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THE
UNTRoubLED
HEART

By
Mrs Howard Taylor

China Inland Mission

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THE UNTRoubLED HEART

THE CHINA INLAND MISSION

LONDON, PHILADELPHIA, TORONTO,
MELBOURNE AND SHANGHAI

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THE UNTRoubLED HEART

BY

MRS. HOWARD TAYLOR

Author of

The Triumph of John and Betty Stam

Guinness of Honan

Pastor Hsi

etc.

JUST as these pages were being prepared for publication, the photograph reproduced as our frontispiece reached us from China. Could we desire a better illustration of the untroubled heart? For it comes from a city captured by enemy forces, with all that that means of suffering and terror. Yet, the face of this Chinese teacher, advanced in years, bears the imprint of inward joy and peace. For long he had been indifferent to the message of God's redeeming love, but the horror overwhelming his home and country awakened him, as so many others, to his need of Christ the only Saviour. Baptised last autumn, he was one of more than eight thousand received into Christian fellowship in 1938 in connection with the China Inland Mission alone. For all these new converts let us continue in prayer with thanksgiving, that through the witness of their lives many more may be won to faith in Christ.

biography of Mr. Hudson Taylor, she found time to produce a small volume of similar messages, published under the title, *Though War Should Rise*—a booklet which had a large circulation and brought comfort to numberless people in the terrible trials of that time.

Now, as we are plunged into what may prove to be another World War, Dr. and Mrs. Taylor, after years in China and North America, have returned to England for a further important task of authorship, and again Mrs. Taylor has found time to pen messages born of personal experience, for the comfort of others.

It is my prayer that, through these truly discerning and uplifting pages, the voice of the Lord we love may once again be heard saying, "Let not your heart be troubled."

W. H. ALDIS.

*China Inland Mission,
Newington Green,
London, N.16.*

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CHAPTER I

“SEE THAT YE BE NOT TROUBLED”

LUKE **xxi.** 9.

WHAT is the secret of the untroubled heart in such a day as this? For our Lord was speaking not of peaceful times, when law and order prevail. He was preparing His own for days of calamity, war and distress unspeakable. They were to be in the midst of it all, yet they were to be in peace, untroubled. How could it be? How can it be to-day?

Those words were spoken on the Mount of Olives. A little later, in the Upper Room, the Lord said more about it and gave to His own the secret—yes, the secret for to-day: “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.” And in the original, it is not so much a statement as a command: “Believe in God, believe also in me” (John xiv. 1).

I. “BELIEVE IN GOD”

Think of the sweep of that first great injunction to the Jewish mind and still more to our own. What reason they had to believe in God! God, who had been their dwelling-place in all generations; God, who had delivered them in countless

perils, provided for them under impossible conditions, led them through hopeless perplexities; who had always made a way of escape and proved Himself to be "a God of deliverances" to His people. Had they not reason to believe in God? He had borne with their failures and unfaithfulness, with their unbelief and sin. He had restored their soul, spread for them a table in the wilderness, spiritually as well as actually, and watched over them by day and night as the never-failing "Shepherd of Israel."

Is He not *El Shaddai*, "the God that is enough"? Hitherto He has helped us, and shall He not still provide? Believe in God, above the firmament, on the Throne which the prophet saw, when his eyes were lifted from the turmoil and threatening of things around him (Ezek. i. 26, 28). Believe in God, unchangeably the same, always "a very present help" in time of need. And thus, "let not your heart be troubled."

And has the experience of 2,000 years since then lessened our reasons for confidence in the same Almighty One? Do we not know Him as Father whom they knew only as God? Has He not given us infinitely more proof of His love and purposes of endless blessing? Rightly do we trust Him to show "in the ages to come . . . the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus," and shall we not trust Him for the present distress? It may have come upon

us with the suddenness of an unexpected storm, but was it unforeseen by Him? “Before they call, I will answer” is the assurance of One who is ever on the watch to succour His people.

Now is the time for steadfastness of faith; the opportunity to show to the “principalities and powers in heavenly places,” as well as to the distracted world around us, that we have and know we have a God who is ruling over all. Let us beware of being occupied with second causes, so easy at a time like this!

II. “BELIEVE ALSO IN ME”

“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come unto you.” God with us, right in our situation to-day! Yes, “our great God and Saviour,” with the pierced hands and feet. He knows, He cares, He loves. “Believe in me”—with you all the days to meet every need. We have an all-sufficient Saviour, an all-mighty Leader, an unfailing Protector and Friend. No trial can come to us but by His permission and through His heart. Nothing can ever separate us from His love. He is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. Does He not care more than we possibly can for the suffering, perishing millions who know not God? All is in His hands, and it is His tender heart that is looking for our confidence at such a time as this. Do not let us

disappoint Him who says, "Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me."

Saved from the depths of sin and suffering such as few have ever known, John Newton wrote amid the conflict of a much-tried life:

"Why should I fear the darkest hour,
Or tremble at the tempter's power?
Jesus vouchsafes to be my Tower.

"Though hot the fight, why quit the field?
Why must I either fly or yield,
Since Jesus is my mighty Shield?

"When creature comforts fade and die,
Worldlings may weep, but why should I?
Jesus still lives, and still is nigh.

"I know not what may soon betide,
Or how my wants shall be supplied;
But Jesus knows and will provide.

"Though sin would fill me with distress,
The Throne of Grace I dare address,
For Jesus is my Righteousness.

"Against me earth and hell combine,
But on my side is Power divine;
Jesus is all, and He is mine!"

By the grace of the ever-present Saviour, we too may know the blessedness of the untroubled heart—for is He not "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever"?

CHAPTER II

A STORE CUPBOARD THAT PRAISED GOD

IT was in war-time, too, when store cupboards are apt to be a good deal tried. This one was no exception, for the young missionary to whom it belonged had been cut off for months from sources of supply save such as could be found in a beleaguered Chinese city. And though she was alone, the only foreigner who had not been obliged to retire from the district, she had many mouths to feed, as the Christian women and girls flocked to her for protection from the advancing enemy. It was the height of summer, and the overpowering heat did not make it easier to care for the hundreds of refugees who crowded the Mission compound. And this continued week after week, month after month, while the city was bombed again and again and finally fell before the cruel invaders. How to feed as well as protect two to four hundred refugees was no small problem, and meanwhile the missionary's own supplies from the coast, so necessary in the hot season, were running low. Yes, the store cupboard was almost empty, and no money, goods or even letters could reach the captured city.

