

STILL WATERS

by James Smith

Smith's evening devotional helping believers transition from daily labor to quiet rest through meditation on Scripture, calming agitation, soothing trouble, and bringing the wandering mind back to God.

3 Chapters

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Still Waters!

Refreshment for the Savior's Flock at Eventide!

James Smith, 1871

01 PREFACE

PREFACE

It is a pleasant sight to see the flock at eventide follow the shepherd from the field to the fold — that there they may rest and ruminate in safety. And it is both pleasant and profitable for the Christ's sheep, after the toils and trials of the day — to follow Him into private, and there meditate for a few moments on some portion of His precious Word. It . . .

calms the agitated bosom,

soothes the troubled spirit,

brings back the wandering mind,

and awakens praise and prayer. To aid in doing this, is the design of the present little volume. A former volume provided for the morning, and we trust that many have been benefitted by its use; this is intended for the evening, and if properly employed, is calculated to do good. It leads to the Lord's Word, and through the Word — to the Lord Himself. But if we would profit, we must . . .

mix faith with the Word;

seek to hold fellowship with God through every portion;

and realize the presence of the Holy Spirit, who alone can render the Word profitable. May every reader perceive the abundant provision which is made for us in Jesus, look to the Holy Spirit to unfold and apply the blessings of the gospel to the heart — and thus "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"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 139:23-24 An honest heart will expose itself to God's all-searching eye — and desires to be examined as well as cleansed and comforted!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace at all times and in every way."2 Thessalonians 3:16 Peace with God is an invaluable blessing! It flows from Christ's atonement, and is the antidote of human misery!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord."Psalms 37:23 The Lord never allows His children to wander without a guide, or rove just where their foolish inclination prompts; but He watches over, and leads them in the way which they should go.

While passing through the wilderness,

Full of temptations and distress,

What comfort does the thought afford,

Our steps are ordered by the Lord!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Unto you who believe — He is precious!"1 Peter 2:7 True faith always leads us to prize the Savior! The stronger our faith — the more precious He becomes!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "It is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."Php 2:13

Notwithstanding all that God has done for us — we daily need the Holy Spirit to direct our wills and strengthen our souls.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "The Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father — He shall testify of Me!"John 15:26 The Holy Spirit always speaks of Jesus, leads us to Jesus, and testifies of Him to the heart and conscience.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "For to me — to live is Christ, and to die is gain!"Php 1:21 The life of the Christian should be a practical exhibition of Christ, in His spirit, temper, disposition, and doctrine — then to live would be Christ — and to die eternal gain!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Because your heart was tender, and you have humbled yourself before the Lord."2 Kings 22:19 Sin hardens the heart — but grace softens it. The more grace we receive, the tenderer our hearts will be.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "You shall be hated of all men for my name's sake!"Matthew 10:22 A holy life condemns a sinful world — hence the opposition that is manifested to it. Let us aim to be holy — then, though hated of men, we shall be happy.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged!"Deuteronomy 31:8 The Lord will never break His word or forsake His people; therefore their fears are groundless, and their doubts sinful.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us!"Ephesians 5:2 The sacrifice of Christ is but the effect of His love; if therefore He so loved us as to give Himself for us — He will not deny us any good thing.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak!"Psalms 6:2

We are never so safe as when we deeply feel our weakness; for then it is that we look for promised strength, and receive it!

I'm helpless as a little child.

And like it I would rest.

Show me, O God, a parent's heart!

Give me an infant's trust.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "The Lord will give grace and glory!"Psalms 84:11

Grace fits us for glory, and is introductory to it. The two are inseparably connected. If grace sanctify us — glory will crown us!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Cast all your cares on Him — because He cares for you!"1 Peter 5:7 Earthly cares . . .

weaken faith,

hinder meditation, and

obstruct our progress.

Let us carry them all to Jesus — and leave them with Him!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "The Lord tries the righteous!"Psalms 11:5

Trials are the Lord's furnace, in which He tries our graces and purifies our persons. If we have not been tried — we are not safe.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "The Lord God is a sun and shield!"Psalms 84:11 Our God is at once the light that cheers and guides us, and the shield that protects and defends us. He both our comfort and safety. Let us look to Him in darkness and danger.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "It is the voice of my beloved that knocks, saying: Open to me, my sister, my love!"Song of Solomon 5:2 Jesus is seeking fellowship with us this evening, let us go into secret with Him, and pour out our hearts before Him.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "I am the Alpha and Omega — the first and the last!"Revelation 1:11

Jesus comprehends in Himself . . .

all that is great, good, or glorious;

all we can desire, enjoy, or employ;

all we can need in time or eternity!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "I am in trouble, Lord. Help me!" Isaiah 38:14 The trouble that drives us to the Lord does us good. It is only the burden that is too heavy for us — that we are willing to cast upon God.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "When he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled Himself greatly!" 2 Chronicles 33:12

Prosperity has led many astray — but adversity has been sent to reclaim them! Affliction is a father's voice crying, "Come back!"

