

“ ANNO DOMINI ”

# GOD OVER ALL

In the Ages of Time  
The Events of To-day  
The Affairs of Man  
And in MY Life

“We know that all things work together for good according  
to His purpose” (ROMANS 8. 28)

BY

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## TO MY READERS.

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I FEAR that in the present times of great stress and wide distress these form a very large number, for I write for the depressed, the forlorn, the wounded in spirit, the broken in heart, the downcast, the sick, and the aged.

Such need help and comfort in a way no glad heart nor gay spirit ever does.

The only object for which I write is to bring some real happiness and brightness and peace to these suffering and sorrowing ones; and my former book on these lines, "The Radiant Morn," has been so widely blessed by God that I have felt constrained to write this small volume for the same object.




One knows well that no printed words can bring happiness, but the spiritual source from which they come is unailing; and such words may prove the humble link that unites the sufferer and Saviour, the mourner and the Comforter, and that reveal to the aged the secret of perpetual youth.

Let all who read this book do so in the sure expectation that from some of its pages comfort and consolation will enter their hearts, and light and joy shine on their lives from this message of peace and joy.

ALFRED T. SCHOFIELD, M.D.

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# GOD OVER ALL.

## THE CHRISTIAN'S YEAR BOOK.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### “ANNO DOMINI.”

THE history of the Calendar is most obscure, and dates back from the earliest times. To give the story with anything like detail would involve astronomical terms and many intricate calculations. This present chapter is only concerned with the history of Anno Domini (the year of our Lord), and we shall make therefore no attempt to give the long and interesting narrative of the formation of our present Almanac.

The more important units of time appear to be the four seasons, the twenty-four-hour day, and the year; less important and possibly subsequent divisions are those of weeks and months. All were probably



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fixed by the stars, and more particularly by the constellations of the zodiac. We are indeed told in Genesis 1. 14 that the lights in the Heaven are "for signs and for seasons, and for days and years," and there can be no doubt they were used for this purpose from the earliest times.

The chief difficulty in the matter, which makes the story of the Calendar such a long history and the subject so intricate, is the unfortunate fact that there is no exact correspondence between the day and the year; if the days were 360 in the year, divided into twelve months of thirty days each, all would be simple and straightforward, but unfortunately the year contains about  $365\frac{1}{4}$  days, and it is this that makes all the difficulty, involving unequal months and a recurrence of leap year to adjust the one to the other.

There is no doubt that the twelve months originally corresponded with the twelve signs of the zodiac, and the four seasons with its four principal constellations. In the same way the days of the week are the number of the planets, amongst which, in early times, the sun and the moon were included. We thus get Sun-day and Moon-

## “ANNO DOMINI.”

day, in addition to the other five, which were named after the five planets then known—Tuesday after Tuesco\* or Mars, Wednesday after Woden\* or Mercury, Thursday after Thor\* or Jupiter, Friday after Freiga\* or Venus, and Saturday after Saturn.

### Regulated by the Sun.

The length of the day was, of course, determined by the sun in relation to the earth, just as the length of the year was determined by the sun in relation to the stars. In the present day there are still two current calculations of the year, the one being the Russian or the old style, which differs a few days from that of the rest of Europe, or the new style.

But I have said enough on these elementary points, which, after all, do not touch the question of Anno Domini, which is concerned with the enumeration rather than the duration of the years. Probably the earliest letters by which these were dated were A.M. (Anno Mundi), meaning the era of the creation of the world, or at any rate of Adam. Later on the Baby-

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\* Scandinavian gods corresponding to those of Greece.

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Ionians had a sidereal Calendar of their own, while the Jews dated their years from the call of Abraham or the Exodus from Egypt, and later on, in the time of the Maccabees, from the era of the Seleucidae at Antioch. A common method amongst nations was to date their years locally from the accession of the reigning king of the country. We get traces of this custom in the books of Kings and Chronicles.

### **A Standard Fixed.**

A fixed chronological standard was first made by the Babylonians and Assyrians, and was succeeded by that of the Persians, and then by Greece, and finally by Rome in the well-known letters A.U.C. (*Ab Urbe Condita*, from the building of the city), which became the time index of the civilised world for some hundreds of years. Subsidiary dates were also used in Rome, running with the years of each emperor's reign; but it was not until the year A.D. 537 that the Emperor Justinian issued an absolute decree making it obligatory that each year should bear the name of the reigning emperor, but only four years later the emperors themselves were no more,

## “ANNO DOMINI.”

and the last Roman Consul remained the ruler of the dying city.

It is remarkable how very slowly and imperceptibly the idea of Anno Domini began to make its way among the nations of the world, very much as the kingdom of God is said to grow, men hardly know how; it certainly did not come “with observation,” for it is difficult to fix the exact date when the letters became at all generally used.

### “Anno Domini” Introduced.

Anno Domini really began with the 1st of January, in the middle of the fourth year of the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad, and A.U.C. 753-4, and Julian Period 4714, this being the supposed year of our Lord’s birth\*. But the years were not so named until Dionysius Exiguus, in A.D. 532, introduced them into the Christian Calendar. From this time A.D. gradually superseded with irresistible force all other eras, just as previously the Word of God, and especially the New Testament, made its silent way unnoticed by men wherever

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\* This birth is now generally placed eight years earlier, or 8 B.C.

## GOD OVER ALL.

Christians were found, until at last it was recognised as Divine by the early Councils of the Church.

Anno Domini became current in Italy about the sixth century, and in France about the seventh century; but it was never introduced into the Calendar by Constantine, as many suppose. Saxony and England adopted it about the eighth century, and Ireland, Denmark, and Germany in the ninth century. It was Charles III. of Germany who was the first king to add the words, "In the year of our Lord," to his reign, in A.D. 879. Russia, Norway, and Sweden adopted it in the tenth century. The oldest diary in England, the Torkington Pilgrimage, speaks of the "yer of ower Lorde God, 1516."

### **A Republican Calendar.**

Long before this all other competing eras had entirely disappeared from Christendom, but subsequently most determined attempts were made to overthrow the Christian era. In the French Revolution the Republican Calendar was started *de novo* on 22nd September, 1793, making all time date from the overthrow of the

## “ANNO DOMINI.”

empire, which was also the first year of the new Republic. This Calendar, with its fantastically named months, and its utter exclusion of all reference to God, only lasted for thirteen years, when Napoleon, who was then First Consul, put an end to its existence, and ordered A.D. to be restored.

### **A Star Calendar.**

Laplace, the great astronomer, wished the Calendar to be dated by the stars, but this was not generally desired, and was not found to be practicable.

### **“Anno Domini” Conquers.**

In spite of all attempts made by scientists and others to alter it, Anno Domini completely conquered, as we have seen, every other era, its most remarkable feat undoubtedly being in displacing from very early times the proud A.U.C. of the Roman Empire.

Anno Domini is now current over Europe, America, Australasia, civilised Africa, Turkey, India, and Asiatic Russia. It has not yet been formally adopted in Arabia, Persia, China, or Japan. The Greek Olympiads, the Julian eras, the Alexandrian, and, as we have seen, the

## GOD OVER ALL.

Roman and Republican Calendars have all passed away for ever, and A.D., with its companion era B.C., has conquered the world.

Advancing civilisation may hereafter even throw off the profession of Christianity, and some new human cult may overspread humanity in the last days, but, nevertheless, this stamp on the Calendar of A.D. will probably remain a stern witness, as did the head of Caesar in the Holy Land in the time of Christ, to testify who is Lord over all; and with our years thus dated the question can be asked of all who refuse the faith: "Whose image and superscription is this" that is indelibly engraved upon your times and seasons? Whose Lord is He who controls your years and the "first day" in all your weeks?

Of course if these words had been placed there by man, man could at his will remove them; but we believe that in their mysterious appearance and their subsequent domination of the civilised world we can recognise another and a greater force; that Holy Spirit that bloweth "where it listeth," for we cannot tell "whence it cometh nor whither it goeth."

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## CHAPTER II.

### NEW POWER IN OLD WORDS.

ANY forms of words continually used become after a time mesmeric in their effect, and one becomes oblivious to their real power; the frequent repetition seems to destroy their force, and eventually almost to obliterate their original meaning. It has long been known that the constant repetition of familiar phrases gradually produces loss of consciousness as to their meaning, so that ultimately one hardly knows and seldom thinks of what they convey.

A well known illustration of this is in "asking a blessing" at meals, when the moment it is done it is not infrequent to hear the question asked: "Have we said grace?" The same occurs in Church prayers, which by reason of their constant repetition become extremely difficult to bring into full consciousness. Some time ago a clergyman came to me fearing he was



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losing his reason because he found that on the previous Sunday he had read a large part of the litany so unconsciously that he told the curate he had omitted it altogether. The familiar conclusions of many prayers, such as "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen," become almost meaningless formulae, although in themselves aspirations of the highest order. Familiar forms in letter writing and legal phrases in the same way are often more or less empty formalities.

In other cases the true meaning of words may be corrupted and forgotten, as in "Good-bye," which few who use it know is "God be with ye." The word "bloody" (as used by the vulgar) was originally "By our lady," referring to the Virgin.

### **"The Year of Our Lord."**

Amongst these-familiar phrases few have more completely lost their power than Anno Domini. My object here is to seek to clothe these words with a new and entirely forgotten force derived from the revelation of their full meaning.

How then can we bring a new power into old words? This can be done in several ways.

## NEW POWER IN OLD WORDS.

### A Personal Acquaintance.

1. A fresh force can be imported to words when their meaning becomes changed from a matter of hearsay to personal knowledge.

The word "Palestine" to me, for instance, was one with which I had been familiar all my life. I had endeavoured to understand it by means of geographies, histories, and maps, and all the allusions to it in the Bible, but so far my knowledge was only second-hand. When, however, I set foot upon its shores, and actually saw the Holy Land, and stood upon its sacred soil, the word Palestine from that moment and for all future time had a force and power to which hitherto I had been an entire stranger.

In like manner may it not be possible that once we know our Lord *personally* that "Anno Domini" will have a hitherto unknown power in our hearts?

### The Real Meaning.

2. Old words become at once invested with new power when we are brought into contact with their real meaning for the first time.

