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THOUGHTS
FOR THOUGHTFUL HOURS.

IN VERSE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"HYMNS FROM THE LAND OF LUTHER."



LONDON:
T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW;
EDINBURGH AND NEW YORK.

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THOUGHTS FOR THOUGHTFUL HOURS.

NEW YEAR GREETINGS.

REJOICE, my fellow-pilgrim ! for another stage
 is o'er, [through no more ;
 Of the weary homeward journey, to be travelled
 No more *these* clouds and shadows shall darken
 all our sky ;
 No more *these* snares and stumbling-blocks across
 our path shall lie.

Rejoice, my fellow-soldier ! for another long
 campaign [vain ;
 Is ended, and its dangers have not been met in
 Some enemies are driven back, some ramparts
 overthrown ;
 Some earnest given that victory at length shall
 be our own !

Rejoice, my fellow-servant ! for another year is
 past ; [last ;
 The heat and burden of the day will not for ever
 And yet the work is pleasant, and sweet the
 Master's smile ;
 And well may we be diligent through all our
 " little while."

▲

Rejoice, my Christian brother! for the race is
nearer run,
And *home* is drawing nearer with each revolving
sun,
And if some ties are breaking here, of earthly
hope and love,
More sweet are the attractions of the better land
above.

The light that shone through all the past will
still our steps attend,
The Guide who led us hitherto will lead us to
the end,
The distant view is brightening, with fewer
clouds between,
The golden streets are gleaming now, the pearly
gates are seen.

O for the joyous greetings *there*, to meet and
part no more!
For ever with the Lord and all His loved ones
gone before!
New mercies from our Father's hand with each
new year may come,
But that will be the best of all—a blissful wel-
come *home*.

"O LORD, THOU KNOWEST!"

THOU knowest, Lord, the weariness and sorrow
 Of the sad heart that comes to Thee for rest.
 Cares of to-day, and burdens for to-morrow,
 Blessings implored, and sins to be confest,
 I come before Thee at thy gracious word,
 And lay them at Thy feet—thou knowest, Lord.

Thou knowest all the past—how long and
 blindly
 On the dark 'mountains the lost wanderer
 strayed,—
 How the good Shepherd followed, and how
 kindly
 He bore it home, upon his shoulders laid,
 And healed the bleeding wounds, and soothed
 the pain,
 And brought back life, and hope, and strength
 again.

Thou knowest all the present—each temptation,
 Each toilsome duty, each foreboding fear;
 All to myself assigned of tribulation,
 Or to beloved ones, than self more dear!
 All pensive memories, as I journey on,
 Longings for vanished smiles, and voices gone!

Thou knowest all the future—gleams of gladness,
By stormy clouds too quickly overcast,—
Hours of sweet fellowship, and parting sadness,
And the dark river to be crossed at last.—
Oh, what could confidence and hope afford
To tread that path, but this—*thou knowest, Lord!*

Thou knowest, not alone as God, all-knowing,—
As *man*, our mortal weakness Thou hast proved;
On earth, with purest sympathies o'erflowing,
Oh, Saviour! Thou hast wept, and Thou hast
loved!
And love and sorrow still to Thee may come,
And find a hiding-place, a rest, a home.

Therefore I come, Thy gentle call obeying,
And lay my sins and sorrows at Thy feet,
On everlasting strength my weakness staying,
Clothed in Thy robe of righteousness complete:
Then rising and refreshed, I leave Thy throne,
And follow on to know as I am known!

ANTICIPATIONS.

AND is the time approaching,
 By prophets long foretold,
 When all shall dwell together,
 One Shepherd, and one fold ?

Shall every idol perish,
 "To moles and bats" be thrown ?
 And every prayer be offered
 To God in Christ alone ?

Shall Jew and Gentile meeting
 From many a distant shore,
 Around one altar kneeling,
 One common Lord adore ?

Shall all that now divides us
 Remove, and pass away,
 Like shadows of the morning
 Before the blaze of day ?

Shall all that now unites us
 More sweet and lasting prove,
 A closer bond of union,
 In a blest land of love ?

