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# RELIGIOUS VERSE

*Compiled by the Rev.*

G. LACEY MAY

PART III.

LONDON

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING  
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE

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## PRAYER

### THE POWER OF PRAYER

STRONG is the horse upon his speed;  
 Strong in pursuit the rapid glede,\*  
 Which makes at once his game;  
 Strong the tall ostrich on the ground;  
 Strong through the turbulent profound  
 Shoots xiphias† to his aim.

Strong is the lion—like a coal  
 His eyeball—like a bastion's mole  
 His chest against his foes;  
 Strong the gier-eagle on his sail;  
 Strong against tide th' enormous whale  
 Emerges as he goes.

But stronger still, in earth and air,  
 And in the sea, the man of prayer,  
 And far beneath the tide;  
 And in the seat to faith assigned,  
 Where ask is have, and seek is find,  
 Where knock is open wide.

CHRISTOPHER SMART.

\* *I.e.*, kite.

† *I.e.*, swordfish.

## ADORATION

PRAYER was not meant for luxury,  
 Or selfish pastime sweet;  
 It is the prostrate creature's place  
 At his Creator's feet.

## PERSISTENCE IN PRAYER

BE not afraid to pray—to pray is right.  
 Pray, if thou canst, with hope; but ever pray,  
 Though hope be weak, or sick with long delay;  
 Pray in the darkness, if there be no light.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

## DISTRACTIONS AT PRAYER

THE world that looks so dull at day  
 Glows bright on me at prayer,  
 And plans that ask no thought but these  
 Wake up to meet me there.  
 My very flesh has restless fits;  
 My changeful limbs conspire  
 With all these phantoms of the mind,  
 My inner self to tire.  
 These surface troubles come and go,  
 Like ruffings of the sea;  
 The deeper depth is out of reach  
 To all, my God, but Thee.

## PRAYER WITHOUT CEASING

IN a mother undefiled,  
 Prayer goeth on in sleep, as true  
 And pauseless as the pulses do.

E. B. BROWNING.

## PRAYER DEFINED

A BREATH that fleets beyond this iron world,  
 And touches Him that made it.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.

## INTERCESSION

### CHRIST'S INTERCESSION

TEN days\* th' eternal doors displayed  
Were wondering (so th' Almighty bade)  
Whom Love enthroned would send, in aid  
Of souls that mourn,  
Left orphans in Earth's dreary shade  
As soon as born.

Open they stand, that prayers in throngs  
May rise on high, and holy songs,  
Such incense as of right belongs  
To the true shrine,  
Where stands the Healer of all wrongs  
In light divine;

The golden censer in His hand,  
He offers hearts from every land,  
Tied to His own by gentlest band  
Of silent Love;  
About Him wingèd blessings stand  
In act to move.

\* *I.e.*, between the Ascension and Pentecost.

## INTERCESSION

A little while, and they shall fleet  
From Heaven to earth, attendants meet  
On the life-giving Paraclete  
Speeding His flight,  
With all that sacred is and sweet,  
On saints to light.

Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, all  
Shall feel the shower of Mercy fall,  
And starting at th' Almighty's call,  
Give what He gave,  
Till their high deeds the world appal,  
And sinners save.

JOHN KEBLE.

### THE POWER OF INTERCESSION

PRAY for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?  
For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.

## THE SPIRIT OF INTERCESSION

## NEVERMORE

Alone upon the threshold of my door  
 Of individual life, I shall command  
 The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand  
 Serenely in the sunshine as before.  
 Without the sense of that which I forbore—  
 Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land  
 Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine  
 With pulses that beat double. What I do  
 And what I dream include thee, as the wine  
 Must taste its own grapes. And when I sue  
 God for myself, He hears that name of thine,  
 And sees within my eyes the tears of two.

E. B. BROWNING.

## SUFFERING

## SUFFERING AS TEACHER

“DEAR God,” she cried, “and must we see  
 All blissful things depart from us, or ere we go to Thee?  
 We cannot guess Thee in the wood, or hear Thee in the  
 wind?  
 Our cedars must fall round us, ere we see the light be-  
 hind?  
 Ay, sooth, we feel too strong in weal, to need Thee on  
 that road;  
 But woe being come, the soul is dumb, that crieth not  
 on God.”

E. B. BROWNING.

I AM not eager, bold,  
 Nor strong—all that is past:  
 I am ready *not* to do,  
 At last, at last.

My half day's work is done  
 And this is all my part:  
 I give a patient God  
 My patient heart.

And grasp His banner still  
 Though all its blue be dim:  
 These stripes, no less than stars,  
 Lead up to Him.

