



THE
Smitten Household:

OR,
THOUGHTS FOR THE AFFLICTED.

BY
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The Death of a Wife.

BY

WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D.D.

Words of Scripture.

I AM the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light. Surely against me is he turned, he turneth his hand against me all the day.—LAMENTATIONS 1 : 2, 3.

He hath bent his bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow. He hath caused the arrows of his quiver to enter into my reins.—LAMENTATIONS 3 : 12, 13.

He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood.—LAMENTATIONS 3 : 15.

Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger?—LAMENTATIONS 1 : 12.

And I said, my strength and my hope is perished from the Lord; remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.—LAMENTATIONS 3 : 18-22.

It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him, he is filled full with reproach. For the Lord will not cast off for ever. But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies; for he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.—LAMENTATIONS 3 : 26-33.

The Death of a Wife.

It is the ordinance of God that fallen humanity and affliction should be bound together by an indissoluble tie. No one liveth, no one ever lived, an entire stranger to pain and suffering. This common feature in our earthly lot results from the operation of a universal cause—all suffer, because all inherit a sinful nature. There is doubtless, a great difference in the sufferings of different individuals; but probably it has respect more to the kind, than the degree, of suffering; and if we leave out of view those calamities which men immediately bring upon themselves by their follies and vices, and limit ourselves to those which result necessarily from the nature we bear, and the relations we sustain, I imagine we shall find that the amount of suffering allotted

to different individuals, is dealt out in much greater equality than we are accustomed to suppose.

Of all the forms that affliction takes on, none is more common than bereavement. The reason of this is, that death is always abroad, doing his work; and as we are united to each other in endearing relations, he rarely strikes a blow that does not break cherished ties, and blast fond hopes, and perhaps leave some habitation desolate. While bereavement, in any form, is to be regarded as an affliction, the character of the affliction is modified by the nature of the relation which is sundered; and though it may be difficult to decide, in many cases, what form of bereavement will make the heart bleed most freely, yet those who have had an ample and varied experience on the subject will render a united testimony to the fact, that the dissolution of one tie produces a very *different* effect upon the heart of the mourner, from the dissolution of another. It must be acknowledged that there are a few families that seem remarkably exempt from bereavement, but it is sure to come at last; and when Death begins with such a household, he is likely to number several victims in quick succession. The very fact that they have been

spared long together, is evidence that their deaths will not be far apart.

But a little while since, I was a visitor in a dwelling in which there seemed to be as much of domestic enjoyment, as it has ever been my privilege to witness. The heads of the family were models of conjugal and parental affection and dignity. The children were beautiful examples of filial obedience and love. The brothers and sisters exhibited towards each other a loving but delicate familiarity. Even the servants showed by their deferential and confiding manner, that they felt the influence of the kindly and healthful atmosphere that surrounded them. There was cheerfulness without frivolity, there was seriousness without austerity, there was devotion without enthusiasm, there was a genial, generous freedom, without the semblance of any thing to dishonor any one of the domestic relations. My visit in that family was delightful. After I came away, it was often in my mind, as a beautiful image of that great family of which Christ himself is the Head.

I knew, indeed, that every one of its members was mortal ; and yet I half yielded to the delusion, that so much grace and loveliness, and tenderness and dignity as I had seen there, would

be almost enough to keep the monster away. Had I been obliged to answer the question, which of all the loved and loving ones it would be the hardest to spare from that dwelling, I should probably have felt constrained to say, "the female head." But there was not one among them all that promised better for life than she. Half a century had not withered the roses upon her cheeks. She moved about with as graceful and elastic a step as the youngest of her daughters. Her spirits were buoyant, her face was like bright sunshine, and not one wrinkle had come to announce that the evening of her day was drawing nigh. But not many months had elapsed from the time of my visit, before I heard that disease was in that dwelling, and the wife and mother was the subject; and *that* was quickly succeeded by the intelligence that death had followed in its footsteps, and that the wife and mother was the victim. In what I shall now write upon the dissolution of the conjugal relation, I shall keep this affecting instance of bereavement in my eye; though I shall endeavor to give my remarks, so far as I can, a general application.