Shall war be learned no longer?
Shall strife and tumult cease?
All earth His blessed kingdom,
The Lord and Prince of Peace!

O long-expected dawning,
Come, with thy cheering ray!
When shall the morning brighten,
The shadows flee away?

O sweet anticipation!
It cheers the watchers on,
To pray, and hope, and labour,
Till the dark night be gone.

A REAL INCIDENT.

NOTE.—The affecting incident which gave rise to these verses occurred as related, in 1855, in the North of Scotland.

Two brothers left their cottage home
On a bright April morn,
The lark was singing in the sky,
The linnet on the thorn;
Their mother watched them as they sped,
So gaily up the hill,
No thought of fear was on her heart,
No shade of coming ill.

But evening came—and they came not,—
Then a long stormy night
Of agonizing fears wore on ;
And with the morning light,
An eager, sympathizing band
Took in a boat their way,
Round the dark rocks which circled in
A small sequestered bay.

The dark red precipices rose
Sheer from the deep below,
With caverns hollowed by the waves
Of ages long ago.
’Twas a wild spot—a giddy height
To look at from beneath,
And from above, one thoughtless step
Were sure and fearful death.

A narrow space of stones and sand
The low tides had left bare—
There was a brief and anxious search--
They found the lost ones *there!*
Clasped in each other’s arms they lay
All lifeless, pale, and cold,—
Oh what a tale of agony
Did the first glance unfold !

With one the mortal strife had pass’d,
All aid for him was vain ;

But one still breathed—*he* lived to see
His mother's face again.

And ere his spirit passed away,
They asked him, " Was it not
An awful night, of pain and *fear*,
You spent on that lone spot,

" With the wild precipice above,
And *death* so close beside?"—
But with a placid look and smile,
The dying boy replied,—
" *Our grandmother was with us there ;*
She staid the whole night long,
And through the noise of winds and waves,
I always heard her song.

" The old low song she used to sing
So often, long ago,
When we were young,—before she died,
And went to heaven, you know.
And when I knew that *she* was near,
I could not feel afraid."
'Twas a strange answer!—who shall tell
The meaning it conveyed ?

Was it some idle phantasy
Of the boy's fevered brain,
That cheered him through those dreary hours
Of mortal fear and pain,—

Some passing sounds by fancy borne
On the cold midnight air ?
Or *did* the kindred spirit come,
And keep love's vigil there ?

Answer us, spirits of the blest,
From your bright homes on high !
Tell us, if still on this poor earth
Ye look with pitying eye,—
If the departed still may come,
In hours of want and woe,
As "ministering spirits" sent
To those they loved below ?

Vain questions of the weary soul !
But we know who has said,
"Let not your hearts, who trust in Me,
Be troubled or afraid.
For I am with you evermore,
According to my word."
Let this suffice for faith and hope ;
So be it, gracious Lord !

IT IS WELL.

“ He hath done all things well.”—MARK vii. 37.

So they said, who saw the wonders
 Of Messiah's power and love,—
 So they sing, who see his glory
 In the Father's house above.
 Ever reading, in each record
 Of the strangely varied past,
 “ All was well which God appointed,
 All has wrought for good at last.”

And on earth we hear the echoes
 Of that chorus in the sky ;
 Through the day of toil or weeping,
 Faith can raise a glad reply.
 It is well, O saints departed,
 Well with you, for ever blest ;
 Well with us, who journey forward
 To your glory and your rest !

Times are changing, days are flying,
 Years are quickly past and gone,
 While the wildly mingled murmur
 Of life's busy hum goes on ;
 Sounds of tumult, sounds of triumph,
 Marriage chimes and passing-bell,
 Yet through all one key-note sounding,
 Angels' watchword,—“ It is well.”

We may hear it, through the rushing
Of the midnight tempest's wave,—
We may hear it, through the weeping
Round the newly closèd grave ;
In the dreary house of mourning,
In the darkened room of pain,
If we listen meekly, rightly,
We may catch that soothing strain.