Afflictions are chastisements; they are sent by a Father, and are regulated by wisdom, pity, and love. To despise them, is to reflect poorly on Him.

Afflictions, though they seem severe,

In mercy oft are sent;

They show the prodigal His sin,

And lead Him to repent!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "He was wounded for our transgressions — He was bruised for our iniquities!" Isaiah 53:5 Our sins being imputed to Jesus — the desert of them was laid upon Him. He suffered what we deserved — and now we enjoy what He merited. That dear blood, for sinners spilt.

Shows my sin in all its guilt;

Ah! my soul, be bore your load —

You have slain the Lamb of God!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ You must fear the Lord your God, and cling to Him!" Deuteronomy 10:20 Filial fear leads to holy obedience, and preserves us from wandering from God!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me!" Romans 7:21

We are in more danger from inbred corruption — than from Satan and all His hosts! The enemy within is worse than the enemy without.

Far worse than all my foes I find

The enemy within —

The evil heart, the carnal mind,

Mine own insidious sin!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "For in just a very little while — He who is coming will come and will not delay!" Hebrews 10:37 The Savior will soon appear, and then our labors will cease, and our sorrows will end! All

beyond will be light, joy, and peace! A few more days, or months, or years,

In this dark desert to complain;

A few more signs, a few more tears,

And we shall bid adieu to pain!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "All things are for your sakes!" 2 Corinthians 4:15 In every purpose He formed,

in every work He wrought,

in every circumstance He permits —

the Lord's eye is upon the good of His people!

All is for their good.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also!" Matthew 6:19-21 The earthly mind only strives for earthly things; but the godly man has his hope, his heart, and his treasure in Heaven.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Be silent, all mankind, before the Lord!" Zechariah 2:13

We may always trust the Lord's wisdom — even when we do not see the design He has in view. He will make no mistake — nor shall His work contradict His word.

Turn to your rest, O my soul.

And kiss the needful rod;

Nor seek your Sovereign to control.

But know that He is God!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:18 Everything on earth is temporal — therefore of small importance.

Everything in the other world is eternal — therefore of infinite moment.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "O Lord, you are our Father! We are the clay — and you our Potter!" Isaiah 64:8

We are . . .

produced by the divine power,

molded by the divine wisdom, and

stamped with the divine name —

to reflect the divine glory.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Wash me — and I shall be whiter than snow!"Psalms 51:7 The blood of Jesus will eradicate the deepest stains, and make the foulest sinner as spotless as an angel of light; its efficacy is infinite!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "How many are Your works, O Lord! In wisdom You made them all!"Psalms 104:24 The works of the Lord are to be studied and enjoyed; they are a looking-glass in which He is to be seen.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"A man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest!"Isaiah 32:2 Jesus is our hiding-place in every affliction, our covert in every storm — in Him we find comfort and safety.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake!"Psalms 23:3

Every sheep in the Savior's fold is prone to wander — and incessantly needs His watchful care and correction!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time!"1 Peter 5:6

Let us reflect upon our origin, our conduct, and our desert! Let us visit Gethsemane and Calvary — and so become truly humble.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons."Hebrews 12:7

Every child of God needs chastening, and every one receives it! Nothing but discipline will produce obedience and submission.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Whoever does not take up his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple."Luke 14:27

He who rests upon Jesus for acceptance with God — will bear the cross after Him in the path of duty. Faith always produces obedience.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed — a refuge in times of trouble!"Psalms 9:9 When sin, Satan, and the world, oppress us — Jesus is a refuge for us! In Him we shall find solace and relief!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "But if we have food and clothing — we will be content with that."1 Timothy 6:8 We have always more than we deserve — and as much as we really need. Therefore we ought to be contented.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "All who are led by the Spirit of God — are sons of God."Romans 8:14 The Spirit leads . . .

from self to Jesus,
from sin to holiness,
from earth to Heaven!

If we are led by the Spirit — our sonship is unquestionable.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep!"Psalms 121:4 The Lord will trust no one to keep His people but Himself! He loves them too well to leave them in any hands but His own.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?"Romans 6:1

If grace has abounded in our experience — we shall tremble at the idea of indulging in sin! Grace always sets the heart against sin.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "You have destroyed yourself; but in Me is your help!"Hosea 13:9 Destruction and misery originate with ourselves; salvation and happiness flow from God alone.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made Heaven and earth!"Psalms 124:8 The omnipotent Creator is our help! He is engaged by promise to help and deliver us! To Him, let us look in weakness and fear.

If rough and thorny be my way.