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I had often heard of Zeppelins, and took but a languid interest in them, until early in the war in Harley Street loud explosions overhead brought me to the windows, and there, clear against the sky, I saw two Zeppelins, the one at the front and the other at the back of the house, dropping bombs on London. They seemed indeed so near that it appeared to be certain that some must fall upon us. After half an hour of continuous uproar, I sat down for a moment to distract my thoughts, and took up one of the "broadsheets" of *The Times* (then issued to the troops), and my eye fell upon the following words:

**"He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: . . . thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness. . . . A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee"** (Psa. 91. 4-7).

These verses, picked up at haphazard, seemed to me a direct message from God,

## NEW POWER IN OLD WORDS.

for the whole household were in a state of the utmost alarm. At last, however, the airships passed on, but from that night the word "Zeppelin" acquired a new force and meaning.

### The Power of Association.

3. Associations bring a new force into old and familiar sights and sounds. The sound of the "pipes" in a distant land will bring tears to a Highlander's eyes; a view or even a familiar smell becomes replete with a wonderful force by association with some long passed scene.

It is recorded that one night when the great Lord Aberdeen was about to dress for dinner the clothes he had taken off lying on a chair became suddenly invested with a fresh force by his connecting them with the body which had to be put off at death. This, by a rapid chain of thought, brought Eternity before his mind, and from this he became an earnest believer and a most devoted Christian.

**"God is NOWHERE."**

A pretty little story is told of the child of an infidel father who was such a fanatic in his infidelity that he put up in the child's

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room on the wall, instead of a text, the words, "GOD IS NOWHERE," thinking its constant sight might help to make the child an atheist. But the little girl had only learned words of one syllable, and as she lay in her bed she read the words as "GOD IS NOW HERE," which were quite within her understanding, and gave her great comfort in her loneliness since her mother's death. The father's intense surprise when he found the fresh association that the word "nowhere" had received in his child's mind can be imagined.

### "God Bless You."

Old memories are also, as I have said, evoked by well-known words. A touching instance of this occurred in my hospital some time ago in a ward where an infidel lay dying. The Christian physician in going his rounds, as he left the patient's bed that morning, seeing him suffering more than usual, just said as he went away, "God bless you." These words, fraught with ancient memories of childhood and early piety, came with such force to the dying man's heart that they were the means of his conversion to God.

## NEW POWER IN OLD WORDS.

### The New Meaning of Words.

4. A fresh revelation of the meaning of words constantly on our lips gives them a new and a wonderful power. This is often found when we read the Bible, and we experience intense and joyful surprise at the blessing we receive from the words of some old and familiar text. I think this is occasioned by some such cause as that which gives a never failing wonder to the pictures in a stereoscope. We look at any ordinary picture without the instrument, and we have before us the picture, say, of some well-known friend, and we think the likeness is good and the grouping effective. But when the same is seen in the stereoscope what a miraculous change takes place! We have now no mere picture before us, but the people themselves, who start into life with intense reality the moment the two eyes become concentrated in single vision.

It is so with familiar Bible words, the moment the eyes become single in their vision the whole body is full of light. I read, for instance, the words "Children of God" (Gal. 3. 26). I have often read

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them before, but now my spiritual and material eyes, the eyes of my heart and mind, are united into a single sight, and I see the words for the first time, as it were, stereoscopically, and the truth that I am a child of God is at once transformed into a fact of overwhelming power in my own experience. A CHILD OF GOD! What want I more? A Father all love, all wisdom, all power, "the Mighty God"—and I His child. Oh! the bliss, the untold bliss of such a thought when it really penetrates the soul. What want I more? What does anything matter in comparison with this? Truly I have all things and abound once I see these words with a single eye.

It is in this manner that text after text starts into life, and the Word of God becomes for me a new Book.

### Resurrection—A New Meaning.

Let me cite a beautiful illustration of this in real life. A well-known sportsman in Ireland suddenly lost his young wife, who was the idol of his heart; he was a man who made no profession whatever of religion, although, like many such, he had been brought up by a godly mother. But at his

## NEW POWER IN OLD WORDS.

wife's funeral he heard the magnificent words of 1 Corinthians 15. She was his treasure, and where his treasure was there his heart also lay buried, and for six weeks he sat each day upon her tombstone, a New Testament with him, in which he found some comfort by reading again every time the chapter from the burial service, without in the least understanding its meaning. He knew that his wife had gone to Heaven, for she was a simple believer on the Lord Jesus Christ; he knew that he was a careless and godless sinner immersed in his pleasures. At the close of six weeks he sat upon the tombstone once more, when by the grace of God he opened his Testament again and read the well-known words:

**“If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins.”**

The words spoke with terrific force. “Oh!” he groaned, “I am indeed in my sins,” and he sat there consciously in the presence of God with all his sins black upon him; and then he read on:

**“But now is Christ risen from the dead.”**



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The words before were, "If Christ be not raised, ye are yet in your sins," and it was this that brought his condition before him. But when he read, "Now is Christ risen from the dead," he jumped up from the tombstone, and loudly exclaimed,

**"Then I am out of my sins,"**

and in that very moment the veil dissolved as a thick cloud in the presence of God, in virtue of the Resurrection of Christ. This was the means of his regeneration, and united him in spirit with his dear wife in a way that had never been realised while she lived on earth.

### **New Light on Old Words.**

5. At other times the light on familiar words, instead of coming suddenly like an illuminating flash, gradually shows brighter and brighter. We sit, it may be, tired and weary, weak, helpless, and hopeless before the well-known words, when silently and gradually, by some side wind of the Holy Spirit's sending, a new thought is wafted into our minds, and we look at the words with a fresh interest, and as we look at them a power comes into them, and eventually before the two letters A.D. we

## NEW POWER IN OLD WORDS.

bow our heads and say, "My Lord, and my God" (John 20. 28).

The power of God is like the power of dynamite, it gives an irresistible force to that which was powerless before. "Rise and walk" (John 5. 8), says the Lord. "Stretch forth thine hand" (Matt. 12. 13). But I have no power in either case. But the word being dynamite, the command itself gives the power, and the impossible becomes possible, and the otherwise powerless phrase becomes the light of my life.

### **How Effectuated.**

The problem still is how to effect this. Here on one side is the blessing of God, all His joy, all His light, all His power; and on the other side lies myself, hopeless, helpless, and powerless; the problem before us is how to bring the one into contact with the other.

### **A Case of "Anno Domini."**

The peculiarity and meaning of the words "Anno Domini" were brought home in this wise. The author in a watering-place somewhere in these isles was enjoying the bright scene and the salty tang of the rough sea as he walked

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along the shore, when he came to an aged friend sitting in the sun in a deck chair, who looked so feeble that he stopped for a passing word. "I hope this air will soon revive you, and that you are feeling better," he said. "I'm about the same," replied the invalid; "my doctor tells me it is a case of Anno Domini." After another word or two, he had passed on, but the "Anno Domini" stuck in his mind with the force of a barbed arrow—"the year of our Lord." "Whose Lord?" he thought, and was it really His year, the year that belonged to Him? It was to answer these thoughts that this book was written, in the hope that it may be "a case of Anno Domini" in a new and better sense with many of my readers.

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## **CHAPTER III.**

### **“NONE OTHER NAME.”**

THERE is no name to those who know its value and understand its meaning like the Name of Jesus. Many look upon “JESUS” as simply another form of Joshua, and of no more importance than Thomas, or John, or James, or Joseph, woefully forgetful or woefully ignorant of its Divine origin, by the lips of the archangel Gabriel, sent directly from the presence of God (Luke 1. 19, 31).

Nothing can dignify the Name of Jesus; it stands alone, and should ever be uttered with reverence and with love, and as so uttered it must not be forbidden to any follower of His. It dignifies all other names connected with it; both Lord and Christ have a new power and a new meaning when associated with Jesus.

#### **The Sacred Name.**

The Name was too sacred to be borne by His disciples, to whom at Antioch His

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other Name was given, and they were called Christians; the Name of Jesus being first appropriated by the Jesuits. Even in the sectarian differences at Corinth that sacred Name was left alone, and never then degraded into a party cry; we are "of Christ" was the most daring venture at that time when the enemy first sought to break up the Church of God.

The Master might say, Philip, Simon, etc., but they always addressed Jesus as Lord and Master.

This is the Name that is "as ointment poured forth" (Cant. 1. 3), which

"Sheds its fragrance still  
Along life's thorny road;  
And sweetly smooths the rugged hill  
That leads me up to God."

In what does its fragrance consist? First, in its saving power, the Name itself being God's pledge of our Salvation. In this Name the love of God's own heart is revealed in all its sweetness and beauty for sinful man. But there are leaves which only give forth their fragrance when pressed, and there can be no doubt that it is as the Lamb of God on Calvary, bruised for our iniquities, that this Name pours

## **“NONE OTHER NAME.”**

forth all its incense. Just as in the trenches in the war the poisonous gases brought death to many a stout heart, so in those same trenches has the healing fragrance of this blessed Name brought life and joy and peace.

### **“Jesus Only.”**

In the clouds and in the darkness around we may often think more of Moses and Elias, of law and ritual, but when the mists have rolled away we find ourselves with “JESUS ONLY” (Matt. 17. 8).

### **“Both Lord and Christ.”**

It is, however, in resurrection that Jesus becomes the Head of the Church, and we become associated with Him in the power of resurrection life, and in this He (Jesus) “is made both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2. 36). We love, therefore, when speaking of the Master to associate the glories of the resurrection with the fragrance of the Name, and we speak of the Lord Jesus, or the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **The Wonderful Name.**

He is ever in the midst, and is the centre of all things in Heaven and on earth, the

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One around whom time and space and the universe itself revolves. We may consider this wonderful Name therefore in its resurrection power of Lord and Christ as the centre of seven different spheres.

### **He is the Centre of All Time.**

1. No king nor conqueror, no priest nor despot can give His name to time. Constantine was the first recognised Christian emperor, but he did not stamp the Calendar with his name. Silently and slowly the Lord Christ stealt into the hearts of men, and not until five centuries after the resurrection was His Name first given to time. In A.D. 525 Dionysius Exiguus began in the Easter tables to call them by the Name of the Lord, "Anno Domini," but it was not publicly used until the eighth century.