*(By an American soldier wounded  
 in the Civil War.)*

I THANK Thee more that all our joy  
 Is touched with pain;  
 That shadows fall on brightest hours;  
 That thorns remain;  
 So that earth's bliss may be our guide,  
 And not our chain.

J. G. WHITTIER.

WHO murmurs that in these dark days  
 His lot is cast?  
 God's hand within the shadow lays  
 The stones whereon His gates of praise  
 Shall rise at last.

J. G. WHITTIER.

I WALKED a mile with Pleasure.  
 She chatted all the way,  
 But left me none the wiser  
 For all she had to say.

I walked a mile with Sorrow,  
 And ne'er a word said she;  
 But, oh, the things I learned from her  
 When Sorrow walked with me!

ROBERT HAMILTON.

THE TRIUMPHS OF SUFFERING

SPEAK, History, who are life's victors? Unroll the  
 long annals and say,  
 Are they those whom the world calls victors, who won  
 the success of the day?  
 The martyrs or Nero? The Spartans who fell at  
 Thermopylæ's tryst  
 Or the Persians or Xerxes? His judges or Socrates?  
 Pilate or Christ?

WALT WHITMAN.

SERVING GOD THROUGH SUFFERING

*(Milton on his Blindness)*

WHEN I consider how my light is spent,  
 Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,  
 And that one talent which is death to hide  
 Lodg'd with me useless, though my soul more bent  
 To serve therewith my Maker and present  
 My true account, lest He returning chide,—  
 "Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"  
 I fondly ask. But patience, to prevent  
 That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need  
 Either man's work or His own gifts: who best  
 Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best: His state  
 Is kingly: thousands at His bidding speed  
 And post o'er land and ocean without rest:  
 They also serve who only stand and wait."

JOHN MILTON.

## CHILDREN

### THE CHILD AT THE FONT

WHERE is it mothers learn their love ?  
In every church a fountain springs  
O'er which th' eternal Dove  
Hovers on softest wings.

What sparkles in that lucid flood  
Is water, by gross mortals eyed:  
But seen by faith, 'tis blood  
Out of a dear Friend's side.

A few calm words of faith and prayer,  
A few bright drops of holy dew,  
Shall work a wonder there  
Earth's charmers never knew.

O happy arms where cradled lies  
And ready for the Lord's embrace,  
That precious sacrifice,  
The darling of His grace !

JOHN KEBLE.

### THE CHILD AT PLAY

BEHOLD the child among his new-born blisses,  
A six years' darling of a pigmy size !  
See, where mid work of his own hand he lies,  
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,  
With light upon him from his father's eyes !  
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,  
Some fragment from his dream of human life,  
Shaped by himself with newly-learnèd art ;  
A wedding or a festival,  
A mourning or a funeral ;  
And this hath now his heart,  
And unto this he frames his song :  
Then will he fit his tongue  
To dialogues of business, love or strife ;  
But it will not be long  
Ere this be thrown aside,  
And with new joy and pride  
The little actor cons another part ;  
Filling from time to time his humorous stage  
With all the persons, down to palsied age,  
That life brings with her in her equipage ;  
As if his whole vocation  
Were endless imitation.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

## THE NEARNESS OF THE INNOCENT CHILD TO GOD

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free;  
 The holy time is quiet as a Nun  
 Breathless with adoration; the broad sun  
 Is sinking down in its tranquillity;  
 The gentleness of Heaven is on the sea:  
 Listen! the mighty Being is awake,  
 And doth with His eternal motion make  
 A sound like thunder—everlastingly.  
 Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,  
 If thou appear'st untouched by solemn thought,  
 Thy nature is not therefore less divine:  
 Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;  
 And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,  
 God being with thee when we know it not.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

## ANGELS

ONE Michael's morn I rose and went  
 Through my cool garden with its scent  
 Of morning blooms; and as I brushed  
 Their trembling dew, all things seemed hushed  
 To listen to the passing feet  
 Of subtle beings pure and sweet.  
 For this one day God's grace had given  
 That I should see the things of heaven,  
 And this one morn the hidden veil  
 Was raised (through which we mortals fail  
 To see the spiritual), and blest  
 And holy things were manifest.  
 Then saw I how the unseen Love  
 Links fallen earth with heaven above.

The scudding clouds were angel-bands  
 That sped to work their Lord's commands;  
 The sighing in the swaying trees  
 Soft speech of angels; and the breeze  
 That rustled from the clearing north  
 Strong wings of angels, speeding forth  
 To fan the sufferer's cheek or cool  
 The city-children at their school.  
 The little brook that sang for glee  
 Was led by angels to the sea;  
 The blue in sky, the ocean's green,

The leopard's spots, the peacock's sheen,  
 The mountain mist, the golden sands,  
 Their beauties took from angels' hands;  
 For angels labour that mankind  
 The good God in His works may find.