My strength proportion to my day;

Until toil, and grief, and pain shall cease,

Where all is rest, and joy, and peace!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Being made free from sin — you became the servants of righteousness!"Romans 6:18 If we are justified and freed from the charge of sin — then we are delivered from the love and power of sin.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "The love of Christ constrains us!"2 Corinthians 5:14 The love of Christ shed abroad in the heart — is the root of holy obedience, and the principle that purifies the whole person.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!"Php 2:8

Here is our example! Humility and obedience should always be our aim — these not only continued — but increased until death. My worthless heart to gain,

The God who gave me breath

Was found in fashion as a man,

And died a cursed death!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men."Acts 24:16 A tender conscience is an invaluable blessing; wherever it is, there is a fear of offending either God or good men.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Do not this abominable thing that I hate!" Jeremiah 44:4 The sin of the saint touches the heart of God! Nothing affects Him like it; therefore He speaks so strongly and so tenderly about it. May I from every sin,

As from a serpent, fly;

Abhor to touch the thing unclean,

And rather choose to die!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Behold, I have given Him for a leader and commander to the people." Isaiah 55:4

If Jesus is our leader — we should carefully follow Him. And if He is our commander — we should cheerfully obey Him.

Behold, He leads the way;

We'll follow where He goes:

We cannot fail to win the day,

Since He subdues our foes!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "The law of Your mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver!" Psalms 119:72 He who thus values God's Word, can never be poor; nor will he ever lack for comfort in the day of trouble.

Oh, may the least omission pain

My well-instructed soul,

And drive me to Your blood again,

Which makes the wounded whole!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"No one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. But the Lord stood with me and gave me strength!" 2 Timothy 4:16-17

Creatures generally fail us when we need them most! But when they fail — the Lord steps in, and displays His power and love!

Friends may fail — but He will take you,

And supply your utmost need;

Nor will Jesus e'er forsake you,

But in paths of safety lead.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"If we suffer — we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him — He also will deny us." 2 Timothy 2:12 If we prefer suffering to sin — we may justly look forward and expect to be crowned with

glory!

~~~~~ "It is an evil thing and bitter — that you have forsaken the Lord your God!" Jeremiah 2:19  
To forsake God is the worst thing we can do! Nothing but sorrow, trouble, and bitter remorse can result from it! From You that I no more may part,

No more Your goodness grieve,

The filial awe, the holy heart,

The tender conscience give!

~~~~~ "I will guide you with My eye!" Psalms 32:8 In all times of difficulty and perplexity, in all seasons of trouble and distress — let us believe and plead this precious promise! Are we blind and prone to error?

God vouchsafes to be our guide:

Are we faint and full of terror?

He Himself is on our side.

~~~~~ "Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation!" Matthew 26:41

We are always exposed to temptation from Satan, the world, and our own lusts; consequently, we should always watch and pray.

~~~~~ "I will instruct you and teach you in the way in which you shall go!" Psalms 32:8

Sinful human nature is prone to choose and prefer the wrong way; divine teaching is necessary to lead and keep us right.

~~~~~ "What is your life? It is even a vapor!" James 4:14

We are not sufficiently affected with the brevity of life! If we were, our thoughts, desires, and hopes would be more taken up with eternal things. My days are shorter than a span:

A little point, my life appears;

How frail, at best, is dying man!

How vain are all His hopes and fears!

~~~~~

"He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all those who believe!" 2 Thessalonians 1:10 When Jesus comes, His people will be collected, perfected, and glorified! Each will resemble Him, and reflect His glory forever!

O glorious hour! O blessed abode!

I shall be near and like my God!

And flesh and sin no more control,

The sacred pleasures of the soul!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "When he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him!" James 1:12 The present is the time of toil and trial — the time of rest and triumph is before us; let us look forward whenever downcast.

Then why, my soul, complain or fear?

The crown of glory see!

The more I toil and suffer here —

The sweeter rest will be!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Who is like You among the gods, O Lord — glorious in holiness, awesome in splendor, performing great wonders!" Exodus 15:11 Our God is incomparable! The more we contemplate His glories — the more humble, resigned, and devoted we shall be!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." Colossians 3:13 In our present sinful state, we must daily bear and forbear with each other — and forgive as we hope to be forgiven.

I hope for pardon, through Your Son,

For all the crimes which I have done;

Oh, may the grace that pardons me,

Constrain me to forgive like Thee!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want." Galatians 5:17

Every Christian has two distinct and opposite principles within Him — and these are always in a state of conflict!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart!" Hebrews 12:3 Our thoughts should be daily directed to Jesus — and we should dwell upon all that He said, and did, and suffered for us. My soul rejoices to pursue,

The steps of Him I love;

Until glory breaks upon my view.

In brighter worlds above!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Your Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path!"Psalms 119:105 The Word of God is for daily use. But in seasons of darkness and sorrow — we learn its value, and prize its contents!

Oh, may these heavenly pages be,

My ever dear delight;

And still new beauties may I see,

And still increasing light!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Father, forgive them — for they know not what they do!"Luke 23:34

If Jesus prayed for His enemies when they were putting Him to death — much more will He plead for His redeemed children who are seeking to promote His glory!

Hark, how He prays! The charming sound

Dwells on His dying lips, "Forgive!"

And every groan and gaping wound

Cries, "Father, let the rebels live!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "I have called you friends!"John 15:15 To be the friend of Jesus is the highest honor we can enjoy! And yet, as poor and depraved as we are — this honor is ours!

