

LESSONS OF PEACE IN THE SCHOOL OF AFFLICTION

by William Purton

Purton's devotional meditation guide designed for those experiencing illness and suffering, providing Scripture-based meditations, prayers, and hymns to help the afflicted understand and endure trials through God's peace.

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Lessons of Peace in the School of Affliction!

William Purton, 1868

PREFACE

In visiting the Sick I have often felt how helpful would be a book written specially for their use, containing Meditations on words of Holy Scripture, together with appropriate Prayers and Hymns. At a time when even "the grasshopper is a burden," the task of study is painful; and an Invalid shrinks from a large book, or pages printed in small type. Moreover, in weakness and weariness, it is comforting to have thoughts of peace suggested to us.

I humbly hope that the following pages may prove a help and comfort to some whom God would educate in the School of Affliction. May my readers learn more and more, as they are called to endure God's discipline. . .

to trust in His Word,

to love His peace,

and to glorify His Name.

Affliction, the Visitation of God "Affliction does not come forth from the dust — neither does trouble spring out of the ground." Job 5:6

Why has this trial come? How ought I to regard affliction? These questions are natural in seasons of suffering. Pain and sorrow make us ask in earnest the why and the wherefore of what befalls us. And so the soul finds a time of trial to be a time of education.

If anything can teach us anything, affliction's looks

Make us to look into ourselves so near;

Teach us to know ourselves, beyond all books,

Or all the learned schools that ever were.

Thoughts and feelings which have satisfied a man, are now tried — put to the proof — tested. If he prays for the Spirit's aid, he is taught and trained — learning by experience those truths which it most concerns him to know; and as a learner, he sets himself in earnest to feel the reality of the lessons which are appointed for him. The first lesson in the school of tribulation, is that affliction is the visitation of God. "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21

Nothing in any man's life comes to him by "chance." All things, both small and great, are under the control of God. He foresees, and limits, and disposes. What is sometimes called "good fortune,"

comes not by accident; neither does trouble spring out of the ground.

Am I healthy and prosperous? It is the will of God. Am I suffering in body or in mind? It is the Lord — let Him do what seems good unto Him. And this is the only answer that can be given to the weak and sorely tempted ones, whom one trial after another afflicts with increasing sorrows. "So it pleases God!" Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right! To the believer, Providence is not merely general and universal, but particular and personal. "Shall there be evil in a city — and the Lord has not done it?" Pestilence and famine are sent for the benefit of cities or nations — but the believer looks to his own particular afflictions also as the dispensations of Divine Providence. To myself, affliction comes as the special visitation of God; and, looking above second causes, the word of trust from my soul should go forth, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

Affliction must not therefore be received as a burden, laid on by a blind and cruel fate — it is given by the wise and loving Father. Nor must I regard it as a "misfortune" — as an unmixed evil, which comes by chance, and is to be received with unconcern. Affliction comes not forth of the dust — it is from God. It is sent in mercy and wisdom — yes, and in power. "For He bruises, but He binds up; He wounds, but His hands make whole." Job 5:18. And rich in lessons of comfort, of strength and of peace, is His visitation.

Such was the experience of Job. So shall I be taught by suffering, if I wait patiently to see the end of the Lord. For all things work together for good to His obedient children. Yes, ALL things.

O Lord my God, bless this trial which You have sent. Teach me to feel that Your hand is laid upon me. Help me to know that You are speaking unto my soul. May I look on affliction as Your Fatherly visitation — a token of Your love, and wisdom, and power.

Almighty Father, You have told me that all things are under Your control — not a sparrow falls to the ground unnoticed. You have said, "Fear not — neither be you of doubtful mind." Lord, teach me to believe in Your love for me. Oh, help me to feel Your wise guidance and control! And as You know it is the wish of Your servant to believe that all things work together for good to those who love You — so aid me to see that this affliction is sent for my good. Bless me with the prayer of confidence — Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening. O my God, increase my faith. Remove from me doubts and carnal-mindedness. May Your Spirit cleanse and sanctify my soul. Teach me to humbly submit to Your will. By patience and faith may I please You, submitting to sufferings because You send them.

Almighty God, hear me and bless me. Teach me that pain and sorrow are Your heavenly messengers. Enlighten my eyes, so that I may say of affliction — it is Your doing. To me, have You sent this. Not by chance, but in wisdom, and with loving purpose it has come. Oh, Lord, help me to believe this with my whole heart! May this be peace to my soul. Do with me what seems good to You. For strength or suffering; for pain, or weariness, or loneliness; in earthly prosperity or in the hour of sorrow and distress — still, O my God, help me to feel that my lot is wisely ordained. If it is in accordance with Your holy and blessed will — then remove this trial. But if You see fit still to afflict me — then teach me truly to pray, "May Your will be done!" Hear me, O God, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

'Tis not for me and my proud heart,

O mighty Lord! to choose my part;
But act well what you give.
'Tis not in my weak power to make
One step of the way I undertake,
Unless You do relieve.
What You have given, You can take,
And, when You will, new gifts can make,
All flows from You alone!
When You did give it, it was Thine;
When You retook it, 'twas not mine,
Your will in all be done.
Lord, let me then sit calmly down,
And rest contented with my own,
That is what You allow:
Keep You my mind serene, and free
Often to think on Heaven and Thee,
And what You there bestow. The Blessings of Patience!

"Tribulation works patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." Romans 5:4

"Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy." James 5:10-11 When great sorrows came upon righteous Job, he did not complain. There was no word of rebellion against God, when messenger after messenger brought tidings of evil. All his property lost, his servants slain, his sons dead! Yet the good man sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. Dark and mysterious was the painful visitation. Why sore distress came to his house, and grievous sickness to himself — he could not understand. But, out of the depths arose the word of trust; in the midst of his woe, and pain, and loneliness, and (worse than all) temptations — the bereaved and sorely-stricken soul felt that affliction was the Divine messenger. Job received his burdens from the hand of God. "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21

We, for whose comfort Job's experience was written, know how it was that the patriarch was afflicted, and have seen the end of the Lord. There was a purpose to be fulfilled — an end to be brought about. We learn that howsoever mysterious our sufferings may be — they are not sent without a wise and loving purpose. Afflictions may be mysterious — but not purposeless. Our own

is the fault, if they are profitless; for the outcome of the believer's affliction — the end of the Lord — is the humility and confidence of patience. Yes! rich in truest blessings is submission to God's will. We count them happy who endure.

Oh, that I may feel the happiness of endurance — the peace of waiting patiently under the rod of correction! Oh, for faith to realize that troubles come to me in mercy! I desire to feel that I am being chastened — and chastened in tender love. So may my own soul prove that the Almighty is the Father of mercies.

It may not be with me as it was with Job, so far as concerns this world's good things. Twice as much of things temporal as he had before — God gave him after the season of his appointed trial. But from me, health and strength and other temporal goods may be taken away forever. It may be, that my work now is to prepare for departure; or my lot may be one of long continued sufferings — even so may I prove, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. His purpose is wise and loving. He cannot err — and He cannot be unkind. And as I read the Holy Scriptures, may I see how true is the verse, "All whom the Lord loves, He chastens." So may I learn to take up my cross — and to endure the trials of my lot. And if I am to be an example of suffering affliction — then may God's will be done — in His way — and in His time! As he gave strength to the Prophets to overcome their sufferings, and to turn them to His glory — even so will He bless me.

Lord, teach me to pray. Help me to strive after patience. Give me true faith. Bless me with the quietness of assurance. Oh, help me to wait patiently upon You! May I learn by experience that You love me. May I prove that all Your ways are faithful and kind. From restlessness, and impatience, and doubts, and selfishness — good Lord, deliver me.

O Holy Spirit, comfort me in reading the words of life. Help me to read so as to learn and inwardly digest. Show me the mercy of afflictions. May the Prophets whom You inspired, be to me examples of suffering affliction and of patience. Cleanse me from earthly and sensual desires — strengthen me with trust and heavenly rest. Comfort me — and, day by day, teach me to endure — even me; so that by meekness, and hope, and humility, I may give glory to God.

Hear me, O God, and bless me. Bless me indeed. Give to me those mercies which You see I stand in need of. Lighten my darkness with the light of Your countenance — and make me more and more to rejoice in You, and to love Your name.

Graciously accept my prayers, O heavenly Father, and help me with true thankfulness to praise You, for Your dear Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

O Father-eye, that has so truly watched,

O Father-hand, that has so gently led,

O Father-heart, that by my prayer is touched,

That loved me first when I was cold and dead.

Still, Father, lead me on, with faithful care,

The narrow path to Heaven, where I would go;

And train me for the life that waits me there,

Alike through love and loss, through weal and woe. The Presence of God

"O LORD, You have searched me and You know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; You perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; You are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue You know it completely, O LORD. You hem me in — behind and before; You have laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me — too lofty for me to attain!

"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence? If I go up to the heavens, You are there; if I make my bed in the depths, You are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me' — even the darkness will not be dark to You; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to You.

"How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with You. Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalms 139:1-24

Everywhere present is God — in Him we live, and move, and have our being. All our actions, and even all our thoughts, are manifest in His sight!

How should this truth — the omnipresence of God — influence me?

1. To realize that I am always in God's presence, is to strive against sin. Every evil deed must be done before the All-holy One. To believe this, is to be afraid of doing evil. Not always am I to be bearing in mind that God is watching me; but, as a child in the same room with father or mother, remembers that he is not alone, as soon as ever he is tempted to do evil — so may I remember, the very moment of temptation, that I am in God's solemn Presence! You, God, see me!

2. To cherish a sense of God's presence, is to increase in holiness. The holy and loving Friend is near me — so, in realizing the companionship of Jesus, I may become more holy and loving. The closer the tie between my soul and His Spirit, the more like to Him I am — meek, lowly, gentle, true. Out of despondency — into confidence; out of fears — into joy and peace; more and more, day by day, while I realize the abiding presence of the Lord Jesus.

3. Really to feel that God is ever near, is to enjoy the assurance of hope. No man can have a strong, settled faith, who does not think much of God's presence. He whose life is altogether in the outward and visible, who never seeks to be alone with God — cannot have true faith. I know that such a one is sure to deem things not seen, as imaginary and unreal. But to feel that we live in God's presence, is to feel the realities of "faith." We ourselves are never so real, never so free from the pretense and make-believes of the world — as when we are alone under the Eye which sees in secret. And so to feel that our life is hid with Christ in God; to enjoy a sense of His presence every passing hour; to lean on Him, and know Him by experience, as a Guide and a Stay — this is to believe warmly, firmly, and in the full assurance of hope.

4. To be able to say, "In every state shall Your hand lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me," is trustfully to follow all the leadings of the Father's will. This is patience: this is holy confidence during sorrow and sickness, "God is with me!" The foolish of the world may point to my many trials and say, "Where is your God?" But I will call my dwelling-place "Bethel" — the house of God; for I know that the Lord is with me.

"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me — too lofty for me to attain! How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand!"

Weary and restless through pain; tempted to distrust or murmur — yet I am still with God! Laying myself down at even-tide; sad and timid in the watches of the night — yet I am still with God! Frail, helpless, unable to be doing; and a burden to others — yet I am still with God! Breathing on a dying bed, "Lord, let Your servant depart in peace" — I am still, and forever, with God!

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

You are near. Yes, Lord, I feel it —

You are near wherever I move;

And, though sense would conceal it,

Faith oft whispers it to love.

Am I weak? Your arm will lead me

Safe through every danger, Lord;

Am I hungry? You will feed me

With the manna of Your Word.

Am I thirsty? You will guide me

Where refreshing waters flow;

Faint or feeble, Thou'lt provide me

Grace for every want I know.

Am I fearful? You will take me

Underneath Your wings, my God!

Am I faithless? You will make me

Bow beneath Your chastening rod.

Am I drooping? You are near me,

Near to bear me on my way.

Am I pleading? You will hear me —

Hear, and answer while I pray.

Then, O my soul, since God does love you,

Faint not, droop not, do not fear;

For though His Heaven is high above you,

He Himself is ever near!

SUBMISSION "May the will of the Lord be done." Acts 21:14

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort." 2 Corinthians 1:3

Submission is the yielding our own will to the will of God. And this yielding is not of despair, not of anger or sullenness, but of child-like trust.

