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I AM A
PRAYER"

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“I AM A PRAYER”
AND OTHER POEMS
By ADA R. HABERSHON

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“ I AM A PRAYER,”

—Psalm cix. 4.

I am a prayer, O Lord, a constant prayer,
I cannot tell Thee all my wants in words ;
I have no eloquence with which to plead,
But 'tis enough—I am myself a prayer.
Like beggar whose outstretchèd hand appeals,
Or fledging in the nest with open beak,
My case to Thee is mutely eloquent ;
And seeing me Thou seest all my need,
For Thou who mad'st my frame can always read
The language of desire it ever speaks.

Thou art the Answer, Lord, Thyself alone !
For every need Thou art the rich supply,
Thou art the “ Yea ” to all God's promises,
The sure “ Amen ” to every one I claim.
“ Is it for me ? ” my heart with longing cries,
One sight of Thee proclaims a gladsome “ Yea ” ;

“I am a Prayer”

“Oh, make it mine,” the yearning stronger grows—
“Amen, it shall be so,” and it is done ;
And as each promise is to me made good,
Thou, Lord, in me art freshly glorified.

'Tis at the mercy-seat that heaven and earth
In presence of the blood communion hold,
And at the throne the prayer and Answer meet—
The Answer waits before the prayer begins,
For Thou art first at every trysting place.
As iron filings to the magnet fly,
My wants all spring to Thee and gladly rest.
*I've found the reason why Thou canst bestow,
Exceedingly abundant, far above
What I can ask or even think ! It is
Because Thou art the Answer—I the prayer.*

I am an answered prayer, but still I plead,
For as each want is met new wants arise,
And every day I crave the Answer still.
My very being is a constant prayer,
Each member adding words of mute request ;
These empty hands need filling from Thyself,

“I am a Prayer”

And ask for strength to do their work for Thee ;
The feet would fain be guided in the way,
That they, with oil anointed,* may speed on,
And run the race which Thou hast run before ;
Mine eyes need Thine illuminating beams,
That they may see Thy footprints and Thy face,
And gaze upon the wonders of Thy Word ;
Mine ears need opening to Thy still, small voice,
My lips need touching with the living coal,
My tongue enflaming with Thy wondrous love,
That it may speak with glowing words of Thee ;
My mouth fresh filling with the heavenly food,
And satisfying with the latter rain ;†
My brow needs daily sealing with Thy peace ;
My heart with every beat proclaims its need,
And every breath I take repeats the tale.

So I would fain for evermore abide
Within the secret place of the Most High,
Like empty vessel in the flowing stream,
That thus the prayer may in the Answer dwell.

*Deut. xxxiii. 24. †Job. xxix. 23.

ECHOES IN THE VALLEY,

Psalm lxxxiv. 6.

IN a certain mountain Pass amongst the higher Alps there is a very remarkable echo. When we visited it some years ago our party divided, some remaining behind, whilst one of our number, who had learnt the peasants' "rond-des-vaches," went on in front till he reached a certain point in the valley. Then he began to "jodel," and I shall never forget the effect. The notes reverberated, till all the mountains seemed to take part, not once, nor twice, but over and over again, as though a full choir of trained singers were repeating the notes. As we stood listening, strangers joined us, and they, too, marvelled at the echo. *The singer was out of sight, but his notes were heard by those far behind.*

We are trav'lers through the valley,
And the road is sometimes steep,
And the mountains all around us
Often make the shadows deep—

Echoes in the Valley

'Tis the narrow vale of Baca ;
'Tis a valley full of shade ;
But we're only passing through it,
So we need not be afraid.

Far away the land of Beulah
 Wrapped in sunlight may be seen,
And this little bit of valley—
 It is all that lies between.
Right beyond us is the sunshine,
 Right beyond us is our Home ;
When we reach it, 'twill not matter
 By which valley we have come.

Though the rocks that tower above us
 Often intercept the view,
Though the path is sometimes stony,
 As our way we thus pursue—
Yet the mountains with their shadows,
 Only keep the trav'lers cool,
While the rain that falls in showers,
 Fills up every empty pool.

“ I am a Prayer ”

There was One who trod the valley,
And He suffered much from thirst ;
He was weary, faint, and footsore,
As He passed this way the first ;
But His footsteps made the pathway
Which we safely now may tread,
And it makes the journey easy
When we know He's just ahead.

But before He left the valley
And emerged into the light
He had turned to those around Him,
Ere He passed from out of sight ;
And He spoke a parting message
For the trav'lers in the vale,
And not one good thing He promised
Has been ever known to fail.

“ Though I leave you in the valley,
I will surely come again :
Then the shadows will be over,
And the sunshine you will gain.

Echoes in the Valley

Do not let your heart be troubled,
For the hour is very near ;
To Myself I will receive you.”
Thus His accents sounded clear.

Then the mountains caught the echoes,
As they passed from hill to hill,
And the notes continued ringing—
We may hear them sounding still ;
We can see His form no longer,
But we know that He is there,
For we recognise His accents
As they vibrate through the air.

We should never hear the echoes
If we walked upon the plain,
But within the “vale of weeping,”
We can catch the glad refrain ;
For the rocks that loomed above us,
And upon our pathway frowned,
Like a wondrous mountain choir
Make the tuneful chords resound.

“I am a Prayer”

So we listen to the echo
Till we quite forget our pain :
“ I am coming to receive you ;
I will surely come again.”
Thus we tread the vale expectant,
Any moment He may come ;
Then the journey will be over—
We shall be with Him at Home.

CAPTIVE THOUGHTS.

‘Casting down imaginations (reasonings, marg.), and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.’ 2 Cor. x. 5.

Take Thou my thoughts, my oft rebellious thoughts—
These vain imaginings which would conspire
To raise themselves against their sovereign Lord—
And like a victor in the olden days,
Who carried captive those whom he had won,
And bore them off triumphant from their homes,
Transplanting them to some far distant clime,
So take my thoughts, and by Thy conquering power
Make them Thy captives, Lord.

I fain would bind

These constant rebels to Thy chariot wheels,
That Thou mayst carry them with Thee to dwell :
I cannot make them captive—Thou Thyself
Must conquer them and make them yield to Thee
They cling persistent to their house of clay,

“ I am a Prayer ”

And grovel in the realm that gave them birth :
But Thou canst subjugate and make them Thine.
Oh lead them captive to the heavenly shore !
Transplant these errant thoughts from earth to heaven,
And keep them henceforth with Thyself above,
No more rebellious, but Thy willing slaves
Obedient, and circling round the One
Who overcame them, and has made them His.

Cleanse Thou each one and clothe them, so that they
May for Thy kingly presence be made fit :
Not dressed in prison garb of heaviness
But in a change of raiment, each arrayed
In robes of praise the livery of heaven.*
Give them a daily portion from Thyself,
A rich allowance from the King's own board,†
That so my thoughts may feed on heavenly bread
And may therewith be nourished, satisfied.
Make them the happy servants of their Lord,
All occupied with Him and Him alone,
Instead of being sad and oft cast down.

* Isaiah lxi. 3. † 2 Kings xxv. 29, 30. Daniel i. 5.