He calls a worm, His friend!

He calls Himself, my God!

And He shall save me to the end,

Through His own precious blood!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "The Word of our God shall stand forever!"Isaiah 40:8 The Word of God is like His nature — unchangeable. We cannot believe it too confidently, nor trust it too firmly. May this blessed volume ever lie,

Close to my heart — and near my eye,

Until life's last hour my soul engage,

And be my chosen heritage!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Hold me up — and I shall be safe!"Psalms 119:117 The Christian is always dependent on His God. And the more He is sanctified — the more He feels His dependence, and prays for divine keeping.

Grace will complete what grace begins,

To save from sorrows and from sins;

The work that wisdom undertakes

Eternal mercy ne'er forsakes!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"He has clothed me with the garments of salvation; He has covered me with the robe of righteousness!"Isaiah 61:10 Sin has stripped us naked, and exposed us to shame!

Grace clothes us, and introduces us to glory! This spotless robe the same appears

When ruined nature sinks in years:

No age can change its glorious hue;

The robe of Christ is ever new!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Any of you who does not give up everything he has, cannot be my disciple!"Luke 14:33 Every Christian must have the spirit of a martyr — and be ready to give up everything, if Jesus calls for it.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart."Psalms 27:14 In waiting on the Lord we . . .

gain strength,

obtain grace, and

secure deliverance from all our foes and fears!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"He will feed His flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in His arms, holding them close to His heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young."Isaiah 40:11 Jesus takes particular care of all His weak and feeble people.

Jesus, Shepherd of Your sheep,

Gather me within Your arms;

Safely in Your bosom keep,

Free from dangers and alarms!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord"Romans 8:39 The love of God was fixed upon His people in Jesus before the world was — and none of the circumstances of time can remove it!

Things future, nor things that are now,

Not all things below or above;

Can make Him His purpose forego,

Or sever my soul from His love!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "My God will supply all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus!"Php 4:19 The Lord's favor to His people is free, infinite, and fruitful! From it flows every temporal and spiritual good. Their daily needs His hands supply,

Their steps He guards with watchful eye;

Leads them from earth to Heaven above,

And crowns them with eternal love!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Strengthen me according unto Your Word!"Psalms 119:28 The Lord has promised us strength,

our duties and trials teach us our need of it,

and in answer to prayer we receive it!

Pity my frailty, dearest Lord;

Grace in the needful hour afford:

O steel this timorous heart of mine

With fortitude and love divine!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me!"Psalms 25:21

Integrity and uprightness are not only adornments to the Christian — but are essential to his character, and to preserve him from dangers.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "O Lord, pardon my iniquity — for it is great!"Psalms 25:11 The greater our sins — the more illustrious will the grace of God appear in pardoning them.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you."1 Peter 4:12 The choicer the metal — the severer the trial. Just so, the Lord's choice ones have to pass through fiery trials to test and purify them!

Trials must and will befall;

But with humble faith to see,

Love inscribed upon them all —

This is happiness to me!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Today if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts!"Hebrews 4:7 When God speaks . . .

the ear should listen,

the heart should receive,

the memory should retain,

and the will should obey!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone!"1 Peter 2:6

Jesus as the cornerstone unites all His people in one — while as a foundation, He sustains and bears up the whole household of mercy.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of My mouth!"Revelation 3:15-16 Nothing is more offensive to the Savior than lukewarmness; let us be decided and zealous in His cause!

Come, dearest Lord, Your grace impart,

To warm this lukewarm, stupid heart,

Until all its powers and passions move

In melting grief and ardent love!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Is this your kindness to your Friend?"2 Samuel 16:17

Every Christian on reading the text — will think of Jesus, his best Friend. Conscience will point to those things which were unworthy of us, and dishonorable to Him. Were I not most vile and base,

I could not thus my Friend requite!

And were not He the God of grace,

He'd frown and spurn me from His sight!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"I, the Lord, watch over it; I water it continually. I guard it day and night so that no one may harm it!"Isaiah 27:3

Every moment we need divine protection and supplies — and every moment God has promised to give them! Here is our comfort and our security!

Each moment watered by Thy care,

And fenced with power divine;

Fruit to eternal life shall bear,

The feeblest branch of Thine!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "When they came to the place called Calvary — there they crucified Him!"Luke 23:33 See what man did with his Maker — when God allowed him to act according to his free will!

He who distributes crowns and thrones,

Hangs on a tree, and bleeds and groans!

The Prince of Life, resigns His breath;

The King of Glory, bows to death!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." 2 Thessalonians 2:13

Election is the root of salvation,

sanctification is the vital sap,

belief of the truth its verdure,

and good works its fruits!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "My beloved is dark and dazzling — chief among ten thousand!"

