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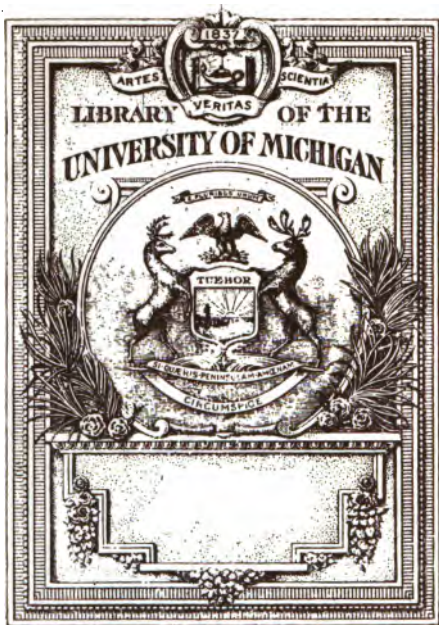
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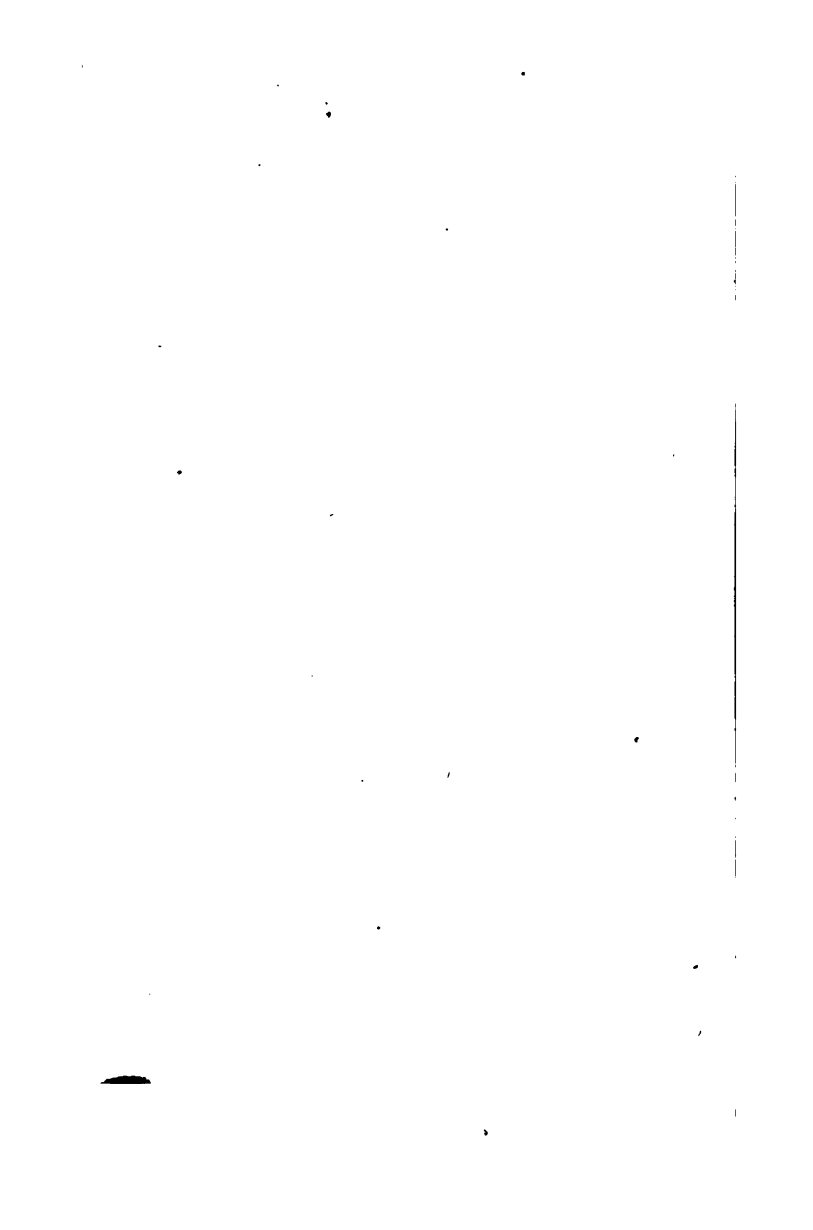
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
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Little Messages for Shut-In Folk

BY *esley* 
CHARLES W. MCCORMICK



THE METHODIST BOOK CONCERN
NEW YORK CINCINNATI

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Foreword

ONCE I thought the lot of the "shut-in" most unhappy, but that was because I did not understand. I thought only of the limitations and deprivations, not at all of the inclusions. I had not considered the loves that glow upon home altars all the more brightly because there are those who can no longer walk abroad. Nor had I valued as I ought the blessedness of those about whom God draws the curtains of his tent in lonely all-sufficing fellowship.

