

F.B. Meyer:

I will wash mine hands in innocency - Psalm 26:6

The Psalmist realized that he could not avail himself of all that was typified by the altar, unless, so far as he knew himself, he had washed his hands in innocency. But he also knew that the washing, to be effective, must be in costlier waters than those of his own innocency. The soul requires a Saviour who comes by water and blood, not by water only.

The compassing of the altar is probably a picturesque way of describing the joyous or penitent circle of worshippers that gathered around the altar; and which needed to be prepared for by the usual lustrations, "The baptisms and laying on of hands." We must separate ourselves from known sin, and wash our hands in innocency, if we are to enjoy the blessings of the altar and its sacred associations.

There is the sacrifice of the burnt-offering, which stands for Christ's perfectness and entire devotedness to God on our behalf. But how can we be utterly given up to God unless, so far as we know, we are innocent of presumptuous and cherished sin?

There are the sacrifices of the meal-offering and the peace-offering. But how can we feed on Christ, or feast with Him in holy rapture, whilst we are concealing the stains of the hands that take the food?

There is the sacrifice of the sin offering. But is it not a sacrilege to claim a share in its blessing if we permit those very sins which cost the Saviour agony and tears? No; we must come out and be separate; we must be willing for God to examine and prove us; we must hate the congregation of the wicked, their conversation and ways; we must occupy ourselves perpetually with the Divine lovingkindness and truth. So only can we compass the altar of God, and taste its comfort and help.

One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after - Psalm 27:4

One purpose dominated prayer and life. It was never long absent from the Psalmist's thought. The men of one idea are irresistible. The arrowy stream will force its way through the toughest soil. See that all the prayers, incidents, and circumstances of life subserve one intense purpose. String all the beads on one thread. When the eye is single, the whole body is full of light.

The Psalmist's purpose. - What a blessing that the Psalmist's purpose may be ours! To dwell in the house of the Lord is to live within the veil in fellowship with God, in the habitual recollection of his presence. To behold his beauty is to keep looking off unto Jesus. To inquire in his Temple is to commune with the Lord about all the concerns of home and business, of church and commonwealth. In senses of which the material Temple could give but a faint conception, we may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of our lives.

The Psalmist's search. - Let us seek after this as well as pray for it. Let it be the fixed purpose and resolution of every day. Let us begin with it in the morning, and at every spare moment remember that we have boldness to stand in the Most Holy Place. Oh to be as intent on this high quest as the man of science to discover nature's secrets; as the business man to make a fortune; as the brave explorer to extort the secret from the Polar Seas!

True prayer will never be presumptuous. It will not ask God to do for us what we may do for ourselves. It will ask as though all depended on asking, but it will seek as though all depended on seeking.

"Thrice blest, whose lives are faithful prayers:
What souls possess themselves so pure?"

Feed them also, and lift them up for ever - Psalm 28:9

The people of God are here compared to a flock, scattered over many hills, marked by differing brands, sheltering in varied folds, but under the care of one Shepherd, and being conducted to one Home.

The holy soul is as eager for the welfare of the Lord's "beautiful flock" as He is. Whatever is dear to the loved one is dear to the lover. You cannot love the pastor without taking a keen and constant interest in all that interests him, and especially in the sheep of his pasture, and the people of his hand. Hence when you are nearest the Lord, you are almost certain to begin pleading for his inheritance, and saying: "Save thy people;

bless them, feed them, and lift them up for ever."

There is an exquisite suggestion in the R. V. "Bear them up for ever." The Good Shepherd bare his flock through the desert, and carried them all the days of old. It is as easy for Him to bear a flock, as a single lamb. Jesus does not simply lead us to green pastures and still waters, He bears us, and He bears us up, and He does so for ever. Never tiring, though He imparts infinite rest; never ceasing for a moment his shepherd care. Are you depressed to-day? Are there strong influences dragging you down? Does your soul cleave to the dust? Let those strong arms and that tender breast lift you up for ever. A dying child asked her father to place his arms beneath her weary, emaciated body. "Lift me," she said. He did so. "A little higher." He did so. "Higher, father." And when he had lifted her as high as he could, the convulsive movement proved that Christ had come to lift her up for ever.