"Yes! He is altogether lovely! This is my Beloved, this my Friend!" Song of Solomon 5:10; Song of Solomon 5:16 The beauty of Jesus can only be seen by the eye of faith! And when it is seen — it can never be fully set forth by any human language!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"For we know brothers, that God loves you and has chosen you to be His own people — because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction!" 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5 The message of the gospel comes to all — but it is only accompanied with the secret and invincible energy of the Holy Spirit to the hearts of God's elect!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "The Lord opens the eyes of the blind!" Psalms 146:8

If the Lord open our eyes, we shall see . . .

our lost state as sinners,

our need of a Savior, and

the exact adaptation of Jesus to us!

He opens the eyes of the blind,

The beauty of Jesus to view!

He changes the bent of the mind,

The glory of God to pursue!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Later I passed by, and when I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign Lord, and you became mine! Ezekiel 16:8

If the Lord had not first sought us — we never would have sought Him! If He had not first loved us when we were unlovely — we never would have loved Him at all.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "I will show you my faith by my works." James 2:18

True faith produces good works. Fruit are not more necessary to prove the life of the tree — than are good works to prove that faith is genuine. Have I that faith which looks to Christ,

Overcomes the world and sin?

Receives Him Prophet, Priest, and King,

And makes the conscience clean?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Will You not revive us again so that Your people may rejoice in You?" Psalms 85:6 The earth does not more need the refreshing showers — than we do the reviving influences of the Holy Spirit. For these let us daily pray.

Return and revive me once more,

With joys that are pure and divine:

Your presence is what I implore;

O grant it — and comfort is mine!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power." Psalms 110:3

If we are willing to be saved by Jesus, and to be His loyal subjects — then the Lord has made us so! His power has been exerted — for none love and obey Him by nature!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "That I might rest in the day of trouble." Habakkuk 3:16

Sin produces trouble — and only faith can give us rest. In the greatest trouble — faith in Jesus will bring us sweet repose!

Oh, that closer I could cleave,

To Your bleeding, dying breast!

Give me firmly to believe,

And to enter into rest!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "The righteous shall hold on His way!" Job 17:9

Nothing can be more certain than the Savior's promise, that His sheep shall never perish! Nothing can be more plain, than the assurance that the righteous shall hold on his way.

Yes, I to the end shall endure,

As sure as the earnest is given;

More happy — but not more secure,

The glorified spirits in Heaven!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Godliness with contentment is great gain." 1 Timothy 6:6

If our godliness is thorough — we shall be content with all God's allotments; and being content, we shall be happy. Contentment is always a great blessing.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "They shall be My people — and I will be their God!" Jeremiah 32:38 The people of God are His choice, His care, and His portion! And He is their confidence, comfort, and all.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart!" Deuteronomy 6:5

Jehovah claims and deserves our highest and constant love — and it is at once our duty and our happiness to observe this precept!

Wherever my foolish wandering heart,

Attracted by a creature's power,

Would from this blissful center start,

Lord, fix it there to stray no more!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"The Lord hears your murmurings which you murmur against Him! Your murmurings are not against us — but against the Lord!" Exodus 16:8

If we murmur against any of God's instruments — He takes it as done against Himself! Murmuring can never benefit us as children of God — or be profitable to us.

I would submit to all Your will,

For You are good and wise;

Let every anxious thought be still,

Nor one faint murmur rise!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Behold, I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands!" Isaiah 49:16 The nails by which our Savior was fastened to the tree for us — engraved our names on His hands! My name from the palms of His hands,

Eternity will never erase!

Impressed on His heart, it remains,

In marks of indelible grace!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Though have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing!" 1 Corinthians 13:2 That is — supreme love to God, and constant love to man. Whatever we have, if we have not love, we are not Christians!

Oh, grant me, Lord, this one request,

And I'll be satisfied —

That love divine may rule my breast,

And all my actions guide!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Fear not, neither be discouraged!" Deuteronomy 1:21

Without God's promises — we have enough to discourage an angel! But with them, nothing ought to discourage us.

You in His wisdom, power, and love,

May confidently trust;

His wisdom guides, His power protects,

His grace rewards the just.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "The Lord gives wisdom." Proverbs 2:6

We daily need wisdom — and the Lord daily gives it! If we . . .

feel our need,

ardently desire it,

earnestly seek it, and

perseveringly expect it

— the Lord will bestow it!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"I am in a desperate situation! Let us fall into the hands of the Lord, for His mercy is great. Do not let me fall into the hands of man!" 2 Samuel 24:14

If the hand of Providence brings us into desperate situation — let us fall into the hand of Mercy! While the one tries us — the other will sustain us!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Return, O backsliding children — and I will heal your backslidings!" Jeremiah 3:22
Backsliding from God brings us into a state of disease — which no one but God can heal!

Return, O wanderer, return,

Your Savior bids your spirit live;

Go to His bleeding feet and learn,

How freely Jesus can forgive!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God! Do not be conformed to this world; but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Romans 12:1-2 As those who are born from above, and whose treasure is in Heaven — we should be heavenly-minded, and holy in every part of our behavior!

Born by a new celestial birth,

Why should we grovel here on earth?