Let me dwell a little on

THE GRIEF WHICH THE DEATH OF A WIFE
OCCASIONS :

THE CONSOLATION WHICH IT DEMANDS :

THE DUTIES WHICH IT INCULCATES :

I know, indeed, that the conjugal relation is not always a channel of blessing—on the contrary, it is sometimes perverted to purposes of unmixed evil ; and its dissolution, however, in some of its aspects, it may fill the survivor's heart with agony, can not but be regarded as bringing a release from an intolerable burden. But it is not with such cases that I have to do at present. I refer to those only in which the dignity of the conjugal relation is, in some good degree, maintained, and its legitimate ends secured ; and in respect to such, I may say, without the fear of contradiction, that the disruption of this tender tie is always the occasion of deep sorrow.

The relation which exists between the husband and wife is, in the order of both time and nature, anterior to any other of the domestic relations. And not only has it received the most impressive sanction of Divine authority, but the Bible has clearly given it the precedence of even that which exists between parents and children ; for Jesus himself hath said that “a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife ; and they twain shall be one flesh.” Is it possible then, that so sacred a relation can

be sundered, without stirring the innermost sensibilities of the heart? Can a man be parted from his own flesh, and not feel the dividing stroke?

Then again, who that has not had the experience, can form any adequate conception of the tenderness of the conjugal tie; of the bright hopes, the grateful associations, the endearing sympathies, that pertain to it? The husband has found in his wife a safe depository of his plans, his cares, his anxieties, his hopes, his griefs, and his joys. He has confided to her what he would venture to whisper in no other ear. He has often welcomed her affectionate counsels, and found in them both light and strength. In his hours of sickness and weariness, she has watched around him and administered to him, like some heaven-commissioned angel. To her willing and efficient coöperation, he owes much of the success which has crowned his efforts in the station in which Providence has placed him. When his engagements have called him from home, the thought of her affectionate interest in all that pertains to him, cheers him in his absence and hastens his return. In short, he associates her with every thing that touches his sensibilities, awakens his hopes, or employs his efforts. And

can it be that he can see this “lover and friend put far from” him into the “darkness” of the grave, without feeling a pang in his inmost soul? Can his most cherished associations thus be broken, and the very current of his life disturbed, without his being bowed under the burden of sorrow?

This departed wife has probably been a mother—she exercised the utmost vigilance and care in the education of her children so long as she was spared to them; but who shall perform those delicate and difficult and tender offices towards them; now that she is gone? The bereaved husband feels that his parental charge has suddenly been doubled. As he sees them going away to weep alone, because they are motherless, or lingering about the coffin with bursting hearts, because they can not stay away from it, his heart sinks within him, under a consciousness of his inability to carry out their mother’s wishes in training them up to virtue and usefulness. Thus the affection which he bears for his children heightens his grief that they are left without a mother.

I have no occasion to draw upon imagination to represent the deep sorrow of a bereaved husband; for I can not throw my thoughts back

into the past, but such cases multiply upon me, almost without a limit. I have in my mind one which, perhaps, witnesses to the truth of what I am saying, as well as any other I can think of. I was called to visit a family in which it was understood that the wife and mother was just falling into the monster's hands. The husband met me at the door, and said, with a bewildered and half-maniac look: "My wife is dead, sir; come and see for yourself; she is dead." I besought him to compose himself; but I quickly saw that I had to do with a mind that was unstrung. I attempted to speak of the consolation that there is in Christ; but the ability to comprehend and apply was gone. Though I doubt not that he was a true Christian, yet such was his nervous sensibility, and such the strength of his conjugal attachment, that the affliction, coming suddenly as it did, was an overmatch for all the power of endurance he could command. He gradually recovered from the shock; but it was long, long before the deep lines of sorrow began to wear out from his countenance. His departed wife—he talked of her by day; he dreamed of her by night; he cherished every thing that was associated with her memory; he took lonely walks where they had been accus-

tomed to walk together; and nowhere did he feel more at home than beside her grave. That afflicted husband's experience was, by no means, singular—if it was, in some respects, extreme, it may fairly represent the anguish that pertains to this kind of bereavement.

Let me then next speak of

The Consolation which such an Affliction demands.

The severity of an affliction is always the measure of consolation that is needed to sustain us under it. When the affliction is comparatively light, we feel less sensibly the need of sustaining and comforting grace; but when it comes upon us with a crushing weight, and makes the future seem so dark that we shudder to contemplate it, we must have "strong consolation" to keep us from sinking under it. Surely then, such an affliction as that we are now considering, in order to be endured patiently, peacefully, profitably, must be greatly qualified and softened by those blessed consolations which have their source in the heart of Infinite Love.