“BUT GOD——”

Far away in a Canadian home, a mother's heart was poured out in ceaseless prayer for this beloved child. No tidings had reached her for long months, but her trust was unshaken, her face radiant and her lips filled with praise. We were there, in Toronto, when the first letter came to break that long silence, a copy of which was given us by the rejoicing mother, who was not surprised, only confirmed in her faith by all her daughter wrote.

“Praise God, I am safe, well and rejoicing in the Lord,” ran this long-delayed letter. “Our city was occupied two months ago. It is a long time to be alone—that is, without other missionaries—but it is a time in which I have proved our God in all His wondrous faithfulness. He is all He says He is, in His Word, and much more! His *peace* is a reality, and I never experienced it in deeper measure. His promises are real. I am deeply conscious of His presence, in answer to the many, many prayers ascending on our behalf. I am learning to know my Lord in new ways: ‘He is altogether lovely.’”

And then, after telling of remarkable answers to prayer, through which her personal as well as communal needs had been supplied, she continued joyfully:

“The God of Elijah still has His ravens! I doubt Him not. His Word is true. Others coming to see me (beside Japanese officers) have brought gifts, so my store cupboard shouts out praises to God! And my heart, with those of the Chinese Christians, is filled with thanksgiving.”

What strong comfort there is here for days like these and hearts like yours and mine! For the apprehension expressed by Bishop Houghton in his last circular letter from China is indeed realised in our experience.

“During the next few weeks, or months—or even days—practically your whole thoughts may be occupied with stupendous happenings much nearer home. The dangers which threaten all our cities in Eastern Szechwan, which have already brought destruction and desolation to thousands in Chungking, Wanh-sien, Liangshan and Fengkieh, may suddenly assail *you*. But whether or not God in His mercy frustrates the designs of the mischief-makers, I believe I may count on your remembrance of us here.

“This is not written from an alarmist point of view. Neither you nor I will ever be asked to enter upon any experience alone. Sometimes it is right to sit down and consider all the possibilities, to exhaust in imagination all the

perils that might confront us from whatever quarter, from man or devil, as the Apostle Paul did when he penned the last section of Rom. viii. And then, after enumerating them all, horror piled upon horror, danger upon danger, he concludes that, real and terrible though they be, their power to harm him is simply nil, for they cannot separate him from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

“Let this great fact steady us as we look ahead. The future, even the immediate future, is not dark for those who know God. But if we are not to be shifted from the ground of our confidence we must pray for one another, maintaining fellowship always by way of the Throne.”

But to go back to our young missionary's letter and the strong confirmation of faith that it brings. Three months after the first pages were written, that letter was still unposted, for there had been no chance of getting it out of the city. But then a Chinese friend who saw a chance of escape offered to take it with him to the coast. And what were the added tidings that it brought?

“We have passed through some trying days and nights, but God has been in the midst of us, mighty to keep. In times of heaviest fighting we have been deeply conscious of His presence and power. Supplies of all kinds were short, but

God has ways and means, and so we have all been clothed and fed. Money, a big problem with us, is no problem to Him who says that the silver and the gold are His. So I just add, He has supplied every need if not every want. The Chinese have risen nobly to God's call and I have received even gifts in money, so that I have all and abound. . . . I cannot get meat yet, but after about three months I have been able to get some eggs and vegetables.

"There are still about three hundred refugees on the premises. . . . Local letters received all have the same story to tell of a tender Father's care and provision."

And she signs herself,

"Yours rejoicing in Him."

"This God is our God for ever and ever"—"Our Refuge and Strength, a very present help in trouble."

Then let us too meet coming days, whatever they may bring, with the quiet confidence that sings:

Though vine nor fig-tree neither
 Their wonted fruit should bear;
 Though all the field should wither,
 Nor flock nor herd be there;
 Yet God the same abiding,
 His praise shall tune my voice;
 For while in Him confiding,
 I cannot but rejoice.

CHAPTER III

“THE THINGS THAT ARE BEFORE”

PHIL. iii. 13, 14.

NOT looking backward, not looking around, but looking up, there is always a glorious Beyond for the child of God—“the things that are before” in the abiding sense.

This uplifting outlook comes, not from the freedom of the mountains, but from a Roman prison where the Apostle, a chained captive, waited the uncertain end. Much tried as to his surroundings, he pens an epistle the pervading note of which is *joy*. It is written to the Church at Philippi, founded through his sufferings in another prison, the dark dungeons of which resounded to his songs of praise. Oh, lover of Christ, tell us thy triumphant secret! for we too would sing to His praise through whatever darkness lies ahead.

Paul's secret, as we ponder the Epistle, seems to be threefold—and it is Christ all through, the Divine Saviour and Friend, who is just as near to us in these dark days as He was to His faithful servant long ago.

First then (Phil. i) his joy was that, whatever

might be his personal situation, Christ was being uplifted and made known to dying men: “Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.” With this went joy that his very bonds were being made a blessing to others, to believers who like himself were suffering for Christ’s sake (verses 12, 13). It was “*the progress of the Gospel*” that thrilled him with gladness, the fact that souls were being saved through faith in his beloved Lord.

And surely, in the dark and menacing days that have come upon us, we too have cause for this joy. “Christ is preached”; in China and other war-torn lands thousands are seeing the uplifted Saviour as never before. Two missionaries were crossing a province in central China recently, on their way to the west, and came upon a notable experience. In a remote mountain region, near an old Confucian temple, they found a group of no fewer than two thousand Chinese students, earnestly continuing their college course under conditions of the greatest discomfort. Hidden from bombing attacks by the invader, it was hoped that their lives would be preserved for the days of reconstruction yet to come. They were living, enduring, working for “the things that are before,” and a finer group of young men it would have been hard to find.