Why grasp at transitory toys —

So near to Heaven's eternal joys?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "That I might finish my course with joy!" Acts 20:24 This is the object which the apostle constantly kept in view. Let us daily pray, and daily live — so that we may expect to finish our course with joy. With joy may we our course pursue,

And keep the crown of life in view.

That crown which in one hour repays,

The labor of ten thousand days!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with Me on My throne!" Revelation 3:21
"Be faithful, even to the point of death — and I will give you the crown of life!" Revelation 2:10

Only conquerors are crowned! We must therefore fight and overcome every foe — if we would be crowned by the hand of Jesus!

"He who overcomes will inherit all this — and I will be his God and he will be My son!" Revelation 21:7

Rouse, rouse, my soul, and fight your way,

Should earth and Hell oppose;

Though you are not, your Savior is,

A match for all your foes!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord — whose confidence is in Him!" Jeremiah 17:7
If we trust in men — we shall be disappointed and discouraged. But if we trust in the Lord — we shall be safe and successful.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Fight the good fight of faith — lay hold on eternal life!" 1 Timothy 6:12

Faith has to fight with corruption within and opposition without. There is no way of laying hold on eternal life — but by fighting for it! From strength to strength go on,

Wrestle, and fight, and pray;

Tread all the powers of darkness down,

And win the well-fought day!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "What do you want Me to do for you?" Mark 10:36

Jesus is able to do all we can ask — and He is willing to do whatever will really benefit us; but He will have us ask Him.

Oh, grant me all a God can give,
And all that mortals can receive;
Grace to believe in Jesus' blood,
Grace to enjoy and walk with God.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Even if my father and mother abandon me — the Lord will hold me close!"Psalms 27:10

Every creature may cast me off — but the Lord never will! Yes, even if my father and mother abandon me — He draws nearer to me, to comfort and bless me! Should every earthly friend depart,

And kindness leave a parent's heart;
My God, on whom my hopes depend,
Will be my Father and my Friend!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Be doers of the Word, and not hearers only — deceiving your own selves!"James 1:22
The Lord requires not only faith in His promises — but obedience to His commands! Practical religion is the only true religion. In vain, religion we profess,

While we reject the Lord's command.

Strangers to God and happiness,
We build our house upon the sand.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "He does not forget the cry of the humble!"Psalms 9:12

Humble souls are much in prayer — they live near the Lord! In every trouble they cry unto Him — and He never denies or forgets them!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Lead me in Your truth and teach me — for You are the God of my salvation."Psalms 25:5
If the Lord leads us — He will teach us. And if He teaches us — we shall know the truth and practice it!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "I meditate on all Your works; I muse on the work of Your hands."Psalms 143:5

Meditation is a most profitable — though much neglected duty. No Christian should expect to thrive without prayer and meditation.

I love to think on mercies past,
And future good implore;
And all my cares and sorrows cast,
On Him whom I adore!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Take heed, watch and pray; for you know not when the time is."Mark 13:33
Watchfulness will awaken a spirit of prayer — and by praying we obtain strength for watching. The Savior bids us watch and pray.

For soon the hour will come,
That calls us from the earth away.
To our eternal home.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped."Psalms 28:7

If we look to broken cisterns — we shall be disappointed; but if we look to the fountain of living waters — we are sure of a supply.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty."Job 5:17 Corrections are proofs of divine love; they are designed to improve and perfect our characters.

Affliction's furnace is designed,
The Christian's character to show;
By this his graces are refined,
And he is weaned from things below!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "What shall I do, Lord?"Acts 22:10

There is something for every Christian to do — and each one should go to the Lord with this inquiry — What shall I do, Lord? To Him who on the fatal tree,

Poured out His blood, His life for me,
In grateful strains, my voice I'll raise,
And in His service, spend my days.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "The world and all its desires pass away."1 John 2:17 The world is like a pageant, which, while we look at it — passes on and is gone! Let us therefore daily set our hearts on things beyond it, even on those things which are eternal.

Lord, from this world call off my love.

Set my affections right;
Bid me aspire to joys above,
And walk no more by sight!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "The Lord preserves the simple. I was brought low, and He helped me!"Psalms 116:6
The simple have no confidence in themselves — but they look to, trust in, and are preserved by, the Lord!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"We fix our eyes not on what is seen — but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary — but what is unseen is eternal!"2 Corinthians 4:18 To fix our eyes is to aim at. The object of the

Christian's aim is nothing visible — but the eternal glories of the invisible world.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "My son, give Me your heart!" Proverbs 23:26 The Lord created the heart for Himself. He claims it. He will be satisfied with nothing less! It is robbery to keep it from Him.

Yes, you shall surely have my heart,

My soul, my strength, my all;

With life itself I'll freely part.

My Jesus, at Your call!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Jesus wept! Then the Jews said: See how He loved him!" John 11:35, 88 The love of Jesus is as strong as omnipotence — and His sympathy is exquisitely tender; let us appeal to it in every distress.

Still His compassions are the same,

He knows the frailty of our frame;

Our heaviest burdens He sustains.