### **A, B, C, D.**

The first four letters of our alphabet, A, B, C, D, tell the story of "Jesus in the midst:" all time before His advent being B.C., "Before Christ," and all since A.D., "the year of our Lord," and there is an appropriateness in the choice of these titles.

It is indeed amazing that amongst

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all the heathen nations no one was thought worthy of such a position; not Aristotle, Homer, Socrates, Plato, Xerxes, Alexander, or Caesar ever filled the place that was given to Christ by the common consent of mankind. The only name standing in the Calendar for all time is that of the Lord Christ. But I need hardly say, though all can see the amazing wonder of this, its real power and beauty are lost to our hearts if this Lord be not our Lord.

### **“That Glorious Name.”**

JEAN PAUL RICHTER writes: “The crucified Jew being the holiest amongst the mighty, the mightiest amongst the holy, has lifted with His pierced hands empires off their hinges, turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages and all our almanacs, recording in unconscious prose the power of that glorious Name.”

This is the one thousand nine hundred and eighteenth year. “Of what?” asked an archbishop not long ago. Not of the world’s life, but of the Christian era, that part which is affected and coloured by what



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the Lord Jesus Christ did and does, who ever was God, and for our Salvation came down from Heaven, and was made Man. It is the nineteen hundred and eighteenth year of what has become in our common speech Christendom, the rule of Christ and of Christ's teaching among the nations of the earth; and although much around us would appear to deny it, I fully believe the truth of the words of a most calm and thoughtful modern historian, that the influence of Christ, who is risen, on man for whom He died, fails not but increases.

We may observe that "the *year* of the Lord" is always connected with grace, love, and acceptance; not so the "*day* of the Lord," which often speaks of judgment; and herein we see the mercy of God, for "judgment is His strange work" (Isa. 28. 17, 21), and as a day is to a year, so is His judgment to His grace.

People love to be up to date, but none can be truly so if the year in which they are living is not the year of *their* Lord.

### **He is the Centre of the Universe.**

2. He is not only all, but He is in all. This is a truth that has been lately

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corroborated from an unexpected quarter—that of science. We used to consider the universe as being essentially material, but when with modern instruments of precision the material is now investigated, it dissolves before the eyes into whirling masses of a supposed ether; these into electricity positive and negative; this into almighty force, and this inevitably into the conception of God in action. In other words, it is proved that God is in all, and He is the centre of the universe,\* “Who created all things by the word of His power” (Heb. 1. 2, 3).

It is indeed wonderful that scientists, many of them setting out with their backs to the spiritual, and determined to confine themselves to the material, should find the latter absolutely vanish in their own analysis, and themselves left face to face with God. The magnificence of the position of Christ in this connection is well shown in Hebrews 1. But we must proceed.

3. We next find this Name, which is above every name, is

### **The Centre of the Revelation of God**

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\* This subject is fully elaborated by the author in “The Borderlands of Science” (Cassells).

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in His Word. If we accept the New Testament as the heart and centre of the Bible we must accept the Gospel of John as the heart and centre of the New Testament; and we know the heart of John's Gospel is Jesus Christ, the centre of God, who is thus the centre of the whole Word. But He is more, for in this connection He is not only the centre, but the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; so that we may say He fills every page of Holy Writ. No wonder that in the walk to Emmaus He was able to expound to two ignorant men "in *all* the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24. 27).

4. Rising higher still, we find Him

### The Centre of all Heaven.

John's tears were soon dried when he realised this, and when the One to whom all his love was given was perceived as the Lamb standing in the midst of the Throne and of the surrounding glories of Heaven, with all power (seven horns) and all wisdom (seven eyes), and there, moreover, in virtue, not of His strength as the lion of the tribe of Judah, but as a "little lamb" in virtue of the weakness of

## **“NONE OTHER NAME.”**

Calvary, when through death He finally destroyed him that had the power of death.

5. And now in the fifth sphere may we with reverence venture one step higher yet, and in the Son see

### **The Centre of the Godhead Itself,**

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the effulgence of the Divine glory and the very image of the Divine substance, the Creator of the universe, the Upholder of all things, as well as the Heir of all things, whose throne is everlasting, and whose Person the object of worship to all the angels of Heaven (Heb. 1).

Such is the Son who on earth was the lowly Jesus.

6. And now we turn with a feeling of some relief from these transcendent and mystic glories to something that we can better understand of a personal nature relative to ourselves. We find, sixthly, that Jesus “in the midst” is

### **The Centre of His Own,**

whether these be limited to a little company of two or three, or whether they include the great Church gatherings, assemblies,

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and conventions at which many of us in these days have been privileged to attend. If there is to be blessing, if Christ is to have His right place, He is as much the centre of gathered thousands as of two or three in private houses. He is the centre of Christian life, the centre of Christian worship, the centre and aim in Christian baptism, the central object in Christian communion, the centre of all corporate expressions of Christian life.

7. We now come to the seventh and last sphere, and I am inclined to think that those for whom this book is specially penned—the distressed, the bereaved, the downcast, the neglected, the obscure, all indeed who need comfort, consolation, help, and hope in the dark days of their troubled lives, will find the seventh glory transcends all the rest ; for, finally, Christ is

### **The Centre of My Heart.**

If this does not turn the darkest night into a day of heavenly radiance, if this does not inspire the broken spirit with fresh hope, if this does not gladden the heavy heart and cheer the sad soul nothing will.

## **“NONE OTHER NAME.”**

### **“That I may Know Him.”**

At a Sunday school the children were asked to bring on a piece of paper the following Sunday all the names of Christ which they could remember without looking at the Bible. Various lists were brought the next week, some with as many as a dozen names, but there was one with only four, which the superintendent read out to all the school as surpassing all the others, and it was this: “Jesus, Lord, Christ, and He is my own precious Saviour.” It is this that is joy in grief, light in darkness, and comfort in the valley of the shadow of death.

The apostle prays that we may know Christ thus, and bows his knees unto the heavenly Father that He would grant to those for whom he writes:

**“According to the riches of His great glory to be so strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; . . . and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled unto all the fulness of God” (Eph. 3. 16-19).**

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In this condition there is no question of a passing joy or of a treasure of which we can be easily robbed. When Christ is thus known He is known to Eternity, and is a joy to the heart which cannot be taken away. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

We have seen much of the last two in the War, and so far from separating us from Christ, they have only driven us nearer to Him, and I may well conclude this chapter with the triumphant peroration of the great apostle:

**"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us; for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 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"**  
(Rom. 8. 37-39).

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE YEAR OF MY LORD.

My object in writing is that my readers, who will be largely among the aged, may experience that if with them it is "a case of Anno Domini," as with the invalid in Chapter 2, it will not be for the usual reason—because they feel old and failing, but, on the contrary, for the very unusual one—that they are so young and strong.

#### **A Case of Emphasis.**

The year Anno Domini of the Calendar undoubtedly may find my readers burdened with weakness and old age, but Anno Domini in its reality has the effect of making those of us who know it renew their youth and regain their strength. As long as the emphasis is on the first word, "ANNO," the *year* (of the Lord), I am living in time with all its varying seasons, its gloom, its miseries, its



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changes, and its chances and its mortal life; but when once I put the emphasis on the second word, "DOMINI" (the year of), *Domini*, my Lord, then the scene changes, and we get the brightness, the radiant glory, the peace, the strength, and the joy of Eternal Life. This is the true emphasis, for as it is the *Lord's* supper, the *Lord's* day, so is it the *Lord's* year, or "Anno *Domini*."

Learn, then, my aged suffering, tempted, or tired friend, for whom I write, to put the emphasis on the second word whenever you speak of Anno Domini. The "few more years may roll," but let them pass without undue care or notice, and let all the faith, the hope, the trust be fixed upon the "Domini"—MY LORD.

If the radiance of Anno Domini fills our poor, tired, distressed, and depressed hearts, it is the sovereign remedy for all three ills.

God can thus make this message an untold blessing if those for whom I write are empowered to transfer the emphasis of their minds and hearts from the Anno to the Domini, from time to Eternity, and to Eternity's Lord.

## THE YEAR OF MY LORD.

### The Radiant Morn.

This is specially true for all who suffer naturally from "Anno Domini," for here is the great paradox; the emphasis on the first word leaves us, as I have said, in time, but placed upon the second lands us in Eternity; and while "the years of time," as George Matheson has so beautifully told us, "go from youth to manhood, the years of Eternity go from manhood to youth." So that our radiant morn really begins thus, and as happy children with a heavenly Father we are never sad nor sorry again. It is now a case of *Anno Domini* with us, not because we are ill, but well; not depressed, but full of joy; not old, but young in spirit.

Oh, the delight of this! What a glorious possibility of relief if we have been full of cares, anxieties, worries, griefs, remorse, difficulties, fears, doubts, despair, or sicknesses! How our physical ailments, our disabilities, our painful affections, our feeble lives, our decaying interests disappear in the warmth of a true *Anno Domini* when it comes—the year of *my Lord*.

How calmly we look back on all such

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misery when once in spirit in our Father's Home; in fact, we only truly know the discords of earth when we hear the harmonies of Heaven.

### **The Higher Plane.**

But a mere vision of all this is not enough. It is useless for us to behold the face of our birth (what God meant us to be) and straightway forget it (James 1. 24).

This is no question of creeds or stress of words; those who have entered this Anno Domini in power are so filled with the knowledge of the Person of the Lord that they touch the higher plane of spirit where all is unity, and the warring creeds of earth die away in silence.

All joys "under the sun" are lost as soon as they are grasped, like the blue-bird of Maeterlinck, for the moment a bird is in the hand its song has stopped. This joy alone sings when it is found, and the tighter it is held the sweeter its music, for—

"The love of Jesus what it is  
None but His loved ones know."

He becomes the centre of all our delights and of all our refreshment.

## THE YEAR OF MY LORD.

### Practical Enjoyment.

When, then, is this Anno Domini to become ours? Is it already true of us as of Israel in Psalm 95. 10? "Forty years long was I grieved with that generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and have not known My ways." Have we grieved our God forty years of our life by our ignorance and unbelief? Is Luke 13. 7 true of us?