Let me say here, to prevent misapprehension, that it is none but a *Christian* husband to whom the Gospel offers its peculiar consolations in the

hour of bereavement ; for, inasmuch as they suppose the existence of a trusting and sanctified spirit, it were impossible that any other than a true Christian should appropriate them. An ungodly husband, when God's afflicting hand is thus laid upon him, is indeed called to reflection and repentance, and faith in the Redeemer, that he may be prepared to receive the proffered consolation of the Gospel ; but until the renovating process has passed upon him, there is no source of substantial comfort open to him in the universe : and though the lenient hand of time may gradually soothe his sorrows, he passes through the affliction a stranger to the sustaining power of God's truth and spirit. When I speak then of the consolation which the mourning husband needs to keep him from sinking in the deep waters, I would have it distinctly understood that not even Christianity herself can supply it to one who has not previously yielded to her enlightening and sanctifying influence.

The bereaved husband mourns, because the desire of his eyes is removed from him ; because not so much another, but a part of himself, has been turned into a clod and laid away in the grave. The joys of the past, to which his wife has so liberally contributed ; the burdens of the

past which her kindly sympathy has helped to alleviate; the sweet hopes and anticipations of the past in which they have been mutual sharers—all these come rushing in a tide of deep sorrow upon the memory and the heart; and the stricken mourner feels that earth can supply no antidote to his grief. The troubled spirit asks, first of all, "Whither has she fled, and is there any hope of a meeting hereafter?" And though Reason and Philosophy are dumb to such inquiries, Christianity answers them with a divine authority—she assures that bereaved husband that the loved one whom he mourns has passed the veil only to mingle in bright realities; that where she is, there is no sin nor death, but perfect purity and everlasting life; that the grave is only a quiet resting-place for her body on its way to heaven; and that, in the course of a few years at longest, he may hope to be joined with her in a blessed fellowship that Death can never invade. Are not these precious truths, which are written in the Bible as with a sun-beam, just what he needs to endure his great trial with composure and dignity? Is it not enough for him to know that she who is dead still lives, and that that countenance upon which he is looking for the last time on earth shall hereafter be animated

with celestial brightness, and that they shall be united again, not indeed in the same relation which has just been dissolved, but in the purer, nobler fellowship of heaven ?

Every case in which this affliction occurs is marked by its own peculiar circumstances ; and sometimes they are such as to add not a little to its bitterness. More than once have I heard the sorrowful survivor exclaim, referring to some peculiarity of his own case : “*That* it is that occasions the sharpest pang—had it not been for that one circumstance, I could have borne it with comparative composure.” But here comes in the very truth which that agonized heart needs more to feel : that a God of infinite wisdom and goodness, a Father who afflicts not willingly, but for his children’s benefit, has ordained every circumstance attending the event as truly as the event itself ; and that not one bitter ingredient has been infused into the cup which could have been dispensed with, in consistency with the best interests of him to whom it has been administered. Is it not enough for thee to know that it is a Father’s hand that is thus causing thine heart to bleed ; that it is because he loves thee that he thus chastens thee ; and that he has put his all-sustaining grace, which can render any burden light, at thy command ?

There is, perhaps, no circumstance that serves more to aggravate such an affliction than the fact of there being a family of young children left without a mother. Hitherto, the father, when he has looked round upon these objects of his affection, has felt that the responsible and delightful charge was shared with him by another; by one too, who was, in some respects, far better qualified than himself to give direction to an immortal mind, especially in the first unfolding of its faculties. And now that he feels that the arm of his own strength is half-palsied by her removal, though his parental duties have become proportionably more arduous, how much of comfort and resolution does he need to have imparted to him in view of this sad change! Well, here again he is met with the assurance of all-sufficient Grace. Even in these most trying circumstances, he has a right to appropriate the Saviour's promise—"My grace shall be sufficient for thee;" and with that grace operating in his heart, he will find himself fully adequate to his added duties. Trust in the Lord, thou bereaved husband, and thou mayest hope that those children will grow up as olive plants round about thee, and that they will live to comfort and bless thee while their mother sleeps in the grave. Remember that though she

who bore them is dead, God, their heavenly Father, lives, and let not thine heart be troubled.

It only remains to advert to

The Duties which such an Affliction inculcates.