Shares in our sorrows and our pains!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Now, who is willing to consecrate himself today to the Lord?" 1 Chronicles 29:5

It is well often to renew our consecration, to give ourselves afresh to the Lord, and to dedicate our talents to His service.

Fain would I now surrender make.

Of my whole self to you;

Jesus, the humble offering take.

Unworthy though it be.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "I will bless the Lord, who has given me counsel." Psalms 16:7 The Lord has counseled us in His Word, in reference to every subject of importance. Happy is the man who takes counsel of His God, and abides by it. His counsels and upholding care

My safety and my comfort are:

And He shall guide me all my days.

Until glory crowns the work of grace!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "It is good for me to draw near to God." Psalms 73:28

It is not good to complain, or murmur, or give way to doubts and fears; but it is good to cast all our cares on our God — and leave them there.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him." Psalms 42:11

However dark the prospect at present — it will soon brighten. However dreary the night — it will only make the day of deliverance more welcome.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "He who does not take His cross and follow after Me — is not worthy of Me."Matthew 10:38

We must bear the cross after Jesus — if we would wear the crown. Now we follow Him in tears — soon we shall stand before Him with songs!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Deliver me, O Lord, from my enemies! I flee unto You to hide me."Psalms 143:9 In every time of danger, in every season of fear — we may look to the Lord for deliverance, and seek shelter and safety in Him.

Let me in Your name confide.

Let me in Your bosom hide;

There in safety would I stay

Until the storm has passed away!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause."Job 5:8 In everything we should . . .

consult God's will,

apply at His throne, and

submit to His wise and holy providence.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold!"Job 23:10 Every trial is limited. It has an end to accomplish, and when the end is answered, it will be immediately removed.

Saints indeed are sorely tried,

Troubles rise on every side;

Nor are they exempt within —

Nothing tries like inward sin!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him?"Job 40:2

Few formally contend with God — but most of us do so in spirit. In this we display our folly, and pride, and ingratitude!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction!"Isaiah 48:10 The Lord chose His people in eternity — but He makes them choice ones in the furnace of affliction; there He purges and makes them pure!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Bearing His cross, He went forth into a place called Golgotha."John 19:17

What a sight for holy angels — the Creator of the universe, a condemned criminal, carrying His cross to the place of execution!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "He gives power to the faint; and to those who have no might, He increases strength."
Isaiah 40 29 Weak Christians are the special objects of the Lord's care; He is always near to
strengthen and support them.

He gives the conquest to the weak.

Supports the sinking heart;

And courage in the evil hour,

His heavenly aids impart.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Say to the righteous — that it shall be well with him."Isaiah 3:10

If we are righteous — there is no condemnation, no curse, no separation from Christ — but
everything must ultimately issue in our welfare.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Teach us to number our days — that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."Psalms
90:12 As our days at best are few and uncertain — it should be our first concern to prepare for
eternity, and spend our time for God's glory.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "The Lord has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me!"Isaiah 49:14 Our conclusions are
often rash and unfounded — and we distress ourselves without the least reason for it.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Let Him do to me as seems good unto Him."2 Samuel 15:26

Never was David in a better frame — than when he thus put himself into the hands of the Lord,
and left himself to His disposal.

Fill my heart with deep contrition,

Take away the heart of stone;

And may I, with true submission,

Meekly say, "Your will be done!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "But just as He who called you is holy — so be holy in all you do."1 Peter 1:15 We are
called by a holy God,

to believe a holy gospel,

to walk by a holy law,

and go to a holy Heaven!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "God is our refuge and strength — a very present help in trouble."Psalms 46:1 To God
as our refuge — we should repair,

in Him as our strength — we should trust, and

on Him as present — we should call in every trouble.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer."Romans 12:12

Hope, patience, and prayer, should always be in exercise. We should . . .

hope in God,

patiently do the will of God,

and constantly call upon God.

If Providence our comforts shroud,

And dark distresses lower;

Hope prints its rainbow on the cloud,

And grace shines through the shower.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "The Lord preserves all those who love Him." Psalms 145:20 No one needs keeping more than a Christian. It is His mercy to be kept with the greatest care — the Lord keeps Him as the apple of His eye.

Saints are always in His keeping.

And He always keeps them well;

Rising, resting, waking, sleeping.

He preserves from death and Hell.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "You in faithfulness have afflicted me!" Psalms 119:75

God has promised to be a Father to us, and to visit our transgressions with a rod. Our afflictions, therefore, are proofs of His faithfulness, love, and care.

Tis sweet, though trials may not cease,

Though pains afflict, though fears appall,

To feel my comforts still increase,

And say, "My Father sends them all."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "To act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8 Every believer is required to keep this law — and be just to all, merciful to sufferers, and humble before God.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Brethren, the time is short!" 1 Corinthians 7:29 Our time below is brief — and therefore very precious. Let us employ it, so as to improve it. Let us live for God and eternity! The time is short — oh, who can tell

How short his time below may be;

Today on earth, his soul may dwell.