Faith realizes the sovereignty of God. Faith looks above second causes, and strives ever to see the Providence that shapes our ends. Sometimes the guiding Wisdom cannot be traced — but still the child of God believes that he is being divinely guided. And so godliness always brings peace, even where the path of life is mysterious and its steps are full of trouble. In bereavement or in disappointment, faith sees that the sorrow comes not by chance, neither by blind or cruel fate — but from the hand of the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. And so, although the trial is painful and very hard to bear; and very mysterious, too — yet it is sent in loving wisdom, and is for our good. To submit must often be in simple trust — while not at all seeing the needs-be of the trial. God's ways must oftentimes seem mysterious, for now we see through a glass darkly.

I know that trial works for ends

Too high for sense to trace,

That oft in dark attire He sends

Some embassy of grace!

Man's knowledge here below must be in part. So says the Savior to every tried disciple: "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." John 13:7. Yes, hereafter all the mystery of my trials will be made clear. But in the cloudy and dark day will I trust, and hope, and wait. There is light enough for me. Grace sufficient will be given. However dark the cloud may be — I know that God's mercy is behind it. The very saddest cloud "turns forth its silver lining on the night." And soon, perhaps, the gloom of this trial will pass away. The wind passes and cleanses the clouds; and when God wills, fine weather comes. After my night of heaviness, may come the bright light of joy, and that very soon.

O Lord, my God, teach me to wait patiently upon You. May I seek to follow Your guidance; even in mysterious trials, may I feel You near. Help me to believe that all things are working together for my good. May I know that all Your dispensations are wise, and just, and loving; so that I may cheerfully submit myself and pray, "May Your will be done." In sickness, or poverty, or bereavement, may I remember that, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away — blessed be the name of the Lord."

O Lord, save Your servant who trusts in You — bless me with the patience and comfort of Your holy Word. I know that Your judgments are right, and that You in faithfulness have afflicted me. Let, I beg You, Your merciful kindness be my comfort. My soul faints, yet I hope in Your Word.

Almighty Father, Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory. O teach me to love Your will. By the gracious teaching of the Comforter, which You promise to all those who ask You, bless me with a spirit of submission. Endue me with patient trust, so that amidst all the changes and trials of this mortal life, I may serve You in holiness and peace; and, finally, come into Your everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ. Amen. My God and Father, while I stray

Far from my home, on life's rough way,

O teach me from my heart to say,

"May Your will be done."

Though dark my path, and sad my lot,

Let me be still, and murmur not,

But breathe the prayer divinely taught —

"May Your will be done."

What though in lonely grief I sigh

For friends beloved, no longer nigh,

Submissive would I still reply,

"May Your will be done."

If You should call me to resign

What most I prize — it ne'er was mine;

I only yield You what was Thine:

"May Your will be done." Should grief or sickness waste away

My life, in premature decay,

My Father! still I'll strive to say,

"May Your will be done."

Let but my fainting heart be blessed

With Your sweet Spirit for its guest;

My God, to You I leave the rest,

"May Your will be done."

Renew my will from day to day;

Blend it with Yours; and take away

All that now makes it hard to say,

"May Your will be done."

Then, when on earth I breathe no more,

The prayer, oft mixed with tears before,

I'll sing upon a happier shore,

"May Your will be done!" The Mercy of God

"I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more!" Isaiah 43:25

Because by nature we are far from God, it is hard for us to understand the way of our salvation. Even when we see our sins and God's holiness — we are slow to learn the way of peace. To come into the clear light of Gospel truth;

to rejoice in the Lord;

to be strong in the Lord;

to increase in happy knowledge of Jesus as my own Savior

— let me rest simply and entirely on the salvation of God — the salvation wrought for me by Jesus Christ. Look, my soul, to the promises. God's way — not mine! Christ's work — not mine!

Blessed be God, for a free and full salvation. It is faith to rest on God's mercy. Yes, humble faith. The freeness of forgiveness, and its all-perfect fullness — amazing, wonderful! The past all blotted out — and peace now given! This is not like man's mercy. No — it is God's mercy. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," says the Lord. Be it mine, then, to believe the precious promises of God. Not shutting my eyes to the sins of the past, confessing my vileness — yet must I believe that the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from All sin.

Oh, that I may rejoice in the liberty with which Christ has made us free! Joined to Him by living faith, may I know that there is no condemnation, and rejoice with holy joy — feeling in the time of trial and in the hour of death, that I am His. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, and not only so, but we rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which is given unto us — and we cry, "Abba, Father!"

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits! He forgives all your iniquities — and crowns you with loving-kindness and tender mercies. The Comfort of Prayer

"I cry aloud to the LORD; I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy. I pour out my complaint before him; before him I tell my trouble. When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who know my path!" Psalms 142:1-3

"Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." Hebrews 4:16 "Is anyone among you suffering? He should

pray." James 5:13 Our heavenly Father loves to hear our prayers — He has bidden us to pray. Many precious promises teach us the value of prayer. Especially ought we to pray in time of trouble. Sorrow, and distress, and sickness should teach us to pray more earnestly. We should learn to be simple and outspoken in our supplications — breathing forth the feelings of our hearts.

Prayer may be a talking with God. And the more simply child-like is our communion with Him — so the more surely shall we find grace to help in time of need. No matter how plain our language, or with what broken expressions. However ignorant we may be, we can speak for ourselves; and the simple outpouring of the soul's feelings is what will do us most good and best please God. Such is His love, that He invites us to speak unto Him as little children do unto their parents.

Oh, that I could come more boldly unto the throne of grace! Oh, that I felt more the privilege of speaking unto God! Poor sinner that I am, yet the All-mighty and All-holy One promises to hear my words! In the name of Jesus, I may call upon God, sure that, in a profitable way, He will answer me!

Blessed exhortation: Casting all your care upon Him — for He cares for you. My desire is to feel this true. Fears, hopes, temptations, doubts — all, all may be told unto my heavenly Father, who cares for me. So did David cry for help in trouble. Great trials brought him nearer and nearer unto God. His comfort was, that God saw and heard: "You know my path." In afflictions the Lord was his refuge. Prayer brought peace of soul. God comforted his afflicted soul with a sense of His presence. Feeling the power of prayer, David cried with earnestness. Though he was brought very low, yet he cried with confidence. The sense of communion with God was comfort. And it was comfort to know that God would give a profitable answer to his prayer. So he says, in the very midst of his sufferings, "You shall deal bountifully with me." May God teach me thus to find comfort in prayer. Let me seek to know Him as . . .

my refuge in all the sufferings of life,

my strong habitation whereunto I may continually resort,

my very present help in times of trouble. May I pour out my troubles before Him, and feel, in the assurance of faith, that He knows my path, sees its difficulties, its windings, its loneliness — and appoints an end of everlasting joy! The brotherhood of Jesus

"Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity . . . For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason he had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because He Himself suffered when he was tempted — He is able to help those who are being tempted." Hebrews 2:1-18 "The First-born among many brethren." Romans 8:29 "Man of sorrows." Isaiah 53:3

"Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory." Romans 8:17 When it pleased God to come into this world to save sinners, He took on Him our nature — the mighty God became the Son of man. Because we are partakers of flesh and blood, the Redeemer took part of the same — becoming, in very fact, "perfect man." Born of a woman, clothed with human flesh — the Son of David, made like unto His brethren — Emmanuel — the Incarnate God! Not in angelic form,

did the Savior live and suffer:

He sent no angel to our race,

Of higher or of lower place —

But wore the robe of human frame

Himself, and to this lost world came!

Truly as a man came the mighty God to redeem us. To atone for our sins; to teach us also, by His life, He became the man Christ Jesus. He took away the sting of death, by destroying the power of the devil. He glorified our human nature, and raised it into the very presence of God. And to be unto men an all-perfect Savior — He is not ashamed to call them brethren. Infinite Love! In humblest reverence, let me adore this mystery, "God with us!" How can I think of such love without wondering awe? Oh, my soul, worship with holy joy! Adore, and bless Him who so much loves you!

Wonderful is His name — Emmanuel, "God with us!" Unspeakable is the comfort of His brotherhood. Jesus, the Son of God, my Savior, speaks as my brother! So may I feel His fellowship in the grief and pain of human life. He will deliver me from the fear of death. He will show me the beauty and blessedness of patience. All my trials Jesus knows — in them all He sympathizes with me. For whatever of sorrow, and woe, and pain can come to the tempted — the smitten and afflicted Man of Sorrows has felt. The path of loneliness He trod — the burden of trial and temptation He endured.

Though He were a Son — yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.

Blessed Lord, help me to realize Your true brotherhood in the sufferings of my lot — so that in looking unto You I may find patience, and comfort, and peace.

You our throbbing flesh have worn,

You our mortal griefs have borne,

You have shed the human tear,

Jesus, Lord and Brother, hear!

You have bowed the dying head,

You the blood of life have shed,

You have filled a mortal bier,

Jesus, Lord and Brother, hear!

O Lord Jesus Christ, bless me in this time of trial. Teach me to trust in You. May the sense of fellowship with you in suffering, be precious to my soul. In temptation, may I look unto You. Blessed Savior, strengthen me. You have experienced woe and agony; and our fainting and wretchedness are known unto You. You chose to be the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief. Lord, help me to believe in Your loving sympathy. Oh, make me feel, in these my sufferings, that

You, the suffering Savior, feel with me! You know that my prayer is to live one of Your brethren.

Merciful Lord, show Yourself as my Savior. Give me true and hearty faith. Let me know that I am Yours. Bless me with the peace of assurance. Teach me to rejoice in hope. You who died for me — make me live unto You. Be to me Rest. Take from me the fear of death. Give Your Spirit to guide, to cleanse, to enliven. Raise my heart towards Your glory.

Blessed Jesus, hear my prayers. By Your cross and passion — by Your agony and bloody sweat — by Your precious death and burial — Good Lord, deliver me!

Yes, O merciful Savior! Bless me with a spirit of praise. Deliver me from fear and doubt. Make me to rejoice in a sense of Your love. In life and in death, be with me, for Your name's sake. Amen.

Still as our day, our strength shall be,
While still, good Lord, we trust in Thee;
While on Your promise we depend,
Our Savior, Brother, Father, Friend;
Our great High Priest, to whom were known
Temptations, troubles, like our own;
Who can be touched with mortal care,
For You did'st all our sorrows bear.
O Lamb of God, the world on Thee,
Has laid her deep infirmity;
And in the cross that weighed You down,
The bitter scourge, the thorny crown,
You all her griefs, and all her fears,
Did bear through all Your earthly years,
The guiltless — for the guilty one,
For man — the everlasting Son.
O Savior mine, how great the love
That brought You from Your throne above!
That love, what seraph's lyre can tell,
That wondrous love unspeakable!
So infinite, so all Divine!
Unlike all other love but Thine;

Like none but Jesus, none but Thee,
You bleeding Lamb of Calvary!
Give me, O glorious Lamb of God,
Daily to walk where You have trod,
And in adoring rapture grow,
As in Your lowly steps I go.
Give me to ponder, more and more,
Your words and Your example's lore,
That walking here, my God, with Thee,
Still as my days, my strength may be.

Fatherly Chastisement

"My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when He rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those He loves, and He chastens everyone he accepts as a son. Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?" Hebrews 12:5-7 My afflictions are chastenings from God. I must neither despise His correction, nor, on the other hand, lose heart under them. As a wise man sometimes punishes his little child, and makes him suffer for his good — so Almighty God sends pain, sorrow, and other trials — dealing lovingly and in wisdom with us, as His sons.

Painful indeed is it to endure chastening. Difficult, very hard is it, most especially for the poor man, to live truly patient in sickness — neither despising nor losing heart under the Lord's discipline. The merciful God knows how tried I am — and yet He still afflicts me. This is the secret whispering of my sinful heart, "Why am I thus tried?" And because my faith is weak, I murmur — not openly rebelling, yet do I ask, "Why am I thus afflicted?" I am too eager to be free from all trials. My real praying is for health, rather than for the blessings which come through patience. Strength, work, busy activity, freedom from pain and trials — these I cry for. Like a spoiled fretful child, I want my own way — I seek to please myself — I chafe against the controlling of another's will. The rod of correction — how can I get free from it?

Subtle is the temptation to think that affliction will prove to me a curse, instead of a blessing. If weakness of body and manifold infirmities make me, in spite of myself as it were — impatient and restless, I cry, Must I be smitten, Lord?

Are gentler measures vain?

Will yet You smite, O Lord?

Can nothing save but pain?