It conveys to the bereaved husband a most impressive charge, to beware of idolatrous attachments, and to fix his affections more firmly upon the things that are above. The event which has occurred has blasted, it may be in the twinkling of an eye, his fondest earthly hopes. She who was the keeper of his secrets, the light of his dwelling, the joy of his life, has had her countenance changed, and been sent away; and according to the measure of happiness that was procured for him by her life, is the bitterness of the cup which is administered to him in her death. What a lesson this of the vanity of earthly hopes, of the utter uncertainty that hangs about the future, of the folly of ultimately trusting to any thing short of God's own all-sufficiency! And what an impressive call to rise up to a higher sense of Christian obligation; to endeavor to attain a more spiritual mind, and thus secure to our Heavenly Father's discipline its legitimate effect! Thou sorrow-stricken hus-

band, that burden that rests upon thy heart, that desolation that reigns in thy dwelling, speaks to thee of the glorious world unseen; and it bids thee, by devout contemplation and living faith, become more familiar with that world, to which thy heart is now bound by a new and most tender tie. Rely on it, thou wilt not have accomplished God's purpose in this affliction, if it does not brighten all thy graces, and render thy Christian example both more attractive and more effective.

Such a bereavement should also lead one to gird himself for meeting other afflictions, which may await him in the future. Be it so that, according to the common course of events, he may not expect another affliction equally heart-rending; yet if he lives long, affliction in some form or other certainly awaits him; and be it what it may, he will need a previous discipline of his spirit, in order that he may be prepared for it. To this preparatory discipline, the bitter scene through which he is now passing, calls him. Remember, O man! whilst thou art looking on that loved face, over which death's withering hand has passed, or whilst thou art standing by that grave from which thy tender recollections will not let thee stay long away—remember that

thou mayest live to see thy children or other beloved friends die ; and that then, as now, thou wilt need to have thy heart braced against the fearful shock. Let thy present experience be the means of fortifying thee against the power of adversity, come in whatever form it may. Possibly, thy future life may be so brief that all thy dear friends may live to see thee die, and then this bereavement will be the last in the history of thy pilgrimage ; but that which constitutes the appropriate preparation for suffering is no less the appropriate preparation for dying ; and thy business here in the furnace is to get ready for walking through the dark valley. Let thy present mourning, then, prepare thee not only for future mourning, but for that gloomy passage which thou hast yet to make out of this world of sorrow.

Should not the effect of such a bereavement also be, to awaken and cherish a heart-felt sympathy with others who are smarting under the rod ? Yours is not the only heart that is capable of bleeding. You are not the only one whose dwelling is invaded by death. You live in a world which is, at present, under the dominion of the king of terrors ; a world in which groans and tears and graves attest that tender relations

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never last long. You are taking a lesson, in what you now experience, of the value of human sympathy, while you are acquiring that deep, practical knowledge which will qualify you to be at once a counsellor and a comforter to others who are in sorrow. Hereafter, then, reckon it as a duty which God requires at your hands—and the more for his having taught you so well how to perform it—to weep with them that weep. Not only when the conjugal tie, but when any other endearing relationship is dissolved, or indeed when any severe affliction—no matter of what sort—overtakes a fellow-mortal, turn your ear towards the grave of your wife, and you shall hear a voice charging you to do what you can to wipe away those flowing tears.

Suppose there are motherless children remaining, what new and arduous duties does this circumstance devolve upon the surviving parent! I have already spoken of this as serving, in one sense, to heighten his sorrow, while yet in another it may help to soothe it; but certainly it imposes upon him a new obligation to conduct their education with the utmost vigilance and fidelity. You surely can not remember what their mother was to them once, without striving to make up for their loss, by your increased fidelity so far as

you can. You can not think of the voice that used to counsel them as hushed, of the hand that used to guide them as palsied, of the countenance that used to beam upon them in loving smiles as hid in the darkness of the sepulchre, without recognizing amidst all this a solemn charge, coming up, as it were, from the heart that has now ceased to beat, to do nothing to peril the interests of those children, to neglect nothing that will be likely to promote them. And I must not omit to say, that even your wounded sensibility may be perverted to their injury—the very fact that they are without a mother may lead you to be too lenient towards their faults, and too indulgent to their wishes; but against this you must guard with scrupulous care. You must bear in mind that you most effectually fall in with the design of Providence, as well as render the best tribute to the memory of your departed wife, when you adopt that course towards your children which will best serve to develop their faculties, and form them to a virtuous character and a life of Christian usefulness.