To the joy of the travellers, they were invited to stay awhile and explain to these eager students

the message of their Faith. The group knew little or nothing of Christianity, but in common with many in all classes of that tortured people they were alive to a heart-hunger and profound sense of need. "Deep calleth unto deep"; and may we not rejoice, now that the foundations of life are being shaken if not broken up, that the Gospel has a new appeal of comfort and healing?

Day after day the missionaries had the privilege of preaching Christ to these hundreds of young men, burdened with the anguish of their people, and the interest awakened found expression at the last meeting of all, when the chief magistrate of that part of the province asked for an opportunity to speak:

"Gentlemen," he said, in the profound silence, "you have listened this evening to a missionary pointing you and our country to the way of everlasting peace. I, too, am a Christian, and although many strange words have fallen on your ears this night, I testify to the fact that they are not only true words, but words of Life, needed by us all. Only JESUS CHRIST can make us new-born men and give us a new nation. I beg of you to heed the words spoken to-night."

Yes, all over China, Christ is being preached, "and laden souls by thousands meekly stealing, kind Shepherd, turn their weary steps to Thee." What cause for joy as we face the opportunity and

privilege of these days, joy in the midst of suffering though it be.

And Paul had another source of joy which, while it satisfied, left him hungry still—joy in the Lord Himself and in a deepening apprehension of His glorious purposes and power. “Finally, brethren, rejoice in the Lord,” begins the passage which reveals his unutterable longing for fuller likeness to and fellowship with Him (Phil. iii.). What if this, too, can only come through suffering?

“For whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but refuse, that I may win Christ, and be found in him. . . . That I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death. . . . Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

“The things that are before” in fellowship with CHRIST—do they move us to like rapture and longing? Surely, if ever, we have the opportunity now to prove Him, to enter into that deeper fellowship which even heaven itself will not afford. For there, with sin and sorrow past and all tears wiped away, we shall share through endless years the fellowship of His joy, His glory, but only here and now may we know the fellowship of

His sufferings, His cross. Oh, joy of the prisoned apostle, reaching out to "the things that are before," may it be ours too as we press on to apprehend, through whatever comes, for that for which we also are apprehended of Christ!

And lastly, Paul had the crowning joy of "that Blessed Hope," among the brightest of "the things that are before." If it was true for him and unspeakably uplifting, how much more so for us now, as we pass into the outward darkness of days that are indeed the last—days of "travail" as our Lord told us they must be, but days that bring to birth the new world-order of righteousness and peace.

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. iii. 20, 21).

We are looking for a Saviour who will change even our bodies, with all their weaknesses and limitations, into perfect conformity to His own glorious body. What a faith, an expectation! If He can and will do *that* at His coming, surely He can do it spiritually even now. Why do we limit His power? Is He not calling us to leave our past failures, weaknesses and fears, and press on with the supreme longing that filled the heart of Paul, even in his bonds, the longing to apprehend

all that for which we are apprehended of Christ? Do we not hear His voice in our hearts the more urgently because of the pressure of these days, calling us to “the things that are before”—all He is waiting to do through us, to be to us, in the power by which “He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself?”

CHAPTER IV

WATCHING—CALLING—EVEN SINGING

ONE cannot listen-in to the national broadcasts these days without being conscious that someone, some superintending power, is keenly alert for our good. Someone is on the outlook all the time, keeping abreast of all happenings, watching *for us*, and more than this, calling to us by day and night. It is a new development, this talking with us of Constituted Authority, like some watchful parent caring for the interests of the family in danger, directing and controlling every precaution and activity. More than ever before we realise our national indebtedness to the powers that be, and are united in loyal response to their instructions.

And are the Heavenly Voices silent? Is there no spiritual broadcast for these days? The answer is clear and certain from hearts that are listening-in. Yes, God is speaking. God is watching, calling, singing even, to His people. "Strength and gladness are in His place" and in the hearts of those who keep in touch with Him.

GOD WATCHING

It was in a time of trouble like our own that God revealed Himself to His people as "the

Watchful, Wakeful One" immanent in all that was happening. He had just commissioned the young prophet, His servant Jeremiah, to go with His message to the suffering nation, imperilled by the advance of enemy hosts. Shrinking from such a task, the prophet was recalled by an unexpected question:

"Jeremiah, what seest thou?"

What is it you are looking at? What is before you, right now and here?

And, strange to say, the response was "Lord, I see the rod, or branch of an almond tree."

"The watchful, wakeful tree," as the Hebrews called it.

"Good," was the divine reply. "That is what I want you to see, to be occupied with. For I am the Watchful, Wakeful One (same Hebrew word) I watch over my word, to perform it."

And in the strength of that assurance the prophet went to his task, to warn, uphold, direct a nation in their trouble.

Is this the secret of our strength to-day? Do we see things as they really are—that behind and over all that is happening there is a supremely watchful Power, God Himself, controlling, overruling, restraining, making the wrath of man to praise Him? This is the Reality; this is what He would have us see. "I watch" is the word to our hearts of Him who neither slumbers nor sleeps.

There is no unforeseen emergency with Him. There is no lack of adequate preparation and provision for the carrying out of His purposes. Let us not be troubled. God is watching means that God is caring. Divine assurances are intended to make us sure. Listen-in, my soul. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help" to-day as in every time of trouble.

"I watch over my word, to perform it."

And surely God's Word, His purposes and promises of grace, cover the whole situation. Search the Word. Discover afresh the whole range of God's revealed purposes at this time. See how they fit in with the national, indeed the world-wide emergencies in which we find ourselves. Our God in all His love and power is far more alive to the whole desperate situation than we are. For the Church and for the world, and for His ancient people, Israel, He has plans and purposes of blessing that He is longing to bring into completion.

"I watch over my word, to perform it."