Most of my illumination has come from shut-in people themselves. They have taught me how to "glory in tribulation." Going to comfort them, I myself have been strengthened. In the crass days of my early ministry I visited "Uncle Henry," an old man, deserted by his children, living in a hovel, poor and alone. I could see no comfort in the present for him. The future alone held any promise. What could I say? A nearby orchard gave me what I thought was a happy clue, and I said, "Well, Uncle Henry, it will not be long before the Good

Father takes you to himself and gives you the fruit of his vineyard." That sounded good to me.

A far-away look came into the old man's eyes, and a strange light played upon his fine old face while he placed his hand upon my knee and said, "My young brother, have you not learned that the grapes of Eshcol hang over the wall for the children of God *here and now?*"

I did not understand then what the years have taught me since, but I went on my way, humbled, yet strangely exalted.

It is no part of my purpose, therefore, to comfort those saints of God whom he is making perfect through suffering and whom *he* comforts with exceeding great comfort. Most of these messages were written in the midst of a busy pastorate in a large city parish, where there were many aged and infirm people, simply that these lonely ones might catch the echoes of the sanctuary and feel that they were not forgotten. With like purpose I venture now to send them out on a wider mission.

CHARLES W. McCORMICK.

Stamford, Connecticut,
January 6, 1920.

The Rest of the Lowly in Heart

And ye shall find rest unto your souls.

—*Matthew 11. 29.*

Whence comes unrest? Not from the hardness of the couch, for health can woo slumber from the earth; nor yet from the tyranny of toil, for muscle transmutes toil into strength. Whence, then, comes the spirit of unrest? From ourselves: our unholy ambitions and jealousies; our constant fear that some right of ours shall be infringed; in a word, our constant self-worship, the thinking of ourselves "more highly than we ought to think"—these are the fruitful sources of our discontent. And for all these the perfect cure is meekness. "Take my yoke upon you," said Jesus, the "meek and lowly in heart," and "ye shall find rest to your souls."

Prayer

O Saviour, I am tired. The cares of life have eaten away my joy. The burden and the heavy load have been almost more than

I could bear. I have not carried them as I ought. Teach me how thou dost bear thy burdens, to wear thy yoke, that as thy yoke is easy so my burden may be light. Amen.

The Sleep of the Peaceful

I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep:
for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.—
—*Psalm 4. 8.*

How the psalmist nestles in the heart of God! There, and there only, he finds safety; there only he may compose himself in peace and sleep. Is not this God's cure for sleepless nights? What is it that holds our eyes waking when God would give sleep to his beloved? Too often it is our brooding over life's ills and impending calamities, as if by our worry we could make them less. "I will lay me down in peace and sleep." Just a simple relaxation of body and soul in God's keeping, a refusal to carry the care which God has bidden us cast upon him, a welcoming of God's measureless strength.

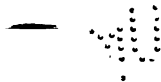
Prayer

O Infinite Father, thy child is weary and restless. I lay my aching, throbbing head



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on thy bosom. I can do no more. Even
my will is weak. Hold me fast. So may I
find peace and restful sleep this night.
Amen.



The Tree of the Lord

But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.—*Psalm 1. 2, 3.*

God is a wonderful gardener. He plants his trees hard by the living waters, where droughts do not parch them, nor heat wither. With what a loving touch the psalmist lingers over each detail of the luxuriant life of the man whom God calls "blessed"! He is "planted" by the river-side, fruitful even down to old age, beautiful with an unfading beauty, "and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

The river that makes glad and beautiful and fruitful is God's law, hidden in the heart, the subject of daily and nightly meditation. The trees planted by this river are full of sap.

Prayer

O God, root and establish me in thy Law. Give unto me unfading beauty. May my

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life, nourished by the living waters, be fruitful through all the seasons. Let me undertake only what thou canst approve, and so may all my undertakings prosper according to thy gracious word. Amen.