Captive Thoughts

The captives made by monarchs of this earth,
When forced to leave their homes, in sorrow pine :
They long for that dear land from whence they came,
And hang their harps upon the willow trees,
For how can they attempt to sing their songs
In that strange land to which they have been borne ?
But 'tis not thus with captives of Thine arm !
Led in Thy triumph-train, Thy joy to share,
They do not sigh for what was once their home,
Where there was neither melody nor song,
But thoughts discordant, out of harmony.
By taking captive Thou hast set them free
From sore oppression and from cruel chains—
How could they sing in bondage such as that ?
And now, since Thou hast won them by Thy love,
Thou puttest a new song in every mouth,
To celebrate the triumphs of Thy grace,
By which they have been subjugated thus.

Oh glad captivity for thoughts and hearts
To own themselves the trophies of Thy love !

“DISBUDDING.”

“Supposing Him to be the Gardener.”

“Disbudding consists in removing the buds before they have time to grow into young branches. It is a species of pruning which has for its object not only training but also economy with regard to the resources of a tree, in order that there may be a greater supply of nourishment for the development of those buds which are allowed to remain.

“If the roots are capable of absorbing a given quantity of nutritive matter for the supply of all the buds upon a stem, and if a number of those buds be removed, it must be evident that those which remain will be able to draw a greater supply of sap and grow more vigorously than they otherwise would have done. This fact has furnished the idea of *disbudding*. It has been proved that a judicious thinning of the buds after they have been unfolded in spring is of great utility.”

—ENGLISH CYCLOPÆDIA.

The Gardener watched His plant from day to day,
And tended it with patient, skilful care,

“Disbudding”

For 'twas His wish that it should bear at length
The choicest blossoms that were possible.
It flourished well throughout the early spring,
And put forth healthy leaves, then tiny buds ;
But as the days passed on the plant was grieved
As one by one those buds were broken off—
And this by Him who had before seemed kind.
With disappointment and with pained surprise,
She questioned thus the Gardener's skill and love :
“ How can I flower if all my shoots be gone ?
How can my beauteous blossoms ever grow ?
The Hand that tended me so carefully,
Now tears my buds of promise from my stem !
But yesterday they nestled in their leaves
On every side, and spoke a mass of bloom ;
But now—they all are gone but two or three
Which He has left, and I am bleeding sore.”

The Gardener heard His cherished plant's
complaint,
And smiled with tender pity at her woe.
She did not understand His purpose yet,

“I am a Prayer”

But well He knew its wisdom would be seen.
He wished that all the strength which she possessed
Should be reserved for two or three choice blooms,
Unrivalled in their loveliness and form,
Each petal faultless, and with perfect tints,
To beautify His House and please His eye.
He also knew a day was coming soon
When many plants would be on view, and then
This one, on which such labour had been spent,
Would gain a prize which should be really His.

But long ere this His plant was satisfied,
For as her flowers unfolded one by one,
She learnt the secret, and was full of joy
To think that after all, her pain and loss
Might win a well-deservèd prize for Him.

Oh, foolish heart ! Hast thou been grieving
sore
Because thy buds of promise have been lost ?
Thou need'st not fear to trust the Gardener's Hand ;
He will not sacrifice a single bud

“Disbudding”

That would improve the beauty of His plant.
The care He gives to those within His House
Is but a proof that He expects to see
Some special blossom to delight His eye,
Or luscious fruit that will that care repay.

Within the fields the wayside flowers may
bloom
Unhindered in their wild and rambling growth.
The Gardener spends no time and labour there ;
But in His House there must be pruning done.
Thou hast not strength to perfect many buds,
And if they all were left then none would be
A pleasure to His heart, or bring Him praise :
But He knows which to spare and which to take.
Thy plans may fail, thy purposes may be
All spoilt and broken, His will all succeed ;
And thou wilt praise Him in the coming Day
For all the sharp disbudding suffered here,
Which will be found to praise and honour then,
As He receives a prize for thy rich blooms.

“AS HE JOURNEYED.”

It was the longest journey
That trav'ler ever went,
When earthward from the glory,
The Saviour's steps were bent,
Before the world's foundation
The highest place He took,
Because that world had fallen,
The glory He forsook.

Midst all heaven's radiant beings.
Not one had stood so high ;
Not one on earth so lowly,
As when He stooped to die.
He left the golden summit,
To tread the steep descent,
He fathomed deepest darkness,
When to the grave He went.

“As He Journeyed.”

He passed the shining angels,
He passed earth's princes by,
Was numbered with transgressors,
And chose with them to die.
The throne and all its glory,
He counted not the loss ;
For joy that did await Him,
He thus endured the cross.

He left the heavenly riches,
Which all to Him belonged,
Was poorest mid the strangers,
Who to the city thronged.
He left the many mansions—
A King without a home,
He had not e'en a pillow,
Was laid in borrowed tomb.

The downward journey ended,
The grave is reached at last ;
The road can lead no lower,
When once those gates are passed.

“I am a Prayer.”

His mission is accomplished,
For which He came to die,
And from the depths of Hades,
He now returns on high.

Because He stooped so lowly,
And death obedient bore,
His God doth high exalt Him,
The first for evermore.
Alone He left the brightness,
The dark'ning path to tread,
But in His glad ascension,
The members join their Head.

From highest point of heaven,
To lowest depth of earth,
That costly journey tells us,
What His redeemed were worth.
O wondrous, wondrous journey,
He took for you and me !
That where He is in glory,
There might His loved ones be.

“ As He Journeyed ”

Lord Jesus, mightiest Trav'ler,
We marvel at Thy grace,
That Thou didst leave heaven's highest,
To take earth's lowest place ;
That Thou didst come where we were,
And bear our deepest need,
That we might sit where Thou art,
Yea, this was love indeed !

THE CAVE OF ADULLAM.

1 Sam. xxii. 1, 2; Psalm xxxiv. (heading); 1 Chron. xi. 16-19.

To the cave of Adullam the fugitive fled,
And the news through the country was rapidly spread,
That their champion, who once had the Philistine slain,
Had returned to the land of his fathers again.

Near the fields round his home, where he once fed the
flocks,

He had often explored all the caves in the rocks,
And he knew that their labyrinths refuge concealed,
As he passed down the windings the entrance revealed.

'Tis in Bethlehem's home that the tidings first sound,
And his brethren and kindred soon rally around,
And they carry the news through the length of the
land,

So that sad ones in haste at his side take their stand.
There are some who find refuge with him in the caves
When their creditors threaten to sell them as slaves ;

The Cave of Adullam

So they come with their debts, having "nothing to pay,"
And they dwell with their Captain in peace from
that day.

'Tis distress that drives these to the fugitive's side,
Where in safeguard they may with their David abide,
Discontented they are with the kingdom of Saul,
Until David receives them and welcomes them all.
And the numbers that thus to his help do repair,
Become larger and larger till hundreds are there,
And the men who came trembling and weak to the
hold,

In the presence of David wax valiant and bold.
For the first thing he does in those perilous days,
Is to gather them round him, and teach them to praise ;
And the walls and the arches all take up the strain,
Till the cave of Adullam re-echoes again,
As he calls on his followers to join him in songs,
And ascribes to Jehovah the praise that belongs.