Oh, that by the help of the Almighty, I may overcome these temptations! Oh, to get the mastery over doubtings and restless strivings! And this is the victory — even faith in this Fatherly comfort.

Whom the Lord loves, He chastens.

Precious words of peace! Light in the darkness! God chastens us for our profit. Yes, our heavenly Father visits us with affliction in wisest love — to purify our souls, that we might be partakers of His holiness. And while chastening, He says, "My son, do not make light of My discipline, and do not lose heart when I rebuke you, because I discipline those I love!"

Oh, that I may hear this voice of my Father! In suffering, in weakness, in every trial — may I feel that He is guiding me. So, when any blessing is taken from me, or any burden is laid upon me — may He help me to say, "Even so, Father — for so it seems good in Your sight!" This is peace — to feel that the trial is from God. I am quiet — I can hope for good — because "You are the One who has done this!"

And, as patiently, with thanksgiving, I bear the correction of my heavenly Father — so shall I become more and more like Christ. For He Himself was made perfect through suffering.

Almighty God, give me grace to submit to all Your afflictive dispensations. Keep me from becoming wearied and faint. Support me, in this season of suffering, with a sense of Your favor. May I feel that I am in Your presence always — in sorrow and pain, I am still with You. Hold me up, and keep me quiet, patiently trusting in You — and I shall be safe!

O Lord and heavenly Father, increase my faith. Teach me that Your chastening is in love, and not in anger. May I feel this more and more. So may I rest in holy patience, praying sincerely to do Your holy will. Bless me with thoughts of Your wisdom. Make me know that You do all things well. Let my soul live in Your love. So shall I praise You.

Almighty God, teach me how to be conformed to the image of Your Son. Give me to partake of Your holiness. May I live as one of Jesus' brethren. Daily transform me into His likeness. May the Spirit cleanse my soul — changing me into Christ's image from glory to glory.

O Lord, answer these prayers, for the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Less, less of self each day,

And more, my God, of Thee,

Oh, keep me in the way,

However rough it be!

Less of the flesh each day,

Less of the world and sin;

More of Your Son, I pray —

More of Yourself within.

Less wayward let me be —

More pliable and mild;

In glad simplicity

More like a trustful child.
More molded to Your will,
Lord, let Your servant be;
Higher and higher still —
Liker and liker Thee.
Leave naught that is unfit;
Of all that is my own
Strip me, and so complete
My training for the throne!
Present Salvation!

"Then he said: Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!

Jesus answered him: I tell you the truth, today you will be with Me in paradise!" Luke 23:42-43

Wonderful example of penitence and salvation! There had been a life of wickedness and crime. Only in the very last moments was breathed the prayer for forgiveness. With eyes filmed over by the chill of death — with voice failing and flesh trembling — in agony of pain turning his head on the cruel cross — the sinner prays to the Savior. Death is close at hand. Dying — he wishes his soul to live. Guilty — he yearns for salvation. And so in fear, but with earnest look, and with all his heart — he looks to Jesus. The criminal appeals to the holy King: "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!" The dying breath of the trembling sinner was not lost — it was a prayer of the heart, and it was welcome. Jesus loved the poor man, so He listened to his cry. Pitying, He forgives. He assures of present salvation, promising the happiness of paradise on that very day. Late, very late was the prayer — but not too late. There is an anxious look — one prayer is offered. The look is seen — the last breathing of the soul is heard. At once the gracious promise is spoken: Present peace — and immediate glory! "I tell you the truth, today you will be with Me in paradise!"

Oh wondrous love! Who can know the pity and mercy of Jesus! Rightly is He called Wonderful! For as it was when Himself hung upon the cross — so is it now. Being in paradise, He prays for sinners and hears their prayers. The wistful gaze is still noticed — the few trembling words are still heard. Peace is given to the penitent — the gates of paradise are opened to the pardoned. This wonderful instance of redeeming love teaches, therefore, not that sinners may presume on God's mercy, putting off repentance to a dying hour — but that whoever the grace of God leads to repentance, is welcomed and pardoned! At all times, Jesus is found by those who truly seek Him. No man need despair. The vilest may be cleansed. The hardest heart may be made soft. A multitude of sins may be blotted out. To every sinner Jesus says, "Come!" and, him who comes unto Me, I will never cast out.

Just as he was, prayed the dying thief — and that very day he received Divine life.

Just as he was, came the leper, all foul and tainted — and that very day he was made pure and clean.

Just as she was, came the sinful woman, so sadly conscious of her guilt, and so broken in spirit, that she could only abase herself at the feet of Jesus. She did not even dare to ask in words for forgiveness — but saving Love raised up the fallen woman and comforted her. "Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you — go in peace!"

Come unto Me, says the Savior: Come unto Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. He gives pardon; He gives peace; this is our present possession; this is the saint's rest on earth.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,

"Come unto Me and rest,

Lay down, you weary one, lay down,

Your head upon My breast!"

I came to Jesus as I was,

Weary and worn and sad;

I found in Him a resting-place,

And He has made me glad.

O Lord Jesus, show me the freeness and fullness of Your salvation. Lead me in faith to the sin-atonement cross. Bless me with the look of true faith. Lord, give to me the spirit of prayer, and teach me to plead Your precious promises. O Savior, who by Your cross and passion have redeemed sinners, hear my prayers.

Lord, I desire humbly to confess my sins. By thought, and speech, and conduct — I have transgressed. manifold have been my iniquities. You know all my guilt. Show me the sinfulness of my nature. Help me to abase myself in Your sight. And yet, O blessed Jesus, speak peace — speak peace, I beseech You, unto my soul. Show me the glorious fullness of Your redemption. Sprinkle my soul with the all-cleansing blood of Your sacrifice. Wash me and make me pure. Bless me with a sense of forgiveness. You who loved me, You who gave Yourself for me — teach me more and more of Your love. You know how I labor and am heavy laden; help me to lay my burdens upon You. Weak, I seek You for strength. Weary, I come unto You for rest. I plead the words of Your promise — Come unto Me, and I will refresh you. Lord, hear my prayers, even mine. Lead me unto Yourself, and give me rest, now and forever. Amen.

Just as I am — without one plea,

But that Thy blood was shed for me,

And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,

O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am — and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am — though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt;
Fightings and fears within, without —
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am — poor, wretched, blind;
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yes, all I need — in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am — You will receive,
Will welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Your promise I believe —
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am (Thy love unknown,
Has broken every barrier down),
Now to be Thine, yes, Thine alone —
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am — of that free love
The breadth, length, depth, and height to prove,
Here for a season, then above —
O Lamb of God, I come!

Prayer for Health

"In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, "This is what the LORD says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die — you will not recover!" Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, "Remember, O LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with whole-hearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

Before Isaiah had left the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him: "Go back and tell Hezekiah, the leader of my people, 'This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears — I will heal you.'" 2 Kings 20:1-5 From this portion of God's Word I learn two very comforting truths:

1. Our heavenly Father, who knows our frame, is not angry with us, when we naturally desire to live. For wise purposes, He has given us a strong yearning for life; and the believer may yearn to live, or wish for health, without in any way offending God.

2. As the Word speaks: Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray — so if I beseech God to restore me to health, the voice of faith may be heard. I may prevail, if I rightly plead. He who loves to answer prayer, may say to me, as He did to Hezekiah, "I have heard your prayer and seen your tears — I will heal you."

I hoped that, with the brave and strong,
My portioned task might lie
To toil among the busy throng,
With purpose pure and high. But God has fixed another part,
And He has fixed it well;
I said so, with my breaking heart,
When first this anguish fell.
These weary hours will not be lost,
These days of misery,
These nights of darkness, tempest-tossed,
Can I but turn to Thee; With secret labor to sustain
In patience every blow,
To gather fortitude from pain,
And holiness from woe.
If You should bring me back to life
More humble would I be,
More wise, more strengthened for the strife,
More apt to lean on Thee. Should Death be standing at the gate,
Thus should I keep my vow:
But, Lord, whatever be my fate,
Oh, let me serve You now! The Good Shepherd

"I am the Good Shepherd; I know My sheep and My sheep know Me. I lay down My life for the sheep. My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish — ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand!" John 10:1-42 The risen Savior said to Peter, "Feed My lambs. Feed My sheep." So likewise does He now bid the ministers of His Church to feed those whom He has "committed to their charge" — to watch for their souls with loving care. "Take heed to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers — to feed the Church of God which He has purchased with His own blood." Yes, the Great Shepherd has appointed under-shepherds to feed the lambs and sheep of His flock with His Word. But while I seek to be influenced for good by my own pastor, this is peace — to believe that the Lord Jesus Himself is my Shepherd. The flock is His, purchased with His own blood — and He watches over it. Still is He tending the sheep of His pasture — every member of the flock is known unto Him. In some portion of the field there may be a hireling who cares nothing for the sheep; but even there is the Spirit of Jesus saying, "I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep." Oh, yes, wherever I may be — there is the Almighty One! He who counts the number of the stars, knows the circumstances of my life. As to Peter and to Mary, so to me — the Lord speaks with a voice of personal love. He made the worlds — and yet He whispers within my soul: Do you love Me? Yes, the Almighty, the Infinite, calls His own sheep by name. With them is He always present. Though I often feel lonely, yet am I never alone — the Good Shepherd is about my path. Because He cares for me, I am always safe. He loves me — He is willing to guide and guard me at all times.

O my soul, pray to realize this more and more: "The Lord is MY Shepherd."

Ought not this to comfort you in sickness or distress? Is not that your faith is very weak, that you are so disquieted? What peace would be yours, did you have more of real faith! In this tribulation I will pray for trust. And Jesus will make me feel that He is leading me in the paths of righteousness — leading me lovingly, tenderly, wisely.

Jesus is our Shepherd,

Wiping every tear;

Folded in His bosom,

What have we to fear?

Only let me follow

Where He does lead,

To the thirsty desert,

Or the dewy mead.

Alas, that I am so sadly lacking in faith! "Why do you doubt?" says the Good Shepherd. But my trust is not deep and abiding. I know that He laid down His life for me — I believe in the precious promises of His Word — and yet in this cloudy and dark day, I seem as though I could not feel the guidance of His love. In the sunshine of prosperity, my soul was confident — loudly I sang Hallelujah.

O Lord Jesus, increase my faith. Show me that this difficult and painful path is ordained in love. Make me feel that You are leading me — and so shall I journey onwards in peace. "Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever!"

Blessed is the promise of safety! "My sheep shall never perish!" says Almighty love. Neither man nor devil can pluck me out of Jesus' hand! Though the hosts of evil rage around me — yet am I safe. Following the Good Shepherd, I shall never perish.

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation — will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!" Romans 8:37-39 Even in the weariest part of the wilderness-path, there is peace. At the end of all, there is the glory of Paradise.

"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom!"

O Lord Jesus Christ, bless me with a spirit of trust. You know all things — You know that I do love You. Lord, increase my faith. Take from me doubts and fears, so that I may become more and more trustful, having joy and peace in believing. O Almighty Lord, full of love and tender mercy — teach me to follow You at all times. You laid down Your life for me — make me to rejoice in Your love. I am weak, and prone to wander — Lord, keep me. Oftentimes, like a lost sheep, I have erred and strayed from Your ways — but, blessed be Your Name, You have brought me to the fold, and restored my soul. Henceforth may I walk more faithfully in Your steps, and follow You with a quiet mind, in holiness and peace. By patience, and gentleness, and trustful obedience — may I prove myself one of the sheep of Your pasture.

I know, O Lord, that all Your dispensations are wise. Wherever You lead me — the way is one of mercy and of righteousness. You are guiding me, even now, in tender love — help me ever more closely to follow You. Be my Light, my Way, my Comfort — yes, Lord Jesus, comfort me in this season of affliction. Teach me more and more the blessedness of Your peace. In the weariness which You have appointed me, in all my conflict and distress — bless me with the full assurance of hope. May I feel that I am safely kept by Your Almighty love — guided day by day nearer and nearer to the fold of everlasting peace. Raise my affections towards that happy place where there is no wickedness to trouble, and where Your weary ones are forever at rest — and so, in that Paradise of gladness and purity, shall I, with all the redeemed, praise You throughout the endless ages! Amen.

Yes! our Shepherd leads, with gentle hand,

Through the dark pilgrim-land,

His flock — so dearly bought,

So long and fondly sought.

Hallelujah!

Tenderly He watches from on high,
With an unwearied eye,
He comforts and sustains,
In all their fears and pains.

