day. I, rising out of my grave, must carry on that very life which was mine before I died, and of which death could not altogether snap the thread. Who I was, I am; who I am, I am; who I am, I must be for ever and ever.

✠

Every ending includes a solemn element. Every ending, cutting short, foreshadows the ending, cutting short of life. . . . When the end is come, the endless end, the end which is the final beginning, be Thy word to each of us, Come. In us see the travail of Thy soul, and be satisfied.

As rivers seek a sea they cannot fill,
  But are themselves filled full in its embrace,—
Absorbed, at rest, each river and each rill:
  Grant us such grace.

Grant, O Lord,
To man who must die, an ordered house;
To the faithless, faith;
To the faithful, confirmation of faith;
To those who weep, consolation;
To the elect, joy and gladness;
To the light-hearted, Thy fear and love;
To lonely persons, Thy most holy Presence;
To workers, good works;
To lovers, Divine Love;
To haters, godly hatred;
To Thy soldiers and servants, victory;
And after victory, peace. Amen.

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