What is His word *to thee*, tried and fearful heart? He knows just the promise, the assurance from His written Word brought home to your heart by His Spirit. Has He "caused you to hope," as the Psalmist puts it (Psalm cxix. 49.) in some gracious assurance of His presence and help? Then look up. See Him to-day as the faithful One, watching to-day over His own Word to

perform it. See Him watching too over His prophetic Word, all of it. How it lightens the darkness of the world-situation to realise that the stage is set for the glorious consummation! "These things are the beginning of travail" were our Lord's own words, as He foretold the wars and distresses that would bring in the last days. Travail is no child's play; but, when the labour pains begin, we do not wish or pray that they may be stopped. That would be foolish indeed! We pray for courage and strength to go through with the painful process which ushers in the new life so ardently longed for. And just so, to-day, we are sharing the labour pains that mean the birth of the Kingdom of God on earth. The "more sure word of prophecy" makes plain the glorious and infinitely worth while outcome of it all. And not far away, but with us in this momentous hour, is the Watchful, Wakeful One, our God, watching over every word of promise He has ever made, *to perform it*.

GOD CALLING

Not only is God revealed to us as watching, amid the outpoured judgments of these days—we also hear His voice as calling. In the sublime and solemn revelation to Isaiah of His final dealings with the nations at the time of the end (Isa. xxiv.—xxvii), the longing of His heart over His own breaks forth in the cry, tender as a mother's:

“Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.”

Are we hearing and obeying? Are we responding daily, hourly, to that call of love? It is only in “the secret place of the Most High” that we can find strength and comfort for this hour. “Enter into thy chambers, shut thy doors about thee,” there “pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly.” There and there only can we find constant renewal of faith and vision, of comfort and courage to carry us through and make us of real help to others.

And listen, there is more than this; for in this passage do we not hear, above the storms of earth, the most wonderful of all heavenly music—God Himself singing? And what is the song He sings to the listening heart in these days?

“In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day” (Isa. xxvii. 2, 3).

Again, in Zephaniah, another prophet of judgment, we hear the same wondrous song:

“Fear thou not: O Zion, let not thine hands be slack.

“The Lord thy God is in the midst of thee, a mighty one who will save: He will rejoice over thee with joy, He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing.”

And this was to a rebellious people, suffering for their own wrong-doing and hardness of heart. Take courage then, my soul, it is also for thee—this call, this song! In the secret place thou shalt hear it. Only enter in and shut the door. There the ever-watchful, wakeful One will meet thee. There the heart that is calling thee to itself will reveal the Love that alone can satisfy and strengthen. From this Presence thou shalt go forth, ever renewed, to pour out for others the blessed reassurance of the untroubled heart:

“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”

“Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine” (Isa. xliii. 1, 2).

CHAPTER V

WHAT LIES BETWEEN?

“The God of all grace, who hath called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall himself perfect [or restore], stablish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Pet. v. 10, R.V. margin).

WHAT a mighty span we have here—called by the God of all grace to His eternal glory. And the same rainbow arch appears in the opening passage of the Epistle to the Ephesians:

“Chosen . . . in him before the foundation of the world. . . . That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Eph. i. 4–ii. 7).

Called before the world was to His “eternal glory by Christ Jesus,” that in the ages to come He might show “the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us in Christ Jesus”—what more can be said of the divine purpose that compasses our little day of earthly life? Thank God, there is much more!

WHAT LIES BETWEEN

The beginning and the end are gloriously certain, but the pilgrimage of life lies between,

and in these days, especially, the difficulties to be faced are neither few nor small.

“Our flesh had no relief,” wrote one who passed this way before us, “we were afflicted on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.”

And this is no abnormal experience for the child of God. Our Lord Himself warned His first beloved followers, “in the world ye shall have tribulation”? And the Apostle Paul confirmed the souls of the disciples, “exhorting them to continue in the faith and that we must *through much tribulation* enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts xiv. 22). More than this, it is distinctly stated that in the last days—surely days upon which we have entered—there are to be special trials and testings to prepare the people of God for “the time of the end.” “Many shall be purified and made white and *tried*” (Dan. xii. 9, 10). Is not this the very process that we see going on to-day, the wide world over? How many true believers, as well as those who make no Christian profession, are being tried as never before! And in how many lives the result is a work of divine grace—a turning from self and sin to Him whose precious blood alone can make white, as His grace alone can sustain.

What lies between the beginning and the end of our Christian pilgrimage? A glorious sufficiency, thank God, of divine sustaining! “All

grace," as our passage in Peter tells us, on the way to "eternal glory." *The provision is complete.*

Returning not long ago to the Golden Gate of San Francisco, the writer found a remarkable change from the appearance it had always presented, either from the ocean or from the Bay. For the Golden Gate has recently been spanned by a wonderful bridge, under which the ships must pass and which daily carries multitudes from the great city to the rest of their homes north of the Bay and to the great Pacific Highway, running far up the coast. The bridge is so high, though easily accessible, that it is often lost to sight in the mists from the expanse of water on either side. But, seen or unseen, it is there. There is no gap in it. The provision is complete.

THE BRIDGE OF "ALL GRACE"

Just so with the Alpha and Omega of our passage in Peter. Springing from the eternal past and reaching on to the eternal future, they are united by practical provision for the daily pilgrimage that, for each one of us, lies between:

"Now the God of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall himself perfect [or restore], stablish, strengthen, settle you."

And the Ephesian passage adds the inspiring thought that, in our call and destiny, we have

each one been "foreordained according to the purpose of him *Who worketh all things after the counsel of his will.*" Everything, then, that comes to us is by the will or permission of God. We may, nay, we must see every detail of our lives in this light, assured, moreover, that "to them that love God *all things work together for good*, even to them that are called according to His purpose."

"Ah! If only I could see my trials in this light," says someone who is looking at second causes. "But the situation I suffer from ought never to have been. It is due to wrong-doing, in others if not myself. It is something in which God can have no part."

And so we get into darkness, and even let our troubles come between us and God, our only source of help. We struggle in vain to deal with them victoriously, because we limit the sphere of His control, the sufficiency of His love. How this must grieve the heart of Him whose limitless grace is waiting to carry us through to His glory! How was it that Hudson Taylor faced emergencies that succeeded one another like waves of a stormy sea, through the long years of his missionary service, and was kept in inward calm? It was enough to see his face to know that he dwelt in the peace of God that passes all understanding. His troubles often came from the mistakes and sins of others. But "there should be only One Circumstance to us in life," he often said,

and that—God. “It does not matter how great the pressure is, it only matters where the pressure lies; whether it comes between you and God, or whether it presses you near and ever nearer to His heart of love.”