Thine arm thou hast not shorten'd,
Nor turned away Thine ear,
Oh Saviour, ever ready
A suppliant's prayer to hear !
Show us light, still surely resting
On all Thy darkest ways ;
Give us faith, still surely trusting
Through sad and evil days.

And thus, while years are fleeting,
Though joys are with them gone,
In Thy changeless love rejoicing
We shall journey calmly on ;
Till at last, all sorrow over,
Our tale of grace we tell,
In the heavenly chorus joining,—
“ Thou hast done all things well !”

"HOW LONG?"

How long, Lord ? wilt thou hide thyself for ever ? Return, O Lord,
how long ?—Pa. lxxxix. 46 ; xc. 13.

How long, O Lord, in weariness and sorrow,
Must Thy poor people tread the pilgrim road,
Mourning to-day and fearing for to-morrow,—
Finding no place of rest, no sure abode ?—

Sighing o'er faded flowers and cisterns broken ;
Gazing on setting suns, that rise no more ;
List'ning to sad farewells, and last words spoken
By loved ones leaving us on Jordan's shore !

How long, through snares of error and tempta-
tion,
Shall noblest spirits stumble on their way ?
How long, through darkening storms of tribula-
tion,
Must we press forward to eternal day ?

How long shall passing faults and trifles sever
Hearts that have known affection's holy tie ?
When shall the slanderer's tale be hush'd for
ever,
And brethren see in all things eye to eye ?

How long shall last the night of toil and sadness,
 The midnight hour of gloomy doubts and fears,
 When shall it dawn, that promised morn of glad-
 ness,
 When Thine own hand shall wipe away our
 tears ?

How long, O Lord ? our hearts are sad and weary,
 Our voices join the whole creation's groan ;—
 With eager gaze we watch for Thine appearing,—
 When wilt Thou come again, and claim Thine
 own ?

Return ! return ! come in Thy power and glory,
 With all Thy risen saints and angel throng ;
 Bring to a close time's strange, mysterious
 story,—
 How long dost Thou delay,—O Lord, how long ?

DARKNESS AND LIGHT.

ZECH. xiv. 6, 7.

I DO not doubt my safety,—that Thy hand
 Will still uphold me, even to the last ;
 And that my feet on Canaan's hills shall stand,
 When the long wilderness is overpast.
 But often faith is weak, and hope is low ;
Forward indeed, but faint, and wearily I go.

I do not doubt *Thy* love, my Lord, my God !
The love which suffered and which died for me ;
The love which sought me on the downward road,
Unclasp'd the fetters, set the captive free ;—
But mine seems now so languid, dull, and cold,
Oh for the blissful hours, which I have known
of old !

I do not doubt Thy wise and holy will
Is ever guiding, ordering the best ;
I know my chastening Father loves me still,
And that the end is everlasting rest ;—
But when the path through clouds and tombs
leads on,
Oh ! it is hard to say, Thy will, not mine, be
done !

I do not doubt, unworthy though I be,
Thy worthiness, my Saviour, is my own ;
One of Thy many mansions is for me,
In the good land where sorrow is unknown ;—
But often clouds obscure the distant scene,
And from the flood I shrink, which darkly rolls
between.

Ah ! whence this dullness ? why, O faithless heart,
Thus sadly linger on the pilgrim way ?
Why not with girded robes arise, depart,
And speed thy progress to the land of day ?

Nor longer mourn the present or the past,
But press towards the prize, which shall be thine
at last.

Lord, at the evening time let there be light!
Unveil Thy presence, bid all darkness fly;
Surely, ere now, far spent must be the night,
The morning comes, the journey's end is nigh.
Renew my strength, what yet remains to run,
Till glory crowns the work which grace has here
begun!

A PARTING SCENE.

THE evening shadows darkened o'er a long bright
summer day,
When we gathered in the chamber where a dying
brother lay; [was run,
A brave yet gentle spirit, whose earthly course
Whose life of love and labour closed with that
setting sun.