"Jehovah the Lord will I constantly bless,
His praise with my mouth will I always confess,

“I am a Prayer”

**My soul shall now make her proud boast in the Lord,
And tell how He always fulfileth His Word.
The humble shall hear the glad strain and be glad,
The broken in heart shall no longer be sad.
Oh magnify with me the Lord and His Name,
And help me to publish abroad all His fame,
I feared and was sad, when the Lord I did seek,
My trouble was strong, and my faith was but weak,
The Lord from His temple did bow down His ear,
And He hath delivered from every fear.**

**(As he spake David pointed to one at his feet,
Or he thought of himself in Adullam's retreat).**

**'Twas thus with this poor man, the Lord heard his cry,
His trouble soon ceased when Jehovah was nigh.
The lions that roam in the valley below,
In search of their prey often hunger may know,
The feeblest believer who looks to our King,
Shall not be allowed to want any good thing ;
For He will deliver, from danger will save,
His angel encamps at the mouth of the cave,
His outposts are stationed to circle us round,**

The Cave of Adullam

And guard from our foes should they try to surround,
The eyes of the Lord are upon all His saints,
His ears are bent earthward to hear their complaints,
The righteous but cry—e'en a whisper is heard,
Deliv'rance is sure, He hath given His Word.
To heart-broken mourners Jehovah is nigh
He listens at once to the penitent sigh.
Though sorrows are many and often befall,
The Lord will deliver us out of them all.
The gloom of these caves doth no longer appear,
The Lord is my light, I have nothing to fear.*
So wait on the Lord and thy heart shall be strong,
Thy courage shall rise as He leads thee along,
Yea, wait on the Lord, and again I say wait,
The Lord in His dealings is never too late."

It was thus he instructed those early recruits,
And he well was repaid by the wonderful fruits,
For by trusting Jehovah they exploits performed,
And they later were captains of bands that he formed,

* Psalm xxvii. is thought to have belonged also to this period of David's experience.

“I am a Prayer”

They were skilful in handling the sword and the bow,
They were strong as a lion, and swift as a roe.

There were three who in harvest had come to the cave,
And their love was so strong and their heart was so
brave

That when David had whispered how greatly he
longed

For a drink from the well which to Bethl'hem belonged,
They did break through the ranks of the Philistines'
host,

And they fought their way onward not counting the
cost,

Till they came to the well for which David had
yearned—

Then they drew of the water and swiftly returned,
And the offering of love to their Captain they gave.
(He had watched what had passed from the mouth of
the cave,

And had seen how their lives were in jeopardy sore)—
All his need was forgot, he was thirsty no more,

The Cave of Adullam

For the love of their heart more refreshment had
brought
Then a drink of the water so eagerly sought,
And the gift they thus purchased so sacred he found,
That in worship to God it was poured on the ground,
And the deed they had done he so highly esteemed,
That the three mid his mighty ones, foremost were
deemed.

It is thus with the greater than David—his Son—
In the time of rejection what hearts He hath won !
For He gathers around Him the weary and sad,
And He beareth their sorrows, and maketh them glad.
In their debt or dismay, discontent or distress,
He will welcome each one who his need doth confess ;
And like David of old He their Captain becomes
And they gladly submit as He Lordship assumes.
In the place of retreat in His safeguard they dwell,
And He teaches them trust and their praises do swell ;
Then He sendeth them forth in His battles to fight,
And He maketh them strong in the power of His might,

“ I am a Prayer ”

**But not yet have the deeds of His warriors been
weighed,
For the day of His crowning has long been delayed,
God's Anointed He is, but not yet is enthroned,
Though the Day will soon come when as King He'll
be owned ;
And He then will reward all the deeds they have done,
All the battles they fought and the vict'ries they won.
At that Day 'twill be found and by all be confessed,
That the mightiest are they who have loved Him the
best.**

“IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS.”

1 Thess. v. 18.

“ In everything give thanks : ”

Forget not Him to praise,
When all thy path is strewn with joys,
And bright the sunny days.
In each and every thing,
In great things and in small,
The daily mercies which He gives,
Oh render thanks in all.

“ In everything give thanks : ”

Each single blessing own,
And wait not till the list is large,
And many days have flown ;
But take them from Himself,
As coming from His hand,
For each event is working out
The pattern He hath planned.

“I am a Prayer”

**“ In everything give thanks,”
Because it is His will,
And this should be our great delight,
His purpose to fulfil.
The way He leads is right,
He maketh no mistake,
And though the road be sometimes rough,
He knows the way we take.**

**“ In everything give thanks,”
In sickness and in health ;
Our weakness only proves His strength,
Our poverty His wealth.
“ Give thanks,” not acquiesce,
Or merely bear His will,
But praise Him for the grace in store,
That will suffice thee still.**

**“ In everything give thanks,”
E'en praise Him in thy pain,
And let thy heart rejoice in Him,
Rejoice, I say, again.**

“In Everything Give Thanks”

“Give thanks,” and give them now,
Still with the sorrow here,
Faith praises even in the dark,
Sight waits to see it clear.

“In everything give thanks :”
Each trial is a gift,
And if we praise when skies are dark,
The clouds are sure to lift.
Not afterwards, but now,
E'en thank Him midst thy fears,
For if thou dost begin to praise,
His love will gild thy tears.

And thank Him in thy loss,
As well as in thy gain ;
The loved one thou hast laid to rest
Thou soon shalt meet again :
The Man of sorrows wept,
While standing at the grave ;
But lifting up His eyes to heaven,
His thanks while weeping gave

“I am a Prayer”

“ In everything give thanks : ”

**If faith can stand the test,
It will bring glory to His Name,
 And thus the heart will rest.**

**“ Give thanks, ” give always thanks,
 Look up, not on the ground,
’Tis they who gaze on midnight skies
 Who see that stars abound.**

“ In everything give thanks, ”

**For thus it is we learn
To know Him better day by day,
 And all His love discern.**

**“ Give thanks, ” e’en here on earth,
 Faith’s privilege below,
In heaven we cannot praise Him thus,
 When all His ways we know.**

“ In everything give thanks, ”

**For every step we tread
Will open vistas on the road
 Of joys that lie ahead,**

“In Everything Give Thanks”

The “blessed hope” is ours,
For soon our Lord will come,
And we shall not regret the way,
When we are safe at Home.

UZZIAH AND ISAIAH.

2 Kings xv. 1-7 ; 2 Chron. xxvi. ; Isaiah vi.

It was the year that King Uzziah died,
A year of gloom within Jerusalem,
For he, the mighty king, was gone at last—
A leper smitten by the hand of God ;
And as the funeral pageant passed along,
And bore him to his kingly sepulchre,
The glory of his reign and all his wealth,
Were nigh forgot ; one thought alone it was
Which filled all hearts that saw him laid to rest,
“ He was a leper.”

Fifty years had passed
Since he had first ascended David's throne,
And long the record of his righteous deeds :
For he had set himself to seek the Lord,
And while he sought Him he had prospered much,
And he was marvellously helped of God,
Till he was strong.

Uzziah and Isaiah

But then alas his heart
Was lifted up within him and he fell.
His sin was this—within the Holy Place
He dared presumptuously to push his way,
That he might offer incense to his God.
He knew that this belonged to Aaron's sons,
For they, and they alone, were called to stand,
Before the Lord within the sanctuary.
Not even Levi's seed might incense burn,
They must be consecrated priests alone,
Who offered this high service to the Lord,
And 'twas for this that Korah had been slain.