Wond'ring I stept into the street.  
 Unheeding men with careless feet  
 Passed angels minist'ring to those  
 For whom Christ suffered, died and rose.  
 Here angels round a little child  
 Clasped saving hands, protection mild;  
 Here tempered to an old man's breast  
 The pains of sickness; here brought rest  
 Of sleep to wearied lids; pure thought  
 Here whispered, and the devil fought;  
 A bruised spirit here made whole,  
 Here bore to God a dead saint's soul.

The little church upon the hill  
 Had open door; I entered. Still  
 And quiet the lowly shrine; alone  
 Was heard the priest's low monotone.  
 Few worshippers—you might have said  
 None there, save for the single head  
 That here and there was lowly bowed.  
 Few worshippers—but oh! the crowd  
 Of kneeling angels! Oh, the cry  
 That rose of "Glory, Lord most High!  
 Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord,  
 Be by heaven and earth adored!"

Then the hushed silence of the bread  
 Broken, and the quick glory shed  
 Around the altar, whilst the Word  
 By men and angels was adored.

Again I stept into the street,  
 And saw men with unheeding feet  
 Pass angels minist'ring to those  
 For whom Christ suffered, died and rose.  
 And ever from the paths of sin  
 And human folly, Cherubin  
 And Seraphin bright ladders trod  
 That opened out from men to God.

G. L. M.

[By permission of the "Commonwealth"]

## THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

### I.—TRUST IN GOD

How beautiful our lives may be, how bright  
In privilege, how fruitful of delight !  
For we of love have endless revenue ;  
And, if we grieve, 'tis not as infants do  
That wake and find no mother in the night.

They put their little hands about, and weep  
Because they find mere air, or but the bed  
Whereon they lie ; but we may rest, instead,  
For ever on His bosom, who doth keep  
Our lives alike safe, when we wake and sleep.

H. S. SUTTON.

COMMIT thou all thy griefs  
And ways into His hands,  
To His sure truth and tender care,  
Who earth and Heaven commands.

Who points the clouds their course,  
Whom winds and sea obey,  
He shall direct thy wandering feet,  
He shall prepare thy way.

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

No profit canst thou gain  
By self-consuming care ;  
To Him commend thy cause ; His ear  
Attends the softest prayer.

\* \* \* \* \*

Give to the winds thy fears ;  
Hope, and be undismayed ;  
God hears thy sighs, and counts thy tears,  
God shall lift up thy head.

Through waves and clouds and storms,  
He gently clears thy way ;  
Wait thou His time ; so shall this night  
Soon end in joyous day.

\* \* \* \* \*

Leave to His sovereign sway  
To choose and to command ;  
So shalt thou wondering own His way  
How wise, how strong His hand !

Far, far above thy thought  
His counsel shall appear,  
When fully He the work hath wrought  
That caused thy needless fear.

Thou seest our weakness, Lord !  
Our hearts are known to Thee ;  
Oh ! lift Thou up the sinking hand,  
Confirm the feeble knee !

Let us, in life, in death,  
 Thy stedfast truth declare,  
 And publish, with our latest breath,  
 Thy love and guardian care !

JOHN WESLEY  
*(from PAUL GERHARDT).*

## II.—HAPPINESS IN GOD

LET all the world in every corner sing,  
 My God and King !  
 The heav'ns are not too high,  
 His praise may thither fly;  
 The earth is not too low,  
 His praises there may grow.

Let all the world in every corner sing,  
 My God and King !  
 The Church with psalms must shout,  
 No door can keep them out;  
 But above all the heart  
 Must bear the longest part.

Let all the world in every corner sing,  
 My God and King !

GEORGE HERBERT.

THE inner side of every cloud  
 Is bright and shining.  
 I therefore turn my clouds about  
 And always wear them inside out  
 To show the lining.

Two men looked out through prison bars;  
 The one saw mud, the other stars.

## III.—CONTENT

I'LL hope no more  
 For things that will not come:  
 And, if they do, they prove but cumbersome;  
 Wealth brings much woe:  
 And, since it fortunes so,  
 'Tis better to be poor,  
 Than so abound,  
 As to be drowned,  
 Or overwhelmed with store.

Pale care, avaunt !  
 I'll learn to be content  
 With that small stock Thy bounty gave or lent.  
 What may conduce  
 To my most healthful use,  
 Almighty God, me grant;  
 But that, or this,  
 That hurtful is,  
 Deny Thy suppliant.