**"These three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none."**

For the last three years has Christ been specially knocking at our heart's door?

Let, then, this year be our true Anno Domini, and the one in which we enter fully "the joy of our Lord." We have been given this year by God, and its light is shining on these pages, which comes to us as a special voice from God:

**"Lord, let it alone this year also, and if it bear fruit well"**  
(Luke 13. 8).

Now is our heavenly vision, now is the time of our visitation; let us see that we do not disobey it (cf. Acts 26. 19).

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE MESSIANIC DECLARATION.

PERHAPS the most remarkable scene in the life of Christ on earth was when He proclaimed Himself the Messiah in the synagogue at Nazareth. We must picture the scene.

The synagogue was a plain building of stone, with a flat roof, the only ornamentation being a vine and fruit rudely painted round the door. Inside the general appearance was not unlike a parish school-room. There were seats at the upper end of superior construction covered with rushes, where the principal people of the village sat, and plain benches at the lower end; while in the middle of the building was a sort of raised pew, sufficiently large to hold many people; these formed the nucleus of the congregation, which could not be less than ten. There was also a pulpit

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and reading-desk, and at the south end a sort of cupboard called the ark, which contained the rolls of the Law and the Prophets that were read every Sabbath day.

In the railed off structure in the middle the elders of the village, headed by the chief rabbi, would gather. Beside the cupboard stood the "chazzan," who kept the rolls, while a third official interpreted the sacred Hebrew Scriptures into the Aramaic dialect as spoken in Nazareth.

On this memorable morning Christ took His seat on the wooden benches with His fishermen disciples, His mother and the rest of the women being behind the screen at the end.

### Twelve False—One True Messiah.

Picture, then, the Saviour as He sits there on the most momentous day of His life. He was already well known as a respected townsman, a carpenter, and a teacher come from God, but not yet as Messiah. Some twelve false Messiahs, however, had risen up in the past few years, and all had disappeared.

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The service had begun, the Psalms of David sung, and the Scripture read by the chief rabbi, and comments on it had been made. Then another portion of Scripture had to be read, and the roll of the Prophet Isaiah was handed to our Lord, who stood up and read it. It was brought by the "chazzan" from the lower end of the synagogue, and every one whom he passed tried to kiss it in reverence, until at last it was put into the hands of Jesus, who "opened the book" (Luke 4. 17).

The passage He read was known to all the Jews as one of the great Messianic messages of the Bible. So far as we know no false Messiah had dared to read it, and one can imagine the emphasis with which He now read aloud:

**"The Spirit of the Lord is upon ME, because He hath anointed ME to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent ME to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord"** (Luke 4. 18).

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Christ then rolled up the scroll and delivered it to the "chazzan," who took it back to the ark, and all eyes in the synagogue were fastened on Him, as they recognised it was the carpenter of the village who had read these wonderful words.

### The Messianic Claim.

Imagine the incredulous amazement with which they slowly understood that a fellow-townsmen now claimed to be the very Messiah, the Saviour of His people. Christ then spoke, and they listened, until He referred to the fact that in old times it was the Gentiles who were constantly blessed, and not the Jews, when such a storm of religious bigotry was raised in their hearts that the "chazzan" found it impossible to keep order. The whole congregation was filled with rage, doubting if their ears had served them aright.

To think that in their own synagogue a Nazarene should dare not only to proclaim Himself as Messiah, but to point out that He came not for Jews only, but for those accursed Gentiles who swarmed around them was too much.



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They rose up, therefore, as one man, hustled Him along to the edge of a stone quarry on the "hill where their city was built," over which they sought to hurl Him, but He, passing through their midst in Divine power, went His way.

### **A Forecast of Glory.**

Amongst those in the synagogue that day was the apostle John, and some fifty years later, when working in the marble quarries of Patmos, he had a vision (Rev. 5), and saw the throne of God, and One sitting thereon, with a roll sealed with seven seals, which no one could open. And John, mysteriously in sympathy with the scene, found the tears rolling down his cheeks, until one came to him and told him to dry them, for "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" was to open the book. So John wiped his eyes, and raised them to see this lion, but all that he beheld was "a little Lamb," the weakest animal instead of the strongest. The moment He took the book to open it John recognised in the "little Lamb" his glorified Master, the Lamb of God. How his memory would recall the last time he saw Him with a

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roll in His hand! Then He shut it and delivered it to the "chazzan;" now He takes it from the Hand of God and opens it, for He that shuts is the only One who can open.

The roll was closed in Nazareth at "the acceptable year of the Lord;" it is opened in Heaven at "the day of vengeance of our God," and only a comma divides the two. Observe again the difference between the *year* and the *day*; for while the Lord delights in mercy, judgment is His strange work.

### Our True "Anno Domini."

Let us consider what Christ does to us in our "acceptable year of the Lord"—our true Anno Domini.

The year in which we learn for the first time the full force of the words we have used so casually all our lives, but which now carry with them a Divine meaning, is to us indeed the beginning of years, the first true Anno Domini we have known.

What does Christ do for us this year? All that we need as the Saviour of poor, broken-hearted, blind, and bruised captives of sin. There is no real Anno Domini

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for contented, self-satisfied, free, rich people—none whatever!

### The Message Considered.

Count the blessings of this year one by one.

1. Our "Dominus" or Lord first **heals the broken-hearted**, and there are many around us to-day.

2. He also **delivers the captives** from the chains of sin, those chains that so often begin as imperceptible cords of silk, until we are so bound that there is no escape but through the power of His Cross.

3. There is **recovery of sight** to the blind; the opening of the eyes is everywhere connected with the Gospel of Christ. Christianity may indeed be described as an operation for spiritual cataract, for, believing the Devil's lie, man became blind towards God, and was enveloped in darkness for thousands of years, in spite of all the Divine messengers who sought to lift the veil from his eyes.

Paul at Athens describes the movements of blind men when he says: We "feel after Him, . . . though He be not far from every one of us" (Acts 17. 27).

## **THE MESSIANIC DECLARATION.**

Not until the true Light came and the "year of our Lord" arrived was preached the recovery of sight to the blind.

### **To Set at Liberty them that are Bruised.**

4. The bruised and the battered in this world's strife are surely also to be found amongst us in increasing numbers, for we are still passing through times of deep distress and sore sorrow, and the tender mercies of our Lord, His loving kindness and His never failing care fill with blessing this acceptable year of the Lord.

5. It is indeed our **year of release** (Deut. 15. 1-9). We have served many masters; henceforth we will be Christ's free men.

6. It is a **year of perfect rest** (Psa. 92. 3; Lev. 25. 5), to which our hearts have long been strangers. Rest and peace reign and rule in a way unknown to all others in the hearts of those who have entered their true Anno Domini. There is no such rest possible to a human heart as when God's kingdom comes, and Christ is enthroned as its Lord.

7. Not only so, but this acceptable

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year is a **year of unprecedented results** (Gen. 26. 12), and our lives, which may have been very barren, begin to respond to the new energy, the new power, and the new seed which has been sown in our hearts.

8. It is a **year of recompense** (Isa. 34. 8), when our many lost past years are forgotten in the fulness of the present; when the years that "the palmerworm, the locust, and the cankerworm have eaten" (Joel 1. 4) are restored to us in double measure. For who can tell the blessing that one year may contain when our hearts at last are in tune with the Infinite, and the year of our redemption has at length come? (Isa. 63. 4).

### **The Divine Magnet.**

No wonder that such a Gospel, so far from being something that repels, is rather a magnet that attracts all at any rate who are in need. "I will draw all men unto Me" (John 13. 32) describes the magnetic power of the Cross.

Above all, it is, as we have said, the year of our Jubilee, the never-to-be-forgotten time when our bonds are burst, our

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prison doors opened, our chains struck off, and we are bid to

**“Stand fast in the liberty where -  
with Christ has made us free”**  
(Gal. 5. 1).

It is thus that God crowns this year to us with His kindness, and as we enter this land overflowing with milk and honey we find that the fruits of it are all ours, and that we are given “all things richly to enjoy.”

In writing for the distressed, the depressed, the downcast, the sick, and for the aged, I can understand that it is difficult for these last to believe that in one year God can restore to them the many years that the locust has eaten, and so obliterate the wasted desert of our past lives that we may

**“be satisfied, and praise the Name  
of the Lord our God that hath  
dealt wondrously with us, so that  
His people shall never be ashamed”**  
(Joel 2. 26).

This is, however, true, and those to whom this year becomes their acceptable Anno Domini will find it so, and it is in

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the hope and the firm belief of this truth that this message is sent forth.

“O satisfy us” is the prayer of Moses, the man of God, “early with Thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.” Then,

“Make us glad according to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us” (Psa. 90. 14-17).

That this prayer may be fulfilled in the experience of all is my earnest desire.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### CHRIST, THE GOOD PHYSICIAN.

THE sacred narrative in the Gospels, directly inspired of God, does not allow the writers to use adjectives.\* We do not therefore read of the "Good" Physician. On one occasion when a young ruler accosted the Lord as "Good Master," he was at once corrected: "Why callest thou Me good? there is One good, that is God" (Matt. 19. 17).

But we know that the Physician who recovers sight to the blind, sets at liberty those that are bruised, binds up wounds with oil and wine, and heals all manner of diseases is a good as well as a great Physician; and as this volume lays no claim to the direct inspiration of the Word of God, it may be permissible for us to call the Lord (the Dominus of whom we have spoken) our Good Physician.

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\* The Good Shepherd is uttered by the Master, and is not an expression of the evangelist.



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### **“Spirit, and Soul, and Body.”**

He can indeed perform really remarkable cures, and especially in cases otherwise incurable. How many sufferers “given up by all the doctors” have subsequently been cured by Christ. In the Gospel days, the woman who had spent all her living on physicians for twelve years was instantly cured by touching the Good Physician in faith; and, thank God, His Divine power is not less to-day, and its effects are everywhere seen in body, soul, and spirit.

We have, however, and especially since the wonderful advance in medicine, which is one of the bright spots of the great War, many very skilled healers of bodily diseases, but we have still few physicians for mental sufferers, and none for really wounded spirits. It is in these last, however, that the unique power of our Good Physician is most displayed.