So when the king, resisting all the priests,
Beside the altar, near the vail, did stand
And hold the golden censer, swift from heaven
The judgment fell ; and there before them all
The leprosy within his forehead rose.
No more the crown could rest upon that brow,
No more could he within the temple stand.
The priestly Azariah drove him forth,

“I am a Prayer”

And swift the kingly Azariah fled
To hide his shame within his lonely house.
It stood apart, divided from the rest,
Fit emblem of the life he henceforth led.
He wished to seize fresh honours for himself,
But all the people knew his awful shame ;
He dared to venture near the throne of God,
And he the earthly throne must straightway leave ;
He thought to hold the golden censer there ;
But now the sceptre might no longer wield.

The leprosy that fell on him that day,
Soon spread and did its hideous work of woe,
Till death at last released him from his pain.

* * * *

The self-same year that King Uzziah died,
A wondrous vision to the prophet came.
The earthly king in gloom had passed away,
But now Isaiah gazed beyond it all,
And “also” saw the Lord upon the throne.

Uzziah and Isaiah

(Tis well if we, with eye of faith, can pierce
The clouds that hang so dark around us here,
And "also" see the Lord who sits above.)
The prophet in his vision awed did stand
Within the Holy Place, and wondering viewed
The glorious throne, and Him who sat thereon,
Whose train alone filled all the temple court.—
There is no room for any but Himself,
Within the temple where He sits enthroned.
The bright shekinah glory like a cloud,
Pervaded all the place, while overhead
The cherubim and seraphim did wait.
In presence of the Lord uplifted high,
They veiled their faces and their feet with awe,
And reverently worshipped Him, and cried,
"Thrice holy, holy, holy Lord of hosts ;"
And when that voice the solemn silence broke,
The very temple stones would fain respond,
In adoration of the King of kings.
They trembled in their place, and e'en the posts,
The brazen pillars, which without did stand

“I am a Prayer”

To guard the threshold of the Holy Place,—
The one named Jachin, Boaz by its side,—
E'en they, the mighty posts were straightway moved.

The prophet feared when he the vision saw—
Far different this from any earthly scene—
The heavenly worshippers who knew God best,
Though spotless, pure, with reverence approached,
While sinful man had blindly dared to come,
With proud presumption to His very throne.

Recalling how Uzziah's sin was met,
And how swift judgment fell upon him there,
Isaiah felt that he the stroke deserved ;
That he before his God a leper stood ;
And like a leper with a covered lip,
Proclaimed himself “Unclean, unclean, unclean,”*
For he had seen the King, the Lord of hosts,
Had entered the most Holy Place itself,
And stood, not merely by the altar's side,
But right before the throne, within the veil.

* Lev. xiii. 45.

Uzziah and Isaiah

The radiant glory had revealed his sin,
But as he cried, and owned himself undone,
A seraph flew, and quickly brought the cure.
A coal of fire upon the altar burned,
On which the precious incense had been laid,
With this he touched the prophet's leprous mouth,
And instantly the loathsome stain of sin
Was put away. He heard the seraph's voice,
"Lo this hath touched thy lip, thy guilt is gone,
Thy sin is purged." And then there also came
A wondrous question asked by God Himself,
"Oh, who will go for Us, whom shall I send?"
Isaiah heard the words, and made response,
"Here Lord am I, send me, send even me."
His prayer was answered and the charge was given,
To "go and tell" the message he received.

The very place where once *Uzziah* stood,
Where judgment fell upon him from on high,
"Beside the incense altar," was the spot
On which *Isaiah* cleansing did receive.

“I am a Prayer”

The one in pride, the other humble stood
Before his God ; and so the two went forth,
The *king* to living death, and lonely pain,
The *prophet* to the errands of his Lord.
Uzziah's eye was filled with self alone.
He only saw the might which he had gained ;
Isaiah saw the glory of his God,
Jehovah Jesus and he “spake of Him.” *
Like Paul, “the glory of that light” † from heaven,
Revealed his sin, then showed his guilt forgiven,
And next equipped him, as a vessel choice,
To bear His message to a sinful world.

And this is still the way that Christ our Lord,
Doth fit His messengers and send them forth.
He gives them first of all to see His face,
He shows them how their sin is put away,
And then He sends them forth with purgèd lip,
To run His errands and to speak of Him.

* John xii. 41 ; † Acts xxii. 11.

THE SHEPHERD AND THE SHEEP.

Psalm xxiii. Luke xv. Matt. xviii.

Through a lonely desert valley
Safe the Shepherd led His sheep,
But the paths were rough and thorny,
As they crossed the mountain steep.
They had left the sunny meadows,
By the gently flowing rill,
And they walked in rocky places,
But the Shepherd led them still.

Well He knew that through the valley,
Just upon the further side,
Richer pastures lay before them,
Where in peace they could abide.
So He made them leave the meadows,
Where they long had roamed at will,
And He took them through the shadows,
But their Shepherd led them still.

“I am a Prayer”

After fields of verdant pasture,
After pools of quietness,
Came the desert drear and lonely,
But the paths were righteousness.
Though the mountains veiled the sunshine,
And the rocks were tow'ring high,
Yet no danger could approach them,
For the Shepherd still was nigh.

When the noonday sun was shining
On the pathways mid the rocks,
Then the Shepherd patient rested,
For the footsteps of the flocks.
There was pasture in the desert,
Where the weary sheep could feed,
As He led them gently onward,
For the Shepherd knew their need.

Ninety-nine lay thus around Him,
Safely resting 'neath His care,
One poor silly sheep had wandered
Far upon the mountains bare.

The Shepherd and the Sheep

When it saw the gloomy valley,
And the wilderness before,
It had panted for the pastures,
And the quiet streams once more.

So, instead of pressing onward,
In the footsteps where He led,
It had turned with longing backward,
And its foolish heart had said,
"Here the desert road is shaded
By the frowning rocks so high,
And the vale is hid from sunshine,
While the grass is scant and dry.

"Surely He forgets the plenty
We have left behind us there,
Or He ne'er would lead our footsteps
To these desert pastures spare.
In the valley of the shadow
There must surely danger be,
Death is lurking in the darkness,
There are foes we cannot see.

“I am a Prayer”

“If I crossed that spur of mountain,
I should find those fields once more ;
There the land was ‘ wide and quiet.’

Where He led His flock of yore.”
So it started up the mountain,
Thinking it the quicker way,
Hoping soon to reach the meadows
Where they fed that other day.

Every step but led it farther
From the loving Shepherd’s arm.
Every step brought greater danger,
Every moment fresh alarm.
But the Shepherd missed the wand’rer,
Followed quickly on its track,
Hurried up the rugged mountain,
For He longed to bring it back.

Patiently He climbed, and sought it
Up and down the mountain side,
Searched in every nook and corner
Where a trembling sheep could hide ;

The Shepherd and the Sheep

Where the crags lay piled in masses,
Where the raging torrents passed
Till the twilight shadows darkened,
And the night was gathering fast.

Then at length He found His wand'rer,
Gently raised His long-lost sheep,
Placed it firmly on His shoulders,
While He trod the mountain steep.
Down the valley, through the desert,
Still He safely held it fast,
Till at daybreak Home was sighted—
All the sheep were there at last.

Oh, the joy of safely lying
Sheltered by the Shepherd's care
Oh, the joy He felt in knowing
That the wand'rer nestled there !
Thus the Shepherd found His lost one,
Thus the sheep had found its Guide,
And their hearts were filled with gladness
Never more could ill betide.