In his temple doth every one speak of his glory - Psalm 29:9

This psalm describes a thunderstorm gathering over the Mediterranean, passing with devastating fury over Palestine, and finally dissolving in floods of rain on the pasturelands of Bashan and Gilead. But how differently such a scene is regarded! To the man of the world it presents an interesting study, or awakes spasms of fear: to the man of God, contemplating the scene from his safe hiding in the Temple, it seems as though nature, with a myriad voices, were proclaiming the glory of God. Many storms are sweeping athwart the world just now. Our standpoint for watching them must be God's presence-chamber.

Somehow, everything that has been, is, and shall be; all that seems startling and dreadful; all that excites fear and foreboding - shall conduce to the glory of God. Wait, O child of God, in patient trust; Jehovah is King, and He shall sit as King for ever; all is under law. "Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things"; and to Him shall be the glory for ever.

Our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost: does every whit of it say, Glory? I know of few things that stir my heart more than the repeated ascription of "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." But is that the refrain of our life? Outside there may be confusion and storm, wild chaos and desolation; but see to it that from your heart's shrine there rises moment after moment the ascription of "Glory be to Thee, O Thou most High."

"Glory to God, to God, he saith.
Knowledge of suffering entereth,
And life is perfected in death."

Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning - Psalm 30:5

The Hebrew might be rendered, "Weeping may come in to lodge at even" (R. V., marg.). See, at nightfall, a black-vestured guest comes to thy heart. Thou must let him in; he brings a warrant from your King for his quartering and entertainment. But he is only a lodger; he has no abiding-place with thee; at daybreak he must be gone. Canst thou not bear with him for these brief hours? It is only for the brief space of an Eastern summer-night. Let the first tint of the dawn flush yon sky, he will go. Like the ghosts of fable, he dies in the light.

Now, see, the morning breaks! Who is this hurrying up the hill, and knocking at the door? Hark to his joyous shout! Who is this? Ah! It is Joy. The child of the morning light! The firstborn of Resurrection! And he comes not as a lodger, but as the Lord and Master of Life, to abide for ever. Oh, welcome him in the name of the Lord, and throw open each chamber and each closet in your heart, that all may be filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And as he enters, sorrow and sighing flee away. They have passed out at the back as he came in at the front.

Joy in the morning at the resurrection of Jesus: Joy in the coming of the Saviour for his bride: Joy as the Millennium breaks on the world: Joy when the Eternal Day comes to gladden those who have drunk of Christ's sorrow, and shall share his bliss.

Child of God, be on the outlook to welcome Joy. Do not fear his advent, nor thrust him away. Milton's L'Allegro is a truer presentation of Christian experience than Il Penseroso. "Thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

Thou hast known my soul in adversities - Psalm 31:7

Men have a way of forgetting their companions when they fall into adversity. They do not know them or visit them, or recognise them if they meet them in the street. But the love of God is always most tender and considerate then. He seeks us out when the sky is shadowed, and life is overcast with sombre tints. Adversity, so far from alienating Him, draws Him closer, and brings out his tenderest, loveliest traits. He knows us in adversity.

It is only when we are overtaken by adversity that we are revealed in the innermost depths of our nature. God knows us in adversity. "Thou shalt remember," said Moses, "all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness, that He might humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart." What revelations of unsubdued pride and imperious self-will are afforded, when we are searched and tested by the fiery trial of pain!

But there suggests another rendering: "Thou hast known the adversities of my soul." Is it not enough that God should know? Need we go to all our friends and explain to them all we are called to endure? Is not this a needless addition to their sorrow, and the sorrow of the world? What a glorious piece of advice the Master gave, when He said, "Anoint thine head and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but to thy Father which seeth in secret."