God's Abundant Mercies

Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.—*Psalm 36. 5.*

We are shut in by the mercies of God; mercies that are "renewed every morning and continued every evening." If you would know the value of these mercies, think of yourself without them. Strike off one blessing after another until you are left alone with what you have produced by your own power. Could you do this, the very beggar would weep over you, share with you his rags, press to your lips his crust. But you cannot shut yourself away from God's mercies. They force themselves upon us; they hover over us like guardian angels while we sleep; they hide amid the shadows and spring upon us unawares, constraining us to say, "Surely God was in this place and I knew it not."

God's mercies are like God himself; it is impossible to flee from them. If we take the wings of the morning and flee to the uttermost parts of the sea, they are there—

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yea, the darkness hideth not from them; but the night shineth as the day, the darkness and the light are both alike to them. In him, in them, we live and move and have our being.

Prayer

O God, thy mercies are as constant as thyself. They reach unto the clouds because thou art in the heavens; they extend to all thy creatures because thou art higher than the mighty and lower than the deeps. In the excellence of thy lovingkindness do men put their trust. O that I might know thee more perfectly, that I might more fully understand thy mercies! Amen.

The Household Rights of Believers in Christ

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.—*John 1. 12.*

“The household of faith”—with what wealth of meaning these words are filled! Yet even the humblest believer may find in them his portion. Children of earth we surely are, subject to sorrow, pain, and the limitation of our powers. But receiving Jesus, God’s message and prophecy from heaven, whom God has highly exalted, we claim the rights of children in the household of his Father and ours. And this *we have the right to do*, for our Father has acknowledged us before men and angels as his dear children.

At this Christmas time God’s family is brought very close together about the manger cradle of Jesus, and very close to God, who by the very weakness of his dear Son, assumed for our sakes, appeals to all that is noble and true in human nature.

Prayer

O God, our Father, Father of Jesus Christ, make my heart responsive to thy beseeching love. Fill all my days with thy presence, and help me so to receive thy dear Son that I may be thy true child, loyal and loving to thee and to all those, my brothers and sisters, who with me await the glory yet to be revealed in us through Christ Jesus. Amen.

A Morning Look Godward

My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.—*Psalm 5. 3.*

Happy is the man whose windows face the sunrise. The view which greets our opening eyes gives color and substance to the whole day. The wise man selects beforehand the point from which each morning he will look out upon life. "I will *direct* my prayer." "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." This is the prearranged vision, expected and rejoiced in every morning. This is the upward look that exalts the heart's vision all day long.

Prayer

O God, who renewest the days and the years, grant me this and every morning the vision of thy face. Save me from all de-

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grading and enfeebling sights and sounds.
In the light of thy countenance may I see
all toil and pain, all joy and service made
beautiful and godlike. Amen.

What a Little Can Do When God Helps

Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient.—*John 6. 7.*

Philip's arithmetic was excellent. Two hundred pennyworth for five thousand men would have been about sixty-eight one-hundredths of a cent for each. Very frugal housekeeping that. And then what a wild stretch of imagination to think of two hundred pennies—nearly thirty-four dollars—among the disciples in a desert! The case is hopeless. The people must starve or go away. Nothing can be done.

Yes, a little may be done. Andrew, the painstaking disciple, has made a discovery. "Five loaves and two small fishes." But what of that? One little loaf and less than half a fish for each thousand. Better for Andrew to have kept silent? Yes, if Jesus had not been there; but his presence changed the whole situation. Two hundred pennyworth of bread alone will not suffice, but five loaves and two fishes, the utmost

offering of love plus the blessing of Jesus,
is more than enough.

Prayer

O God, my Father, help me this day to trust thee for all things: for daily bread, for spiritual comfort and health. Make me willing to bring my small gifts to thee that, blessed by thee, they may be multiplied. Amen.

The Pilot and the Haven

So he bringeth them unto their desired haven.
Psalm 107. 30.

The Haven. At best the sea is only a place for sojourn. The haven lies out yonder below the horizon. Fickle and uncertain, the waters that bear up our little craft to-day mirror in themselves the beauties of the overarching heavens; to-morrow they will mount up to the skies and go down again to the depths, and the voyager will be at his wit's end. The soul of man, like Noah's raven, wanders over the face of the great deep and finds no resting place. Dancing waves and creaking timbers and throbbing engine all bear witness that we are going somewhere. Our *path* is in the sea; our destiny is yonder.