I will only add, that a husband upon whom the hand of God has thus fallen, should maintain the utmost personal circumspection. Let him remember that he is sacredly bound to improve

the affliction for the benefit of others as well as of himself; and that whether that end is accomplished or not, must depend, in no small degree, on the spirit that breathes in his every-day deportment. I have known men, and good men, who have dishonored their character as husbands, I may say as Christians, by the lack of prudence and dignity in the circumstances which I am supposing. Through the influence of an excitable temperament, or perhaps of unfavorable associations, they have been led to do that for which they have been stigmatized as indiscreet, if not heartless, mourners. Let no such imputation even be whispered against *you*. Wherever you are, forget not that the world look upon you as a bereaved husband. Let your example be marked by so much consideration, and prudence, and piety, that none shall have aught to say against it—that all shall be instructed and profited by it.

But I can not bring these remarks to a close, without being reminded that they have by no means a universal application. I have been supposing that both the husband who mourns, and the wife who is mourned for, are the disciples of Christ; that the latter has gone to be for ever with the Lord, while the former remains to wit-

ness to a good profession. But need I say that there are cases innumerable of a sadly opposite character? Art thou a Christian husband, mourning for a wife who never felt the heavings of godly sorrow, or the joys of living faith? I wonder not that thine heart is thrice broken, and that, go where thou wilt, that dying look brings anguish to thy soul; but still the truth that God reigns and does all things well, remains to thee; and it becomes thee to bow in reverent submission, and seek consolation here. Art thou an ungodly husband, bereaved of a Christian wife, who set before thee a bright example, and upon whose last breath a prayer for thy salvation died away; and dost thou now think of her as living and shining among the angels? But canst thou bear the thought of an eternal separation? Canst thou take along with thee into future scenes of adversity, the reflection that thou hast practically determined that that last prayer should not be answered? Wouldst thou rather that thy wife should come as a bright ministering angel around thy death-bed, or be summoned as a swift witness against thee in the judgment?

P o e m s

I.

O LIFE! O Death! O World! O Time!
O Grave, where all things flow!
'Tis yours to make our lot sublime,
With your great weight of woe.

II.

Though sharpest anguish hearts may wring,
Though bosoms torn may be,
Yet suffering is a holy thing:
Without it, what were we?

TRENCH.

Poems on the Death of a Wife.

The Dead Wife.

If I had thought thou couldst have died,
I might not weep for thee ;
But I forgot, when by thy side,
That thou couldst mortal be ;
It never through my mind had passed
That time would e'er be o'er,
And I on thee should look my last,
And thou shouldst smile no more.

And still upon that face I look,
And think 'twill smile again ;
And still the thought I will not brook
That I must look in vain !
But when I speak—thou dost not say,
What thou ne'er left unsaid ;
And now I feel as well I may,
Dear Mary, thou art dead !

If thou wouldst stay, e'en as thou art,
All cold and all serene—
I still might press thy silent heart,
And where thy smiles have been.
While e'en thy chill bleak corse I have
Thou seemest still my own ;
But there, I lay thee in thy grave—
And I am now alone ;

I do not think, where'er thou art,
Thou hast forgotten me :
And I perhaps may soothe this heart
In thinking too of thee ;
Yet there was round thee such a dawn
Of light ne'er seen before,
As fancy never could have drawn,
And never can restore !

WOLFE.

Sleep On, My Love.

Sleep on, my love, in thy cold bed
Never to be disquieted !
My last good night ! thou wilt not wake
Till I thy fate shall overtake :
Till age, or grief, or sickness must
Marry my body to that dust
It so much loves ; and fill the room
My heart keeps empty in thy tomb.
Stay for me there ; I will not fail
To meet thee in that hollow vale.

And think not much of my delay,
I am already on the way,
And follow thee with all the speed
Desire can make, or sorrows breed.
Each minute is a short degree,
And every hour a step towards thee.
At night when I betake to rest,
Next morn I rise nearer my west
Of life, almost by eight hours' sail,
Than when sleep breathed his drowsy gale.
Thus from the sun my bottom steers
And my day's compass downward bears :
Nor labor I to stem the tide
Through which to thee I swiftly glide.
'Tis true, with shame and grief I yield,
Thou like the van first took'st the field,
And gotten first the victory
In thus adventuring to die
Before me, whose more years might crave
A just precedence in the grave.
But hark ! my pulse, like a soft drum,
Beats my approach, tells thee I come ;
And slow howe'er my marches be,
I shall at last sit down with thee.
The thought of this bids me go on,
And wait my dissolution
With hope and comfort : Dear, (forgive
The crime,) I am content to live
Divided with but half a heart,
Till we shall meet and never part.

HENRY KING, (1699.)

Farewell.