REFUSING SECOND CAUSES

Is not this the secret by which men and women of faith have triumphed all down the ages? Even the Apostle Paul, in the midst of his devoted labours, was assailed by a trial that was evil in its source. So painful was it that he besought the Lord again and again that it might depart from him. It was “a messenger of Satan,” a cruel, constant irritation, planned and sent “to buffet him.” He could not have pleaded more earnestly for its removal. It seemed nothing but a hindrance to power and blessing.

“Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.” “Take it away! Take it away!” was his cry. But the object of divine love was to take away, not the thorn, but the rebellion against it, the spirit in His servant that found it unbearable. And by what process could this be accomplished? Simply by turning away his eyes from second causes.

The thing was from Satan, there was no doubt as to that. But, when Paul had brought it three times to the Lord in earnest, believing

prayer and *still the Lord left it*—was it then from Satan or from the Father's love? Oh, matchless alchemy that can and does turn every "messenger of Satan," as it affects a child of God, into heavenly blessing! What was Paul's experience?

"Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

"And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

"Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. xii. 8-10, R.V.).

Then what about the searching trial of these days? Now, if ever, the powers of darkness are let loose upon a shuddering world. None are exempt from the assaults of the adversary; none are excluded from the grace that is all-sufficient. Divine assurances are intended to make us sure, are they not? And nothing is more sure than that "with the trial" the God of the promises will "make a way of escape," until He brings us to His eternal glory.

Whatever lies between is spanned, then, by the Bridge of All Grace. Our feet are upon it. Here we prove with saints in all ages who have gone before that—

"Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor

principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

CHAPTER VI

WEEPING OR A WELL

“WHICH is the longest, widest, most populous valley in the world?” questioned the white-haired professor of his students. For a moment there was silence—more than a hundred young men waiting with interest. But the teacher desired an answer.

“Who will name for me the longest, widest, most populous valley in the world?”

“The valley of the Amazon,” ventured one.

“The valley of the Yangtze,” suggested another.

“But there is another valley, longer, wider, more populous than these.” And the keen, enquiring eyes searched the group. “Have we not just read of it here, in the 84th Psalm? Yes, ‘the valley of Baca,’ or Weeping. Does not every life, sooner or later, pass into that valley—wide as the world, long as time—that place of lamentation, suffering, tears?”

“But, young men, the important thing is not what we find in that valley, but what we leave behind us there. For I would have you notice the words ‘passing through.’ Some there are who do not tarry in the place of weeping, and they are spoken of as ‘blessed.’ They have a strength and

inward renewing not from themselves. It comes from a source inexhaustible, like the water from the smitten rock that attended the wanderings of Israel in the great wilderness.

“Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; . . . who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.”

It was a memorable hour as the beloved teacher went on to unfold the secret of inward peace, of the untroubled heart, even in the midst of sore distresses. He spoke of songs in the valley, rising above the lamentation and weeping—songs that tell of heart-gladness amid surrounding sorrow. Such songs were heard from the dungeons of the jail at Philippi, when Paul and Silas were there in cruel bonds. “Spring up, O well! sing ye unto it.” And has it not been flowing ever since through the pages of the sacred record, a source of life and healing, age after age?

And to-day, when the whole world seems a Valley of Weeping, are there not songs that tell of the passing of pilgrims who have found the well that is always there to quiet faith? For One is with us in the valley who has said, “I will never leave thee, no, never forsake thee.” And to find Him close beside us, pouring the consolation of His love into the suffering heart, is a joy the wonder of which heaven itself cannot surpass. For there the Valley of Weeping will be a memory

only, left far behind when faith is lost in sight. But now there is a fellowship amid the shadows, with Him who as the Man of Sorrows passed this way for love of us, that angels might well envy, but can never know.

“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. . . . Fear not” (Isa. xliii. 2, 5).

So the dear old hymn comes back that we used to sing in the Language School for beginners in China, fifty years ago:

I've seen the lightning flashing,
I've heard the thunder roll,
I've felt sin's wild waves dashing
And trying to conquer my soul;
But I've heard the voice of my Saviour
Telling me still to fight on,
For He promised He never would leave me,
He never would leave me alone:

No, never, no, never alone,
No, never, no, never alone,
He promised He never would leave me,
No never alone.

“Spring up, O well” of divine consolation in the soul! “Sing ye unto it” that others may catch the heartening strain and go on to prove the faithfulness and tender love of God, turning even the Valley of Weeping into a place of praise.

Some of us have been much cheered lately by the passing our way in the Valley of Weeping of the dear Chinese pastor of a group of believers scattered in some forty little churches, in a district ravaged by fire, and sword and flood. The central church in the city, seating over a thousand, was filled Sunday by Sunday with glad worshippers, for they had made many a sacrifice to rear and maintain it for the service of God, and the place was dear to them.

But nine great bombing planes came over the city.

“I could see tongues of flame leaping ten and twenty feet into the air,” wrote the missionary, returning when the raid was over, “while billows of smoke rising to a tremendous height blotted out the summer sun.”

In the chapel meanwhile, the Chinese pastor had had a wonderful experience. Japanese troops were killing and looting at will.

“Huge fires,” he wrote, “flared up on all sides of the chapel, casting a red glare around us, an awesome and never-to-be-forgotten sight. Yet the peace of God continued to fill my heart. In faith, I knelt beside the pulpit and besought God to work according to His will. Having committed all to the will of God, I had no fear, and my heart was at rest with a perfect peace. Although alone, I carried on as

usual—reading the Bible aloud, praying and singing hymns of praise for the Lord's grace.

“Gradually the force of the fires decreased. Buildings on all sides were completely destroyed by the conflagration, *and only the church building remained unscathed*. This strengthened my faith to trust the Lord more earnestly. My heart was fixed—I would die in the house of the Lord rather than leave for another place.