### **War Shock—Wounded Spirit.**

The distracted, despairing, and many of the afflicted in spirit find their ills disappear and their powers restored in the

## CHRIST, THE GOOD PHYSICIAN.

healing knowledge and skill of the Good Physician. Very bad cases of war shock have been thus cured; and the "wounded spirit" which none can bear is healed. In incurable grief which no human skill can reach, and from which the spirit is veritably bleeding to death, the touch of Christ brings the sweetest and deepest and lasting consolation. He is the only One who can cure the ills of old age.

He is the Saviour of the body as well as of the soul. Indeed the very bodies of those who have truly entered their Anno Domini are said to be "members of Christ" (1 Cor. 6. 15). He is also "the health of our countenance and our God," as we have just heard in the last chapter in the declaration at Nazareth when He proclaimed the first true Anno Domini, the acceptable year of the Lord.

When we enter this year, which if not already done we should all do *here and now*, it will prove the best year in our lives; for our Dominus is not only our Saviour, but our Physician, curing all diseases, and even "bringing every thought into subjection unto Himself" (2 Cor. 10. 5).

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### **The Vital Touch.**

For those of my readers who have not yet entered this glorious year, but fain would do so, I would ask: Can you not hear His voice calling you by name at this moment, as when in the garden of the new tomb He said "Mary?" Can you not feel Him knocking at the door of your heart? Mary turned when He spoke to her, and said, "Rabboni." And when we turn and say, "My Master, my Lord, my Dominus," this is our conversion—for conversion means turning round—and this is the entrance into our acceptable Anno Domini. For "whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10. 13). Indeed, if we hear His voice we are His sheep, and are henceforth obedient to His Word.

### **Heart, not Head.**

All this is an affair of the heart, and not of the head, and it is remarkable that it was not in the Scriptural exposition, even when given by Christ, as they walked that the two disciples knew their Dominus, but when they were at supper with Him. It

## **CHRIST, THE GOOD PHYSICIAN.**

is remarkable that the story of Emmaus is repeated at Laodicea; and if Christ is to be known to us He must sup with us, as with the two disciples, and we with Him.

The reason why Mary turned and said, "My Master," and thus met Christ before any of the apostolic band, was because the voice that called "Mary" reached her heart rather than her head; and it is with the heart that man "believes unto righteousness" to-day.

We are told in 2 Corinthians 4. 6 that God who illumines the face of Jesus Christ with His glory "shines in our hearts" that we may see it. It is only by Divine power that we can see our Divine Lord, and the same light that shines in Christ's face must shine in every heart that thus enters its true Anno Domini.

### **Glory and Humility.**

We are not worthy of such grace, and none know this more than those whom it surrounds like a bursting sea, and who feel themselves in the grip of a "love that will not let them go." "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man," is

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often the language of those who most desire Him. It is Christ's glory alone that produces true humility.

“The more Thy glory strikes mine eyes,  
The humbler I shall lie;  
Thus while I sink my joys shall rise  
Immeasurably high.”

Many, like Job, have searched for the Lord with the head, and in their failure bitterly cried: “Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!” But He works “on the left hand” (Job 23. 9), and though we may not always trace Him with the reason we can feel Him, for here is “the hidden man of the heart,” and He is nearest to those who are of a humble and contrite spirit.

### **The Issues of Life.**

It is the heart out of which are the issues of life; it is the heart for which our Lord asks, and it is the human heart that must be the seat of His Divine throne. The work may be mysterious, but it is vital; the change is radical, and there is no man that enters his acceptable year without knowing it. He may not be

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able to argue about it, or intellectually grasp the cause that produces it, but his burning heart and his thankful spirit testify to the entrance of light into the soul; and thus with his Lord above and the Holy Ghost within, renewing his spirit, enlarging his mind, and strengthening his body, he begins to understand the care of the good Physician.

### Light at Eventide.

I will add one word as to His care in old age. We all remember the words of the Psalmist regarding age:

**“The days of your years are three-score years and ten”** (Psa. 90. 10),

and to-day, in spite of our increased knowledge, seventy-five is still looked upon as the duration of average human life. But although life may not often be prolonged after eighty years, there is no doubt whatever that old age, looked at generally, is very much healthier and happier than it was, and a great many more old people are found able to enjoy their closing days in the eventide of life than was formerly the case.

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### Causes of Contentment.

Turning for one moment in this connection to some of the simpler causes for this we notice that most who thus enjoy the last years of life are small eaters, good sleepers, consume little or no alcohol, and have good digestions. They are mostly of quiet and peaceful dispositions and fair mental powers, for there can be no doubt that the moderate development of the mind tends to prolong life. As time creeps on the will becomes weaker and habits become stronger, and it often happens towards the close little but an automaton is left; so that those who really die of old age as contrasted with disease are really launched into Eternity with a very gentle hand. This death from old age robs our great enemy of many of its painful features. One day the old man is happy and comfortable, the next he is gone. The thoughts in a Christian old age become happier and simpler, and the truths of which I here write more real and precious to the soul.

Browning's cheering words to the old are well justified:

“Grow old along with me;  
The best is yet to be

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The last, for which the first was made.

My times are in Thy hand,  
Perfect the whole as planned.

Trust God, see all, be not afraid.”

### Happy Old Age.

An easy *conscience*, a *heart* at peace with God, and a contented *mind* are three requisites for a happy old age, and they are the birthright, and should be the possession of all who have truly entered their Anno Domini. The *conscience* is set free by resting on those blessed words: “Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool” (Isa. 1. 18). “I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins” (Isa. 43. 25).

The *heart* rejoices in God’s love, and reflects it as sunshine on those around.

The *mind* is not only contented, but overflowing with praise in the contemplation of the present blessings, which the grace of God brings, and the future glories soon to be entered upon.

These are the blessed privileges of a happy old age.



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It may be that many aged Christians have no such feelings, and present a far different picture. Perhaps so; but whose fault is it? Is it not the result of our own carelessness and sin when we come short of the peace and joy that steadfast faith in the Lord Jesus Christ secures?

Old age ceases to be old age when it becomes a second childhood; not in the foolishness and restlessness of youth, but in the other side of childhood that may now be beautifully reproduced—in its trustfulness, its confiding love, its serene brow, its ready smile, for all these are lovely in old age, combined as they often are with the wisdom of a lifetime. The experience amassed may be helpfully used in wise and loving counsel, and the old man become the trusted guide of the house. To have friends, one must show oneself friendly, and grandfather can easily make himself greatly beloved by his stories, by his counsels, by his ready smile and love for all, and by his trust in God at all times.

### **Show Love—Get Love.**

Those who have seen such a one in the family know the calm and peace that is

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diffused by one bright spirit. The young are strengthened, the elder ones helped and encouraged, and all benefit by their patience and experience.

The mistake that some aged people often make is that they think that if they have toiled and worked for others all their lives others now should work for them. This is a form of selfishness which must be absolutely banished from the mind if happiness is to be preserved. The best way to get love and care is to show love, and though the time for work may have passed, the time for love and kindness never has.

It is thus that our Good Physician cures old age.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### MY ACCEPTABLE YEAR.

IF any have entered into this for themselves, so that the "Dominus" of the "Anno" is also the Lord of the heart, this old quatrain will best express their feelings:

"If all the earthe was paper white,  
And all the sea were incke;  
'T were not inough for me to write  
As my poor heart doth thinke."

Or in more modern language:

"Could I with ink the ocean fill,  
Were the whole sky of parchment made,  
Were every stick on earth a quill,  
And every man a scribe by trade;  
To write the love of God to man  
Would drain the ocean dry;  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole  
Though stretched from sky to sky."

For this Anno Domini is radiant with an unearthly light, warmed with a heavenly love, and serene with the peace of God.

## MY ACCEPTABLE YEAR.

One day is as a thousand years when seen through God's microscope, and my one acceptable year is more to me than all that have gone before!

In times of great joy, according to Psalm 114. 1-4, we are assured that the most stolid, grave, matter-of-fact people "skip like rams" as they come out of Egypt into this Canaan of delights; for in this acceptable year we begin "to be merry" in a manner of which the "far country" knows nothing.

The doing of our own wills left us weary, heavy laden, and starving by the swine trough, but yielding to the will of God brings us into His banqueting house, clothes and feeds us with a happiness that never ends.

### The Day—The Year.

In the great War the Germans are always talking of "*Der Tag*" (the day) which was to be the consummation of all their aspirations for generations;\* but for us "*Das Jahr*" (the year) is better—the

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\* In Scripture "the day" is associated (and probably also now) with Divine judgment of the day of vengeance of our God; whereas "the year" is associated with blessing and acceptance.

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“acceptable year of the Lord”—the year of *my* Lord when “His kingdom comes,” and we cry in the language of the old Jubilee singers:

“O reign, O reign, O reign, my Saviour!  
Reign, Massa Jesus, reign;  
O reign, O reign in my poor heart,  
Reign, Massa Jesus, reign!”

We may indeed be so full of happiness, “skipping like rams,” that some seeing with amazement our unaccustomed joy asks us what is the matter, and we can only reply: “This is my first, true ‘Anno Domini;’ it is the acceptable year of *my* Lord.”

### “Saving Health.”

God has so shone into our hearts that His saving health is known among all nations. It is not on my circumstances He shines, but in my heart, and this gives me “saving health” from all the cares of life.

We are indeed “in Christ,” we are “new creatures,” and old things have become new. In the language of the beloved John my Lord “makes all things new;” for it is not that He makes all

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new things; the old things are still there, but are so transformed by the bliss into which I have entered that my old circumstances, surroundings, work, pleasures, religion, and friends have all become new to me.

We thus anticipate the future in the joy of our present. "The beauty of the Lord is upon us," "the beauty of holiness"—an expression often distorted to mean, "the holiness of beauty;" the truth being not that beauty is holy, but that holiness is beautiful.

The sharp distinction, so insisted on before I knew my Lord, between sacred and secular things, each being kept severely in its proper place, entirely disappears in the new light I now enjoy. No longer am I only fed once a week with spiritual food on a Sunday morning, but I "go in and out" all the days of my life, and find pasture everywhere.