But where lies the haven? At the end of our desires. It is for the sake of the haven that we have planned and sacrificed all these years, thinking of it by day and dreaming of it by night. How we have longed for it! Will the uncertain billows bear us to it at last?

The Pilot. There are more pilots in the wheel-house of the ship than human eyes may see. The hand of one, stalwart, brave, and skilled, grasps the wheel. His eye is fixed on compass and chart; his ear is open to the command of the captain on the bridge. He commands and is worthy of the trust we give him. But with him, though unseen, is the infinite God, who made and controls the seas, in whose hand are the waters, whose voice the winds and waves obey. *He* it is who will bring the mariner to his desired haven, making him glad because the storms are past, and the ship once more swings calmly at her chains in the harbor.

Haven and Pilot. The disciples were storm-tossed on the Sea of Galilee. Their little boat was filling and they were in despair. And then Jesus came to them walking on the water, and they took him into the boat, and *immediately* the ship was at the land whither they went. The point lies in the fact that they were seeking Jesus. Their haven was wherever he could be found. The Pilot and the haven were one. Finding him, they were straightway at their desired haven. The tempest and the storm serve the divine Pilot.

Prayer

O God, who holdest in the hollow of thy hand the destinies of all men, help me this day to trust thee and love thee. My boat is small and the sea is large, but thou art infinite. If the haven I seek seem far away, may thy presence make it near. Gladly do I welcome thee, my Pilot and my Eternal Friend. Amen.

The Inner and the Outer Gladness

Be of good cheer.—*John 16. 33.*

“Cheer” is a soulful word. Just to think of it or hear it stirs the blood like a breeze from sunlit mountains. It means so much—the joy within strong and full and un-failing, and the smile without. The text might almost read, “Be of good countenance.” And why not? To be sure, in this world there is tribulation for everyone. But there is also the Father’s presence, whose love guarantees plenty and peace to all who ask in Jesus’s name. And it means so much for the world to have cheery people in it; people whose souls rest in God and whose faces reflect the light after the sun has gone down; who know the great peace, the birthright of those for whom Christ overcame the world.

Prayer

O Father, keep my heart stayed on thee. Turn my face ever toward the light. Let me never be fretful of heart or gloomy of

countenance. In thee is my joy forevermore. Make my joy to shine always for thy sake, and for the sake of my love for thee, and for the sake of those who are sad. Amen.

Unrevealed Ministries

And there are also many other things which Jesus did.—*John 21. 25.*

The complete life of Jesus has never been written in books and never can be. Little glimpses here and there are all that his loving disciple could record of his manifold and gracious ministries. What a pity! How eagerly would we welcome the perfect picture of Jesus!

But the ministries of Jesus are not the less real because they are hidden. Who can understand and tell the blessed influences that have shaped his life? Does not everyone know that ten thousand forces all unknown to him have conspired to protect him, to furnish the matter and shape the mode of his thinking, and to purify his impulses? Even so the unrecorded words and acts of Jesus have wrought themselves eternally in the life of the world, and pass from generation to generation through transmitted character and tendencies.

In like manner Christian influence ever

perpetuates itself. Goodness is never lost, though often unremembered. Somewhere in the great stream of life each tiny rivulet from the mountain is preserved, and does its work under the eye of the All-Seeing Father.

Prayer

O my Father, make my heart respond to the whisper of thy voice, even when I only know that it is thy voice, and can hardly understand the words thou speakest. Let me feel the breath of thy presence. And help me so to live that from my life, even when I do not know it, there may flow streams of blessings. Amen.

The Right Use of Good Gifts

And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, It is the bread which the Lord hath given you. to eat.—*Exodus 16. 15.*

The old familiar gifts of God must ever be renewed, else by a mysterious law of life those gifts, unrenewed, will turn to curses in our possession. Shut a man within a room from which fresh currents of God's blessed air are excluded. He will not use up all the air; he will poison it; he will destroy himself. Is there not in this fact a lesson? Are there not those whose minds are troubled with many questionings about Providence, who cannot understand God's dealings with them, and who utter bitter complaints against him because they have not sought the renewal of some precious gift of God to them, but by their misuse of it have changed that gift to something meaner? God gave them faith; have they not changed it to presumptuous self-confidence? God gave them talents; have

they not, by consuming their talents upon their own lusts, transmuted them into curses, making them roots of evil rather than ministers of righteousness? Had they sought by the right use of these gifts to have them renewed, the gifts would have gathered new value, and God and life would have been changed for them.