Hallelujah!

Through the dreary desert He will guide
To the green mountain side;
Through the dark stormy night,
To a calm land of light.

Hallelujah!

Yes! His "little flock" are ne'er forgot:

His mercy changes not!

Our home is safe above,

Within His arms of love!

Hallelujah!

CONTENTMENT

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs!"
1 Timothy 6:6-10

"I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!" Php 4:11-13
The apostle Paul lived in Christian contentment. In all things he was bent on doing the will of God. And so he was quiet and patient — yes, even content. Sometimes he was persecuted; very often reproached and despised — he well knew what it was to be hungry and to suffer need. But there was no murmuring, no fretting. Far from being gloomy and giving way to a brooding and impatient spirit — the Apostle was thankful, content and peaceful. Happiness was his, such as can come to a man only in the service of God. Sickness, sorrow, distress of mind, hunger, hardships — all things which Providence called him to pass through — were endured patiently in the love of Christ. The Apostle was not restless, nor did he weary himself in striving to be free from suffering. "I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!" Such were his feelings. O what blessed quietness — what holy confidence — what peace of

Heaven in following thus the guiding hand of God! This was not natural to Paul; his nature, like mine, was self-willed — and desiring to be full and to abound. But the grace of Jesus strengthened him — through Christian experience he became content — and so, perhaps, after sore striving, certainly after having passed through great tribulation, he says, I have learned — I am instructed.

Yes, the school of affliction teaches us how to suffer — teaches those who will be learners under a suffering Savior. Sorrow and pain will help us to feel the strengthening power of Christ, if we receive them rightly.

I know that I am slow to learn Christian contentment — but God will teach me. Sharp trials have come to me — perhaps still sharper trials are before me. All is uncertain. Yet it may be hereafter, if not now, quite true even of myself, "I have learned to be content!"

Oh, that God may . . .

educate me,

bend my will,

wean me from worldly pleasures,

make me submit to every discipline of His will. As each little fresh trial increases my sufferings — He will enable me to endure. Jesus says, "My grace is sufficient for you!" I shall feel His presence, and know that He is teaching me in His own school. My present fretfulness, my over-much longing after pleasant things, my restlessness — these may be subdued. Through Christ, I may become more patient, more humble, more quiet — yes, and quite content. Let me strive in prayer for this peaceful state, accepting my Providential lot, with every God-sent sorrow, in true contentment.

I desire to do Your will. O my God, teach me. Guide me with Your counsel. Help me more truly to feel that You maintain my lot.

I ask You for the daily strength,

To none that ask, denied;

And a mind to blend with outward things

While keeping at Your side,

Content to fill a little space,

So that You be glorified.

Give me, O Lord, an earnest heart

Anxious to do Your will,

Contented with whatever part

In life 'tis mine to fill.

Fearful of wealth, and worldly pride,

Glad, if a low degree,

With even sorrow by my side,
Help me to walk with Thee.
Cautious of all the gauds and glow
By earthly sunshine given,
Choosing the cloudiest paths below,
So that they lead up to Heaven.

God's Presence in the Sick-room "The LORD will strengthen him on his bed of illness; You will sustain him on his sickbed." Psalms 41:3 "You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. Psalms 139:3

"How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You!" Psalms 139:17-18

O how soft that bed must be
Made in sickness, Lord, by Thee!
And that rest, how calm, how sweet,
Where Jesus and the sufferer meet. With Your heavenly presence blessed,
Death is life — and labor, rest;
Welcome sleep or death to me,
Still secure, for still with Thee! When the soft dews of kindly sleep
My wearied eyelids gently steep,
Be my last thought — How sweet to rest,
Forever on my Savior's breast!

Glorifying God in Sickness "Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God." John 21:19

"Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel." Php 1:12

"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." John 11:4

It was said to the Lord Jesus, "Behold, he whom You love is sick!" And His answer teaches that a believer's sickness is for the glory of God.

Jesus Himself glorified God the most, when He suffered and died. Not so much by His mighty works, as by His self-sacrifice — did he manifest His glory. It was on the night of agony, and beneath as it were the shadow of the cross of shame, and desolation, and cruel death — that the

suffering Savior prayed: "Father, the hour is come — glorify Your Son!" And when the risen Lord told His Apostle to live to the good of the Church, He also told him by what kind of death he would glorify God. And what was the death of Peter? Even that of the cross. In the sharpest sufferings, at the close of a life of toil and trouble — the aged Apostle was to die for the glory of God. Yes, his cross was for the good of Christ's holy Church.

We know that God does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. He is love. When He sends sickness — it is for our good. But it is harder to believe that sickness is for the glory of God — yet this is equally true. The beauty of holiness may shine brightly in the sick-room — the sufferer may live to God's praise, quite as truly as the earnest busy man of health does. Yes, the infirm may quite as truly, as really, show forth God's praise, as the strong and active. One star differs from another star in glory — but each star glorifies God. And so one believer's work differs from the work of another — but every believer glorifies God! And the light of grace in the sick-room — shines as purely as the light which gladdens a multitude. The sunshine of Day utters speech — but the twinkling of Night's stars also pours forth knowledge.

O that I could more sincerely pray to glorify God in His own way! What I think is best — may be very different from what His wisdom appoints. The service which seems to me so useless, may be the very service in which most of all I can do good to others. "They also serve, who stand and wait." The painful things which happen unto me, may prove rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel, than pleasant things. The Apostle Paul found his imprisonment to be, in God's wisdom, a preaching of the truth, "Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly." And so likewise many a prisoner of Jesus Christ has found that in weakness, in pain, in disappointment — he has done more for God than in his busiest days of strength and gladness. To strive to do God's work in God's way, to be active or inactive as pleases Him — is the sure secret of a holy, a peaceful, and a useful life. And specially to all submissive sufferers, is the great promise spoken: "The spirit of glory and of God rests upon you!"

Almighty God and heavenly Father, teach me to love You and magnify Your name. Bless me with faith to feel that Your painful visitation is for Your glory. Be this my comfort: You are making use of me, so in weakness I may glorify Your power, and by patience show forth Your praise. May I spend these days of pain and uncertainty, as Your faithful servant. Preserve me from selfishness. Help me, even in sore trials, to think of others. By prayer, by quietness of spirit, may I live unto You — knowing always that You appoint my service, whether it be of health or sickness. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom — and You will show me how best to manifest Your glory.

O bless this season of suffering to the good of those near and dear to me. Be with me in my affliction — in weariness and pain, may I feel You near. Strengthen me with Your grace and Holy Spirit, enabling me to understand the precious promises of Your Word. Deliver me from all fear of the Enemy and allow me to rest in Your love. So may I adorn Your doctrine, and let my light shine for the blessing of others. And to You, O Lord God, will I give praise and thanksgiving now and forever, through Your dear Son our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

O You whose wise paternal love,
Has brought my active spirit down,

Your will I thankfully approve,
And, prostrate at Your gracious Throne,
I offer up my life's remains;
I choose the state my God ordains.
Cast, as a broken vessel, by,
Your work I can no longer do;
But while a daily death I die,
Your power I may in weakness show.
My patience may Your glory raise,
My speechless woe, proclaim Your praise.
But since without Your Spirit's might
You know I nothing can endure.
The help I ask in Jesus' right —
The strength He did for me procure.
Father, abundantly impart,
And arm with love my feeble heart.
O may I live of You Possessed.
In weakness, weariness, and pain;
The anguish of my throbbing breast,
The daily cross, may I sustain.
For Him who languished on the tree,
And lived, before He died, for me!

Thanksgiving in Sickness

"Bless the LORD, O my soul — and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul — and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with loving-kindness and tender mercies!" Psalms 103:1-4

I bless God that in His mercy, I have been afflicted. From childhood until now, God has shown Himself loving and merciful in dealing with me. But I have not had a due sense of all His mercies. Blessings without number have been given me, for which I did not pray — nay, never did I even think of them! Sad indeed has been the selfishness of my heart — dull and cold — receiving good from God, and yet not giving thanks. I have been careless and forgetful; sometimes murmuring,

discontented, and of a grumbling spirit.

O my God, help me henceforth to bless You and to live unto Your glory. I know that those who are thankful for Your mercies, are the happiest. Make me thankful. Let the words of my mouth, and the good works of my life, show forth Your praise. Yes, let me sing with joy, "Bless the LORD, O my soul — and all that is within me, bless His holy name!"

Now that I am restored from sickness — now that I feel grateful for this mercy, as well as for the blessings of the past — there is need for me to watch against falling back into coldness. Prayers have been answered — strength is coming to me again — my life is spared. Oh, to keep thankful! May I cherish a warm and lively sense of God's goodness. In my suffering, I felt that He was good. On the bed of sickness, He taught me to believe in the love which forgives all iniquities, and redeems life from destruction. May my faith in His mercy be kept strong.

God did not afflict me only in righteous anger. His visitation was in love. He made me feel my weakness and my sins, so that I might turn myself unto Him. For the salvation of my soul, He chastened me. "Let my soul live, and it shall praise You!" was my cry. God graciously heard, and answered. He has taught me by His judgments — to love His mercy and rejoice in His love.

Oh, that the rest of my days may be spent to the glory of my Savior. Never may I forget His benefits. For all God's gracious dealings with me; for strength of body, for friends, for all the earthly comforts which He has given me to enjoy — but above all for the sense of forgiving mercy, for peace and hope in Jesus, bless the Lord — O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name!

I cannot call affliction sweet,

But yet 'twas good to bear:

Affliction brought me to Your feet,

And I found comfort there.

Lord, grant me grace for every day,

Whatever my state may be,

Through life, in death, with truth to say,

"My God is all to me!"

PURIFYING "A refiner's fire." Malachi 3:2 "Look, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have purified you in the furnace of affliction!" Isaiah 48:10 "Tried with fire." 1 Peter 1:7 To purify gold or silver, the refiner puts it into a furnace. Great heat separates the dross from the precious metal. Out of the fire, comes forth the precious substance clear and pure. So likewise with the child of God. The character may be true gold — yet not pure gold. And so the Lord's mercy says, "I will turn my hand upon you, and purely purge away your dross. I will purify you in the furnace of affliction!" Yes, even as in great heat gold is tried — so in the sharpness of pain and sorrow, does God test and purify His children.

Let me, then, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is trying me. This testing of my faith is the gracious dealing of the Refiner who seeks to cleanse me. In the furnace of affliction, God's mercy wills to purify me. May I strive to say, as righteous Job said: "When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold!" The pain of passing through the fire is keen. The fiery test is not easily endured. Such is our nature, that we all shrink from the furnace of affliction. Indeed, it is very hard to bear the of pain of bodily weakness. But the Refiner's love chooses the trial! His wisdom limits it! His power strengthens us to bear it!

O Lord God, sanctify this trial according to Your wisdom. From pride and self-will; from earthliness of temper; from carnal lusts and sensual imaginations — purify my soul. Make me humble, trustful, gentle, heavenly-minded. In suffering, may I know that You are blessing me. Free my soul from earthly baseness, and beautify it with holiness. Make me, O Lord, like unto pure gold — a vessel fit for Your use and bright with Your glory!

Almighty God, You sent this affliction — You measured it. O bless it, for Christ's sake. Amen. The world can neither give nor take,

Nor can they comprehend

The peace of God, which Christ has bought,

The peace which knows no end.

God's furnace does in Zion stand;

But Zion's God sits by,

As the refiner views his gold

With an observant eye. His thoughts are high, His love is wise;

His wounds, a cure intend;

And though He does not always smile,

He loves unto the end.

Day by Day "Give us this day our daily bread." Matthew 6:11 "Your shoes shall be iron and brass; and as your days — so shall your strength be!" Deuteronomy 33:25

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own!" Matthew 6:34

They who do not look to God amid cares and trials, must live in suspense. Foreboding fear and anxiety are their portion. But when there is true faith, yet only weak and imperfect faith — the soul may be harassed by anxious thoughts about the morrow. Only strong faith rests quiet in the Providence of the day. All who have learned by experience the peacefulness of waiting upon God, live in the spirit of the prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread." Contentment and confidence are theirs. They have experienced the truth of God's Word: "As your days — so shall your strength be!" According to their necessities, has been the relief and comfort.

"Each day has enough trouble of its own!"

Today's grace — for today's trials.

Today's strength — for today's weakness.

Am I to be yet more severely tried tomorrow? God's grace will be sufficient. He who afflicts, will also sustain.