“ I am a Prayer ”

Jesus, Saviour, we Thy children
Often wander thus astray,
When we dream of past experience,
And compare it with to-day ;
Then we long for former blessings,
Think that Thou hast made mistake,
Dread the vale of death's dark shadow,
And the way Thou wouldest take.

But 'tis safer far to trust Thee,
For Thou only leadest Home ;
Keep us then for ever near Thee,
Lest we on the mountains roam.
Raise us on Thy loving shoulder
Ere we start to go astray,
Take us safely through the shadows
Till we reach the perfect day.

APART WITH HIM.

“After six days Jesus taketh with Him Peter, and James and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain, apart by themselves, and He was transfigured before them.”

Mark ix. 2.

He called His three disciples by their names,
And bade them leave the work He gave before,
Amidst the crowd that thronged the plains below,
With all its sorrows and its needs and pains.
He took them up the lonely mountain side,
And step by step they followed where He trod.
Perchance they wondered why He called them thus,
For He had shown them how the fields around
Were white to harvest, and the labourers few,
And yet He bade them leave the work, and come
“Apart” with Him, alone, and “by themselves.”

“I am a Prayer”

At last they reached the mountain top, and then
They learned the secret, why He led them thus.
He prayed, and as He prayed their eyes beheld
The majesty that He had hid from view.
He was transformed before them, and they saw
The glory shining from their radiant Lord.
The King before them in His beauty stood,
And from the cloud that wrapped them in its light,
They heard the voice of Him Who owned His Son,
And bade them listen henceforth but to Him.

The vision passed. 'Twas but a foretaste giv'n
Of glories that will never fade away,
And when the morrow came they joined once more
The busy workers midst the crowds below.

But had that day been wasted which they spent
Upon the mountain with their glorious Lord,
Fresh beauties learning in His face to see,
And listening to the voice that spake of Him ?
Ah, no ! The mem'ry of those hours remained,

Apart With Him

And never more could they forget the sight,
Or lose the echo of those wondrous words.

“ This voice which came from Heaven we heard
that day,

When we were with Him in the holy mount.”
So Peter wrote when he was nearing Home,
The journey over and the battle won,
And he about to follow in the steps
Of Him who died upon the shameful tree :
And when we meet him on “ the other side,”
We'll surely find that he remembers still
The glory he was called that day to see.

'Tis thus our Master calls His servants now,
To leave the work, and come “ apart ” with Him.
The busy crowds within the city throng,
The work is great, and toilers still are few,
And those whom we are leaving bid us stay ;
They ask the Master if we may not still
Continue with them, bringing souls to Him,

“I am a Prayer”

And telling others of His wondrous love.
But yet He leads us on, away from all
Beside Himself, with nothing else to do
Than walk with Him upon the mountain side.

Sometimes the path is rough and hurts our feet,
And we are weary, and the road seems long,
Yet more than ever then we feel Him near,
To help, to hold, to whisper words of love.
At other times He leads us gently on
By easier ways, and as we walk, we hold
Sweet converse, which beguiles the fleeting hours.
He tells us of His love, His wondrous ways,
And shows how He has ever taught His own.
He listens as we tell Him of the work
To which He called us, and of all its needs,
And we remind Him of the labourers,
Of others,—troubled ones, who know Him not,
Or knowing Him, yet need Him day by day.

Sometimes He turns and points to distant scenes,
And shows us how, in years gone by, He led

Apart With Him

His chosen servants as they fought for Him,
Upheld the truth, and sealed it with their blood ;
And then He tells us something of His plans
For future days, when He Himself shall reign.
But best of all He doth reveal Himself,
And teaches us to know Him more and more.

And so the days glide onward one by one.
Not wasted are the hours thus spent with Him !

But when we reach the mountain top at last,
And rest upon the barren rocks awhile,
He intercedes and guides us to the Throne,
And pleads for us, and all the work He loves—
The work in which He let us have a share,
Which now He plans for us to lay aside.
And as He prays, the lonely mountain top
Is all forgot ; the work, the friends below,
The rough ascent, they all are lost to sight.
Like His disciples, we have eyes for nought
Save "Jesus only," as He shines on us.

“I am a Prayer”

**It is at times like these, when quite alone,
That He becomes transfigured in our sight.
We see His glory, as we could not see,
If we were toiling in the crowds below.
We hear His voice, as we could never hear,
If we were mixing in the noisy throng ;
And e'en the cloud that shrouds the mountain side,
Which seems to those below to hang so dark,
Is bright with glory from His beaming face.**

**'Twas as He prayed that His disciples saw
The glory shine upon, and from their Lord,
That so the fashion of His face was changed,
And e'en His garments glistened in the light.
“Oh, holy Father, 'tis My great desire,
That those whom Thou hast given Me may see
Some glimpses of the glory that is Mine.”
And as He prayed, the answer to His prayer
Came from the open heav'ns and shining cloud.**

**E'en Moses took the vail from off his face,
When in the presence of his God he stood,**

Apart With Him

And when we see our Master where He is,
And hear Him interceding at the Throne,
His prayer for us is answered, even now
We see His glory, and we speak of Him.

A peace which passeth understanding guards
Our heart when we can "leave the choice to Him,"
Our Father God, who, gazing on His Son,
Sees us in Him.

Thus David spake of old :

"Oh Lord of Hosts, I pray thee hear my prayer,
Give ear, O God of Jacob, to my cry."
And then he waits,—he knows not what to ask,
His needs are many and he wants the best—
At last he sums it up in one request,
"Behold, O God, our Shield, and look on Him.
Gaze on the face of Thy beloved Son,
And seeing Him let blessing fall on me,
According to the love Thou bearest Him."

It may be when to-morrow's sun shall rise,
That He will lead me down the mountain side,

“I am a Prayer”

**And send me forth amid the crowds once more,
To labour for Him yet a little while.
Till then I wait, content that He should plan,
And lead me where He will, for He remains,
And whether on the mountain or the plain,
The road He takes is sure to be the best.**

LIKE A WEANED CHILD.

—Psalm cxxxi. 2.

My soul is like a weaned child,
Which quietly can rest ;
And learns with confidence to trust,
The One who loves it best.

I thought it was a cruel will,
That did my wants deny,
That would not listen to my sobs,
Or hush my fretful cry.

'Twas love refused the boon I craved,
And would have dried my tears,
That held me in its close embrace,
And tried to soothe my fears.

“I am a Prayer ”

**How many useless tears I shed,
In struggling for my will !
But now I question not the love
Which doth enfold me still.**

**I've learnt to recognise the Face,
That bendeth from above,
To know the meaning of the smile,
So full of faithful love.**

**I've quieted and stilled my soul,
And ceased my wilful cries,
Am satisfied with what He plans,
Who gives or Who denies.**

CRUMBS.

—Matt. xv. 21-30.

He left the land of Judah for a time,
Samaria and oft blest Galilee,
That He might tread on Gentile soil at last,
And visit once the proud Phœnician coasts.

Mid Israel's tribes, in time of famine sore,
There had been many widows without bread,
But unto none was the great prophet sent,
Except to her within this selfsame land ; *
And now Elijah's Lord must travel far,
That He may satisfy one hungry soul,
And grant a boon to this poor Canaanite.