"Thou know'st our bitterness! - our joys are thine!
No stranger Thou to all our wanderings wild!
But yet Thou call'st us Brethren! Sweet repose
Is in that word ; - the Lord who dwells on high
Knows all, yet loves us better than He knows."

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go - Psalm 32:8

"Learn of Me," said the Master: and indeed there is no teacher like Him; no school like his. We stand at the door of the school-house, saying, "What I know not, teach Thou me"; and He does not hesitate to undertake our case. But there are several points of difference from our methods. In Christ's school there is but one Master for all the scholars, and they all learn from the same books; the pupils begin with the upper classes and end with the lowest; and those that are most proficient, and have been longest under his tuition, are most conscious of their ignorance. There are no holidays; but every day is a holy day. The school never breaks up; but the students leave it for Home, and the prizes are sent after them, and given when they arrive.

We need more than personal instruction; we are travelling through an unknown land, and require direction for the way. This also is guaranteed; but not as in the cases of tourists, who extract all information from their friends before they start from home, as to the places they are about to visit. Our Guide accompanies us. He counsels us with his eye upon us, detecting every pitfall and chasm, and warning us; perhaps even guiding us by the movement of his eye.

How greatly then are we in need of the quickened sense! The eye fixed on his eye; the ear open to his slightest whisper; the foot quick to place itself down in his footprints. The horse and mule need bit and bridle; but it is enough for us if the heart fears to miss the least indication of the Master's will. Be willing to know; it then becomes his part to make thee know somehow. If not in one way, then in another.

The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD - Psalm 33:5

The Psalmist means that there is no spot in it where the traces and footprints of God's love may not be discerned, if only the eyes and the heart are opened. Just as every corner of a room which faces the south is filled with the morning sunlight, unless artificial and violent means are adopted to keep it out, so every part of human life is full of God's loving-kindness; but may not your eyes be blinded? May there not be more than you suppose? May you not be so occupied with the one irksome thing in it as to be oblivious to ten thousand marks of tender compassion and unobtrusive mercy!

Your chamber is very bare and comfortless; but it is part of the earth, and it is therefore full of God's loving-kindness. Your home seems uncongenial and trying; but it must be full to the brim of loving-kindness. Your daily life is hard and difficult; but there is as much loving-kindness in it as if it were easy and prosperous. There is indeed more loving-kindness in these trying and difficult surroundings than in happier ones. It costs God more to give us pain. We need more love, and we get it. We should rejoice in it if our eyes were opened.

The loveless heart can detect nothing but disappointment and unkindness. But the heart that loves, and sings, and rejoices in the Lord, detects the evident tokens of God's love; just as the child of nature knows when friend or foe has passed through the forest-glade, by indications which would be un-intelligible to our unpractised eye. Echo always answers in the same key in which we address her!

The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart - Psalm 34:18

What broke your heart? Unkindness? Desertion? Unfaithfulness on the part of those you trusted? Or did you attempt to do something which was beyond your power, and in the effort, the heartstrings snapped? A bird with a broken wing, an animal with a broken leg, a woman with a broken heart, a man with a broken purpose in his life-these seem to drop out of the main current of life into shadow. They go apart to suffer and droop. The busy rush of life goes on without them. But God draws nigh. The Great Lover of man is always at the best when the lights burn low and dim in the house of life. He always comes to us then. He shall sit as the Refiner.

Where do you see love perfected? Not between the father and his stalwart son who counts himself independent, or between the mother and the girl in whom love is awakening in its first faint blush: but where the crippled child of eleven years lies in the truckle-bed, pale and wan, unable to help herself. There the noblest fruits of love ripen and yield refreshment. The father draws nigh to the little sufferer, so soon as he gets home at night, and the mother is nigh all the time to sympathize and comfort and minister. So brokenness attracts God. It is dark; you think yourself deserted; but it is not so. God is there - He is nigh; call to Him - a whisper will bring a response.