### New Life—New Claims.

This new life introduces also new claims. I not only believe, but I belong. I am in a kingdom, the rule of a *Lord* that has come into my heart. Self is absolutely

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displaced from the throne of life, in my purposes and hopes, and Another is enthroned for the first time. This amounts to unqualified surrender of myself; I become enslaved to God, and so far as I can see I shall never be set free from this slavery. It is so permanent that it continues into the Eternal State, for

**“His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face”** (Rev. 22. 3).

As Dr. HANDLEY MOULE so beautifully points out, if I fail to recognise this to the full, and fail to carry this recognition into the inner habit of everyday thought and purpose, there will be in every aspect of my Lord to me something out of order and some lack of rest.

### **Under the Yoke.**

It is only as servants “under the yoke” that we find rest unto our souls. Every day and every hour, therefore, I look upon Jesus Christ as my Lord and Master. One who knew this well, GEORGE HERBERT, found his best loved aspect of his Saviour was: “My Master Jesus—an oriental

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fragrancy, my Master.” Let me, like the poet, wear this word next my heart, next my will, and let it sink deeper into the springs of both every day.

To quote Dr. MOULE: “Let me get up every morning with this for the instantaneous thought, that my Master wakes me; I wake, I rest His property. Before I go out to plough or feed, or whatever it may be, upon His domain let me with reverence and deep joy go into His private chamber, as it were, and avow Him as my Master, my Possessor, absolutely and constantly; supremely entitled to order me about all day, and if He pleases not to thank me at the close. Let me put the neck of self beneath His feet, and rise up bearing not the cross only, which is another thought, but the yoke—implement of menial service, pledge of readiness to do or to carry anything; and let me continually, in the habit of my thought, be coming again into that Presence chamber to renew the act of that dedication and submission.”

### **His Faithful Slave.**

“How delightful the thought that hands or head or voice are indeed the implements



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of the faithful slave kept at work for such an Owner. Is it unlooked for additional service? It is the Master's sudden call; I am wanted, and wanted by Him; let me rise with alacrity at His lightest bidding and ask His pleasure. Is it the miscellaneous intercourse of life? Let my mental habit be so full of my Master that I shall be on the watch always and everywhere, to be used by Him or to stand and wait close to Him as He pleases, always knowing myself to be His property, and glad indeed so to be. Let others always know where to find me, as the phrase is, because I am bound and anchored to His blessed will by the realised and heart-welcome fact of this thrice holy, entire, and literal slavery.' '\*

### He Knows—He Cares.

Even if laid low with sickness, accident, bereavement, or old age, and seemingly useless for my Master, I ask no questions. "He knows" is enough for me, for He is the Lord of my life and being.

Aristotle, speaking of slavery, points out that a slave "is a part of his master, as it were; a living though separated

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\* "Christian Sanctity."

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portion of his body;” so that in no action of life is he for one moment an independent being. And we must ever remember that in our Passover feast it is the slave that shares the holy meal, while the hired servant is shut out altogether.

Such then are some of the wonderful results that issue from my acceptable year.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### INWARD SANCTITY.

THE source of inward sanctity, lying as we have seen in the Kingdom of God within, is a realised surrender to Another that is absolutely contrary to men's thoughts. Everywhere independence is claimed, and the cry is, "Who is lord over us?" That we are our own masters is absolutely asserted by those who do not hesitate to date their letters with the year of the *Lord*.

All Divine authority is entirely alien and repugnant to modern thought. But for the Christian the Lord does not so much domineer, which is a bad sort of word, but dominate all his thoughts and actions. Strangely enough, those who so boldly proclaim their freedom from Divine law obey earthly lords, and are slaves too often to debasing passions, unconsciously led captive by the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The acceptable year of the Lord is the

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dawn on the soul of "the Blessed Vision." There is no peace like the peace of a surrendered heart, there is no joy like the joy of a captured spirit, there is no life to equal the life of a slave to God.

### **Ideal Slavery.**

The very thought of lordship breathes the deepest rest. Hired servants, independent as they are, can leave their master. The slave is his property for life. All the evil with which the word "slavery" is surrounded is derived from the evil exercise of lordship, and the fact that the lord is merely human. Once the master is perfect and Divine slavery becomes the ideal condition. Indeed we may venture on the paradox that perfect freedom is only known to the slaves of Jesus Christ.

All may address Christ as Rabbi, but only the captured heart of Mary used the word Rabboni, which is "my Master." The delight of being able to say this is untold. I came across a singular instance of it a short time ago.

### **A Slave of Jesus Christ.**

I happened to find myself one afternoon, as a comparative stranger, at a well known

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bishop's, whose lawns were thronged with ecclesiastics of all orders, accompanied by their wives and friends in radiant garments. I was feeling rather in a solitary condition, when a friend introduced to me a tall young girl full of life and spirits, and to all appearance one of the brightest and gayest there. She told me she lived in the country with her parents as an only child, and I said casually enough: "But would you not like to come up to London for a change?" "Oh, no!" she said with a bright smile, "I am quite happy where I am." And then, suddenly unconsciously moved by some inward power, I asked her what was indeed an extraordinary question, considering that I was absolutely ignorant of her religious feelings, and had not even known her name for more than five minutes. I think it was something in the character of her smile that brought the question to my lips.

"There is nothing so delightful as doing the will of God, is there?" said I.

She turned to me at once, and with radiant eyes said with intense feeling: "Ah! no, nothing. But how do you know that? It is the joy of my life," and

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suddenly I found I was in the unexpected presence of a slave of Jesus Christ, one of God's dear children who knew her Lord and had entered her "acceptable year." She told me that she found it impossible to make people understand what she was talking about; her object in life and the source of her happiness seemed alike incomprehensible to them.

This is now years ago, but the joy and brightness of that slave of Christ Jesus grows no less, and in hours of happy converse I have never ceased to wonder at the way we came to know each other's secret on that bishop's lawn.

### **The Name on the Forehead.**

We are told in Revelation 22. 4 that by and by we are to have our Lord's Name written on our foreheads. It seems to me that as we antedate so much, we surely may do so in this, for the slaves of Christ Jesus should bear the impress of that Name even now. Indeed I am sure it should be so, for I am not one of those who think it a virtue to conceal their joys and hide the light which is from Heaven. Had my young friend done so

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on that afternoon we should never have really known each other, and should have lost all the happy times we have enjoyed since; but somehow I think I saw that Name on her bright face.

“Let the dry land *appear*” is the command in Genesis 1. 9. It is not enough that it should be there; it must be shown above the face of the waters. Now, my aged, my distressed, sorrowing, and suffering friend, you who have been submerged so long under the water floods, let this word come home to you who have now got the “Dominus” in your heart, but so far have shown little of His Name on your face, and let the joy that is now yours *appear* to all men.

### “The Health of my Countenance.”

Psalm 43. 5 declares that Jehovah is not only “my God,” which to His praise is true of you, but is also “the health of my countenance.” Let this also henceforth be equally true of you, and the testimony of all who know you. His Name in the forehead, that is to say, seen by all but yourself; His joy apparent, so that others see whenever they meet you whose you

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are and whom you serve; His health in your countenance, in the brightness, the peace, the joy, and the love of your life and of your looks.

I have mentioned love, for above all, on the top of all else, we must "put on charity" if we are to be truly beautiful. It is to be the innermost garment of the soul in the shrine where Christ dwells, as well as the outermost covering that first meets the eye of all who see us. It is indeed the constant desire of the one who has truly seen his Lord to be fully like Him by His grace, and it is this inward sanctity that makes us beautiful.

### **An Emphatic "Never."**

To quote Bishop MOULE: "We aim at nothing less than to walk with God all the day long, to abide every hour in Christ, and He and His words in us; 'to live no longer to ourselves, but to Him who died for us and rose again' (2 Cor. 5. 15). We aim to yield ourselves to God, as the unregenerate will yields itself to sin and to self; to have 'every thought brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ' (2 Cor. 10. 5)



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—every thought, every movement of the inner world; never, nevermore to speak evil of any man; never to lose patience; never to trifle with wrong, whether impurity, untruth, or unkindness; never in any known thing to evade our Master's will; never to be ashamed of His Name. I emphasise again and again this 'never,' for there is the point. Failure when it comes across this aim will be a deeply conscious discord, it will be a joy lost, it will be the missing of a Divine smile, the loss of the light of the countenance of the king (Prov. 16. 15). We cannot possibly rest short of a daily, hourly, continuous walk with God in Christ, by the grace of the Holy Ghost. It is possible to cast every care on Him daily and to be at peace amidst the pressure; it is possible to have the affections, the imaginations purified through faith in a profound and practical sense; it is possible to see the will of God in everything and to find it, as one has said, 'no longer a sigh but a song;' it is possible in the world of inner act and motion to put away, to get put away *'all* bitterness and wrath

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and anger, and evil speaking,' daily and hourly.' '\*

### **The Ideal Divine Life.**

This ideal of a Divine life must not remain a mere ideal. It must be in some true and solid sense our experience and become our life. For since we absolutely belong to Him, His slaves for His work, He is not only able, but He greatly cares to keep our spirits. We have committed ourselves to our Master's custody, and rejoice to know, not only that He has clasped our hand in love with a clasp that is returned, but that according to the Roman custom the two hands are joined together in the strong bond of a real and lawful custody. In this close connection we are entitled to look into our Master's face, into His heart, and into His will, knowing that He sees our inmost being.

The secret of discipleship is the ear opened morning by morning to hear as the learner. It is only thus that we are fit to teach. If Christ is thus closer than a brother, we learn not only to listen but

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\* "Christian Sanctity."

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to talk; to speak at all times, and with perfect freedom to our Lord and Master. He has become to us a reality that requires no analysis. He is just Himself, and we come to Him, and naturally come away strong where we were weak, happy where we were miserable, and pure where our aim was doubtful. We have at last seen that sacred One who is the secret of our inward sanctity. He is now a reality, a fact attainable and solid, able to be touched and clasped by the hand of faith, and is none other than our Lord and Master Himself "dwelling in our hearts by faith."

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## CHAPTER IX.