The trysting place of faith has now been reached,
The weary travellers may rest awhile,
But in the wayside village where they lodge,
The great Physician cannot long be hid,

* Luke iv. 25, 26.

“I am a Prayer”

For faith has heard a rumour He is near—
It is for this He tarries.

Well He knows
That one has started on her quest of Him,
And He has come to meet her on her way.

What joy is hers when first she hears the news,
That Israel's Prophet lodges in their coasts !
And soon she finds Him, where He waits for her,
And lays her sorrow at His blessed feet.

Strong faith is always tested, so at first,
He seems reluctant to bestow the boon.
An alien she from Israel's commonwealth,
A stranger from the favouring covenant,
And so must learn that she, a Gentile born,
Can have no claim on Him as David's Son,
But only as a sinner on His grace.

“It is not meet to take the children's bread,
And cast it to the dogs.”

Crumbs

She quick responds,
“ Yea, Lord, 'tis true, but yet the little dogs,
That gather 'neath the table, eat the crumbs,
That careless children heedless cast away.”

She humbly takes the place that He assigns,
But will take no refusal, and the Lord
‘Capitulates before her conquering faith.’ *

He gives to her the key of all His wealth,
And bids her take what benefit she will,
He turns her loose in His sufficiency,
His own omnipotence is at her beck ;
Not only so, but e'en the devils too,
Must stoop before her, and fulfil her will. †

And this the “ crumb ” that she that day received,
But it was not the first that He had given ;
The simple faith, that sought the seeking Lord,
That knew His grace, that owned Him David's Son,
That would not let Him go except He blessed,
Was in itself a priceless gift from God.

* C. H. Spurgeon. † Christopher Ness. (A.D 1678).

“I am a Prayer”

And so she proved a “crumb” from His blest
hand
Sufficed to make a feast for needy souls.

* * * * *

The object of His journey to that land
Is now accomplished ; Gentile soil he leaves,
And straight returns to favoured Galilee,
His work the same as it had ever been,
For still we find Him, midst the hungry ones
Who throng around Him, and the few small loaves,
He breaks amongst them, till they all are fed,

And they too find a “crumb” from His blest
hand,
Enough to make a feast for hungry souls.

TRAINING DAYS.

Exodus ii. 21 ; Phil. iv., 11.

“And Moses was content.”

A mighty prince,
The son of Pharaoh's daughter, he was called,
The centre of the gay Egyptian court,
And skilled in all the wealth of Eastern lore.
His prince's training had included all
The arts of war and peace. Perchance he led
The conquering armies of that mighty land,
When forth to battle they had proudly marched.
But now all this was past, and he had changed
The palace and the court for Midian's home.
The prince had now put on the shepherd's garb,
And patient dwelt upon the desert's brink.
He was “content,” though he the wealth had left,
The grandeur, and the pleasure, and the sin.
He all rejected that he thus might own
That he belonged to Israel's chosen seed.

“ I am a Prayer ”

For forty years the court had been his home,
And then the great decision had been made.
Refusing still to bear the princely name,
And choosing rather trial sore to share,
Enrolled among the people of his God,
Than revel in the short-lived joys of sin ;
Esteeming the reproach of Christ to be
Far greater treasure than Egyptian gold,
He gladly looked beyond, and saw the crown.
Jehovah had revealed Himself to him,
And he endured as seeing Him unseen.
By faith he therefore left the splendid court,
Became a stranger in a foreign land.
“ A stranger here ” he named his firstborn son,
And thus confessed he was a pilgrim still,
But yet, through all, one Home he had, and sang,*
“ O Lord, our habitation Thou hast been,
Through every generation still the same,
Before this mountain range had yet been formed,
From age to age Thou still Jehovah art.”

* Psalm xc. : “ A Prayer of Moses, the Man of God.”

Training Days

A vision he was giv'n ere leaving court,
That God through him a mighty work would do,
And he supposed that soon He would begin
To liberate the people by his means.
But no ! God's time for this had not yet come,
Another training had begun for him ;
Not as the prince of Egypt, but the king
In Jeshurun, he shortly would appear ;
But first there must be forty years alone,
And he who led the armies, led the flocks,
And learnt God's hosts in future days to guide,

In Sinai's range the hill of Horeb stood,
And there he oft was followed by his sheep,
Who, resting, lay around the mountain's base
Where soon the hosts of Israel would encamp.
The forty years prepared for forty days,
Which there he twice would later spend with God.

“And Moses was content,” for in those hours
Great lessons he was learning from his God.
He, versed in Egypt's learning long had been,

“I am a Prayer”

But now his heart a greater knowledge craved,
As in his psalm he earnest makes request,
“So teach us all our passing days to count,
That we our hearts to wisdom may apply.”
The *years* we note and think the time was long,
But Moses felt the value of each *day*.
And when he later stood upon the Mount,
He still did plead “that I Thyself may know.”
All other wisdom seemed of small account,
Compared with that which taught him more of God.
The glory of the brilliant Zoan court
Was nothing to the glory that he craved.
In after times, when all his hours were filled,
And he the burden of the people bore,
He must have loved to think of shepherd days,
When he had held sweet converse with his Lord,
And first had learnt to intercede with power,
And plead the cause of Israel’s captive sons,

When many years had passed, another form
Was wandering through th’ Arabian wilderness.

Training Days

The pupil of Gamaliel might be seen,
Upon the self-same hills where Moses stood,
And, in the solitudes of Sinai's range,
He too was learning in God's higher school.

How changed his life from that eventful morn,
When he had seen "the glory of that light,"
Which took the brightness from all earthly things,
And dulled their lustre till they seemed but dross !
The wisdom of the Greeks was foolishness,
All Roman wealth and glory seemed to fade
Compared with that in which he claimed a share,
For he was now a freeborn citizen,
Enfranchised in the empire of the heavens.

We know not how he spent the training days,
Nor where he travelled in those three long years,
We only know that Saul of Tarsus learnt
What made him since the great apostle Paul.
His one desire, like Moses, henceforth was
That he might know the Lord, and apprehend

“I am a Prayer”

The thing for which Christ apprehended him.
Like Moses he had found God's will was good,
And learnt in whatsoever state he was
“Therein to be *content*.”

And shall *we* fret,
Or be impatient, when He calls us forth
To quiet training in earth's solitudes ?
We must perchance withdraw from noisy throngs,
That He may fit us for our work for Him.

Not merely earthly work, for life itself
Is training us for serving Him above.
The vessels which King Solomon would place
Within the temple he had built for God,
Must one by one be moulded in the clay,
That in the plains of Jordan might be found.⁽¹⁾
The stones of which he built the temple walls
Must all be shaped and quarried, smoothed and squared,
Within the quarry 'neath the temple hill,
That neither sound of hammer, or of tool,
Might break the stillness of that holy place.⁽²⁾

(1) 2 Chron. iv. 17, (2) 1 Kings vi. 7.

Training Days

Then we may surely likewise be "content,"
And let Him lead us onward where He will ;
For God prepares His wondrous work "without,"
And in the field of earth, through daily life
He fits it for Himself, then builds His House.

(1) Prov. xxiv. 27.

NIGHT SONG-BIRDS.

Psalm xlii. 8.

He giveth songs at night time,
Which are not sung by day,
At night His song is with me,
A God-inspired lay.

I've sometimes tried by daylight,
To sing the self-same song,
But there are other carols,
Which to the day belong.