"There, little one, don't cry;
They have broken your heart, I know
And the rainbow gleams
Of your youthful dreams
Are things of the long ago;
But heaven holds all for which you sigh -
There, little one, don't cry."

Them that are quiet in the land - Psalm 35:20

A significant title for the saints, which has been adopted at least by one great religious body. In every age God has had his quiet ones. Retired from its noise and strife, withdrawn from its ambitions and jealousies, unshaken by its alarms; because they had entered into the secret of a life hidden in God. We must have an outlet for the energies of our nature. If we are unfamiliar with the hidden depths of eternal life, we shall necessarily live a busy, fussy, frothy, ambitious, eager life, in contact with men and things. But the man who is intense on the eternal, can be quiet in the temporal.

The man whose house is shallow, but one room in depth, cannot help living on the street. But directly we begin to dwell deep - deep in God, deep in the watch for the Master's advent, deep in considering the mysteries of the kingdom, we become quiet. We fill our little space; we get our daily bread and are content; we enjoy natural and simple pleasures; we do not strive, nor cry, nor cause our voice to be heard in the street; we pass through the world, with noiseless tread, dropping a blessing on all we meet; but we are no sooner recognised than we are gone.

Get quiet, beloved soul; tell out thy sorrow and complaint to God. Let not the greatest business or pressure divert thee from God. When men rage about thee, go and tell Jesus. When storms are high, hide thee in his secret place. When others compete for fame and applause, and their passion might infect thee, get into thy closet, and shut thy door, and quiet thyself as a weaned babe. For if thy voice is quiet to man, let it never cease to speak loudly and mightily for man in the ear of God. Oh to be a Quietist in the best sense!

Lord, all my desire is before thee - Psalm 38:9

God knows our desires. We cannot always put them into words; we dare not trust them to the ears of our dearest, but they lie open to Him - the ideal we desire in our holiest moments; the thorn in the flesh from which we long to be delivered; the prayer for one who is dearer to us than life. "Lord, all my desire is before Thee."

Think of the desires of the saints - for the realization of their ideals; for the salvation of men; for the glory of the Redeemer; for the Divine answer to the scoff, the sneer, the taunt of infidelity; for the coming of the King, the restoration of his ancient people, the setting up of the millennial reign.

"Lo, as some ship, outworn and overladen,
Strains for the harbour, where her sails are furled;
Lo, as some innocent and eager maiden
Leans o'er the wistful limit of the world:
"So even I, and with a pang more thrilling;
So even I, and with a hope more sweet.
Yearn for the sign, O Christ! of thy fulfilling,
Faint for the flaming of thine advent feet."

And remember, He who implanted the desire does abundantly above all we ask or think. There is always a defect in every earthly joy, a something which shows itself for a moment to elude us.

"It blossoms just beyond the paths I follow,
It shines beyond the farthest stars I see;
It echoes faint from ocean caverns hollow,
And from the land of dreams it beckons me."

But it never can be thus with any desire that God has taught us to cherish. Of these, as the ages pass, we shall say: It was a true report that I heard, but the half was not told. The desire which is directed to God cannot miss gratification.

I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were - Psalm 39:12

Sorrow and pain had taught the Psalmist some deep lessons touching the life of men around him—they seemed to be shadows pursuing shadows. They walked in a vain show, and were disquieted in vain. At their best estate, i.e., when most firmly rooted, they were only a breath, curling from lip or nostril into the chili morning air, and then gone for ever. The outward life and activity of man seemed to him as the shadow which darkens for a moment a whole mountain side, and, whilst you look, it has been chased away by the succeeding sheets of sunshine.