ROBERT HERRICK.

## IV.—THANKFULNESS

How much owest thou ?  
 For years of tender watchful care,  
 A father's faith, a mother's prayer;  
 How much owest thou ?

How much owest thou ?  
 Oh, child of God and heir of heaven,  
 Thy soul redeemed, thy sins forgiven,  
 How much owest thou ?

SOME murmur when their sky is clear  
 And wholly bright to view,  
 If one small speck of dark appear  
 In their great heaven of blue.

And some with thankful love are fill'd  
 If but one streak of light,  
 One ray of God's good mercy, gild  
 The darkness of their night.

ARCHBISHOP R. C. TRENCH.

HE that without grace sitteth down to eate  
 Forgetting to give God thanks for his meate  
 And riseth again letting Grace surpasse  
 Sitteth down like an oxe and riseth like an asse.  
*Old Rhyme.*

## V.—LOVE

If love should count you worthy, and should deign  
 One day to seek your door and be your guest,  
 Pause ! ere you draw the bolt and bid him rest,  
 If in your old content you would remain.  
 For not alone he enters: in his train  
 Are angels of the mist; the lonely guest  
 Dreams of the unfulfilled and unpossessed,  
 And sorrow, and life's immemorial pain.

He wakes desires you never may forget,  
 He shews you stars you never saw before,  
 He makes you share with him for evermore  
 The burden of the world's divine regret.  
 How wise were you to open not ! And yet  
 How poor if you should turn him from the door !

S. R. LYSAGHT.

[By permission of Mr. Lysaght and Macmillan and Co., Ltd.]

HE prayeth best who loveth best  
 All things both great and small;  
 For the dear God who loveth us,  
 He made and loveth all.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

LORD, make us all love all: that when we meet  
 Even myriads of earth's myriads at Thy bar,  
 We may be glad as all true lovers are

Who having parted count reunion sweet,  
 Safe gathered home around Thy blessèd feet,  
 Come home by different roads from near or far,  
 Whether by whirlwind or by flaming car,  
 From pangs or sleep, safe folded round Thy seat.  
 Oh, if our brother's blood cry out at us,  
 How shall we meet Thee who hast loved us all,  
 Thee whom we never loved, not loving him?  
 The unloving cannot chant with Seraphim,  
 Bear harp of gold or palm victorious,  
 Or face the Vision Beatifical.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

#### VI.—UNSELFISH SERVICE

If there be some weaker one,  
 Give me strength to help him on;  
 If a blinder soul there be,  
 Let me guide him nearer Thee.  
 Make my mortal dreams come true  
 With the work I fain would do;  
 Clothe with life the weak intent;  
 Let me be the thing I meant.  
 Let me find in Thy employ  
 Peace, that dearer is than joy;  
 Out of self to love be led  
 And up to heaven acclimated;  
 Until all things sweet and good  
 Seem my natural habitude.

J. G. WHITTIER.

HOPE not the cure of sin till Self is dead;  
 Forget it in love's service, and the debt  
 Thou canst not pay the angels shall forget;  
 Heaven's gate is shut to him who comes alone;  
 Save thou a soul, and it shall save thine own.

J. G. WHITTIER.

BE useful where thou livest, that they may  
 Both want and wish thy pleasing presence still.  
 Kindness, good parts, great places are the way  
 To compass this. Find out men's wants and will,  
 And meet them there. All worldly joys go less  
 To the one joy of doing kindnesses.

GEORGE HERBERT.

YIELD thy poor best, and muse not how or why,  
 Lest, one day, seeing all about thee spread,  
 A mighty crowd and marvellously fed,  
 Thy heart break out into a bitter cry,  
 "I might have furnished, I, yea, even I,  
 The two small fishes and the barley bread."

FREDERICK LANGBRIDGE.

GIVE all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore  
 Of nicely calculated less or more.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

CHRIST did not of His more abundance cast  
 Into the empty treasury of man's store,  
 But first and last gave, until even He  
 Could give no more. His very living—  
 Such was Christ's giving.

VII.—COURAGE AND HOPE

In hope a king doth go to war;  
 In hope a lover lives full long;  
 In hope a merchant sails full far;  
 In hope just men do suffer long;  
 In hope the ploughman sows his seed;  
 This hope helps thousands in their need.  
 Then faint not, heart, among the rest;  
 Whatever chance, hope thou the best.