“When the Christians returned next day,” the missionary continued, “and found the church building standing alone, amid the mass of ruins, their joy was unbounded. There and then they met for prayer and praise. And what a praise meeting it was! The mystery of the unburned church was solved when the pastor told us that as he passed out of the courtyard, when the bombing was over, he paused and said: ‘Lord, this is Thy House: into Thy hands I commit it.’ ”

The city was almost entirely destroyed. Amid the smouldering ashes many charred bodies could be seen, whole families having been overtaken by destruction. But “among the killed and wounded there was not a single Christian.” And “most wonderful of all,” as the pastor wrote, was the further preservation of the building in which services were held without intermission, even when floods came and people could only go to the

meetings in boats or tubs. With what follows we must close the pastor's story though there is much more one fain would tell:

“Opposite the chapel stood a pawn-shop having a brick wall fifty feet high, which suddenly collapsed toward the chapel. The iron door of our neighbour's house was smashed, and the falling wall grazed the wall of the chapel with only an inch to spare! Not the slightest harm was done to us. It is clearly evident that the Most High God protected His holy temple, and as it were set bounds round about it. Manifestly the living God is with His children, and He is wholly trustworthy.”

Praise God for such songs in the Valley of Weeping, and that so many come from the section we call China. Praise God for suffering believers everywhere, whose “passing through” is marked not by laments, but by the wells they leave behind them. Are we too in that valley? What manner of “passing through” is ours? Can we be traced by our tears, our forebodings, our complainings—or is there a note of confidence, even praise, to cheer those beside us as we journey?

Yes, we are in the valley, but are we so casting our burden, whatever it may be, upon the Lord day by day that we go, not from weeping to weeping, not from fear to fear, but “from

strength to strength"? The same divine Fellow-Traveller is with us. Have our eyes been holden that we did not know Him? Do not let us disappoint Him. Do not let us fail to leave behind us, by His grace, the testimony which shall be to His glory and for the blessing of others.

"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." And joy comes, even in the darkness, to those who "forget to weep" because of the comfort of the Everlasting Arms.

"Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?"

CHAPTER VII

THE SECRET OF ENDURANCE

WHERE should we look for this secret but in the life of our blessed Lord Himself?

He lived in this very world of ours, truly a man among men, in closest touch with the realities of life we know so well. And yet He could speak of "My peace," "My joy," and was strong with a steadfastness that not all the powers of evil could shake. How we need such joy and calm to-day!

Where then shall we look in His life for the secret of that inward strength? Naturally, we turn to the Gospels first, and especially to the pages of "the disciple whom Jesus loved." What rifts are there found into the glory that was His "before the world was"; what outshinings of the Companionship that was the greatest reality of His earthly life! "He that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone." But there is another Gospel beside the four in the New Testament, and in its revelations we discover secret experiences hidden from us elsewhere. Such enlightenment comes especially from the Messianic Psalms and from the five passages which, taken together, have been well called the Gospel in Isaiah.

Turning then to the fiftieth chapter of that book, we find prophecies that fill out the records of the Evangelists. For it is clearly the suffering Messiah who speaks in the sixth verse:

“I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.”

And in the earlier verses of the chapter, the speaker is the same—the passage is one. Listen, then, to the words which enfold so much:

“The Lord God hath given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I should know how to sustain with words him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught.

“The Lord God hath opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away backward.

“I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

“For the Lord God will help me; therefore have I not been confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed” (Isa. l. 4-7).

“Power of endurance and encouragement”—where did they come from in the life of our blessed Saviour? How shall we find them ourselves, amid the pressure of these testing days? Does not the secret lie in those opening words that tell of communion with God “morning by morning,” of the listening heart, the opened ear, of comfort given to the One who was to pass it on in words that should sustain “him that is weary”? “Never man spake like this man,” people said in

surprise. But when He stood among them and cried "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," they did not know the hidden source of the rest of His own spirit. "Morning by morning," never a day intermitted, He was wakened by the Father—wakened to a consciousness of His love and nearness, wakened to hear as a child that is taught. The Gospels do not tell us this. Even the beloved disciple, John, may not have known of that daily renewal. But there it is, plainly stated, surely as an example and encouragement for us.

For if our Lord depended for His steadfastness upon the daily teaching and upholding of God, how can we expect to follow in His footsteps without it? The greater the difficulties, the more searching the suffering as He went onward in the pathway of the Cross, the more real was the inward sustaining. "The world is full of deserters from the Cross" it has been truly said. But with Him there was no faltering, no turning back. He saw the dreadful shadow looming ever more clearly before Him, but He "set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem." How was such endurance possible? And is there a like sustaining available for us? Listen again to the breathings of that inward confidence, renewed "morning by morning."

"For the Lord God will help me; therefore have I not been confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed."

“There is a place of quiet rest, near to the heart of God.” But, more than this, there is a place where God Himself speaks to the soul. Not once or occasionally does He speak, because of some emergency, but daily, faithfully, effectively, “morning by morning.” There need be, must be no day when the spirit is not wakened to hear. “He wakeneth me, morning by morning.” This taught, thus held near to the heart of God, the whole being is quietly strengthened. We do not ourselves know the strain, the demands that any day may bring. We do not know where the pathway before us leads, or in what way we are to fulfil the will of God. But “morning by morning” He leads us into the fullness of His resources for that day; shows us the next step, if nothing more, and imparts through His own presence the power of endurance to follow on.

That this was our Lord’s own experience in the pathway to the cross we gather clearly from the words that follow:

“And I was not rebellious, neither turned away backward. I gave my back to the smiters . . . I hid not my face from shame and spitting.”

He might have hidden His face. He could have withdrawn from humiliation and suffering. But, strengthened “morning by morning,” enlightened, held in the will of God, there was no turning back, no weakening in spirit. Daily wakened

by the Father, directed and renewed in strength, He could say "I have meat to eat that ye know not of. . . . My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work." And what need for this daily renewed confidence there was before the great cry could go up from the darkness of the world's darkest hour: "It is finished."

"For the Lord God will help me; therefore have I not been confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed."

And here is a point of great importance for us, brought out by the Hebrew scholar Delitsch, in his translation of the original. The words "not confounded" he renders, "*not suffered myself to be overcome,*" as nearer the true meaning. Thus the verse reads:

"For the Lord God will help me; therefore have I not suffered myself to be overcome; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed."