Amid all these vanities, the child of God is a pilgrim to the Unseen. He passes through Vanity Fair, with his eyes steadily fixed on the Eternal City, whose Builder and Maker is God. Abraham first described himself as a stranger and sojourner, when he stood up from before his dead, and craved a burying-place from the sons of Heth. All his children, those who inherit a like faith, must say the same. Faith cannot find a home on this side of the stars. It has caught a glimpse of the Infinite, and it can never be content with anything less.

But we are sojourners "with God." He is our constant companion. What Greatheart was to the women and feeble ones, God is to each of his saints. We may be strangers; but we are not solitary. We may be compelled to relax our grasp from the hands of beloved ones; but never alone - the Father is with us. Good company, safe escort, is it not? In the strength of it, we may obey without reluctance or fear the old motto - *Habita, ut migraturus*: Live as about to emigrate. "There is nothing greater than God; nothing less than I. He is rich; I am very poor, but I want for nothing."

I delight to do thy will, O my God - Psalm 40:7,8

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Psalm 40:10.) lays great stress on these words. He says that this yielding up of Christ's will to his Father's was consummated on the cross, and was the inner heart of our Saviour's passion. "By which will (surrendered and given back to God) we have been sanctified." He then proceeds to suggest that it is only as we enter into a living oneness with Jesus in this that we can pass from the outer court and have boldness to enter into the Holiest of all. This, he says, is the new and living way. Jesus entered into the Holiest because He gave Himself absolutely to his Father. We cannot expect to go thither till we have become possessed of the same spirit.

It is a solemn question for each. Have we all stood at the cross, as the slave of old at the doorpost of his master's house, and said, "I love my Master. I will not go out free"? Have we been united to that cross, as by the boring of the awl? Have we so embraced the will of God that we are prepared to follow it, though it lead to the Cross and grave? Then one condition at least is fulfilled for our standing unabashed where angels veil their faces.

But there is yet another condition. We can have no right to stand within the Holiest, except through the blood of

Jesus, shed for sin on the cross. This is necessary ere sinners can have boldness in the presence of Divine Purity.

When Rutherford was like to die of sore illness, instead of a martyr's death, he said, "I would think it a more glorious way of going home, to lay down my life for the cause at the cross of Edinburgh or St. Andrew's; but I submit to my Master's will. Oh for arms to embrace Him!"

Blessed is he that considereth the poor - Psalm 41:1

The realm of Blessedness is all around. It may be entered at any minute, and we may dwell in it all the days of our life. Our enjoyment of blessedness is totally undetermined by outward circumstances. If you stand in some great retail emporium and watch the faces of the women, you will be greatly instructed. Yonder sits a richly-dressed lady with society and fashion, dress and money at her command, but her manner and tone are utterly weary and dissatisfied; whilst across the counter a girl waits on her, whose thin face and simple attire tell their own story, but her expression and bearing betoken the possession of an inner calm and strength, an inexhaustible fund of patience and sweetness. Such contrasts meet us everywhere. The realm of blessedness dips down into humble and lowly lives on every side of us. Have we entered it.

Christ's beatitudes give us eight gates, any one of which will immediately conduct us within its confines. But here is another: "Blessed is he that considereth the poor." Even if you cannot help or relieve them to any appreciable extent, consider them; let them feel that you are thinking of and for them; do not hurry them when they recite their long, sad story; put them at their ease; treat them with Christian courtesy and consideration. Begin at once. There are plenty around you, who, if not poor in the things of this world, are poor in love and hope and the knowledge of God. Tell them of "the blessing of the Lord," which "maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it." Silver and gold you may have none; but such as you have be sure and give. Learn to consider people. Try and look on things from their standpoint.

Deep calleth unto deep - Psalm 42:7

There are wonderful harmonies in nature. Voices call to one another across vast spaces. The depths below the firmament call to the heights above. The deep of the ocean calls to the deep of the azure sky. Listen, O my soul, to the mighty voices sounding ever through the universe of God.