Prayer

O God, giver of every good and perfect gift, forbid that I should spoil my heritage by misusing it. Help me to see thee in every blessing thou dost bestow upon me, that in grateful and loving fellowship with thee I may render unto thee at length the tribute of a perfected life. Amen.

Voices of Praise

Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving—*Psalm*
147. 7.

Thanksgiving is the proper language of the heart. He who withholds his thanks when they are due can have no proper place in God's garden. He is a noisome thing that grovels in the dark, that hides in corners, and nurses his own venom, and darts out spite. Without thanksgiving the soul of man cannot live. If he refuse to utter the gratitude he feels he belies himself; if he feel no gratitude, it is because he is a down-looker and not a man. Up-looking is thanksgiving; the acknowledgment that inspiration, help, and succor come from above.

Thanksgiving is a lingering breath of Eden, pent up in human hearts, waiting expression, which when once expressed, set free, flies straight to heaven, that God may know that man still yearns for him. O that men would set the spirit of thanksgiving free, that men would praise the Lord

for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! Then would the heavens open, and the angels of God would bear messages of love to hearts that hunger vainly for love. The angel that most needs to come to many homes and hearts is the angel of thanksgiving; once let him in, and the angels of peace and joy and contentment will soon be heard knocking at the door.

Prayer

O God, save me from meanness of spirit. Make me broad and responsive according to the measure of thy loving thought for me. May I ever be filled with the spirit of thanksgiving and thanks-doing. Amen.

God's Peace

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.—*Isaiah 26. 3.*

The highest form of peace is the divine incapacity for unrest. Is this peace attainable for man? God possesses it because he is infinite in knowledge, wisdom, and power. He knows his own resources, and he knows also the task to which he has set himself. Man lacks this infinity, but he may have this peace in proportion to his faith in God, the Infinite One. Perfect faith will bring perfect peace. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee;" and this peace is also according to the measure of the trust. Is not this peace imparted at conversion? Assuredly so, in its beginnings; but unless nourished by the Spirit of God through the Word it will fail. It is to be perfected according to the mind of the Spirit, through the use of means. Our responsibility is that of submission and cooperation.

Prayer

O God of Peace, let me choose not my own way. Rather may I be one with thee, walking in the paths thou dost choose for me. So may thy peace become my peace because thy ways are my ways. Amen.

The Supreme Knowledge

We do know that we know him.—*1 John 2. 3.*

God is not the end, but the beginning of knowledge. The Christian is more than a scholar; he is a seer. By faith he comes into immediate fellowship with God, his Father and Friend. And of this fellowship he is certain. He knows that he knows God. Others may doubt, but he knows. If evidence of this knowledge be sought, either for himself or for others, it is found in his loyal obedience to God's commands. Knowing God and doing God's commands are one in John's thought.

Prayer

O Father, I would know thee, that I may know all truth through thee. I would obey thee, that I may wisely use all other knowledge. May truth, thy truth, wholly possess and control me. Amen.

Dwelling in the Secret Place

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.—*Psalm 91. 1.*

The Secret Place. The place that God knows and to which he will lead his willing children. Here no evil can come. It is beyond the ken of birds that fly in the dark.

The Place of Secrets. In his tent of peace God is lavish of his secrets. Mutual confidences are easy when one is by choice alone with God.

He That Dwelleth. We move about in the world, and in it do our work; but it is our privilege to *dwell* with God. He is the home of our hearts.

Under the Shadow. But not in darkness. The shadow of the Almighty is brighter than the noonday. All other shadows flee away because they cannot endure his radiance.

Prayer

O God, let me dwell with thee. If I go upon errands of mercy, bring me home

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again at the nightfall to thy heart. And
in all my wanderings may I never forget my
dwelling place in thy tent of peace under
thy protecting shadow. Amen.