### NEVER DESPAIR.

“*Nil desperandum,*” “Never say die,” are well known mottoes dear to our race, and though in the mercy of God we have been nationally preserved for so long from ever being in our last extremity as a country, there can be no doubt that individually and in the private lives of hundreds all resources have at times come to an end for those who have not got the one resource that is inexhaustible at their disposal—THE LIVING GOD.

Many of us, however, are more or less faint-hearted and inclined to despair long before we get to our “last ditch.” Old age, depressing circumstances, isolation, and ill health all tend to sap our courage, to undermine our hope, and often to make us prematurely old.

With regard to remedies, beginning with the very simplest, I notice that the BISHOP OF BRISTOL has given us three

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very quaint maxims for keeping cheerful in old age:

1. To have had good parents.
2. To be brought up in the country.
3. To turn on the electric light when things look black at night.

It may seem to some that these remarks are somewhat elementary even for a bishop, but we will advance to others of a deeper character.

### **Pleasant Places—My Lot.**

We read in Psalm 16. 11: "Thou wilt show me the path of life." It is very interesting to see how this is shown, which is explained in the fifth and sixth verses. "Thou maintainest my lot; the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places." This requires explanation.

In Palestine each village was a small commune, and on a certain day, at the beginning of the year, the villagers met for the annual allotment of the village lands. The lots were numbered, and each lot contained ten lines, and as the land was divided as fairly and evenly as possible, some of the lines would be in good ground and some in bad, so as to make the land

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equal. The number of each lot was written on a small stone, and the stones were placed in a bag, which was held by the rabbi seated at the door of the village synagogue, the farmers standing all around him. He would then call out a small boy from the crowd, and tell him to pick a stone out of the bag and hand it to the first farmer in the row. The moment the man thus got his lot for the year he went off to see what the lines were like, and there was often great disappointment. But whether mostly good or bad they were his for the year; they were never all good.

We now begin to understand our Psalm. In verse 5: "Thou maintainest (or better, obtainest) my lot, (therefore) the (ten) lines are (all) fallen unto me in pleasant places." When I obtain my own lot of life by dipping in the bag of fate for myself, the result is very uncertain, and at best will be a mixture of good and evil; but when God chooses for me the path of life, when my times are really in His hand, when He really directs my path (Prov. 3. 6), then and then alone will "I bless the Lord at all times, and His praise will continually be in my

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mouth'' (Psa. 34. 1), for all the different lines in my lot will prove to be good and pleasant because they are His choosing, and I would have none of them altered.

### **The Levelled Path.**

We read in Isaiah 26. 7: "Thou dost level the path of the just." When God levels our path we do not feel the ups and downs that may naturally lie in it.

But there is more about our path than this. We read in Proverbs 4. 18:

**"The path of the just is as the light of the dawn (R.V., margin) that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."**

This is a beautiful simile to show that our humble lives, if ordered aright by God and directed by His will, become to the world at large, which lies in darkness, harbingers of the Coming Day, when "the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. 4. 2).

### **The Brightening Outlook.**

No despair is possible with such an outlook when once it is realised in the soul, and we have ever the assurance it

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is better further on, or as Browning tells us in some well-known words:

“The best is yet to be. . . .  
Trust God, see all, be not afraid.”

Or as Terstegen sings:

“Now in the haven of untroubled rest  
I land at last;  
The hunger and the thirst and weary quest  
For ever past.  
There, Lord, to lose in bliss of Thine  
embrace  
The recreant will;  
There, in the radiance of Thy blessed face,  
Be hushed and still;  
There, speechless at Thy pierced feet,  
See none and nought beside,  
And know but this—that Thou art sweet,  
That I am satisfied.”

In Genesis 1. 31 we find that at the close of the Creation when all things were completed, behold, it was very good. It took many dark evenings as well as bright mornings to reach this point, but the result is worth it; and although the dawn of the morning in some parts of our lives may be very dim, we know the light will increase and the radiance brighten into the perfect



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day, so that "at eventime it shall be light" (Zech. 14. 7), recalling the old-fashioned lines:

"They call it 'going down the hill'  
When we are growing old,  
And speak with mournful accents,  
When our years are nearly told.  
They sigh when talking of the past,  
The days that used to be,  
As if the future were not bright  
With immortality.

But though in truth the outward man  
Must perish and decay,  
The inner man is yet renewed  
By grace from day to day.  
They who are planted by the Lord,  
Unshaken in their root,  
E'en in old age shall flourish still,  
And still shall bring forth fruit.

And when the eye, now dim with age,  
Shall once behold the King,  
And ears now dull of sense shall hear  
The harps of Heaven ring,  
And on the head now hoary  
Shall rest the crown of gold,  
Then shall be known the lasting joy  
Of never growing old."

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### “Refuge” and “Strength.”

In all times of trouble, in all seasons of distress—

**“God is our refuge and strength,  
and a very present help in trouble”**  
(Psa. 46. 1).

A refuge is not the same as strength. The verse means that we are protected from half our trouble, and strengthened to bear the rest. With regard to the refuge, we recall the phrase of William Tyndall, the English martyr: “They so noosed (nestled) themselves in Him, as a child would in a nurse’s arms, that He was round them, and all the difficult circumstances were round Him.”

It is thus our troubles and our trials yield us joy, in that they drive us to the arms of Christ.

“For sorrow is the sorrow of an hour,  
And is eternal love;  
The dusky bud enfolds the glorious flower  
For God’s delight above.  
Yet sweeter even now to see Thy face,  
To find Thee now my rest—  
My sorrow comforted in Thine embrace,  
And soothed upon Thy breast.

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Lord, there to weep is better than the  
joy  
Of all the sons of men ;  
For there I know the love without alloy,  
I cannot lose again.'—*H. Suso.*

### **Songs of Deliverance.**

But we get more than this. We are brought out of our troubles and compassed about with songs of deliverance. These songs of praise, when prospects brighten, may be songs of faith or of experience. The one comes while still in trouble, the other after it is over. The hymn of triumph on the banks of the Red Sea was after all the enemies had gone; but the hymn at the last supper was one of faith while they were yet there. It is the lark at sunrise that sings the song of faith in the glories of the coming day. It is the nightingale at sunset that returns thanks for the brightness of the day that is past.

### **Manufactured Clouds.**

We must remember, too, with regard to troubles, that though God does send clouds we are large manufacturers of them

## NEVER DESPAIR.

ourselves. No bow is promised in these; His bow with the seven colours of His love shed abroad in our hearts (Rom. 5. 5) is only seen in clouds of His sending; the order being the cloud, the bow, the love, and the sun. These clouds of God are carefully balanced. Job asks: "Dost thou know the balancing of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge?" And in 1 Corinthians 10. 13, we read:

**"God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."**

This is the silver lining which is ever seen in God's clouds.

### **Infectious Smiles.**

No wonder, then, that the Christian can smile and sing even in trouble with such a God and such a prospect? And we must remember that smiles are very infectious, and the sight of them under such circumstances not only bring glory to God, but help others in trouble.

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“ Just smile awhile,  
And while you smile, another smiles,  
And soon there will be miles and miles  
of smiles,  
And life becomes worth while  
Because you smile.”

Or in nobler words than this cheerful  
rhymster :

“O Lord, in my songs I have praised Thee  
For all that was sad and was fair,  
And now a new song would I sing Thee,  
A song that is wondrous and rare ;  
A song of the heart that is broken,  
A song of the sighs and the tears,  
The sickness, the want, and the sadness  
Of the days of our pilgrimage years.  
Sweet sings the great choir of sorrow,  
The songs of the gladness untold,  
To Him on the throne of His glory,  
Who wept in the days of old.”—*H. Suso.*

### **Clouds Produce Character.**

Observe again, God's bow is never seen  
in a blue sky. There must be a cloud if  
its glories are visible. All sunshine makes  
a desert. There can be no doubt whatever  
of the great effects of our cloudy English  
skies upon the English character. The go,

## NEVER DESPAIR.

the grit, the courage, the endurance are not made by blue skies and blazing suns, they are the product of driving rain and east winds.

The servants of the Lord are blessed who stand by night in the House of the Lord (Psa. 134. 1). It is then indeed we are nearest to Him, when all around is dark and silent, when the wishes of the heart are made known to our beloved Lord, and though our aspirations may never materialise into deeds, He whispers now, as of old, "Thou didst well in that it was in thine heart" (2 Chron. 6. 8).

### "Songs in the Night."

We should doubtless rejoice *always*, but songs in the night are wholly Divine, and as at Philippi they work miracles. Never in Heaven can there be songs of such a character, as there is no night there.

Perhaps one of the sweetest night songs is the following, written by a dear friend, now in the presence of her Lord.

"We thank Thee, Lord, for weary days,  
When desert springs were dry,  
And first we knew what depth of need  
Thy love could satisfy.

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Days when beneath the desert sun,  
Along the toilsome road,  
O'er roughest ways we walked with One,  
That One the Son of God.

We thank Thee for that rest in Him  
The weary only know—  
The perfect, wondrous sympathy  
We needs must learn below.

We know Him as we could not know  
Through Heaven's golden years;  
We there shall see His glorious face,  
But Mary saw His tears.

The touch that heals the broken heart  
Is never felt above;  
His angels know His blessedness,  
His way-worn saints His love.

When in the glory and the rest  
We joyfully adore,  
Remembering the desert way  
We yet shall praise Him more.

Remembering how, amidst our toil,  
Our conflict and our sin,  
He brought the water for our thirst  
It cost His blood to win.

And now in perfect peace we go  
Along the way He trod,  
Still learning from all need below  
Depths of the heart of God.''

## NEVER DESPAIR.

It may be, however, the heart has been so far tried that no song can for the moment rise to the lips. Such a one is absolutely broken in heart, and it may be the broken heart has not yet been bound up.

### **Broken—for His Glory.**

We must remember that God uses broken things for His glory.

It was only when JACOB'S natural strength was gone that God clothed him with spiritual power.

It was a broken ROCK at Horeb that gave the stream in the desert.

It was when GIDEON'S pitchers were broken that the hidden light shone forth.

It was only as the FIVE LOAVES were broken that the bread was multiplied.

It was only as the PRECIOUS BODY of our Lord was broken that His life was poured out for souls to drink and live.