LIE down in peace to take thy rest !
 Dear cherished form ! no longer mine,
 But bearing in thy clay-cold breast
 A hidden germ of life divine,
 Which, when the eternal spring shall bloom,
 Will burst the shackles of the tomb.

Lie down in peace to take thy rest !
 Unbroken will thy slumbers be,
 Satan can now no more molest,
 And Death has done its worst for thee.
 Lie down thy hallowed sleep to take
 Till clothed with glory thou shalt wake.

Lie down in peace to take thy rest !
 We can no longer watch thy bed,
 But glorious angels, spirits blest,
 Shall guard thee day and night instead ;
 And when thine eyes unclosed shall be,
 Christ in his glory they shall see.

Lie down in peace to take thy rest !
 My eyes must weep—my heart must mourn ;
 But to thy soul, with Jesus blest,
 For comfort and for hope I turn :
 Thou wilt not mark these tears that flow ;
 Sorrow can never reach thee now.

Lie down in peace to take thy rest !

Let me betake myself to prayer,
 Bending Faith's corselet on my breast,
 Lest Satan find an entrance there :
 God gave ;—though now his gift he claim,
 Still blessed be his holy name !

BARTON.

The Dying Wife to Her Husband.

THEY tell me life is waning fast,
 And Death's dark wing unfurled,
 Will bear my spirit soon from earth,
 Unto an unknown world ;
 I feel, beloved, it must be so—
 I feel that even now
 His hand is on my fluttering heart,
 His shadow o'er my brow.

How shall I leave thee ?—how resign
 Thy tenderness : and care ?
 The pressure of thy clasping hand,
 Thy blessing and thy prayer !
 Together we have tasted joy,
 Together wept in ill,
 And the love that was so bright in bliss,
 In grief was brighter still.

Wilt thou not miss me from thy side,
 When twilight's hour hath come?
 Will it not seem a desert place,
 The paradise of home?
 Then, gather close with brooding love
 Our children round thy knee,
 And wipe with tenderest hand the tears
 Which they will shed for me.

And soothe each little throbbing heart
 That asks for me in vain,
 And say, that in the far-off heaven
 Their mother lives again;
 Link not my name with thought of death,
 But point them to the sky,
 And tell them in the "Better Land"
 They neither weep nor die.

Go with them to their lonely couch
 At evening's silent close,
 And softly press each pillowed cheek,
 And hush them to repose:
 Or bid them kneel with claspéd hands
 To lisp their evening prayer:
 Thou must unite a father's love,
 With all a mother's care.

A mother's care! a mother's love!
 And must they never know
 How deeply in her "heart of hearts"
 A mother's love may glow?

Will they yet bloom in girlhood fair,
While she who gave them birth
Lies all forgotten far away,
In one lone spot of earth ?

Forgotten ! no, beloved one, no !
Thou wilt remember still
The being who hath shared thy lot,
Alike in good or ill ;
Thou wilt remember all her love,
With faithful, fond regret ;
And but the faults she could not hide,
Thy heart will e'er forget.

And thou wilt come to that lone spot
Where the green willow waves,
And lead our children's tiny feet
Among the quiet graves ;
And read for them the sculptured stone—
Brief record of my life—
Then say how faithfully I loved,
As mother and as wife.

How can I say farewell to thee ?
How mark thy bitter tears ?
Look up, beloved, we only part
For a few fleeting years ;
They will roll o'er thy darkened path
Swiftly as shadows flee,
And in a world of holier love
Will our blest meeting be.

The Coming of the Master.

RISE, said the Master, come unto the feast :
 She heard the call, and rose with willing feet ;
 But thinking it not otherwise than meet
 For such a bidding to put on her best,
 She is gone from us for a few short hours
 Into her bridal-closet, there to wait
 For the unfolding of the palace-gate,
 That gives her entrance to the blissful bowers.
 We have not seen her yet, though we have been
 Full often to her chamber-door, and oft
 Have listened underneath the postern green,
 And laid fresh flowers, and whispered short and soft :
 But she hath made no answer, and the day
 From the clear west is fading fast away !

HENRY ALFORD.

The Father to His Motherless Children.

COME gather closer to my side,
 My little smitten flock—
 And I will tell of him who brought
 Pure water from the rock ;
 Who boldly led God's people forth
 From Egypt's wrath and guile—
 He once a cradled babe did float
 All helpless on the Nile.

You're weary, precious ones—your eyes
 Are wandering far and wide ;
 Think ye of her who knew so well
 Your tender thoughts to guide ?
 Who could to Wisdom's sacred lore
 Your fixed attention claim—
 Oh ! never from your hearts erase
 That blessed Mother's name.