Very needful is it, in time of affliction to strive against anxious forebodings. Bodily weakness tries sorely. Fears and doubts come and come again. In the still watches of the night, the sufferer often grows sad and sick at heart — looking at the future as all dark and sorrowful. "Shall I be able to endure much more? Can I keep myself in the love of God?"

Now, it is comforting to call to mind, that God knows our frame — He remembers that we are dust. The frailty of our nature is known unto Him in whom we trust. Our sighs and tears, our restless tossings, our weary wandering thoughts — all, all are observed by Infinite Love! And as a true friend in sickness bears with us, makes allowances for our petulance or anxious inquiries — so does the All-merciful Son of God, who knows us perfectly, say of our many sinless weaknesses, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak!"

Yes, Jesus is not angry because in depression or other infirmity of our human nature, we fall sometimes from the quietness of faith. He sees the heart — He knows the desire. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Dark thoughts may come, as it were, in spite of our will — even when we refuse to think of tomorrow's troubles — yet because of bodily weakness, fears again and again distress us. But Jesus knows the trial — He knows that it is a grief to us because we cannot keep ourselves free from anxious thoughts. Pitying His redeemed child — He forgives.

Yet let me still remember the words, "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow!" Let me beware of giving way to anxious thoughts. It is very easy to give way. But let me fight against the very beginnings of doubt. Also, let me remember, that in trust, there is peace — for a great portion of life's wretchedness comes from the fear of evil. That about which I have had painful thoughts — may never really come to pass. The trial existed only in my imagination — the sorrow was of my own making. God may never lay upon me the burden about which I have been so afraid.

Blessed is the patience which bears this day's trial — while not looking forward to tomorrow's. Faith does not seek to know what shall be on the morrow — simply and with humility waiting upon God, it says, "I will fear no evil." Is not Jesus with me today? Happy in a sense of His presence — let me enjoy the calm and holy confidence which He gives. This is my present peace — this, I know, should be my assurance for the future.

Almighty God, unto You all things are known — and in Your wisdom, all things are rightly directed. Deliver me from anxious fears. My spirit is sad and disquieted within me — but You know my desire, and in You will I hope. Grant me grace to be patient in suffering. Let me feel that You are surely working all things together for my good; so in quietness and confidence, may I find strength. My times are in Your hand. Help me, O Lord, to resign myself to the love and wisdom of Your sovereign will — to be healthy or sick, to have wealth or distress, to live or die — just as You shall see best for me. Comfort me in weakness and in heaviness, and keep me in all my ways.

O my God, forgive all the doubts and fears in which I have offended You — and teach me more and more to trust in Your loving care. Deliver me from anxious thoughts of future troubles.

Increase my faith, so that in affliction my soul may not cease to bless You. Teach me to pray for daily strength, and grace sufficient for my present needs. Humble me, and do me good in Your own wise way — and lead me, day by day, in the paths of righteousness, until I come into Your everlasting rest!

Hear me, O Heavenly Father. Strengthen me with Your blessed Spirit — and graciously accept my prayers and praises, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen. Does each day, upon its wing,

Its allotted burden bring?

Load it not, beside, with sorrow

Which belongs to the morrow.

Strength is promised! Strength is given,

When the heart by God is riven.

But fore-date the day of woe,

And alone you bear'st the blow.

One thing only claims your care:

Just seek Heaven by faith and prayer;

And Whatever you need'st below

He you trust, will sure bestow. The Sympathy of Jesus

"Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God — let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses — but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need!" Hebrews 4:14-16

Precious should this truth be — the Son of God, who was in all points tempted like as we are, pleads for me. He who wept at the grave of Lazarus, who was most truly the Man of Sorrows, lives — my High Priest in Heaven! Where high the heavenly temple stands

(The house of God not made with hands),

A great High Priest our nature wears,

The Guardian of mankind appears!

Jesus is not removed from His people — He still is the same loving Savior — He still cares for them — He, the Son of God — the man Christ Jesus — Almighty and All-holy, but also full of human sympathy. As God, He could always pity men. But that we might value His fellow-feeling, He condescended to learn, by experience, the sorrows and pains of men. And so, having Himself suffered — He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses.

Blessed truth! Jesus sympathizes with me! In pain, in loneliness, in grief, or conflict of every kind — He sympathizes with me. And this is the blessedness of His fellow-feeling — that He understands me perfectly! Friends or relatives may misjudge me — their knowledge never can be perfect; and therefore, although they may seek to sympathize with me in tender unison — yet my soul can rest all-peaceful only in the sympathy of Jesus. Unto Him, all hearts are open, and all desires known! There is . . .

no trembling fear which He cannot lay to rest,

no secret infirmity which He cannot strengthen,

no wearying pain which He cannot soothe.

Distrust, or sinful hardness of heart may say, "The Son of God cannot sympathize with us!" But faith looks to the sympathy with of Him who lived on earth a life of suffering and trial. It is Jesus, the tempted and afflicted Man of Sorrows, the Sinless Sufferer — in whose sympathy is our comfort. And, as among men generally, it is true, Those who the sharpest trials bear

Can best another's sorrows share.

Just so, comfort can come to me best, in the truth that the Son of God, my Savior, did Himself endure the pains, and sadness, and temptations of man's life. Yes, the very heaviest trials were His. No sorrows of mine, can be so afflictive as were His. When I am sad, and lonely, and distressed — my be it peace to go to the throne of grace — opening out my heart unto that loving Friend who can sympathize with me, in that He Himself has suffered. He Himself trod the path of trial, and passed through the gate of death.

Blessed Savior, teach me more and more to trust in You. May I realize Your fellowship in pain and sorrow. As You said unto Your Apostle, "Follow Me," so teach me, even me, to live as Your follower, bearing my appointed griefs in the spirit of Your meekness.

O knit my heart unto You, so that in weakness, I may prove Your strength; and in loneliness, I may feel You near. Comfort me in sadness; strengthen me in time of temptation; soothe and cheer me in all my trials. Lord Jesus, take distrust and doubt from me — and teach me to repose in a sense of Your loving sympathy. Oh, help me to believe that You care for me — even for me; that You look down from the heavenly glory and behold me with tender care. And as I tread the path of sorrow, may it comfort me to remember how in pain and loneliness You made your earthly pilgrimage. Blessed Lord, You were tempted, You were tried — help me to pray unto You in all my times of suffering. May I come to the throne of grace with confidence, speaking out all my fears, telling all my sorrows. May I look up to You as an all-compassionate Friend. Such as You were on earth — may I know You now to be in heaven — kind, pitying, and full of love. You learned the learned the sufferings of man by experience — and so You have assured us of Your sympathy in all the conflicts of our human life.

Blessed Lord, draw me closer unto Yourself. In every time of need, fulfill Your promise and give me grace sufficient. So in the strength of Your fellowship, may I be patient under trial, resist temptation, and finally pass in peace through the gate of death into Your everlasting kingdom! Amen. When gathering clouds around I view,

And days are dark, and friends are few,
On Him I lean, who not in vain
Experienced every human pain!
He sees my needs, allays my fears,
And counts and treasures up my tears!
If wounded love my bosom swell,
Deceived by those I prized too well;
He shall His pitying aid bestow,
Who felt on earth severer woe;
At once betrayed, denied, or fled,
By those who shared His daily bread.
If vexing thoughts within me rise,
And, sore dismayed, my spirit dies,
Still He who once agreed to bear
The sickening anguish of despair,
Shall sweetly soothe, shall gently dry,
The throbbing heart, the streaming eye!
"When, sorrowing, o'er some stone I bend,
Which covers what was once a friend,
And from his hand, his voice, his smile,
Divides me for a little while,
You, Savior, mark the tears I shed,
For You once wept o'er Lazarus dead.
And, oh, when I have safely past
Through every conflict but the last,
Still, still unchanging, watch beside
My painful bed — for You have died!
Then point to realms of cloudless day,
And wipe the last tear away!

Consolation in Weakness

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are Mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior!" Isaiah 43:1-3

"You shall guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. My flesh and my heart shall fail — but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever!" Psalms 73:1-28 "Kept by the power of God." 1 Peter 1:5

Blessed words are these, which tell of God's unchanging mercy. Every true believer is preserved, guided, kept. So did the Savior pray: "Holy Father, keep through Your own name, those whom You have given Me!" Yes, every humble trusting soul is safely kept under the Almighty wings; for the promise is, "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are Mine!" — and the word of our Covenant God is sure. God does not deceive or promise lightly. It is for our comfort He says, Fear not. He is able and willing to make good the assurance that His own people are kept. If I had only my own strength or steadfastness to rest upon — then well might I fear; but I may rely on God's strength, and find peace in His unchanging love. Be it mine, then, to pray for faith to rest on the promise: "I will never leave you — nor will I ever forsake you." So in true humility, but also in hope's confidence, may I say unto Him who redeemed and who promises to keep me, "You shall guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory!"

I know that nothing could be so awful as for a man to be left to himself. Waxing worse and worse — he would go further and ever more hopelessly away from God.

Oh, that I may feel more and more the comfort of God's presence and preserving care. Oh, for more and more of the assurance of the words — "I am with you always! You are Mine!" May I feel the soft and tender embrace of Redeeming Love — silent, but all-sure, even for eternity! So shall I pass unharmed through all life's trials — kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation. From doubts and fears; from mistrust and waverings; from earthly and sensual desires — Good Lord, deliver me! From spiritual pride and vain-confidence; from self-deceit; from sinful thoughts, and from all self-righteousness — Good Lord, deliver me! In pain and weakness; in sorrow and restlessness; in loneliness and temptation; in weary nights, and in all my sufferings — Good Lord, deliver me! When languor and disease invade

This trembling house of clay,

'Tis sweet to look beyond the cage,

And long to fly away!

Sweet to look inward, and attend

The whispers of His love:

Sweet to look upward, to the place

Where Jesus pleads above.

Sweet to reflect how Grace Divine

My sins on Jesus laid;

Sweet to remember that His blood

My debt of sufferings paid.

Sweet on His faithfulness to rest,

Whose love can never end;

Sweet on His covenant of grace

For all things to depend.

Sweet, in the confidence of faith,

To trust His firm decrees;

Sweet to lie passive in His hands,

To know no will but His.

Sweet to rejoice, in lively hope

That when my change shall come,

Angels will hover round my bed,

And waft my spirit home! The Perfect Work of Patience "In your patience possess your souls." Luke 21:19 "Let patience have her perfect work." James 1:4 "I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation!" 2 Corinthians 7:4 To live in the patience of Christ, is to follow closely the guidance of God, as He did. His whole life was the fulfillment of the saying, "Lo, I come to do Your will, O God!" or, "My food is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." To be patient, then, is to walk in the way which God has before ordained for us — to keep in that path, however rough or painful it may be — to hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. And so, looking at my whole life, patience is to keep on doing the will of God — not my own will. Whatever may be sent by Him — sickness, or poverty, or persecution, or bereavement — still patience prays: "May Your will be done!" In weakness, and sorrow, and long-continued affliction — still patience prays: "Not as I will, but as You will." There is no murmuring, neither sullenness or despair. There is the submissiveness of trust. So the patient one does not run away from his trial, or seek by distractions to forget it. Lovingly he bears up under it — he endures and lies still beneath it. This is to possess one's soul in patience.

Jesus only, the Son of God, could say with perfect truth, "I have finished the work which You gave Me to do." And even He, because He was the Son of Man, thrice prayed in His agony: "Oh, my Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will." The followers of Christ can only strive to know what is the will of God, and watch and pray, hoping to do His will so as to please Him who knows our weakness. And it is quite possible to say sincerely, "Speak, Lord — for your servant is listening!" It is quite possible to be in great measure free from murmurings — to be cheerful even in suffering — to bless God for trials.

Yes! Patience hopes, and trusts, and praises. It feels the sweet and holy calmness of heavenly rest — singing even in sorrow, "May Your will be done!" It counts it a high privilege to glorify God in sickness and retirement; and, proving by experience the joy of lying still beneath the hand of Love — prayer for meekness takes the strength and beauty of praise. So, in quietness and in confidence, the son delights to say —

O Lord my God, do You Your holy will,

I will lie still —

I will not stir, lest I forsake Your arm,

And break the charm

Which lulls me, clinging to my Father's breast,

In perfect rest.