The woods are very lovely,
When sunlight plays around,
And all the forest flowerets,
Are strewn upon the ground.

Night Song-Birds

And many birds are singing,
And pouring out their lays,
I love to join their chorus,
And warble out my praise.

We twitter, and we flutter,
And busy fly around,
We chirp to one another,
And fill the woods with sound.

But when we all are singing,
My notes are not so clear,
My heart is too distracted,
By all the sounds I hear.

And there are many duties,
E'en song birds must be fed,
And during hours of daylight,
We find our daily bread.

“I am a Prayer”

But in the quiet darkness,
The songsters are asleep,
Then perched within my corner,
My lonely watch I keep.

The winds just stir the bushes,
And shake the quivering trees,
A sound is in the branches,
Made by the heavenly breeze.

There's none to hear my carol,
Save He who made me sing,
To Him I trill my sweetest,
And make the forest ring.

* * * *

At night His song is with me,
And He is sure to hear,
His presence fills with gladness,
For He Himself is near.

Night Song- Bird

Yea, 'tis the midnight season,
That suits some songs the best,
When darkness stills the earth sounds,
And hearts are hushed to rest.

You ask me how they differ,
These songs of day and night,
A new song for the darkness,
The old song for the light.

The new song is the old song,
But in another key,
It tells the self-same story,
Of all His love to me.

The one we sing in chorus,
The other all alone.
When in the midnight darkness,
New lessons have been shown.

“I am a Prayer”

And in the heavenly regions,
When night has passed away,
The mem'ry of the night songs,
Will mingle with the Day.

And when that Morn has broken,
Like nightingales no more,
We, in unclouded sunshine,
As larks shall upward soar.

Ah, then we'll sing the new song !
But not in minor key,
For unto Him that loved us
We'll sing eternally.

THE LITTLE CITY.

Ecclesiastes ix. 13—18.

There was a little city, weak and small,
And few the men that dwelt within its gates ;
A strong and mighty king against it came,
Besieged it round and straitly shut it in,
Built bulwarks high, and frowning towers upreared,
In hopes that he might soon possession gain,
And win the city from its rightful King.
But spite of all his strength and crafty plans
He failed, and had at last to raise the siege.
Within the city walls, unknown and poor,
There dwelt a lowly man, who strove to save,
And by his wisdom had devised a plan,
By which the city was impregnable,
And quickly was delivered from its foe.

“I am a Prayer”

The citizens who dwelt within its streets
Rejoiced to find the danger now was o'er ;
Yet though they owed their safety to his skill,
They soon forgot their gratitude to pay,
And none remembered him, the poor wise man,
Or sought him out, or thanked him for his work.
“Oh, base ingratitude !” we cry—and yet,
’Tis thus that we have treated God’s own Son !

This fallen world was like that city small,
For Satan longed its ruin to achieve,
And would have gained his end except for Him.
Ye know the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord,
Who though He once was rich, yet poor became,
Who, being in the form of God Himself,
Yet did not grasp at being equal still,
But made Himself of no repute at all,
And took upon Him e’en the servant’s place.
In likeness of mankind He did appear,
And being found in fashion as a man,
He stooped still lower, e’en to death itself,
And that a felon’s death upon the cross.

The Little City

Oh, wondrous scheme the "poor wise Man"
devised

To save the leaguered city from its foe,
For by His knowledge He has many saved.
The rescue of that city cost His life,
But ere His death one last request He made.
He gave to all His own a simple feast,
In which memorials of His death to find.
"This do," He said, "in memory of Me,
As often as ye thus do eat and drink."
He gave this feast a test for every heart,
To see if we would do what He had asked,
An act by which we might show forth His death,
Not once, nor twice, but constant "till He come."
That those who had forgotten what He did
Might be reminded of the debt they owe.

Within the city's streets the hurrying throng
Are ever busy with their daily work.
They would be rich, and think that wealth is power ;
But wisdom far surpasses wealth and strength
And all the warlike weapons which men trust,

“I am a Prayer”

**And yet the “poor Man’s” wisdom is despised !
The turmoil of the city drowns His voice,
For ’tis “in quiet” that His words are heard,
For He doth neither strive nor cry, nor cause
His voice within the noisy crowds to sound.**

**Then let us go to every street and lane,
And tell to all we meet what once He did,
And what our “little city” owes to Him ;
How still He grieves that He should be forgot,
And longs that we should often mention Him,
And keep His mem’ry in a grateful heart.**

WHAT CAN WE DO ?

“ Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.”

1 Thess. v. 24.

What can we do that will make the fruit grow ?
How can we hasten a harvest to show ?
If we study our tendrils and feel at the root,
If we measure the branches and look at the fruit,
If we count up the buds and each blossom inspect,
If we anxiously watch for the grapes we expect,
If we fret and we worry, and struggle and strain,
Shall we ripen the faster if constant our pain ?
Ah, no ! we have only to gather our strength
From the True Vine Himself, through each passing
day's length,
And to drink of His fulness, to bask in the sun ;
For it is not by striving the work can be done.
To receive what He sends to us, this is our share,

“I am a Prayer”

And the tending and pruning the Husbandman's
care,
For the fruit will not ripen by effort of ours,
But yet slowly and surely, through sunniest hours,
And in cold wintry nights when the rough winds do
blow,
Thus abiding in Him, the ripe clusters will grow.

What can I do with this small lamp of mine ?
How can I make it in darkness to shine
With a steadier flame and a still clearer light ?
If I strive to the utmost to make it more bright,
If I push up the wick and examine each thread,
If I look to the channel by which it is fed,
Tell me, what can I do to incline it to burn ?
Nay, it is by no effort of mine, I must learn,
I have only to draw from the plenteous oil,
I have neither to strive, nor to strain nor to toil,
'Tis the work of our Priest all the lampstands to
trim,
It is He who prevents every branch growing dim ;

What Can We Do?

Our most glorious High Priest, who amidst us yet
stands,
And attends to the lamps with His own piercèd
hands,
And He poureth the oil in the pure golden bowls,
And He fills with His Spirit obedient souls,
It is thus as we drink of His rich fulness in,
We are able to shine in this dark world of sin.

“LO, I COME !”

In the unrolling of the scroll it is written of Me.”

Psa. xl. 7.

Rendering given by MR. DAVID BARON.

WITHIN the volume of the Book—
Our lamp, our light, our guide—
Unroll it where we will, we find
The Name of Him who died.

To opened eyes the Coming One
Appears at every turn—
In history, type and prophecy
We may Himself discern.

His “Lo, I come to do Thy will,”
Is running through the whole,
In each successive portion viewed,
As we unroll the scroll.

“Lo, I Come”

And though this Advent now is past,
His “Father’s business” done,
We yet can see within the scroll
The quickly Coming One.

His “Lo, I come !” was first proclaimed,
’Tis now, “I come again” ;
The opened Book doth everywhere
These two glad words contain—

Twin orbs which lighten every truth,
With clear and steady beam,
Like foci in the vast ellipse,
That bounds redemption’s scheme.*

* “We have been accustomed to think of a circle as the most perfect form, but, for the illustration of many truths, it serves imperfectly, for a circle allows of but one centre; where an ellipse allows of a twin centre. By the law of the ellipse the sum of two lines drawn from any point in the curve to the foc will be the same. And this serves to illustrate the relation which the whole scheme of redemption bears to the two great events—Christ’s first and second comings.”—DR. PIERSON.