Tomorrow in eternity!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "My beloved is mine, and I am His!" Song of Solomon 2:16

If Christ is the object of our desire and affection — then He is ours. And if He is ours — then we are His. This union is the source of all that is good and great.

If Christ is mine — then all is mine,
And more than angels know;
Both present things, and things to come,
And grace and glory too!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son; how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!" Romans 5:10

Jesus died for us when enemies — to make us His friends. And having reconciled us to Himself, we now live to Him, and for Him.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "I will give them an heart to know me!" Jeremiah 24:7

We never know God — until He gives us the heart to know Him. And after we do know Him — we can be satisfied with nothing short of Himself.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "And when the people complained — it displeased the Lord." Numbers 11:1 Who ever had less reason to complain — and yet who so ready to do it? Just so it is now; those who have the least reason, complain the most.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "I am God, even Your God!" Psalm 1:7

If Jehovah is our God, we should worship, believe, obey, and submit to Him; and then we would rise superior to all outward circumstances.

I am your God — well think of this,
When all things seem to go amiss;
This turns the darkest night to day.
And saves the heart from sad dismay!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom." Job 28:1-28; Job 28:1-28 The fear of the Lord includes faith, love, worship, and obedience. Such as thus fear God, are truly wise.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "To wait for His Son from Heaven." 1 Thessalonians 1:10 As the loving bride never feels satisfied while her bridegroom is away — but waits and longs for His return — just so should we for Christ's coming.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "The friend of publicans and sinners!" Matthew 11:19

It was the enemies of Jesus who gave Him this title. But it was so honorable to Him, and so encouraging to us — that He has condescended to wear it ever since!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Christ died for the ungodly!"Romans 5:6 Jesus died for ungodly sinners — and He died for them to redeem them from iniquity, and restore them to God. And could you, my Savior, die,

To rescue me from endless woe?

Enough! there's none more blessed than I,

Since you could love a sinner so.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "The God of all grace has called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus!"1 Peter 5:10 God is infinitely gracious, and He has displayed it by calling insignificant worms to inherit His glorious kingdom!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "His mercy is on those who fear Him."Luke 1:50 The mercy of God is like the sun — ever communicating, but never decreasing. It is fixed on all who fear God.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "He is the Head of the body, the Church."Colossians 1:18

Jesus rules His Church as its Head. But he also thinks for it, feels for it, provides for it, protects it, and supplies it.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame."Hebrews 12:2 Jesus kept His eye on the crown — while enduring the cross. So should we. The cross is the way to the crown.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it."Luke 12:29 The concerns of time should always be secondary. A diligent use of means, should ever be accompanied with trust in God.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Where I am — there shall my servant be also."John 12:26 We are now where Jesus was — and as Jesus was.

We shall soon be where He is — and as He is!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Little children, your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake."1 John 2:12

Every child of God is pardoned. His pardon flows to Him through the cross of Jesus, and is bestowed upon Him the moment He believes. My soul, forget not what is due,

To Him whose suffering pardon brings;

Nor cease to keep the cross in view,

The cross will teach you wondrous things!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "The desire of the righteous shall be granted."Proverbs 10:24

Desire is the proof of life, and test of nature. If our natures are holy — so will our desires be; and then God will grant them. To you, O Lord, I look alone;

To you, to whom all hearts are known:

To walk with you, my soul aspires;

Oh, satisfy my soul's desires.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh."Romans 13:14 If we would be just before God — we must put on the work of Christ.

If we would be consistent before men — we must put on the temper of Christ.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might."Ecclesiastes 9:10

Every Christian should be a diligent man — but especially in Christian duties. We have no time to loiter or delay.

Whatever our hands shall find to do,

Today may we with zeal pursue;

Seize fleeting moments as they fly,

And live as we would wish to die!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Blessed are those who mourn — for they shall be comforted."Matthew 5:5 If we are mourning over sin, and after the Savior — we are under the blessing, and comfort is sure.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "You hid Your face, and I was troubled."Psalms 30:7 When the Lord smiles — the believer rejoices. When He frowns — his soul is sorrowful; but then is the time to trust His changeless word.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"I have longed for Your salvation, O Lord."Psalms 119:174 The believer daily longs for complete deliverance from sin, and the possession of perfect holiness: this to Him is salvation.

View, dearest Lord, my longing heart,

Which pants and sighs for Thee!

And oh, Yourself and Heaven impart,

For there I long to be!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given."Isaiah 9:6

Never was there such a birth before! A holy child — from a polluted mother; an infant of days — yet the everlasting Father!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ "God is able to make all grace abound toward you."2 Corinthians 9:8 Whatever we need — is comprised in the word grace. And whatever grace we need — is provided in Jesus. And what He has — He will bestow.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Him who overcomes — I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it."Revelation 3:12 The conflict will only cease with life! We must die with our armor on — and only put it off to receive the crown! A few successful struggles yet,

Then not a conflict more!
Satan and sin shall ne'er assault,
On the celestial shore!

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