'Tis time to sing your evening hymn—
 My youngest infant dove,
 Come press thy velvet cheek to mine,
 And learn the lay of love.
 My sheltering arm can clasp you all,
 My poor deserted throng ;
 Cling as you used to cling to her
 Who sings the angels' song.

Begin, sweet birds, the accustomed strain—
 Come, warble loud and clear—
 Alas ! alas ! you're weeping all,
 You're sobbing in my ear.
 Good-night, go say the prayer she taught,
 Beside your little bed ;
 The lips that used to bless you there
 Are silent with the dead.

A father's hand your course may guide
 Amid the thorns of life—
 His care protect these shrinking plants
 That dread the storms of life ;

But who upon your infant heart
 Shall like that mother write ?
 Who touch the springs that rule the soul ?
 Dear mourning babes, good-night.

L. H. SIGOURNEY.

The Mystery of Chastisement.

WITHIN this leaf, to every eye
 So little worth, doth hidden lie
 Most rare and subtle fragrancý :

Wouldst thou its secret strength unbind ?
 Crush it, and thou shalt perfume find,
 Sweet as Arabia's spicy wind.

In this dull stone, so poor, and bare
 Of shape or lustre, patient care
 Will find for thee a jewel rare.

But first must skillful hands essay,
 With file and flint, to clear away
 The film, which hides its fire from day.

This leaf? this stone? It is thy heart,
 It must be crushed by pain and smart,
 It must be cleansed by sorrow's art—

Ere it will yield a fragrance sweet,
 Ere it will shine a jewel meet,
 To lay before thy dear Lord's feet.

WILBERFORCE.

The Mystery of Providence.

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform ;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up his vast designs,
And works his sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take ;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and will break
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace ;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour ;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain ;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain,

Thou art gone to the Grave.

THOU art gone to the grave ! but we will not deplore thee,
 Though sorrows and darkness encompass the tomb ;
 The Saviour hath passed through its portals before thee,
 And the lamp of His love is thy guide through the gloom.

Thou art gone to the grave ! we no longer behold thee,
 Nor tread the rough paths of the world by thy side ;
 But the wide arms of Mercy are spread to enfold thee,
 And sinners may die, for the Sinless hath died.

Thou art gone to the grave ! and, its mansion forsaking,
 What though thy weak spirit in fear lingered long ?
 The sunshine of Paradise beamed on thy waking,
 And the sound which thou heardst, was the seraphim's song.

Thou art gone to the grave ! but we will not deplore thee,
 For God was thy Ransom, thy Guardian, and Guide :
 He gave thee, he took thee, and he will restore thee ;
 And Death has no sting, for the Saviour hath died.

HEBER.

The Safe Repose.

REPOSE, then, precious clay !
 Thou art in safer custody than mine,
 The purchase of atoning blood ! What though
 The sods of earth now cover thee, and rage

The elements around thee? Angels watch
 The sleeping dust; nay, more, Omnipotence
 Is th' invisible Guardian of thy tomb!
 JESUS! the Mighty Conqueror of Death,
 Who felt its power and plucked its sting away,
 Drying our tears, addresses us in words
 Which glow with immortality: "Fear not!
 For I am He that liveth and was dead.
 Behold! I am alive for evermore;
 And in my hand retain the keys of Death!"
 Then looking forward through the dim perspective
 Of this dark vale of weeping, let the eye
 Rest on the splendors of that cloudless morn,
 When the Archangel's pealing notes shall startle
 A slumb'ring earth; the sea and land restore
 At the loud summons what they hold in trust,
 And o'er a renovated world resound
 The pæans of eternal victory!

"WELLS OF BACA."

Grateful for Chastisement.

MUCH have I born, but not as I should bear:
 The proud will unsubdued, the formal prayer,
 Tell me thou yet wilt chide, thou canst not spare,
 O Lord! thy chastening rod.

Oh! help me, Father! for my sinful heart
 Back from this discipline of grief would start,
 Unmindful of His sorer, deeper smart,
 Who died for me, my God!

Yet, if each wish denied, each woe and pain,
 Break but some link of that oppressive chain
 Which binds me still to earth, and leaves a stain
 Thou only canst remove—

Then am I blest, O bliss from man concealed !
 If here to Christ, the weak one's tower and shield,
 My heart, through sorrow, be set free to yield
 A service of deep love.