Hope

Hope thou in God.—*Psalm 42. 5.*

Hope is a most beautiful virtue. It has a beauty of its own, sweet and compelling. The wild flowers of spring are beautiful in themselves, but owe their chief charm to the hope they bring of summer and harvest. Hope has its face toward the east; the glow of the morning is on its brow. It is beauty-imparting, like the sun or like a flower in a sick-room. Hope is rooted in discontent and is due to the sense of unattained possibility. Discontent is divine. The only truly contented man is a dead man. But we need to distinguish between a noble and impelling discontent and a weak fretfulness. Right discontent has to do with being and capacity. We ought to be discontented with unrealized powers, but not despairing. This kind of discontent must issue in hope. It is not always easy to be hopeful, but it is always right and therefore possible. The trouble is that we deal very leniently with our own weakness. It is so easy when we are gloomy and blue to charge the blame

to inherited temperament, or to nerves, or to unusually hard experiences. Here is the true attitude in the text: "Be still, my soul, hope thou in God." It is a matter of chosen attitude; a settled trend of life which puts being before present experiences and commits a man to a policy of cheerful expectation. And this despite the fact that many of our hopes are unrealized. Remember that hopes are not hope. When our hopes are merged in one great and worthy hope we cannot be disappointed. If all our hopes were realized, we should spend too much time dividing the spoils of victory. But for the spoils of Ai, Jericho would have been taken long before it was. But for the richness of Canaan, the Philistines would not have been allowed to remain in the cities near by to harass the Children of Israel through all the years. God has sometimes to shatter our hopes that we may see the supreme good.

Prayer

O God, keep my face ever toward the sunrise. Let me not carry the night over into the day. My hope is in thee: let me never be afraid. Amen.

Lobe's Response to God's Mercies

I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.—*Psalm 116. 1.*

This is not the only reason for loving God, but one reason among many. If man never had prayed, even when he did not pray, the goodness of God was around about him continually, a challenge to his love and confidence. But it is blessed to know that God hears the cry of his children, and that no supplication is disregarded. Such constancy of love begets answering love in us.

Sometimes prayer is vague, inarticulate—merely a voice, a sort of universal cry that bursts with its uncomprehended and incomprehensible sense of need. The infinite in us calls out to the infinite in God: deep calls unto deep—and he hears.

Sometimes our prayers take rapid form. Petition crowds upon petition in quick succession. Our sense of definite need turns common prayer into tearful and insistent pleading. This is the agony of prayer. And God hears. His ear inclines, and his hand

is extended to support, to strengthen, to supply.

Prayer

O God, thou hast heard my cry and my supplication. Thy love constrains me, draws me close to thee. I cannot withstand thy compassion. Make me to abide in prayer that the sense of thy love may never fade out of my heart. Amen.

The Shepherd's Care

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.—
Psalms 23. 1.

The Shepherd. What would a flock of sheep be without a shepherd? No flock, surely. They would be just wandering, unprotected, imperiled, individual sheep. It is in the shepherd that they find unity, safety, and nourishment. So in Christ, the Good Shepherd, God safely folds his flock. Apart from Christ there is disintegration, danger, hunger. In Christ, there is unity with God and with one another—all the blessings of God.

I Shall Not Want. God thinks upon his sheep one by one. He calleth them by *name*. He has his own familiar name for each. Tenderly he says, "I know my sheep." That is enough. To be known of the Good Shepherd guarantees all good.

Prayer

O my Father, in my peril defend me, in

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my hunger and thirst feed me, in my discouragement hearten me, in all times and needs love me. So shall my soul be constantly restored. Amen.

A Listening Jehovah

I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.—*Psalms 116. 1.*

Jehovah, the God of the whole earth, listens to *me*. He bows his head and turns his ear toward me. He singles me out that he may catch my voice amid all the din and clangor of worlds. He knows my voice as one knows the voice of a friend.

He hears my voice—my cry that cannot find expression in words, my need that is simply a call and nothing more. He hears my supplication—the entreaties that over and over again rise to my lips. No sigh or groan, no word or tear escapes him. He hears to help.

I love the Lord. He binds me to himself by his tender compassion, his patience, his sympathy, his unfailing help.

Prayer

O Father, let my love for thee be un-

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selfish and unending, full and overflowing;
even as my cry and my supplications are
broad and generous, filled with the spirit
of Christ. Amen.

A Prepared Place in the Fathers' House

In my Father's house are many mansions: . . .
I go to prepare a place for you.—*John 14. 2.*

Our Father has a house eternal and in the heavens. It is his home, the place where he dwells forevermore, and to which he is planning to bring all his children. In it there are many rooms, each like unto a mansion; or, as the margin reads, abiding places from which his children shall go out no more forever.