Not many words were spoken, not many sighs
were heard,
As through the quiet twilight-hour we watched
and minister'd,

And felt as only they can feel, who count such
moments o'er,
While gazing on the form beloved they soon
must see no more !

And one, of all the dearest, was nearest to his
side,
In silent anguish bending under grief's o'erflow-
ing tide ;
So long, in sorrow and in joy, had these two
hearts been one,
It seemed as though she could not stay, if he
indeed were gone.

But earthly joys and sorrows for him were ended
now,
The calmness of a better land was resting on his
brow ;
And when to that sad mourner he softly turn'd
and spoke,
It was as though a spirit-voice the solemn still-
ness broke.

“ Now my last prayer is answer'd, my last desire
is given,
Each hope of earth is yielded up, each wish
transferred to heaven,—

From nature's latest weakness my Saviour sets
me free,
He gives me strength to separate, Elizabeth,
from thee!"

And strangely mournful earnestness was in his
look and tone,
As slowly from her trembling hand he disengaged
his own;—
While on our sinking hearts a cloud of deeper
darkness fell,
A shadow from the sepulchre came with that
last farewell.

But the pale weeper started, and faith and
courage high [to her eye;
Gave sudden colour to her cheek, and brightness
And she spoke in words which sounded like a
whisper from above,
An angel-message sent us by the God of light
and love.

"Not so, my friend and brother! I take this
hand again,
Intoken of a lasting bond, unbroken to remain!
Still as mine own I claim it, I clasp it to my
heart,
For those in Christ united, not death itself can
part!"

B

Then a gleam of heavenly radiance illum'd those
 dying eyes,
 Like sunbeams breaking suddenly through
 clouded evening skies;— [away,
 And thus a noble spirit passed from mortal toils
 And earthly twilight was exchanged for everlast-
 ing day!

**“ AT EVENING TIME THERE SHALL
 BE LIGHT.”**

“ LIGHT at the evening time !”

Oh ! blessed hope, when, on the waters dark
 Faith's straining eye can scarce discern the Ark,
 And the poor dove, in weary flight around,
 No olive branch has found !

Light at the evening time !

Oh ! blessed hope, when brightest suns have set
 In strange eclipse, while it was noonday yet,
 And we remain in chill and silent fear
 Within the shadow drear !

Light at the evening time !

Oh, precious promise, brightening the gloom,
 When a sad nation stands around the tomb
 Where Genius sleeps, and dearest hopes are laid
 Low in death's awful shade !

Light at the evening time !

Oh, cheering thought, when Thy mysterious ways
Leave us, O Father, in the strange amaze
Where faith can only anchor on that word,
" So hast Thou willed, good Lord !"

Light at the evening time ;—

Yes, suddenly and dark the thunder cloud
May wrap the skies of noon in deepest shroud,
But the sun is not quenched,—a golden ray
Shall come ere close of day.

Light at the evening time,—

Oh, God of love! no darkness dwells with Thee,
And in Thy light at last we light shall see ;
Thy covenant of promise faileth never,
Thine own are thine for ever !

Light at the evening time !

Let us walk patiently through darkness on,
Till we arrive where night and storms are gone,
And all eternity's disclosures tell,
God hath done all things well !

Dec. 29th, 1856.

PRAYER OUT OF THE DEPTHS.

“ From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.”—
PSALM lxi. 2.

ALL in weakness, all in sorrow,
O my God, I come once more,
Lifting up the sad petition
Thou hast often heard before,
In the former days of darkness,
In the time of need of yore.

For a present help in trouble
Thou hast never ceased to be,
Since at first a weeping sinner
Fell before Thee trustingly,
And Thy voice is ever sounding,
“ O ye weary, come to Me.”

Lord, Thou knowest all the weakness
Of the creatures Thou hast made,
For with mortal imperfection
Thou didst once Thy glory shade;
Thou hast loved and Thou hast sorrow'd,
In the veil of flesh array'd.

Thus I fear not to approach Thee
With my sorrow and my care ;
Hear my mourning supplication,
Cast not out my humble prayer !
Lay not on a greater burden
Than Thy feeble child can bear !