The deep of Divine Redemption calls to the deep of human need. - It sometimes seems as though the opposite were true, and as though the cry originated in man; but it is not so. God is always first; and as He looks into hearts stricken and desperate, conscious of unfathomable yearnings, and infinite capacity, He calls aloud, and the depth of his heart appeals to the depth of the heart of man. Would that it might ever answer back!

The deep of Christ's wealth calls to the deep of the saint's poverty. - He looks down upon our attenuated and poverty-stricken experience with an infinite yearning. He cannot endure that we should go through life naked and miserable, poor and blind, when He has got gold, and precious stones, and white raiment. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider. Forsake thy father's house. Come unto Me, and receive from my fulness. Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."

The deep of the Holy Spirit's intercession calls to the deep of the Church's prayer. - He awakens in us groanings that cannot be uttered, and burdens us with the will of God.

Whatever depths there are in God, they appeal to corresponding depths in us. And whatever be the depths of our sorrow, desire, or necessity, there are correspondences in God from which full supplies may be obtained. Thou hast the pitcher of faith, and the well is deep.

O God my God - Psalm 43:4

What a change within the soul one short hour spent in God's presence will prevail to make! The psalmist is opposed by an ungodly nation, and resisted by a deceitful and unjust man. He mourns because of the oppression of the enemy; he questions whether God has cast him off. Then led by those twin angels, Light and Truth, commissioned and sent forth for that purpose from the presence of God, he enters in thought and spirit within the precincts of the Divine Tabernacle, and stands before the Altar. Immediately the clouds break. Putting his puny hand upon the great God, he appropriates all He is and has, as though it were his own, and takes again, in a very ecstasy of realizing faith, his harp, too long silent, and breaks into rapturous melody.

Have you not sometimes groped in the dark, till those two angels have come to lead you also to the altar where the High Priest stands? Then what a change! Your circumstances have not altered, but you have conceived a new idea of what God can be to you. You have said, This God is my God for ever and ever. You have said, O God, MY God! You have laid your hand on God's wealth and called it all your own. You have chided your soul for being disquieted and depressed whilst such a heritage is yours. You have spoken of God, first as the God of your strength; secondly, as the gladness of your joy; thirdly, as the health of your face.

"Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others - that we are not always strong,
That we are ever overborne with care,
That we should ever weak and heartless be,
Anxious or troubled when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?"

Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances - Psalm 44:4

Before a man can say that God is his King, he must have very definitely consecrated himself to God. The relation of too many believers to Christ falls short of this supreme act of the soul; and in consequence their lives lack directness, power, victory over temptation. My reader, thou hast been sorely tried by overmastering temptations before which thy resolutions have been swept as children's sand-heaps by the tide. Wilt thou quietly consider whether from the very depth of thy being thou hast ever said to God, Thou art my King. The kingship of Jesus is always associated with victory; and just as soon as his supremacy is acknowledged, He will begin to command deliverance and victory.

Behold, thy King cometh to thee, having salvation. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and the King of Glory shall come in; but He is also the merciful Saviour. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour. It is always Prince first. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, thou shalt be saved.

What a battle-shout this is! Whenever temptation is near; when the foe seems about to take the citadel by assault; when heart and flesh quail before the noise of battle - then to look up to the living Christ, and say, Thou art my King, O Son of God: command victory! There is no devil in hell but would flee before that cry of the tempted and tried believer; and God could not be neglectful of such an appeal. Jacob is only a worm; yet even he is more than a conqueror when God fights for him. It is thus that Jacob Behmen begins one of his letters: "May the Overcomer, Jesus Christ, through Himself, overcome in us all his enemies."

I speak of the things which I have made touching the king - Psalm 45:1

This dignifies the meanest occupation. By this motive the apostles urged their converts to daily duty, slaves though they were in the houses of rich and godless owners. They were taught to look upon their lot as the will of God; and to do service as. unto the Lord, and not unto men, seeking the praise of God as their sufficient reward.