O HUMAN soul ! as long as thou canst so  
 Set up a mark of everlasting light,  
 Above the howling senses' ebb and flow,  
 To cheer thee and to right thee if thou roam,  
 Not with lost toil thou labourest through the night !  
 Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

BEACONS of hope, ye appear !  
 Languor is not in your heart,  
 Weakness is not in your word,  
 Weariness not on your brow.  
 Ye alight in our van ! At your voice,  
 Panic, despair, flee away.  
 Ye move through the ranks, recall  
 The stragglers, refresh the outworn,  
 Praise, re-inspire the brave !  
 Order, courage, return.  
 Eyes rekindling, and prayers,  
 Follow your steps as ye go.  
 Ye fill up the gaps in our files,  
 Strengthen the wavering line,  
 Stablish, continue our march,  
 On, to the bound of the waste,  
 On, to the City of God.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

*(Courage in Bearing Witness)*

WHY dost thou lurk so close ? Is it for fear  
 Some busy eye should pry into thy flame,  
 And spy a thief, or else some blemish there ?  
 Or being spied, shrink'st thou thy head for shame ?  
 Come, come, fond taper, shine but clear,  
 Thou must not shrink for shame, nor shroud for fear.

Remember, O remember, thou wert set  
 For man to see the great Creator by;  
 Thy flame is not thine own: it is a debt  
 Thou ow'st thy Master. And wilt thou deny  
 To pay the interest of thy light?  
 And skulk in corners and play least in sight?

FRANCIS QUARLES.

### VIII.—HUMILITY

HE that is down need fear no fall;  
 He that is low, no pride;  
 He that is humble, ever shall  
 Have God to be his guide.

I am content with what I have,  
 Little be it, or much:  
 And, Lord, contentment still I crave,  
 Because Thou gavest such.

JOHN BUNYAN.

WHAT better friendship than to cover shame?  
 What greater love than for a friend to die?  
 Yet this is better, to assell the blame;  
 And this is greater, for an enemy.

GILES FLETCHER.

*"I had rather be a doorkeeper in the House of my God,  
 than to dwell in the tents of the ungodly."*

To keep God's door—  
 I am not fit.  
 I would not ask for more  
 Than this—  
 To stand or sit  
 Upon the threshold of God's House  
 Out of the reach of sin,  
 To open wide His door  
 To those who come,  
 To welcome Home  
 His children and His poor:  
 To wait and watch  
 The gladness on the face of those  
 That are within:  
 Sometimes to catch  
 A glimpse or trace of those  
 I love the best, and know  
 That all I failed to be,  
 And all I failed to do,  
 Has not sufficed  
 To bar them from the Tree  
 Of Life, the Paradise of God,  
 The Face of Christ.

JOHN W. TAYLOR: *The Doorkeeper.*

[By permission of Miss P. Taylor and Messrs.  
 Longmans, Green and Co.]

HUMBLE we must be, if to Heaven we go:  
High is the roof there, but the gate is low.

ROBERT HERRICK.

IX.—THE GUARDED THOUGHT

. . . GOOD may ever conquer ill,  
Health walk where pain hath trod;  
“As a man thinketh, so is he”;  
Rise, then, and think with God.

GUARD well thy thoughts, for thoughts are  
Heard in heaven.

THOUGHTS are the angels which we send abroad,  
To visit all the parts of God's abode.  
Thoughts are the things wherein we all confess  
The quintessence of sin and holiness  
Is laid. All wisdom in a thought doth shine,  
By thoughts alone the soul is made divine.

Think, and be careful what thou art within;  
For there is sin in the desire of sin.  
Think, and be thankful, in a different case;  
For there is grace in the desire of grace.

JOHN BYROM.

. . . WHEREFORE sully the entrusted gem  
Of high and noble life with thoughts so sick?  
Why pierce high-fronted honour to the quick  
For nothing but a dream?

JOHN KEATS.

THOUGHTS are the springs of all our actions here  
On earth, tho' they themselves do not appear.  
They are the springs of beauty, order, peace,  
The city's gallantries, the fields' increase.  
Rule, governments, and kingdoms flow from them,  
And so doth all the new Jerusalem,  
At least the glory, splendour, and delight,  
For 'tis by thoughts that even she is bright.  
Thoughts are the things wherewith e'en God is crown'd,  
And as the soul's without them useless found,  
So are all other creatures too . . .  
Thoughts are things  
Which rightly usèd make His creatures kings.

THOMAS TRAHERNE.

[By permission of Mr. P. J. and A. E. Dobell.]

X.—CHRISTIAN OLD AGE

THE seas are quiet when the winds give o'er;  
So calm are we when passions are no more.  
For then we know how vain it was to boast  
Of fleeting things, so certain to be lost.  
Clouds of affection from our younger eyes  
Conceal that emptiness which age descries.

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