The very CORN OF WHEAT that was broken up by death bore much fruit.

God must have broken things; broken it may be in health, in reputation, in ambition, in ideals, in affections, in 'self-will, and these can be used for the glory of God.



## GOD OVER ALL.

The souls of such sufferers are ever crying out for the living God. Faith, we know, is the assurance of the reality of the invisible. It pleases God and brings Salvation; but in time of trouble something more is needed, for to know the reality of God is not necessarily to know God. Philip had no doubt of the reality of his Lord, yet, "Hast thou not known Me, Philip?" (John 14. 9).

We are very fond in our conversation, in our prayers, and in our hymns of speaking of our future as a scene where faith shall be changed to sight, and prayer to praise, and we sing:

“Far from these narrow scenes of night  
Unbounded glories rise,  
And realms of infinite delight  
Unknown to mortal eyes.

Fair distant land, could now our eyes  
But half thy charms explore,  
How would our spirits long to rise,  
And dwell on earth no more!”

But the only remedy for a broken heart is to enjoy that distant land, that future life *here and now*; so that to-day our faith is changed to spiritual sight, and prayer to

## NEVER DESPAIR.

the praise that the presence of God alone produces.

### The "Rock" and the "Bosom."

It is true that he who hears Christ's words stands upon a rock, but he who knows the love of Jesus has his head upon His bosom; and it needs no words of mine to say which of the two is the better resting-place for a sorrow-bowed head and a broken heart.

It is the personal knowledge of God and the enjoyment of the love of Christ which passes knowledge which leads us never to despair.

In Psalm 86 we read in verse 7 about "*my* trouble," and in verse 2 we find the remedy in "*my* God," and when the "*my*" in the one verse is as strong and real as in the other the remedy is effectual.

Nothing after all soothes an agitated child like its mother's breast. Counsels and words may do much to help it in its ordinary life, but the "love that will not let me go" must be personally known and enjoyed if some of the hearts who read these pages are ever to be healed.

# GOD OVER ALL.

## CHAPTER X.

### INFINITE BLISS.

WE have spoken of the power of living in Eternity now, and of singing down here on earth songs at midnight, and of the comforts and consolations of the love of God in the hearts of those to whom this and each succeeding year is a true Anno Domini, and it only remains for us in this closing chapter to consider one or two points of great interest, and so "count our blessings one by one," both in prospect and retrospect.

#### **Retrospective.**

Looking backwards it does us untold good to contrast in quiet meditation our present happy condition with that before we reached the acceptable year of our Lord. My heart rejoices at the wonderful change in all my life and prospects. For this cause and with this experience I sing:

## INFINITE BLISS.

“Marvel not that Christ in glory  
All my inmost heart hath won ;  
Not a star to cheer my darkness,  
But a light beyond the sun.  
All below lies dark and shadowed,  
Nothing there to claim my heart,  
Save the lonely track of sorrow,  
Where of old He walked apart.  
I have seen the face of Jesus—  
Tell me not of aught beside ;  
I have heard the voice of Jesus—  
All my soul is satisfied.  
In the radiance of the glory  
First I saw His blessed face,  
And for ever shall that glory  
Be my home, my dwelling-place.”

### **Prospective.**

All my prospects must, of course, be apprehended now by faith and by spiritual sight ; but there is a time before us when all this shall be changed, when we shall actually and literally enter the joy of our Lord in new and glorified bodies, in His very likeness, to dwell with Him for ever. Then, indeed, will it be seen how perfectly God's great organ, set up in creation and so magnificently played in

## GOD OVER ALL.

the closing psalms, though marred by sin, has been repaired by grace.

We know that the human voice was hushed in Eden by sin, and though all creation might praise the Lord the *vox humana* stop of the organ was mute. But the new song of the praise of the redeemed in Heaven, as even now the midnight psalm shall testify to that grace of God, who having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself has at the same time put a new song into our lips, even praise unto our God. Through God's mercy we rejoice as we look forward to this time, to remember that we shall join in that celestial music.

### **Sorrow Before Song.**

In the infinite bliss (which is the subject of this chapter) that lies before us, one specially trained choir of one hundred and forty and four thousand voices (Rev. 14. 3) will sing a song that no one else can even learn, and this song was taught them in the great tribulation. Sorrow is the best training for the choir invisible. No such training is possible once we reach the realms of glory. Looking forward to this, an old writer exclaims:

## INFINITE BLISS.

“O glorious day! when I shall set out on my journey to that Divine conclave in the accompany of all just spirits, and when to this troubled, this polluted scene, I shall bid farewell for ever.” Then for the first time, long accustomed as we have been to the twilight of our earthly life, shall we know the real meaning and the full glory of light. Like our Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration, shall we then be clothed in light, in a brightness and a whiteness surpassing all earthly imagery, lost by Adam on the day he fell, but of which I sometimes like to think some faint traces may even now occasionally be seen in this grey and dark world.

### **Called up Higher.**

The summons for the change into the presence of the Lord, however long looked for, is always more or less unexpected when it comes. It is beautifully described by Miss Havergal:

“At last the gentle tone was heard that falls  
In all mysterious sweetness on the ear  
That long has listened, longing without  
fear,  
Because so well it know the Voice that  
calls,

## GOD OVER ALL.

Though only once that solemn call is  
heard,  
While angel songs take up the echoes  
of the word.

‘Friend, go up higher,’ so he took that  
night

The one grand step beyond the stars  
of God,

Into the splendour shadowless and  
broad,

Into the everlasting joy and light ;

The zenith of the earthly life was come,  
What marvel that the lips were for the  
moment dumb.

What then? Eye hath not seen, ear hath  
not heard ;

Wait till thou too hast fought the  
noble strife,

And won through Jesus Christ the  
crown of life ;

Then shalt thou own the glory of the  
word,

Then as the stars for ever, ever shine

Beneath the King’s own smile, for ever,  
ever thine. ~

Or, as one of the “friends of God” sang  
long ago in the dark ages :

## INFINITE BLISS.

“His hand at last, the hand once pierced  
for me,  
For ever holdeth mine.  
O Lord! no songs, no harps of Heaven  
will be  
Sweet as one word of Thine.  
Lord! altogether lovely, then at last  
High shall the guerdon be,  
Thy kiss outweigh the weary ages past  
Of hearts that break for Thee.”

### **The Glory to Follow.**

The Coming Glory is spoken of as “an eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4. 17). I never knew what this meant until I went down to Jericho in Palestine and felt the absolute pressure of the sun on my head as a real weight that required a stout and well-made helmet to resist. I was not prepared or fitted for the heat at Jericho, but, thank God, there will be a difference with us in Heaven, for there our bodies and powers will be in such perfect harmony with the scene that the very weight spoken of is only regarded as that earnestly to be desired. Then, indeed, we reach the true, happy childhood of the sons of God, and



## GOD OVER ALL.

begin to be merry in our Father's house with a joy that is eternal.

Oh! how we who read these pages long for this Coming Day of infinite bliss, and as we discern the Morning Star high up now in the sky before the dawn, shining in our hearts and at times in our faces by faith, do we understand the beautiful words:

“Lo, as some venturer from his stars  
receiving  
Promise and presage of sublime em-  
prise,  
Wears evermore the seal of his believing  
Deep in the dark of solitary eyes,  
So even I, and with a pang more thrilling,  
So even I, and with a hope more sweet,  
Yearn for the sign, O Christ! of Thy  
fulfilling,  
Faint for the flaming of Thine advent  
feet.”—*F. W. H. Myers.*

### **Sufferings Now—Glory Then.**

But all this glory, as we are told (1 Peter 5. 10), is after we have suffered a while. For “the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward.” Let then the vision fill us with

## INFINITE BLISS.

courage and patience and endurance until  
“the morning breaks and the shadows  
flee away.”

“From glory unto glory  
Of loveliness and light,  
Of music and of rapture,  
Of power and of sight.  
From glory unto glory  
Of knowledge and of love  
Shall be the joy of progress  
Awaiting us above.”

One finds, indeed, that spiritual song is essential when our hearts realise in ever so small a measure the future that lies before us; but perhaps there is a point when in the presence of God even song ceases.

### **God Silent in His Love.**

It has been suggested that the highest form of praise, the climax of emotion, the fulness of harmony, reaches its ultimate in silence. We read in Zephaniah 3. 17 of God Himself, that when He rejoices over us with joy He “will be silent in His love.” To enter into this let us quietly listen in closing to one of the last poems of Miss Havergal that will help us to understand the thought:

## GOD OVER ALL.

‘They say there is a hollow safe and still,  
A point of coolness and repose ;  
It is the centre of a flame where life might  
    dwell  
Unharmed and unconsumed as in a  
    luminous shell  
Which the bright walls of fire enclose  
In bridgeless splendour, barrier that no  
    Could pass at will.                   [foes  
    There is a point of rest  
At the great centre of the cyclone’s force,  
A silence at its secret source,  
A little child might slumber undistressed,  
Without the ruffle of one fair curl,  
In that strange central calm  
Mid the mighty whirl.  
So in the centre of these thoughts of God  
Cyclones of power, consuming glory fire  
As we fall overawed  
Upon our faces, and are lifted higher  
By His great gentleness and carried nigher  
Those unredeemed angels, till we stand  
Even in the hollow of His hand,  
No more we lean upon His breast,  
There, there, we find a point of perfect rest  
    And glorious safety. There we see  
His face to usward, thoughts of peace  
That speak in tenderest love, that still  
    increase

## INFINITE BLISS.

With the increase of our need that never  
change  
Or fail, or falter, or forget.  
O pity infinite!  
O royal mercy free!  
O gentle climax of the depth and height  
Of God's most precious thoughts, most  
wonderful, most strange;  
For I am poor and needy, yet  
The Lord Himself, Jehovah, thinketh  
upon me."

### **Climax!**

And this the climax is reached, and it only remains for each of my readers to translate these truths of God into facts in their own experience; that thus this little book, written in prayer and faith, may fulfil its mission; and that God may through its simple words bring light into dark hearts, brighten gloomy hearts, bind up broken hearts, heal wounded hearts, speak peace to troubled hearts as they are brought into the full enjoyment of the acceptable year of their Lord—their true

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