How easy it is in days like these to be fearful and apprehensive, to look around instead of looking up—in a word, to suffer ourselves to be overcome. We may not show it outwardly, but inwardly we give way somewhat, and the power of endurance is shaken. Then let us come back quickly to the secret of our Lord's own victory. "*Therefore,*" because of that quiet listening and receiving morning by morning, "*therefore* have I set my face

like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." "For the Lord God will help me" is the constant certainty and reassurance of the soul that listens "morning by morning" to His word, applied to the heart by His Holy Spirit.

There was a time in China when Hudson Taylor was beset as never before with difficulty upon difficulty, sorrow upon sorrow. The Mission was passing through a baptism of suffering. The first massacre of foreigners in modern times had taken place at Tientsin, and there was danger of like developments in many places. At the height of an unusually hot summer there was sickness in almost every station, and Mr. Taylor was the only physician available to most of his fellow-workers. For the sake of his children, he and their mother made the sacrifice of sending the two older boys and their only little girl home to England for education. A younger brother who was to have gone with them died of dysentery on the way to the coast. But there was no yielding to sorrow. Comfort and help were needed at every centre of the Mission, and in divinely-given strength they held on—until the heaviest blow of all left him unspeakably desolate.

For it was then, at the worst of that terrible summer, that the one, still young, who had been the light of his eyes for twelve years of perfect married life was suddenly taken from him. Wife

gone, children gone, in broken health, bearing the burdens of fellow-workers throughout the Mission, the wonder was that he was not overcome. But when it seemed that he could endure no more, the very passage before us was brought home to him with great tenderness.

“He wakeneth morning by morning.” Ah! that was it: the desolation of waking each new day to an empty home, no loved ones at his side. And the words recalled the joy it had been to him to waken his children with a kiss of love. Could it be that his Heavenly Father would really waken him in this way? The longing became prayer, a prayer that was answered in blessed experience. For from the time that faith laid hold upon the fact that, one with Christ, he might claim the same manifestations of the Father’s love, there were no more desolate wakings when sorrow rushed in upon him like a flood. On the contrary, his first consciousness day by day became the joy unspeakable that the Father’s presence brings.

“So near, so very near to God, nearer I cannot be,
For in the person of His Son, I am as near as He.

So dear, so very dear to God, dearer I cannot be;
The love wherewith He loves His Son,
such is His love to me.”

In a word, the secret of our Lord’s own power of endurance became his, so that he could write to a close friend of those days of sorrow:

“Whether I called by day or night, how quickly He always came and satisfied my heart! So much so that I often wondered whether it were possible that my loved one who had been taken could be enjoying more of His presence than I was in my lonely chamber.”

All this joy and victory, continued to the end of life, came through a fresh apprehension of what this passage means to us. For the secret of endurance here revealed may be ours too. Did not our Lord mean just this when He said: “As my Father sent me, even so send I you”? Then He is ready to waken us morning by morning with His smile; to waken our ear to hear His own teaching. For us too is the “power of endurance and of encouragement” which His Word affords—or, as the Chinese version of Rom. xv. 4 expresses it, “which are *born of the Scriptures.*”

Well does the writer remember the privilege that was ours when travelling for five months one summer with our father (Mr. Hudson Taylor) through several of the provinces of North China. In some places our only mode of progression was by springless wheelbarrows, jolting twelve to fourteen hours a day over unspeakable roads. Tired out at night, we would reach the poor little inns where the one and only room for travellers was occupied by all and sundry—sometimes including a traveller’s mule tied up in a corner—and where the barrow men lay down on

the floor to sleep, their wet clothes steaming by smoking fires.

Putting up sheets as curtains, we would make a corner somewhere for father and one for ourselves, and, tired as we were, would soon be asleep. But always, long before daylight, there would be a match struck and a candle lighted in the corner where father, his Bible open before him, was quietly waiting upon God. That little light, seen through the curtain in the darkness, has been to me a symbol ever since of the joyous calm and endurance of a life truly hidden with Christ in God. And it stood the test of the long weary days, and all the inconveniences, distresses, and burden-bearing that they brought.

When is our candle lighted day by day? When do we listen-in, and receive fresh strength from the Word of God to make us "more than conquerors"? Intermittent communion is the secret of much of our failure. There is no substitute for the Lord's own way of "morning by morning."

CHAPTER VIII

BRIDAL ARRAY

NOT for an earthly marriage—but bridal array for the quickly coming union with the King of Kings. For that event draws near and will be just as real though far more glorious than any marriage ever celebrated on earth. Does not the song with which, already, it is heralded come to us from that higher sphere?

Essential to this, as to other marriages, is the preparation of the bride. We can all enter into the experiences of a young missionary in China in this connection.¹ Picture her crossing an inland province on her way to its capital to be married. Beside of the joy of the union she was anticipating, she had the happy consciousness that she was well prepared. His last letters were kept near her to be often read and the weary hours of the journey were brightened by the hope, the assurance, that on their wedding morning she would be fair in his sight. She knew just what he liked, and her simple preparations had all been made with a view to pleasing him. There was a special thrill in thinking of one beautiful thing that seemed to hallow it all—she was to wear her own mother's wedding veil! Was it not kept with her in its

¹ A true incident, though names are not given.

delicate wrappings, to be sure of its safety by day and in the inns at night?

But in a lonely place among the mountains the party was attacked by bandits, who robbed them of practically all they had. Though not personally injured or taken captive, they were left almost destitute, to the distress especially of the bride-to-be, whose wedding things were all gone, the cherished veil even torn to pieces before her eyes.

The sense of loss may be imagined as they painfully journeyed on. The hot anger that at first filled her heart gave place to true contrition as she realised that she had been caring more about her belongings than about the souls of the men who had taken or destroyed them. It was a big struggle at first to forgive and pray for them. But love to Christ conquered. She was His first of all, and as His Spirit filled her heart, the joy came back, and there was only love and pity left for those who had caused all the trouble. Neither time nor means were left to make good her losses. It was hard to arrive on the eve of her wedding-day without the things that would have been so pleasing. But this too she left with the Lord in prayer, realising all the more the preciousness of the love that could not be taken from her.