Earth has lost its best attractions,
All the brightest stars are gone,—
All is clouded now and cheerless,
Where so long a glory shone :
Where I walk'd with loved companions,
I must wander now alone.

All is dark on the horizon,—
Clouds returning after rain ;
Faith is languid, Hope is weary,
And the questions rise again,
“ Doth the promise fail for ever ?
Hast Thou made all men in vain ? ”

O my God, rebuke the tempter,
Let not unbelief prevail !
Pray for Thy poor disciple,
That my weak faith may not fail,
Nor Hope let go her anchor
When the waves and storms assail !

These passing, changing shadows,
These brief, bright joys below,
Let me not grasp so closely,
Let me not prize them so!
Let me not feel this anguish
When call'd to see them go!

O Saviour, shall one perish
Who looks to Thee for aid?
Let me see Thee, let me hear Thee,
Through the gloomy midnight shade;
Let me hear Thy voice of comfort,
"It is I, be not afraid!"

For when feeling *Thou* art near me,
All my loneliness is o'er,
The tempter's dark suggestions
Oppress my soul no more;—
I fear not now to follow
Where *Thou* hast gone before.

And the lights of earth all fading,
I can gaze on tearlessly,
When the glory that excelleth,
The light of life, I see.
Whom in the earth or heaven
Should I desire, but *Thee*?

ALL THINGS NEW.

2 CORINTHIANS v. 17; REVELATION xxi. 5.

THOU makest all things new!
 Old things have passed away,—the hopes and
 fears,
 The joys and griefs, of unconverted years;
 And as they sunk at once, or slowly fled,
 Some sighs were heaved, some bitter tears were
 shed:

For not without a pang can the fond heart
 From its long-cherished idols bear to part;
 But that is over—if some joys were there,
 Oh, how much more of sorrow and of care!
 Let them depart; or, in the silent hour
 When Memory reigns with her resistless power,
 If they return to haunt the soul again
 With profitless regrets and longings vain,
 Then to Thyself, all weary and oppressed,
 Help us, O Lord, to fly, and find our rest;
 And let all mental storm and conflict cease,
 Before Thy words of blessing and of peace.

Thou makest all things new!
 Within the broken heart new hopes arise,
 New prospects cheer the mourner's weeping eyes;

Over the gloomy past a light has shone,
 And all its phantoms of despair are flown ;
 From the dark future comes a cheering ray,
 The smiling dawn of an eternal day.
 New sweetness breathes in every present bliss,
 And sorrow's cup has lost its bitterness ;
 New motives, objects, energies, extend
 All through life's journey, to the welcome end.
 —Shame on the faithless heart and feeble knees
 Which falter on, uncheered by thoughts like
 these!

Rather, with hearts enlarged, and eager pace,
 Strengthen us, Lord, to run th' appointed race,
 Above all nature's weakness bravely rise,
 And press towards the mark, to gain the prize !

Thou makest all things new !
 New upon earth, and, oh ! what vistas given
 Of brighter hopes to be fulfilled in heaven !
 Eye hath not seen, and words may not declare,
 The things prepared for Thy redeemed ones there ;
 Where countless myriads, one in heart and voice,
 In the new song of love and praise rejoice,—
 “ Worthy art Thou, O Saviour divine,
 Glory and honour be for ever Thine !
 For us Thyself hast suffered and obeyed, [paid,
 With Thine own blood our ransom Thou hast
 Now faultless we appear before Thy throne,
 The bliss is ours, the glory all Thine own ;

Strong in Thy strength, the weakest have prevailed,
 Of all Thy promises not one has failed,—
 All is fulfilled, which faith and hope received,
 When on the earth we saw not, yet believed ;
 All the report we heard in days of old,
 All has been true,—but not the half was told !”

EBENEZER,

“ Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.”

THUS far the Lord hath led us on,—in darkness
 and in day,
 Through all the varied stages of the narrow home-
 ward way.
 Long since, *He* took that journey, He trod that
 path alone,
 Its trials and its dangers full well Himself hath
 known.