As we take in hand the bits of carved work which once stood high in the cathedral roof, but now lie almost hidden by rank vegetation, and consider the exquisite carving, which the artists never thought would be so minutely inspected, we feel that each unknown craftsman did his work for the King. There is no doubt that the religious intention of their work elevated their meanest toils to the level of sacred service. Let us endeavour each day to realize that everything may be done for Jesus which may be done at all. Do you take food? It is that the body may be deft and quick to execute his purposes. Do. you rest and seek recreation? It is that your energies may be recuperated, and that the tide of nervous power may return with fresh vigour. Do you manufacture, buy and sell, advise and preach? All may be inspired by the one purpose, that Iris will may be done, his kingdom come - which is righteousness, peace, and goodwill to men.

Such a life, however, is only possible when the heart overflows, bubbles up and over, with goodly matter. The heart must always be in contact with the fervent love of Christ. It is only as the Divine heat passes into us that the affections will boil up. and overflow in holy act. Let us make the things about the King before we speak them. Let us give time to muse, that the fire may burn.

He maketh wars to cease - Psalm 46:9

"My soul is among lions, and I dwell among those that are set on fire: even the sons of men, whose words are spears and arrows, and their tongue .a sharp sword." Such is the frequent confession or the child of God.

Hemmed in by foes, the butt of vehement hate! But the moment comes at length when God arises to deliver. He utters his voice the earth melts. In the night the enemy has wrapped up his tents and stolen silently away. War has ceased, and all the land of life lies plain and open.

God makes the wars of the outward life cease, so that as life's afternoon comes the man who had fought his way through overwhelming odds - as a reformer, or inventor, or philanthropist - spends his years amid troops of friends and loving recognition.

God makes the wars of the home cease, so that the disturbing elements pass out, or are transmuted by invincible patience and love.

God makes the wars of the heart cease, so that Satan no longer annoys. The storm dies down, and the river which makes glad the city of God purls quietly through the soul. Sennacherib and his vast array lie as the leaves of autumn, silent in the last sleep.

If as yet God has not made your wars to cease, it is because He knows that you have still strength to fight on. Do not faint in the day of battle. Ponder those great words of Cromwell: "Call not your burden sad or heavy, for if your Heavenly Father sent it (or permitted it) He intended it to be neither." It is through the fight that you are winning experience, strength, the approval of your Captain, and the crown.

He shall choose our inheritance for us - Psalm 47:4

"Choose for us, our Father." We say it; deliberately. If He were to give us our choice at this moment, though there is no one of us that does not cherish a secret longing too deep for words, we would put it back into his hand and say, "Thou knowest better than words can tell Thee what lies closest to our soul, but we dare not take the opportunity of snatching at it; Thou wilt give it or its equivalent in the sweetest form and at the most opportune hour," Would not this be the wisest attitude for any one of us to assume, believing, as we do, that our Father's wisdom is only outshone by his love?

Wilt thou, O soul of man, standing at the foot of the Hill of God, ask thy Father to choose the track He knows thy strength and powers of endurance; He knows also thy ardent yearning for the best. Subordinate thy choice to his in all things. Then whatever the difficulties may prove to be, dare to believe that they are less than any that would have opposed thee hadst thou chosen the route for thyself. Never look back; never doubt thy Father's personal interest; the clouds that sweep darkly over thy path may hide Him from thee, but not thee from Him.

And thou, who hast had much experience of God, wilt thou not still say, He shall choose? Thou canst not repent the trust which thou reposedst years ago in his selection. Thou wilt not withdraw thy confidence. For evermore, whatever life may bring here or hereafter, we will cry, He shall choose, He shall choose. As Nicholas Herman said: "Pains and sufferings would be a paradise to me which I should suffer with my God; and the greatest pleasures hell, if I could relish them without Him."

Consider her palaces - Psalm 48:13

The pious Jew broke into exclamations as he considered the beloved city of his fathers. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth. In proud confidence he challenged the world of men to walk about Zion, count her towers, and mark her bulwarks. Finally they were to traverse her palaces. But what Jerusalem was to the Jews, God's lovingkindness is to us, as we think of it, in the midst of his temple. Let us consider its beauty and joy, its strength and glory. "How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!"