Some day he will bring together his whole family in earth and in heaven that they may be with him. What a reunion! What a fellowship! God will be there. Jesus will be there. All the saints of all time will be there. Our loved ones who served him on earth will be there. And we shall be there—all brought there by the hand of our Lord; for he has promised to come for us and lead us home. There is no danger, then, of losing our way. The path may be new, but the Leader we know and love.

Better still, we are known of him. Not one will he lose out of his hand, for he will come purposely for us.

Even now he is thinking about us and longing for our home-coming. Day by day he is fitting up our room, just as a mother makes ready the room of her child. Lovingly, tenderly, carefully he is putting things in place for us, so that we shall feel at home. No two rooms will be furnished alike; each will be just right for its occupant. Infinite riches, eternal love, and unfailling wisdom are employed in furnishing each room—your room and mine. And when each one of us is ready our Father will send for us and lead us home, prepared sons and daughters of God, to dwell in prepared mansions.

Prayer

My Father, I am longing for home. By faith I see it afar. Make me ready even as thou art making ready for me. My times are in thy hands. My trust is in thee. Some day thou wilt bring me with gladness into thy presence. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Quiet Waiting for God

My soul waiteth in silence for God only.—
Psalm 62. 1.

The Tumult Without

This is not a quiet world. Noise and tumult are round about us. Shouts and groans and cries fill the air. The steady tramp of passing feet wearies the ear. The jargon of sounds is torture to tired nerves. "O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest!"

The Quiet Within

There is a quiet which nothing can disturb. The child of God may possess his soul in quiet. His soul belongs not to the turbulent world but to himself—and God. Faith keeps guard at the entrance of the soul and shuts out all the tumult.

The Silence of Waiting

Sometimes the waiting seems long. Yet faith waits patiently and joyously. Waiting for God, the soul listens for the ap-

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proach of his footsteps. All other sounds, even the anxious heart-throb, are stilled. Lo! he comes. The waiting is over. Silent waiting merges into heavenly fellowship.

Prayer

My Father! It is sometimes hard to be silent. Tarry not in thy coming, O my God. Amen.

The All-Sufficient Cure for Fear

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?—*Psalm 27. 1.*

The Lord Jehovah

This is the unutterable name; so full of majesty and power that human lips may not speak it. Yet the glory of this unutterable presence is round about us. Its greatness does not make us afraid. Nay, rather, it inspires strong confidence. It is the greatness of our God and Father.

My Light

God's light is my light, because God is my God. His truth in his works is round about us. The heavens declare his glory, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. His truth in his Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. His truth shining on the path of life makes it a highway of holiness shining more and more unto the perfect day. All mystery is made bright by his presence. "Whom shall I fear?"

Prayer

O God, thou art greater than my thought of thee; yet do I know thee. The entrance of thy light makes an end of darkness. Let me live and walk with thee, that I may never walk in darkness nor be afraid. Amen.

The Lord Our Stronghold

The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?—*Psalm 27. 1.*

Where shall man hide from life's tumult and strife? Evil-doers, adversaries, and foes—militant hosts—are on every side; they encamp about us. The good man cannot escape their threatenings nor shut his eyes to their presence! Indeed, they come upon him because he is good. Their venom is the price of his piety. How shall he endure, and conquer?

In the midst of the camp is the tabernacle of Jehovah. In the very center of the tabernacle is the secret place of the Most High. Here Jehovah dwells; here he welcomes his weary and battle-worn children. This is the stronghold of the saints; not apart from the battlefield, but in the very midst of it.

Prayer

O Lord God Almighty, when I am tired with fighting, hold open for me the door of



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thy tent, that I may come in and commune
with thee, and strengthened by thy might
go forth again with dauntless courage to
endless victory. Amen.

God's Memory of His Own

According to thy mercy remember thou me.—
Psalm 25. 7.

God Forgets

How, we may not know. We cannot always forget when we would. But God, our Father, puts our sins out of his thought. He will remember them no more forever. He covers them in waves of oblivion, he separates them from us as far as the sunrise is from the sunset. Eternity's day is between them and us.

God Remembers

What does he remember? Our frailties, our origin in the dust, our tears, our struggles, our needs, and, better than all, our relationship to him. We may forget that God is our Father, but he never forgets that we are his children. He has us always in his mind.

God Remembers Lovingly

God thinks the best of us he can. He

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makes excuses for us, nurtures us, loves us, bears with us. He ever looks upon us through eyes that glow with affection.