Such seems to be the teaching of God's Word. That the believer should submit to the Divine will joyfully, as well as humbly — that he should submit not only without murmuring or repining, but even in the "perfect rest" of joy and praise — is the perfect work of patience. Your will I cheerfully obey,

Both when You give and take away;

I follow wherever You lead,

I shun whatever You forbid.

Do As You Will, O Lord, provided

I never be from You divided.

How far I am from this state, God knows. Be it my desire, yet more and more sincere, to prove the preciousness of His gracious promises, to be strong in faith, giving glory to God in every time of trial, holding fast His Word without wavering, and without worry. So shall I be perfect and entire, lacking nothing. Your way, not mine, O Lord,

However dark it be!

Lead me by Your own hand,

Choose out the path for me.

Smooth let it be, or rough,

It will be still the best;

Winding or straight, it leads

Right onward to Your rest.

I dare not choose my lot;

I would not, if I might,

O choose for me, my God,
So shall I walk aright. The kingdom that I seek
Is Yours — so let the way
That leads to it be Yours,
Else I must surely stray.
O take my cup, and it
With joy or sorrow fill,
As best to You may seem,
O choose my good and ill.
O choose for me my friends,
My sickness, or my health,
O choose my cares for me,
My poverty or wealth.
Not mine, not mine the choice,
In things or great or small,
O be my guide, my strength,
My wisdom, and my all! The Heavenly Home!

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am!" John 14:1-3 The blessed Savior spoke these words to His disciples as a farewell. They knew not how to bear the loss of their Master. At the thought of being left alone, they became afraid. He, the wise and loving, the good and mighty One — was going to die. Well might they look sad. Great indeed was their trial. But Jesus comforted them. He gave them blessed hope to drive away their fear; for He told them to believe that soon they would be with Him again. He was going to the Father. He was going to that holy and happy place from whence He came — where are many mansions. For each of His true disciples, one of those glorious homes would be prepared; and as soon as He saw fit, Peter and John and Matthew would be summoned. "Come up hither, that where I am, there you may be also!"

Let me seek to make this promise of the Savior precious to my own soul. O, for faith to hear Him say to myself, "Let not your heart be troubled — neither let it be afraid." To know that He is seeking to comfort me now — that He is leading me to a heavenly home — is peace! When all seems dark before me; when I am disquieted and uneasy; when in the nights of pain and loneliness, all weary and sick at heart — I yearn for something to rest upon, and, like a frightened child, cry for companionship. When I suffer with fears which the soul can tell to no man; when a sense of sin

makes me long for holiness, weakness for strength, weariness for rest — oh, then may I look unto Jesus, and feel that He has not forsaken me! May I find His promises precious, and repose in a sense of His redeeming love! And in the midst of trials, may my comfort be the hope of a heavenly Home — a mansion, a glorious building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens! For all that I can — yes, far, far more than I can imagine of beauty, and grandeur, and happiness, and joy — is the everlasting portion of every true believer. So, then, believing in the suffering Savior, who on the very night of His agony spoke these words of peace — may I find rest in hope, looking for the everlasting day of His glory!

Am I tired and weary? Soon shall there be sweet, perfect rest!

Am I sorely tried in suffering? In Jesus' presence there is the fullness of joy, neither shall there be any more pain!

Am I sad because of loneliness? In the mansions above the saints enjoy harmonious gladness! Does not the conflict with sin oppress me? To be with Jesus is to be perfectly like Him in goodness — to see Him as He is — and reflect the brightness of His glory.

Blessed hope! May I realize it more and more; knowing, that although the sun, and moon, and all temporal things may disappear — yet that unfading, incorruptible and undefiled inheritance, is mine throughout eternity!

O Lord Jesus, You know all my sorrows. You who are about my bed and about my path — are acquainted with all my thoughts. No secret is hidden from You. My pain and weariness, all my doubts and fears — are known unto You. Blessed Jesus, comfort me. Give me the peace which comes only from trust in Your promises. May I hope and not be afraid. And as You said on the night of Your agony, "Let not your heart be troubled" — so now speak peace to my soul. May I trust in Your love, and feel, ever more and more, that You are guiding me to a mansion of joy in Your presence! O may I in heart ascend thither! As You are teaching me the vanity of earthly things — so teach me, good Lord, to look above temptations and sorrows, that I may learn heavenly truths; and amidst all the trials and changes of this mortal state, live peacefully in hope of Your promised blessedness. Lead me, in Your own good time and way, unto its excellent glory. So, with the angels and all Your saints, shall I praise You, forever and ever. Amen.

Jerusalem! my home!

Where saints in triumph sing,

While, tuned in tones of golden harps,

Heaven's boundless arches ring!

No more in tears and sighing,

Our weak hosannahs dying,

But hallelujahs loud and high

Roll thundering through the sky!

One chorus thrills their countless throngs;

Ten thousand times ten thousands tongues,

Fill them with overwhelming songs!

Jerusalem! my home!

Jerusalem! my home!

O sole all-glorious Bride,

Creation shouts with joy to see,

Your Bridegroom at your side!

The Man yet interceding,

His hands and feet once bleeding;

And Him the angel hosts adore,

Lord God for evermore,

And "Holy, Holy, Holy," cry

The choirs that crowd Your courts on high,

Resounding everlastingly!

Jerusalem! my home!

Jerusalem! my home!

Where saints in glory reign,

Your haven safe, O when shall I,

Poor storm-tossed pilgrim, gain?

At distance dark and dreary,

With sin and sorrow weary,

For you I toil, for you I pray,

For you I long always.

And lo! my eyes shall see you too!

O rend in twain, the veil of blue,

And let the golden city through,

Jerusalem! my home!

Meek and Lowly

"My heart is not proud, O LORD, my eyes are not haughty. I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me. O Israel, put your hope in the LORD both now and forevermore!" Psalms 131:1-3 "Do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them!" Jeremiah 45:5 To do my duty in the state which Providence made my own, is peace — and it is true greatness also. To feel that where we are, is of Him who has made us what we are — gives a sacredness and a dignity to our condition. Thus the very poorest man may glorify God. In every honest occupation, man may show forth the patience, and truth, and love of Christ.

"Let every man wherein he is called," says the Scripture, "therein abide with God." Happy is the believer who seeks to glorify God in his divinely-appointed lot. He does not strive to be occupied in great matters. He prays to be kept from pride and vainglory — to be content with such things as he has — to labor in his daily calling, as unto the Lord, and not unto men.

Joyful, though but in humble cot,

His quiet task to see.

Since fitter far the lowlier lot,

For heavenly love, may be.

Such humility is especially pleasing to God. It is His gift. By nature we are proud. It is the fruit of the Spirit to say, with sincerity, "Lord, my heart is not haughty nor my eyes lofty!" We naturally like to exercise ourselves in great matters; to be much thought of by others — and so to be successful; to have the sweetness of flattery or of self-praise.

What says God's Word? "Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited."

"Blessed are the poor in spirit — for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." "Do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them!" The believer also strives after meekness. Blessed are the meek — for they shall inherit the earth. As regards our fellow-men — meekness is to be long-suffering, to bear vexatious things with patience, to refrain from harsh words or sour looks. When I am tempted to reply angrily, to resent injuries, to be peevish and fretful — let me pray to follow the example of the Lord Jesus, who, when He was reviled — reviled not in return. And as towards my God also, may I be meek. When He sees fit to afflict — let me be still and quiet. In bereavement, in sickness, in sorrow — the believer speaks not foolishly. Looking beyond second causes — Faith sees the hand of God in every painful providence. "I was silent — I did not open my mouth — for You are the One who has done this!" Yes! the Almighty says to me, "Be still, and know that I am God!" May I pray for this stillness — learning in the school of suffering how to behave myself as God's child. So may I hope in the Lord from henceforth and forever.

Blessed Lord, give me faith to see that sorrow and joy are mingled in my portion — not by chance or accident. Show me the mercies of my state, and help me to be content. Keep me from the sin of murmuring. May I believe that You do all things well.

O Savior, merciful and slow to anger, forgive me all my sins. Pardon my lack of gratitude. You, O Lord Jesus, were meek and lowly in heart — grant me more patience, that I may grow like unto

You. Let not my heart be haughty, nor my eyes lofty. Help me to still and quiet my soul — like a weaned child with its mother. Give me the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit — so that I may, in the midst of suffering, adorn the doctrine of my Savior.

Give me grace, O God, to receive each trial and each mercy as Your gift. Let neither pain or disappointment lead me to speak unadvisedly with my lips. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from me. By gentleness and unselfishness, may I show myself a follower of the Lord Jesus.

O Savior, may I indeed learn of You. You who were a man of sorrows, persecuted and despised — teach me to follow in Your steps. Give me Your grace, that I may pass through the trials of my lot in meekness and humility, showing forth Your praise. Finally, in Your own good time and way, lead me into that glory, where with the Father and the Holy Spirit, You reign forever and ever. Amen.

I would not have the restless will

That hurries to and fro,

Seeking for some great thing to do,

Or secret thing to know:

I would be treated as a child,

And guided where I go.

Wherever in the world I am,

In whatsoever estate,

I have a fellowship with hearts

To keep and cultivate,

And a work of lowly love to do

For the Lord, on whom I wait.

Assurance of Hope "God has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure!" 2 Samuel 23:5

"We desire that every one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end." Hebrews 6:11

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13 May God teach me to examine myself. In His visitation may He prove me, and help me to see myself in the light of His truth. Have I a quiet, abiding confidence in God's mercy? Can I say, in humble sincerity, Jesus is my Savior — my sins are forgiven? Have I a sound Scriptural sense of acceptance with God? Is my hope of Heaven bright and clear?

I see that every one is exhorted to be diligent unto the full assurance of hope. I know that many believers are filled with all joy and peace in believing, so as to abound in hope. But what is my own state? Am I living in God's peace? Do I walk humbly and yet trustfully with God, rejoicing that I am accepted in the Beloved? Sweet are those lines: When I can read my title clear

To mansions in the skies,

I bid farewell to every fear,

And dry my weeping eyes! But is this my state — having a bright hope of the mansions in the skies? Can I read "my title" with loving confidence?

David says: "The Lord is my light and my salvation." Paul says: "I am persuaded. We know. We are always confident." So also John: "We know that we have passed from death unto life." Blessed peace! What joy to have such strong faith! Hope as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast! In the troublesome waves of this life, a strong consolation.

I will seek for more and more of trust in God's precious promises. Simply to believe His Word with the heart, is to have peace. It is humility to trust — and to trust heartily is to enjoy the assurance of hope. For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Safe is everyone, however timid and tempted, who is on the Rock of Ages — but most happy are they who know that they are on the Rock. In assurance, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

I know that the grace of Assurance is sometimes weakened in the believer's experience. The pilgrimage of Faith is varied. Sometimes there are storms and clouds, and again there is clear shining after rain. Today there is brightness and confidence — and yet in a little while, feebleness and depression. But He, upon whom my soul rests, is the same yesterday, today, and forever. And He has said unto every true Christian, "I will betroth you unto Me in faithfulness."

So, in times of bodily weakness or other infirmities, I will ask my Covenant God to make me repose upon His sure mercies. All-mighty — He is able to keep the feeblest of them who cry unto Him. All-loving with an everlasting love — He soothes His weak and timid children with the tender promise, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you."

Through the love of God our Savior,

All will be well!

Free and changeless is His favor;

All, all is well!

Precious is the Blood that Healed us,

Perfect is the grace that sealed us,

Strong the Hand stretched forth to shield us;

All must be well!

Though we pass through tribulation,

All will be well!

Ours is such a full salvation,

All, all is well!

Happy, still to God confiding;

Fruitful, if in Christ abiding;

Holy, through the Spirit's guiding,

All must be well!

We expect a bright tomorrow;

All will be well!

Faith can sing through days of sorrow,

All, all is well! On our Father's love relying,

Jesus every need supplying;

Or in living, or in dying,

All must be well! My Jewels!

"They will be Mine," says the LORD Almighty, "in the day when I make up My jewels!" Malachi 3:17 The promise of God is that His saints shall be as the jewels of a crown — yes, they shall shine in the Royal diadem! The Lord rejoices to call them His jewels!

What a price has been paid for the saints! The Son of God purchased them with His own blood! Are they not valuable in His sight? How precious are those whom Jehovah calls His jewels! Bought with such an inestimable price! But the saints are likened unto jewels, also because our souls need cutting and purifying. A diamond seems to be a mere pebble before the jeweler's hands give shape and smoothness. Skill and patient toil so transform it, that everyone takes pleasure in its beauty and brightness.