Thy Will be Done.

THY will be done ! I will not fear
 The fate provided by thy love ;
 Though clouds and darkness shroud me here,
 I know that all is bright above.

The stars of heaven are shining on,
 Though these frail eyes are dimmed with tears ;
 The hopes of earth indeed are gone,
 But are not ours the immortal years ?

Father, forgive the heart that clings,
 Thus trembling, to the things of time ;
 And bid my soul, on angel-wings,
 Ascend into a purer clime.

There shall no doubts disturb its trust,
 No sorrows dim celestial love ;
 But these afflictions of the dust,
 Like shadows of the night, remove.

E'en now, above there's radiant day,
While clouds and darkness brood below ;
Then, Father, joyful on my way
To drink the bitter cup I go.

J. ROSCOE.

The One Prayer.

ONE prayer I have—all prayers in one—
When I am wholly Thine ;
Thy will, my God, thy will be done,
And let that will be mine.

All-wise, almighty, and all-good,
In thee I firmly trust ;
Thy ways, unknown or understood,
Are merciful and just.

May I remember that to thee
Whate'er I have I owe ;
And back, in gratitude, from me
May all thy bounties flow.

And though thy wisdom takes away,
Shall I arraign thy will ?
No, let me bless thy name, and say,
"The Lord is gracious still."

A pilgrim through the earth I roam,
 Of nothing long possessed,
 And all must fail when I go home,
 For this is not my rest.

MONTGOMERY.

Wholly Resigned.

CHRIST leads us through no darker rooms
 Than he went through before.
 He that into God's kingdom comes,
 Must enter by this door.
 Come, Lord, when grace hath made me meet
 Thy blessed face to see ;
 For if thy work on earth be sweet,
 What will thy glory be !

Then I shall end my sad complaints,
 And weary, sinful days,
 And join with the triumphant saints
 That sing Jehovah's praise.
 My knowledge of that life is small,
 The eye of faith is dim,
 But 'tis enough that Christ knows all
 And I shall be with him.

BAXTER.

NEARER, MY GOD, TO THEE.

. Nearer, my God, to thee—
Nearer to Thee !
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me ;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee !

Though like a wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness comes over me,
My rest a stone,
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to thee—
Nearer to thee !

There let my way appear
Steps unto heaven ;
All that Thou sendest me
In mercy given ;
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to thee !
Nearer to thee !

Then with my waking thoughts
Bright with thy praise,
Out of my stony griefs
Bethel I'll raise ;

So by my woes to be
 Nearer, my God, to thee—
 Nearer to Thee!

And when on joyful wing,
 Cleaving the sky;
 Sun, moon, and stars forgot,
 Upward I fly;
 Still all my song shall be,
 Nearer, my God, to thee—
 Nearer to thee!

ADAMS.

Submission.

NOWHERE canst thou so magnify thy God
 As in the furnace-fires! Submissive tears
 Wrung from the grieved yet unrepining heart.
 In silent eloquence proclaim the power
 Of Christian faith; a living evidence
 Of love, a jewel for Immanuel's crown
 Prepared. Of old, when Salem's temple rose
 In strange majestic silence, "neither hammer
 Nor sound of axe, nor other tool, was heard"
 Within the stately fabric: So at times
 The hammer of affliction scarce the stone
 May feel, and yet 'tis polished and made meet
 For the Great Builder's use; the spirit wafted,
 Like Israel's prophet in his car of fire,

Upwards to glory, tasting scarce the pangs
Of human woe! Unwonted ease! to reach
The heavenly goal uncovered with the scars
Of earthly battle! Christian combatant!
The conflict is unchanged. Who would the path
Of suffering avoid, his Saviour trod,
Or claim immunity from woe, when HE
Attained *His* crown with "garments rolled in blood"?

"WELLS OF BACA."

Lord, teach us to pray.

THERE are who mock at prayer, and with their blind
And tangled sophistries would shake our faith
In that which to our hearts the Father saith
When he commands to seek that we may find.
Ah! fools, and vain! whence shall the fainting mind
Seek strength but from the Strong—where find repose
But in that Friend who all its troubles knows,
And all its wounds can tenderly upbind?
All pious hearts *must* pray; they can not live
Save as they breathe an atmosphere of prayer.
Their life began with prayer: "O Lord! forgive,"
Was their soul's birth-wail, and, as on they fare,
Their cry is still for help; and still they say,
When nearest Christ: "Lord, teach us how to pray."

W. L. ALEXANDER.