Prayer

O thou Great Lover, transform me into the image of thy love. Make me worthy of it. Let thy loving-kindness compel me. Amen.

A Dark Prophecy That Has Hope in It

Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night.—*Matthew 26. 31.*

How well Jesus knows the weakness of the human heart! He had been with his disciples for three years, and during that time had constantly endeavored to make them understand his message and purpose. They had not failed utterly but must have been often a disappointment to their teacher. Jesus knew them through and through and was about to commit to them the work of taking care of his church in the world. He foresees the great trial through which they are to pass yet unprepared, though he had done his utmost to prepare them for it. He sees their discouragement, their cowardice, their flight. Yet the marvel is that he does not spurn them or cast them aside as worthless. And this is because he knows not only their weakness but also their potential strength. He has faith in what they may become when they shall have passed through

the struggle in the midst of which they may seem to be beaten. It is this underlying faith of Christ in the outcome of human struggle and defeat which gives to the world its great hope. Jesus not only knows human weakness, but he sympathizes with man in his weakness and summons forth all that is best while he surrounds the struggling individual with the light and strength of his gracious love.

Prayer

O God, who knowest me altogether, who art acquainted with all my nakedness and sins, and yet dost not spurn me, pity me in my shortcomings, and save me from denying thee. Call me back from my wanderings and establish my feet in the way of loving obedience. Amen.

Abiding in Christ

Abide in me. He that abideth. If ye abide in me.—*John 15. 4, 5, 7.*

A Command. God's commands are rooted in man's need. Without Christ man can do nothing, is nothing, has no true life. He must draw from Christ his very spiritual existence; otherwise he is dead, fruitless, mere refuse.

A Fellowship. Whoever abides in Christ has Christ abiding in him. His union with Christ is immediate, vital, fruitful. The work of Christ did not grow out of supreme effort, but out of the abundant life that was in him. He has come that they who abide in him may have the fullness of his life and love.

An Assurance. "Ye shall ask what ye will." The demands of this united life shall be satisfied. Of course they shall. The abiding soul becomes one with Christ. His needs become the needs of Christ and cannot cry in vain. Here faith mounts as high as heaven, even to the heart of God.

Prayer

O God, eternal source of life and hope in Jesus Christ thy Son, enable me to abide in him evermore, that through him I may live and bear much fruit to thy glory. Amen.

Christ's Ministry of Joy

That my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.—*John 15. 11.*

A Joyful Saviour. Jesus was the gladdest Being that ever trod the earth. Lonely he could not be, for he abode in the Father; discouraged never, for he looked into the eternities for the unfolding of God's eternal purposes; poor, yet infinitely rich, for the glory of the Father was his. And he it is who plans to share his joy with his disciples through their fellowship with him.

Joyful Saints. They who hear his words and do them share his joy, and are so fashioned by their participation that they are made like him. Their joy and his become one. It is theirs in such measure that their very capacity for joy is taxed. Their joy is complete—full, overflowing.

A Sequence. Such joy manifest in the lovers of Jesus is a supreme attraction. Men see their fellows suffering, toiling, in want, like themselves, yet full of joy, and are drawn toward the Saviour who can so satisfy all needs.

Prayer

O Joyful Lord, help me to rejoice evermore. Let thy sunshine illumine my face.
Amen.

Purity and Vision

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.—*Matthew 5. 8.*

Heart Chastity. Two stronger words could not be used. The heart is the very center of life—it is the whole man. The purity here spoken of is absolute. Chastity admits of no degrees or qualifications. The slightest abatement of chastity is impurity. The pure in heart are they who from the center out are snow white, spotless, “washed in the blood of the Lamb.”

Heart Vision. The heart sees many things which the intellect alone can never see. It recognized the prodigal afar off, it saw the beckoning hand from Macedonia, it knows the presence divine in fiery furnaces and dens of lions, it senses the guidance of the Almighty. The pure heart longs for God—hungers and thirsts for him. In God it finds the perfection and glory of vision.

Hearts Made Happy. Happy are they (for so the word means) whose hearts are

pure. Purity itself is happiness, for it is man's highest quality. But the vision which purity makes possible—who shall describe the happiness which this brings? Pure hearts and God make earth an Eden. Pure hearts and God will be heaven.

Prayer

O God, who never dost hide thyself from the pure in heart, cleanse me thoroughly from all stain of former transgressions. Make my thoughts and impulses sincere and holy. Give me the heavenly vision. Amen.