Likewise is it with our souls. Divine grace removes defects, and beautifies. The sharp edge of affliction, directed by the hand of Infinite Love, makes perfect. No longer rough and unsightly, but beautiful and glorious — the precious workmanship of God becomes His delight. It is made fit for the Royal diadem, in which it will shine throughout eternity — reflecting all-gloriously the majesty of the King of Kings! In this dull stone, so poor, and bare

Of shape or luster, patient care

Will find for you a jewel rare!

But first must skillful hands essay,

With fire and flint, to clear away

The film, which hides its fire from day.
This rough dull stone — it is your heart,
Which must he cleansed by sorrow's art,
Before it will shine, a jewel meet
To lay before your dear Lord's feet.

Christ, Our All in All "The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want." Psalms 23:1

"He who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all — how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32

All things are yours; whether . . . the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come — all are yours; and you are Christ's — and Christ is God's." 1 Corinthians 3:21-23 "God shall supply all your needs, according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus." Php 4:19

How glorious is the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ! John speaks in the name of true believers in Jesus: "Of His fullness have all we received." But what can I say? Has grace upon grace come to my soul according to the riches of God's goodness? Am I more thankful, more trustful, more hopeful?

O that I may more clearly see the fullness of the blessing of Him who is . . .

my Savior from sin,

my Comforter in sorrow, and

my Example of righteousness. So may my life on earth be holy in the likeness of His goodness, restful in His love, and useful unto His praise.

I know that in days of trial, Faith is able to say, "I shall not be in want. Christ is my All-in-all. Away with anxious cares and faithless doubtings, for His promise to believers is, All things are yours!" Even so exclaims the Psalmist, "I am poor and needy — yet the Lord thinks upon me!" And likewise the Apostle Paul:

"Dying, and yet we live on;

beaten, and yet not killed;

sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;

poor, yet making many rich;

having nothing, and yet possessing everything." 2 Corinthians 6:8-10

Though some good things of lower worth,

My heart is called on to resign,

Of all the gifts in Heaven and earth,

The greatest and the best is mine:

The love of God in Christ made known,

The love that is enough alone,

My Father's love is all my own.

Yes, in the midst of difficulties, Faith proves that the grace of Christ is sufficient. Sure is the promise: "My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus!" To the cry: "Undertake for me, I am oppressed" — comes the comfort: "I Myself will help you — be of good cheer."

O Lord Jesus Christ, show me the fullness of Your salvation. Raise my affections, and fix them more on You. Teach me more sincerely to trust in Your precious promises — so that I may grow in grace, and in knowledge of You, the Giver.

Give me, O Lord, precious gifts out of Your fullness. Bless me with true wisdom. Teach me to love You as my All-in-all, the source of joy, and hope, and all things which are good for me.

Blessed Savior, give me true sorrow for sin, and help me to look more thankfully to Your cross. May I love You as the burden-bearer, who bore my innumerable iniquities. Give me joy and peace in believing — so shall I live in sweet fellowship with You.

Keep me, O God, from all murmuring and fretfulness. Be unto me Light, that I may rejoice and be glad. Bless me with a spirit of praise. Still in time of trouble may I sing with joy — happy because I am Yours and You are mine!

Teach me, Lord Jesus, to look to You for sympathy. In all my sorrows and weaknesses, may I find Your words very precious. And as I read and meditate — be near me, that my soul may be comforted, and I may walk in Your way. So may I grow like You — yes, Lord, transform me into the image of Your glorious goodness. Day by day mold me in Your likeness, ever more and more, until You send for me to be with You — where, with all the saints and angels, I shall forever praise You! Amen.

Wherefore should I grieve and pine?

Is not Christ the Lord still mine?

Who can sever me from Him?

Who can rob me of the Heaven

Which the Son of God has given

Unto faith, though weak and dim?

Soul and body, life and goods,

Are not mine — are only God's —

Given me by His loving will!

Would He take back ought of His?

Let Him take it — not for this
Shall my song of praise be still.
Does He send some cross to bear?
Comes sorrow, need, or care,
Shall it all my peace destroy?
He who sends can end it too,
Well He knows, in season due,
How to turn my griefs to joy.
Many a day of happiness
Has He sent, who loves to bless;
Shall I not bear aught for God?
He is kind — we know that He
Never forsakes us utterly,
Love lies hidden in His rod.
Fount of Joy! my Lord Divine,
Yours I am, and You are mine!
Naught can part my soul from Thee!
I am Yours, for You did give
Once Your life, that I might live:
Dearly did You purchase me!
Abide With Me

"As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, 'Abide with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them." Luke 24:28-29

"Jesus said unto him: If a man loves Me, he will keep My words; and my Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him!" John 14:23

There is true comfort in the promise of Jesus: "Lo, I am with you always!" He abides with His own redeemed people. As in the presence of the Apostles He began both to do and teach — so now is He dwelling within the souls of His true disciples, still the same doer and teacher of good. His sacred body is at the right hand of God — yet Jesus is really present with true believers. Happy are they who can say, in the words of John, "We know that He abides in us!"

"Behold," says the Savior, "I stand at the door and knock. If any man hears my voice and opens the door — I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." And so He pledges to be the guest of every man who opens the door of his heart — He comes to abide with weak and erring man. Wonderful is this love! As He went in to tarry with the disciples at Emmaus — so now the Lord Jesus comes in to the waiting heart; He dwells, not only comforting in sorrows, but sweetening and sanctifying joys.

This, then, should be my strength — the indwelling of the Lord Jesus. In sorrows, in temptations, in conflicts — I am not alone — the Mighty and Loving One is with me. And toward evening, when the day is far spent, in the pain and weariness of the last moments, the Lord Jesus will still be with me. Even though from weakness I may not know how to cling to Him — yet will He keep me safe and peaceful. Underneath me will be the everlasting arms — and I shall fall asleep on the bosom of His unchanging love!

Abide with me! Fast falls the eventide;

The darkness deepens — Lord, with me abide!

When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,

Help of the helpless, O abide with me!

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;

Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;

Change and decay in all around I see,

O You who changest not, abide with me! Not a brief glance, I beg — a passing word —

But as You dwell with Your disciples, Lord;

Familiar, condescending, patient, free,

Come, not to sojourn, but abide with me!

Come not in terrors, as the King of kings,

But kind and good, with healing in Your wings;

Tears for all woes, a heart for every plea,

Come, Friend of sinners, and thus abide with me!

You on my head, in early youth did smile;

And, though rebellious and perverse meanwhile,

You have not left me, oft as I left Thee,

On to the close, O Lord, abide with me!

I need Your presence every passing hour,

What but Your grace can foil the Tempter's power?

Who like Yourself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me!
I fear no foe, with You at hand to bless,
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness,
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, your victory?
I triumph still, if You abide with me!
Hold then Your cross before my closing eyes!
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies!
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee,
In life, and death, O Lord, abide with me!

Praise for Affliction "Oh that You would bless me indeed!" 1 Chronicles 4:10 The prayer of Jabez was that God would bless him indeed; and as we use the words of that devout and wise man — use them in the best sense of the prayer — we ask God to give to us those things which are good for us — whether they be of pleasure or of pain to our human nature. "Oh that You would bless me indeed. Give to me what You see for my real good, and for Your glory. Bless me with true blessings."

Sometimes those things which we yearn after, pray for, strive earnestly to get — would prove very hurtful to us. And likewise those things which seem to the believer to be his chief blessings — are taken away in wisdom, that God may bless him indeed. The coming also of certain things which at first appeared to be altogether against us — sometimes proves a special mercy.

"God moves in mysterious ways,

His wonders to perform!" And oftentimes the strangely winding pathway, that on which no footprints of divine mercy can be traced — is the very one for which the experienced believer most delights to praise God. We must trust His heart — even when we cannot trace His hand! For His judgments are unsearchable, and His ways are past finding out. So does the Psalmist call God's mysterious dispensations a great deep — the depths of infinite wisdom and eternal love. Blessed be His name, that I am able to thank my God for all His gifts:

the sorrowful — as well as the joyous;

the mysterious — as well as those easy to understand. In the perfect day of His presence I shall see and know even as now I am known. Yet even in the cloudy day of earth's trials I can see, in shining characters, tokens of His love. As the sufferings of Christ abound in us — so our consolation also abounds by Christ. The Dove has settled upon the Cross. Not only for the light of loving hearts

That cheered my lonely life, I thank You, God.

Not for my childhood's home, nor tearless eyes,

Nor pleasant paths of peace my feet have trod,
But that the idols tenderly embraced,
By this weak heart, and falsely called my own,
You have withdrawn, that I in time might learn
To lean upon Your holy arm alone.

For the sharp reed that pierced this feeble hand,
For thorn-torn feet that You alone could see,
For the deep fount of tears by You told over,
I thank You, Lord — they brought me nearer Thee.

Work and Rest "Oh that I had wings like a dove! For then would I fly away, and be at rest!" Psalms 55:6

After the toils of a day's labor, every workman loves the refreshing of rest — quietness and repose are very pleasant at eventide. And sleep, "tired nature's sweet restorer," is very welcome to the weary. But rest, far sweeter still

Than ever nightfall gave,
Our yearning hearts shall fill
In the land beyond the grave!

During times of severe trials — oftentimes may come a yearning to enter at once into that eternal rest. In bodily infirmities, as also in disappointments and other distresses, there may arise the cry, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! For then would I fly away, and be at rest! Away from these scenes of sorrow and conflict! Away into that eternal Rest where there is no wickedness to trouble, and where the weary are at rest!" When is this cry sinful? When it is said in impatience and lack of trust — when the sufferer prays merely to be made free from present trials. Elijah once requested for himself that he might die. He was sad and fearful — he had been greatly disappointed, and so he cried, "It is enough! Now, O Lord, take away my life!" And the Prophet Jonah, sinning greatly against God, cried in bitterness, "Take my life from me — it is better for me to die than to live!"

Whenever this prayer springs merely from impatience under trials, from distrustfulness of God's providential dealings — then it is a rebellion against the yoke of God's service. But the cry for heavenly rest need not be a selfish, faithless, God-dishonoring supplication. It may be the pure breathing of love — the realization that to be with Christ is far better — a yearning after perfect holiness and perfect praise in the presence of Jesus.

Oh, for a heart that never sins!
Oh, for a soul washed white!
Oh, for a voice to praise our King,

Nor weary day or night! The comfort is, that infinite Wisdom and infinite Love appoint the end of our earthly labors. Sometimes the saint, in sinless infirmity, may pray for grace to die — but God bestows grace to live — to live more faithfully to His glory. And sometimes the saint's prayer is, "O spare me, before I go hence!" But Jesus, seeing that the sheaf is ripe, at once gathers it into His garner. May I be kept free from fretfulness or distrust! May the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in God's sight! I know that one prayer is always well pleasing unto God: "May Your kingdom come — May Your will be done.

Two hands upon the breast,

And labor's done.

Two pale feet crossed in rest,

The race is run.

Two eyes with coin-weights shut,

And all tears cease.

Two lips where grief is mute,

And wrath at peace.

So pray we oftentimes, mourning our lot,

God, in His kindness, answers not.

Two hands to work addressed

Yes for His praise.

Two feet that never rest,

Walking His ways.

Two eyes that look above,

Still through all tears.

Two lips that breathe but love,

Nevermore fears.

So cry we afterwards, low at our knees:

Pardon those erring prayers! Father, hear these!

Strangers and Pilgrims

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Hebrews 11:13

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11 "And He said: My presence shall go with you." Exodus 33:14

"He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness. He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye!" Deuteronomy 32:10

Every true believer realizes that he is a stranger in this world. Faith is confidence in things hoped for — a conviction of things not seen. The faithful are waiting for that which is promised. Rest, indeed, there is on the earth, for we who have believed, enter into rest (refreshing joy and peace). But the best rest yet remains to the people of God — and so we with patience wait for it. We are living in remembrance that Heaven is our home. We are spending our days as pilgrims — as on a journey. We are sojourning in a frail and imperfect body, out of which, before the silver cord is loosed — the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. Then shall the days of pilgrimage have come to an end, and Time be exchanged for Eternity! And this I know is the faithful pilgrim's joy — he is drawing nearer to his heavenly home — nearer to God!

Here in the body pent,
Absent from Him I roam,
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent
A day's march nearer home!