“ I am a Prayer ”

**When Thou wast here, O blessed Lord,
Thine own were taught to see,
In psalms, and prophecies, and law,
The things concerning Thee.**

**Unroll the scroll before us now,
Enlighten Thou our eyes,
Then point to every line where we
Thyself may recognise :**

**That so Thy precious “ Lo, I come ! ”
May shine throughout the page,
So much the more as we approach
The ending of the age.**

**That seeing Thee in every part,
We more and more may learn,
Responsive to Thy promise sweet,
To watch for Thy return.**

BREAD FOR THE EATER, AND SEED FOR THE SOWER.

Genesis xlvii. 18, 19, 23 ; Isaiah lv. 10 ; 2 Cor. ix, 10.

“ Oh Lord of Egyptian plenty,
In famine we come unto thee,
Unlock thy rich storehouse we pray thee,
Thy suppliant subjects are we.
We know that thy corn is all priceless,
Its value can never be told,
And we are but penniless paupers,
We have neither silver nor gold.
When Pharaoh said, ‘ Go unto Joseph, ’
We thought we could still stay away,
But now that we perish with hunger,
We grieve that we made such delay.
While silver and gold were remaining,
We felt not such utter despair,

“I am a Prayer”

**But now that our purses are empty,
‘To Joseph’ alone we repair.
We searched through the land in our hunger,
But found not another supply,
If thou dost not help us O Joseph,
We here in thy presence must die.
Our bodies alone now remaining,
Are all we can offer to give,
If thou in our famine wilt feed us,
Henceforth as thy slaves we will live.”**

**And Joseph gave ear to their pleading,
And opened his storehouses wide,
Refused not a single petition,
Not one of the hungry ones died.
He purchased each penniless comer,
And cared for the ones he had bought,
He bade them accomplish his bidding,
And henceforth their service he sought ;
For when with his corn he had fed them,
He sent them to scatter the seed,**

Bread for the Eater

The grain which they had in their baskets,
The same that had furnished their need
He first had found bread for the eater,
It all was received from his hand,
And then he gave seed to the sower,
And thus they replenished the land.

O thou who art fainting with hunger,
A greater than Joseph is here,
He calleth to all who are needy,
His free invitation to hear,
His garners are full to o'erflowing,
Come hither, yea, come buy and eat,
No price and no money are needed,
He gives of the finest of wheat.
Your money you long have been spending
On that which is not really bread ;
You laboured so hard to obtain it,
And yet you have never been fed.
Away in the land of your famine,
On husks you have oft tried to feed,

“I am a Prayer”

Your portion has long since been wasted,
And now you are feeling your need :
The famine which driveth you homeward,
Is better than prospering there,
Oh come to the house of the Father,
Where all receive bread and to spare.

'Twas thus that we came to the Saviour,
The famine around us was sore.
He made us partake of His bounty,
And opened His plenteous store ;
And now on account of His mercies,
Because all our hunger was met,
He asks that our bodies be yielded,
Nor shall we His good will regret,
It is our most reasonable service
To own that to Him we belong.
Sent forth in His fields 'mid the labourers,
To join in the harvesting song,
'Tis He must replenish our basket,
Supply from His store all our need,

Bread for the Eater

We've nothing to pay for His plenty,
He freely will give us His seed.
Then why are we sometimes so hungry,
When He is so richly supplied?
And why are we sowing so little?
Oh, hasten to scatter it wide:
For He who gives bread to the eater,
To all who their hunger will own,
Will minister seed to the sower,
And multiply that which is sown.

TREASURE HID IN A FIELD.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field ; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.”

Matt. xiii. 44.

In ancient days there was a fertile field,
In which was planted every kind of tree
Which to the sight was pleasant to behold,
And good for food. A river and its streams
Did irrigate each glade, and nook, and dell—
It was a garden rather than a field ;
And underneath its surface there was gold,
With precious stones deep hidden in the soil.

The Owner who had planned and made the spot,
Entrusted it unto a tenant's care,
That he might dress and keep it, and enjoy
The plenteous produce of that fruitful field.

Treasure Hid in a Field

How long he lived within that paradise
We cannot tell. We only know he failed
To keep his charge, and sold his vested rights
Into the hands of one who long had been
The greatest enemy his Lord possessed.

And soon a change came o'er the fertile scene.
The soil refused to bear its wonted fruit,
Brought forth, unblest, a harmful, noisome crop
Of thorns and thistles, growing up instead
Of luscious vines, and weeds in place of wheat.
The rivers changed their course, and passing by
Poured out their waters now on other fields
Until the land became a parchèd waste.

For long long years the property remained
In the usurper's hands, until at last,
The Son of Him to whom the field belonged,
Before He placed His worthless tenant there,
Bethought Him of the spot He once had loved,
And oft had visited in by-gone days.

“ I am a Prayer ”

He knew that ere the field had changèd hands,
A treasure had been hid beneath the soil,
Which rightly to His Father still belonged,
And so He left His distant lordly Home,
And visited again the barren field
In humble guise, a poor way-faring Man.
He knew it well and quickly found the place
Where once the treasure had been buried deep,
And oh ! the joy He felt when soon He saw
That still it lay preserved through all those years.
The gold was safe, each gem and jewel too ;
He counted them, and found not one was lost,
For none had passed into the alien's hands !

But for a time the treasure must remain
Still buried 'neath the surface of the field.
And so He quickly hid it once again,
With joy to think that He had found His own.

The field was costly, but He straightway sold
His vast possessions ; He who once was rich
For joy thereof most gladly poor became,

Treasure Hid in a Field

To pay the price and to redeem the field,
Relinquished all, and sorrowed not but deemed
The treasure worth the sacrifice He made.

And now the field is His, the title-deeds
His own by double right, and He but waits
The time when He can claim the purchased land ;
And in that day the wilderness again
Shall blossom as a rose and fruitful be,
A watered garden fertile as before.
The treasure too will be no longer hid,
But will be taken to His Father's House,
To beautify the Palace of the King.

“ And they shall all be Mine in that blest day,
When I shall reckon up My jewels rare.”
He thus has spoken—for that day He longs,
And none will shine more radiant in His crown
Than those for whom He paid so great a price,
And journeyed far and laboured hard to win,
His own peculiar treasure, hidden once,
At length displayed before admiring throngs.

HOW WILL HE COME ?

Will He come with a mighty whirlwind,
With chariots of dazzling light,
And with fiery wheels encircling
The steps of His escort bright ?

Will He come in a raging tempest,
When heaven doth its floods outpour,
And the lightning is flashing vivid,
Amidst the loud thunder's roar ?

Will He come with the gentle shower,
That follows a time of dearth,
And with quiet and silent footsteps,
Refreshes the parchèd earth ?

How Will He Come ?

Will He come midst a glorious sunrise,
Succeeding a night of cold,
When the grey of the morning twilight
Is suddenly changed to gold ?

Will He come in some sunny noontide,
Right down through the fleecy clouds,
As He steps on the azure pavement
To meet the expectant crowds ?

Will He come at the morn or midnight ?
We cannot—we need not—know,
We have only the angels' message,
“ He'll come as ye've seen Him go.”

And no earthquake then shook the mountains,
No tempest the stillness rent,
And no mightiest throes of nature
Accompanied His ascent.