Traverse the rooms in the Palace of God's love - that council-chamber of the eternal foreknowledge where we were chosen in Christ; this suite of apartments, which began with the unrobing-room of Bethlehem, and ended with the golden stairway of Olivet; those mansions of the Home-land which He is preparing for them that love Him; the pavilion whither He will lead his bride where He comes to take her to Himself: then look onward to the new heaven and the new earth, where God shall spread his tabernacle over his people, and all our loftiest ideals will be realized for evermore.

Life is a traversing of the successive rooms of the Palace of Love. They are not alike: each has its own beauty; each leads to something better; in each God is All. Some seem to pass through the rooms veiled or blind; others miss seeing the King. But those who dare to look for Him everywhere, find Him. Always our Christ for ever and ever; always our Guide even unto death, and beyond. Always the present opening to something better, as the rosebud to the rose; as the acorn to the oak; as the chrysalis to the butterfly.

Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil - Psalm 49:5

Have I not God? At sundry times and in divers manners, He spake to, and succoured his saints. Will He not come to me, and cast around me the soft mantle of his protecting love? And if I love Him, do I need any beside?

"Who that one moment has the least descried Him,
Dimly and faintly, hidden and afar,
Doth not despise all excellence beside Him,
Pleasures and powers that are not, and that are?"

Did He not walk with Enoch, and then take him home, before the deluge came? Did He not shut Noah in, with his own hand, that there should be no jeopardy from the overflowing flood? Did He not assure Abram that He was his shield and exceeding great reward, quieting his fears against any possible combination of foes? Did He not preserve his servant Moses from the fury of Pharaoh and the murmurings of Israel? Was not Elijah hidden in the secret of his pavilion from the wrath of Ahab? Did He not send his angel to shut the lions' mouths that they might not hurt Daniel? Were not the coals of the burning fiery furnace as sweet and soft as forest glades to the feet of the three young confessors? Has God ever forsaken those that trusted Him? Has He ever given them over to the will of their enemies?

Wherefore, then, should I fear in the day of evil? I may be standing on the deck, whilst the ship is beset by icebergs and jagged splintered rocks; the fog drapes everything, as the way slowly opens through this archipelago of peril: but God is at the helm - why should I fear? Days of evil to others cannot be so to me, for the presence of God transmutes the evil to good.

Our God shall come - Psalm 50:3

The years pass as snowflakes on the river; and as each drops into the mighty past, it cries, God will come! Each Advent season, with its cluster of services, herald-voices, reminiscences and anticipations, lifts the message clear above the turmoil and tumult of mankind, God will come! The disappointments of our fairest hopes, the overcasting of our sunrises, the failures of our politicians, statesmen and counsellors, to effect a permanent and radical improvement of man's nature, all take up the word, Our God shall come!

"Surely He cometh, and a thousand voices
Call to the saints and to the deaf and dumb;
Surely He cometh, and the earth rejoices,
Glad in his coming, who hath sworn, I come."

Dear heart, get thee often to thine oriel window, and look out for the breaking of the day. Did not the Master assure us that He would soon return? Harken, He saith again to-day, "Surely I come quickly." The little while will soon be over, and He will come first to receive his saints to Himself, and afterwards to come with them to the earth. Why are we disconsolate and dismayed? The perplexities of the Eastern problem, the gradual return of the Jews to Palestine, the despair and lawlessness of men, the unrest of nations, the preparedness on the part of the Church - like so many minute guns at night - keep the heart awake. Oh, let your eyes flash with the glow of thanksgiving! Be glad and strong, confident and calm. Let your loins be girded, and your lamps burning. Through heaven's spaces you shall detect the advent of your God; and when He comes He will break the silence of the ages with words of majesty and might.