Yes, now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. Many storms are spent and gone — we shall see the fewer. Many trials and temptations have in God's strength been met and overcome. Perhaps not many more sorrows yet remain for us. We are drawing nearer and nearer to the perfect day!

One sweetly solemn thought,
Comes to me o'er and o'er:
I'm nearer my home today
Than I've ever been before!
Nearer my Father's house,
Where the many mansions be;
Nearer the Great White Throne,
Nearer the crystal sea!
Nearer the bound of life,
Where we lay our burdens down;
Nearer leaving my cross,

Nearer gaining my crown! As I look back on the steps of my pilgrimage, my chief thought is of God's guiding mercy. How graciously have I been guided, controlled, taught, and guarded! Surely

goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life!

God found me, "Then I passed by and saw you kicking about in your blood, and as you lay there in your blood I said to you, "Live!" Ezekiel 16:6. Of His sovereign grace, it is that I have been walking in the paths of righteousness. By the grace of God, I am what I am. He sought me, even according to the purpose of His everlasting love. He drew me unto Himself — drew me with the gentle constraint of Jesus' love! And He has led me about. Precious is His promise, "My presence shall go with you!" — and wondrously has He guided me hither and thither, oftentimes in ways mysterious — but always tenderly, wisely, and in love. The course of my pilgrimage was well-ordered — rough or smooth, cloudy or bright, each portion was good for me. So also the Lord has instructed me. An unwilling and heedless scholar have I often been — yet His Word and His dealings have been profitable for instruction in righteousness. When erring and failing — I have been restored and comforted. "Seek Your servant!" was my cry — and Jesus has listened:

Sought me wandering, set me right,

Turned my darkness into light!

Yes, in some sort I have learned, even as the Apostle Paul did. I know by experience what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Chastisements, as well as pleasant things — have taught my soul. The pathway of some travelers has been unbroken — unroughened with affliction; but because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God. This is the song which I have been taught: "Great are Your tender mercies, O Lord. Quicken me according to Your judgments." By His judgments, the Father of mercies blesses Me. And in my pilgrimage Almighty Love keeps me. Yes, God preserves the believer even as the apple of His eye. In the hour of temptation — His grace has been strength. In trouble — He has been a very present help to me. When my heart fail me — the faithful God soothed and comforted. Not one thing has failed of all the good things of His covenant promises! The Omnipotent Hand has . . .

warded off many evils,

raised me up after many a stumble,

and fed me with innumerable mercies.

Even as a man preserves the apple of his eye — so watchfully and tenderly has Jehovah been my Keeper. As I look forward, waiting for the pilgrim's rest — the light of Heaven throws the shadow of earth's burdens behind me, and I cry, "God is my portion forever! Lead me onwards, O Lord, by the right way, to that city of habitation."

Blessed prospect! I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed to us!

O Almighty God, teach me, I beseech You, by Your Holy Spirit. Teach me to live as one of Zion's pilgrims — walking in humility and self-denial, and looking unto Jesus. Bless me with stronger faith. Open my eyes, that I may have confidence in eternal unseen realities. May I live more nearly as I pray; not clinging closely to the things of time and sense, but remembering how frail and uncertain is my earthly tabernacle; waiting for the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Take from me all self-confidence, all deceitfulness of heart. Search me, O God, and see if there is any secret wickedness within me, and lead me in the paths of holiness. Knit my heart in Your love. Give me, O Lord, more and more of Your heavenly grace. May I press onwards, forgetting those things which are behind — and reaching after those which are before; striving earnestly to please You, to grow in grace, to glorify Your name.

Assist me, O Lord, so that I may become the channel of Your mercy, assisting others. By kindness, by meekness, by tenderness of spirit — may I help onwards those whose faces are set Zion-wards, and bring into the everlasting way, some who as yet do not know You. In my weakness O God — bless me with Your strength. Guide and comfort me in every rough place of my pilgrimage. Day by day may I feel You, O loving Savior, near — so that in the light of Your countenance I may journey onward, step by step, content even when the way is difficult, and joyful in hope of eternal rest.

Bestow upon me, O gracious Lord, the spirit of thankfulness and praise. May I remember all the way which You have led me, to humble me and to prove me, to know what is in my heart; allowing me to hunger — that You might feed me with heavenly manna; bowing me down in disappointment and distress — that I might rest more simply upon You, waiting to be satisfied. I praise You, my loving God; I thank You and bless You. Even now my heart rests in Your love, and when my times of trial are come to an end, and the work of Your love towards me is accomplished — I shall be fully satisfied, for I shall awake in Your likeness, and be with You forever!

Hear me, O Lord God and heavenly Father. For Jesus Christ's sake, accept my supplications and thanksgivings. Sanctify me by Your Spirit. In Your own good time and way, lead me into that excellent glory, where You live and reign world without end. Amen.

"Is this the way, my Father?" "It is, my child,

You must pass through the tangled, dreary wild,

If you would reach the city undefiled —

Your peaceful home above."

"But enemies are around!" "Yes, child, I know

That where you least expect — you will find a foe,

But victor you shall prove over all below —

Only seek strength above."

"My Father, it is dark!" "Child, take my hand;

Cling close to Me, I'll lead you through the land.

Trust My all-seeing care — so shall you stand.

Midst glory bright above."

"My footsteps seem to slide!" "Child, only raise

Your eye to Me; then, in those slippery ways

I will hold up Your goings — you shall praise

Me for each step above."

"O Father, I am weary!" "Child, lean your head

Upon My breast — it was My love that spread

Your rugged path: hope on still, until I have said,

Rest — rest forever above!" The Suffering and the Kingdom

"I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus." Revelation 1:9 "We suffer with Him — that we may be also glorified together." Romans 8:17

"Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." Php 1:29 "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." 2 Timothy 2:12 The patience of Christ is the meekness, long-suffering, holy submission to the will of God, which He displayed. And the grace of patience which He so perfectly displayed — that grace He now bestows. To grow in the knowledge of His all-patient life, and to grow in the grace of patience (endurance) which He gives — these two are together in every true Christian. Every faithful member of Christ's holy Church is companion in the patience of its Lord.

It was said to the early Christians, "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." The great Head of the Church had foretold this. "Here on earth," says Jesus, "you shall have many trials and sorrows." And in every age, many of His most faithful followers have greatly suffered for His Name's sake — they have been companions of a suffering-Savior. But not only in persecution is there a fellowship in Christ's patience — in all the sufferings of my providential lot, I may be a companion in the sufferings of Christ. I may imitate Christ, be molded in His image, possessing His grace, glorifying His name. A high privilege indeed! Even in weakness, in distress of mind and body, to be a companion in the patience of Him who in affliction perfectly glorified God, who is now the all-ruling Lord.

They, therefore, are truly partakers of Christ's sufferings — who rejoice in the midst of daily trials, in family and social personal sorrows, because in the patience of Jesus Christ they may glorify God. So a believer confined to a sick-room is a prisoner of Jesus Christ. And one of His little ones, weak, poor, unlettered, and lonely — is as truly a companion of Christ's, as the successful scholar or the noble martyr.

Oh, that in my dear Lord's patience, I may prove that, "When I am weak — then am I strong!" May I follow Him, bearing whatever cross He shall lay upon me! Constrained by His love, may I patiently share in His afflictions! Yes, triumph over them, and turn them to God's glory — in all these things be more than conqueror! So when His glory shall be revealed, when Christ shall come to be glorified in those who believe, I shall be glad with exceeding joy. Yes, I shall reign with Him forever in glory!

It is true that even now the believer is companion in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. The Savior is King, though the world knows Him not. You is the kingdom — my Master and my Lord! But this is the prayer of Hope: "May Your kingdom come." Oh, may it please You speedily to accomplish the number of Your elect, and to hasten Your kingdom! Even so, come Lord Jesus!

Eternal Praise!

"After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" Revelation 7:9-10

Blessed in this life is the communion of saints — but how glorious will be our fellowship in the joy and holiness of Heaven! Clothed with white robes, perfectly pure; bearing palms in their hands, rejoicing conquerors; the glorified Saints stand together before the Throne, having the harps of God.

Every voice is there harmonious, Praising God in hymns symphonious. And the voice of Heaven's worship, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of many thunderings — is the sweet song of praise: "Alleluia! Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed. Alleluia!"

Patriarchs and Prophets, Evangelists and Apostles, the noble army of Martyrs and the great multitude of the redeemed — sing the same strain — the song of the Lamb! Each and all worshipping Jesus, they cry, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain! You have made us kings and priests unto our God . Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him who sits upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever!"

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; sorrow and mourning shall flee away; no grief, no conflict, no anxiety, no pain shall try them forever again! God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head. The former things are passed away. Their gladness is eternal — within the incorruptible, and undefiled, and unfading inheritance.

Dwelling in the mansions of the Fathers house, they shall see His face and sing His praises, forever and ever. Instead of earth's supplications — they utter Heaven's blessings. Their song of praise is untiring, gladsome, holy, and eternal. The tearful, impure, and broken worship of mortality is passed away — but the delight of praise, the full, sweet, adoring song of immortality, that which is perfect, ceases never!

Blessed hope! I shall sing unto the Lord as long as I live:

My days of praise shall ne'er be past,

While life, and thought, and being last,

And immortality endures!

Sometimes while here below, in a strange land, my harp hangs upon the willows — but when at my everlasting home, in the Zion of glory, I shall sing the Lords song with perfect and unfailing joy!

Oh, happy saints! who dwell in light,
And walk with Jesus, clothed in white,
Safe landed on that peaceful shore,
Where pilgrims meet to part no more.
Released from sin, and toil, and grief,
Death was their gate to endless life —
An opened cage to let them fly,
And build their happy nest on high. And now they range the heavenly plains,
And sing their hymns in melting strains,
And now their souls begin to prove,
The heights and depths of Jesus' love.
He cheers them with eternal smile,
They sing Hosannas all the while!
Or, overwhelmed with rapture sweet,
Sink down, adoring, at His feet!
Ah, Lord! with tardy steps I creep,
And sometimes sing, and sometimes weep,
Yet strip me of this house of clay,
And I will sing as loud as they!

"Then I heard a voice from Heaven say: "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on."

"Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor!" Revelation 14:13

I shine in the light of God,
His likeness stamps my brow;
Through the shadows of death my feet have trod,
And I reign in glory now. No breaking heart is here,
No keen and thrilling pain;
No wasted cheek, where the frequent tear

Has rolled, and left its stain.
I have found the joys of Heaven,
I am one of the sainted band;
To my head a crown of gold is given,
And a harp is in my hand.
I have learned the song they sing,
Whom Jesus has set free;
And the glorious walls of Heaven still ring
With my new-born melody. No sin, no grief, no pain!
Safe in my happy home —
My fears all fled, my doubts all slain,
My hour of triumph come!
Oh, friends of mortal years —
The trusted and the true!
You still walk in the valley of tears,
But I wait to welcome you. Do I forget? Oh, no!
For Memory's golden chain
Shall bind my heart to the hearts below,
Until they meet to touch again.
Each link is strong and bright,
And Love's electric flame
Flows freely down, like a river of light,
To the world from whence I came. Do you mourn when another star
Shines out from a glittering sky?
Do you weep when the raging voice of war
And the storms of conflict die?
Then why should your tears run down,
And your hearts be sorely riven,
For another gem in your Savior's crown,

Another soul in Heaven!

Dying in Christ!

"For me to live is Christ, to die is gain!" Php 1:21

"We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord!" 2 Corinthians 5:8

Though our outward man perishes — yet the inward man is renewed day by day. When this frail tabernacle of mortality is dissolved — we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens! I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord — whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. When the appointed hour is come, the believer's body falls asleep, but the soul departs to be forever with the Lord. Then shall be sung that hymn of triumph, which in its fullness shall be sung on the resurrection morning: "Death is swallowed up in victory!" My Lord and Savior is the life — joined to Him by living faith, I shall never die — never see death. That which we call death will have no power over my immortal spirit. Departing I shall hear the voice of Jesus: "Today shall you be with Me in Paradise!" When I am dead, and silent lying,

Should you, in your hour of awe

Gaze upon me — softly sighing,

Back the solemn curtain draw. But the frame of clay you'll see,

O beloved, will not be me!

I shall be with Christ, my treasure,

Drinking in eternal pleasure!

Yes, then shall I be at Home — joyous and holy, forever and ever!

"Happy and blessed death — that golden bridge between Time's clay banks — and Heaven's shore!"

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