Thus far the Lord hath led us,—the promise has
 not failed, [vailed ;
 The enemy encountered oft has never quite pre-
 The shield of faith has turned aside, or quenched
 each fiery dart,
 The Spirit's sword, in weakest hands, has forced
 him to depart.

Yes, "They that know thy name, O Lord, shall
put their trust in Thee,"

While nothing in themselves but sin and helplessness they see.

The race Thou hast appointed us, with patience
we can run, [hast begun.

Thou wilt perform unto the end, the work Thou

LABOUR FOR CHRIST,

"Always abounding in the work of the Lord."—1 COR. xv. 58.

COME, labour on!

Who dares stand idle on the harvest plain,
While all around him waves the golden grain,
And to each servant does the Master say,
"Go, work to-day!"

Come, labour on!

Claim the high calling angels cannot share,—
To young and old the gospel gladness bear;
Redeem the time, its hours too swiftly fly,
The night draws nigh.

Come, labour on!

The labourers are few, the field is wide,
New stations must be filled, and blanks supplied;
From lands far distant, from our own at home,
The call is "Come!"

Come, labour on!
The enemy is watching, night and day,
To sow the tares, to snatch the corn away.
While we in sleep our duty have forgot,
He slumbered not.

Come, labour on!
Away with gloomy doubts and faithless fear!
No arm so weak but may do service here,
By feeblest agents can our God fulfil
His righteous will.

Come, labour on!
No time for rest, till glows the western sky,
While the long shadows o'er our pathway lie,
And a glad sound comes with the setting sun,—
“Servants, well done!”

Come, labour on!
The toil is pleasant, the reward is sure,
Blessed are those who to the end endure;—
How full their joy, how deep their rest shall be,
O Lord, with thee!

REST.

“ We which have believed do enter into rest.”—HEB. iv. 3.

REST, weary soul!

The penalty is borne, the ransom paid,
 For all thy sins full satisfaction made;
 Strive not thyself to do what Christ has done,
 Claim the free gift, and make the joy thine own.
 No more by pangs of guilt and fear distress,
 Rest, sweetly rest!

Rest, weary heart!

From all thy silent griefs, and secret pain,
 Thy profitless regrets, and longings vain;
 Wisdom and love have ordered all the past,
 All shall be blessedness and light at last;
 Cast off the cares that have so long opprest,—
 Rest, sweetly rest!

Rest, weary head!

Lie down to slumber in the peaceful tomb,
 Light from above has broken through its gloom,
 Here, in the place where once thy Saviour lay,
 Where He shall wake thee on a future day,
 Like a tired child upon its mother's breast,
 Rest, sweetly rest!

Rest, spirit free !
 In the green pastures of the heavenly shore,
 Where sin and sorrow can approach no more ;
 With all the flock by the Good Shepherd fed,
 Beside the streams of life eternal led,
 For ever with thy God and Saviour blest,—
 Rest, sweetly rest !

THE DESIRED HAVEN.

“ Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according
 to Thy word.”—LUKE ii. 29.

“ LORD, the waves are breaking o'er me and
 around,
 Oft of coming tempests I hear the moaning sound,
 Here there is no safety, rocks on either hand,
 'Tis a foreign roadstead, a strange and hostile
 land,
 Wherefore should I linger ? others gone before
 Long since safe are landed on a calm and friendly
 shore :
 Now the sailing orders in mercy, Lord, bestow,—
 Cut the cable, let me go !

“ Lord, the night is closing round my feeble bark,
 How shall I encounter its watches long and dark ?
 Sorely worn and shattered by many a billow past,
 Can I stand another rude and stormy blast ?

Hark, the solemn answer!—hark, the promise
sure!

“ Blessed are the servants who to the end endure!
Yet a little longer hope and tarry on,
Yet a little longer, weak and weary one!
More to perfect patience, to grow in faith and
love,
More *my* strength and wisdom, and faithfulness
to prove;
Then the sailing orders the Captain *shall* be-
stow,—

Cut the cable, let thee go!”

THE END.

8 AP 59