And then, beautiful things began to happen. At the capital, the welcome was all the warmer because of the dangers passed. One and another of the missionaries stationed there searched their

own belongings for bridal attire. Gifts began to flow in, and though there was no veil a simple wedding outfit was soon complete. If the bride missed her mother's special gift, the bright face did not show it. And even that pain was swallowed up in joy and wonder as she opened a parcel that arrived just in time, from a distant part of the province, to find—could it be true—a lovely wedding veil! Knowing nothing of what had happened, a fellow-worker recently married had sent it for the occasion with loving thoughtfulness.

“Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

How much the words meant to them all, that happy day! What do they mean to us, as we approach the far more glorious day of union with our Heavenly Bridegroom. For it is to be a real wedding-day; and in heaven, already, the song is being sung: “The marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife hath made herself ready.”

Are we ready? Have we given eager and longing care to the things that will please Him most when that sacred meeting comes. And what are those things—robe and veil and corresponding attire? Have we begun, even to make definite preparation? But, someone says, how can we? What does it mean, in practical life, to prepare for the coming of the Bridegroom? In the light of this passage (Rev. xix. 6-9) there need be no doubt as to the answer.

The trouble is we are not definite enough in dealing with these matters. We make preparation for the "black-out" at great expense. We make preparation for possible enemy invasion. How much more should we be definite with regard to the certain coming of Him whom, "not having seen, we love"? But what kind of preparation can we make, beside that of giving our hearts to Him in unreserved consecration? Listen to the Holy Spirit speaking through this passage?

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth.

"Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

"And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

"And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are true words of God."

"*The righteous acts of the saints.*" This, then, is no question of the "robe of righteousness" in which we are arrayed the moment we turn from sin and self and put our whole trust in the Saviour. That righteousness is the gift of God, imputed freely to all who are "in Christ," through faith in His redeeming blood. This is something, on the contrary, that saints are to do on their own part; something in which they are to *array themselves*. It

is not prayer, or faith, or personal devotion, even, to the Lord Jesus Christ that is intended here. The Revised Version of the passage makes it clear that it is simply the right kind of action in every relationship of life. The "fine white linen" must be woven, thread by thread, by the saints themselves. We know from His own Word just the sort of conduct that is pleasing in the Lord's sight. The Sermon on the Mount and chapters in the Epistles dealing with practical matters such as relations between husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants make this perfectly plain. We are in no doubt as to how a Christian should live, whether man, woman or child. But do we live that life? Are all our thoughts and actions in the spirit of humility and love? Are all our words truthful as well as kind? Are all our debts paid, our letters answered (as far as they should be), our affairs in order, our relationships right? Oh, that the Holy Spirit may search our hearts in this matter! The eyes of Love that are upon us are also eyes of Flame.

"Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

How far is the desire of His heart satisfied in us? Does He see earnest care on our part to weave in every thought and deed the bridal

array that shall be to His glory as well as our joy? Only He can "sanctify and cleanse us through the washing of water by the Word," but we have to listen to that Word and to translate it into practical action every day of our lives, by His grace.

"The righteous acts of the saints," what does it mean for you and me as our Lord's personal appearing draws near? There are those who will meet Him with joy without fear; there are those who will "shrink away from Him in shame at His coming," as Weymouth's reading puts it (1 John ii. 28). Can any question, next to that of our soul's salvation, be more practical?

"Righteous acts" must mean just doing right, being right in all our relationships. Then shall we not go alone before God and quietly search our lives in His light to see what there is to put right? And as each thing, small or great, is shown—for He is more eager to reveal to us our true condition than we can be to know it—let us claim His power, to *put it right*. Only the fullness of the Holy Spirit in our hearts can meet the situation. Some things are so wrong, so complicated, that no wisdom or strength of ours can deal with them. But there is no situation beyond His divine wisdom, strength and love. It is our Heavenly Bridegroom who is calling us to Himself in a nearer, dearer relationship than we have ever known or imagined. He sees the flaws, the

hindrances to perfect fellowship that are hidden there in our hearts. He desires, He is able to deal with them every one. But there must be our wholehearted co-operation. We must weave His blessed will into the warp and woof of daily life.

“Put it right! Put it right!” Do we not hear the voice of His Spirit in our hearts? He is urgent, for the time is short. The Bridal Day draws near and He would have us ready. That letter to write, that bill to settle, that confession or apology to make, that gift to give, that loving word to speak—what is it, what is it, O my soul, that He would have thee do, and do without delay? Is it some ministry unfulfilled, something begun but still unfinished, some critical attitude that must be changed, some unloving word that still hurts? He will show thee, help thee to put it right, “according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

But we must do our part. We must weave the garment we shall have to wear That Day, even if it means much unravelling to make it “pure and bright.” Undiscouraged, for He is ever at our side, nay more, within us to live out His own life, let us respond to the urging of His Holy Spirit:

“PUT IT RIGHT: DO IT NOW.”

“**I** REMEMBER well when God was pleased to open my heart to this great truth that the LORD JESUS is coming again, and that He may come *at any time*. What was the effect? I had not a great many books, but it sent me to see if I could give a good account of all I had, and also of the contents of my wardrobe. The result was that some of the books disappeared before long, and some of the clothing, too. It was an immense spiritual blessing to me. When I came home from China, and can make time to go through the house from attic to basement with my dear wife, to review out things in the light of His speedy return, we always find it a helpful spiritual exercise to see what we can do without. It is profitable to remember that we are stewards who have to give account of everything that we retain, and unless we can give a good reason for the retention shall we not be ashamed when the Master comes? Since He may come any day, is it not well to be ready every day? I do not know any thought that has been made a greater blessing to me through life than this.”

J. Hudson Taylor.

Thy kingdom come, O GOD,
Thy rule, O CHRIST, begin;
Break with Thine iron rod
The tyrannies of sin.

Where is Thy reign of peace,
And purity, and love?
When shall all hatred cease,
As in the realms above?

When comes the promised time
That war shall be no more,
And lust, oppression, crime
Shall flee Thy Face before?

.

O'er heathen lands afar
Thick darkness broodeth yet:
Arise, O morning Star,
Arise, and never set.

China Inland Mission

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