

Poems and Prose



By Bruce
of
Farrants Hill

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Farrant's Hill

(Donald Bruce Whittaker)

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Text by Donald Bruce Whittaker (1941-2000)

Edited by Lionel D C Hartley

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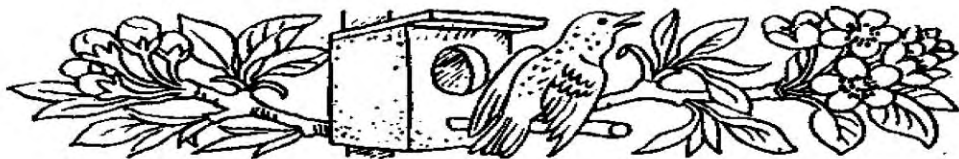
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Preface

Over a two or three year period, Bruce Whittaker secreted prose, poems, and their revisions to the editor for future publication as a surprise to his family. He originally, and maybe *facétieux*, suggested the title, 'Your Fill from the Quill of Bruce of Farrants Hill'.

It was with great sorrow that the editor learned of his death only weeks before publication. And so this small compilation, although selected by Bruce himself, has been published posthumously.

Donald Bruce Whittaker (1941-2000) was the son of an evangelist and spent his childhood hearing the Word of God publicly preached almost daily. He chose also to study for himself and mastered New Testament Greek to aid him in his personal search for the Biblical Jesus. His poems and prose show that his search was not in vain.

In the short time that I knew him I found him to be quiet, unassuming and strangely serious. And yet he shared a wonderful warmth and love which began with his family and radiated out to all he met. I count it a great privilege to have known him and look forward to meeting him again on Resurrection Morning.

The content of Bruce Whittaker's writings will leave no doubt in the reader's mind that he loved his Lord and that he would wish for the same of his readers.

Lionel Hartley, Editor
November 2000

Dedication

To Victoria

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By Paul of Tarsus (1st Cor. 13:1-3)
As told to Bruce of Farrants Hill

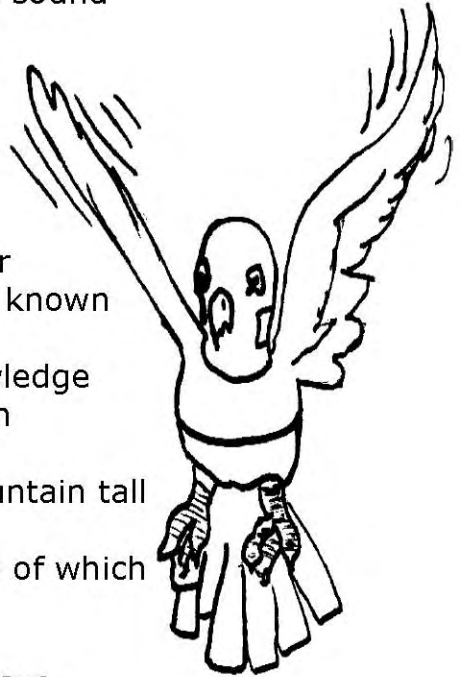
If I could speak the tongues of men
and angel dialect besides
What profit would that be to me
if Love I brushed aside
Then my smart but empty words
would be like noisy gongs
Or perhaps a tinkling cymbal sound
unheeded by the throng

If I could see the future clear
and mysteries were trifles known

If vast ocean depths of knowledge
were fathoms easily shown

If my faith could seize a mountain tall
and heave it into hell
And yet that Love, the worth of which
the Father knows full well

I did not value, then in His gaze
a hapless slave I'd be, content
With servile ignorance to ply a course
that's self-destruction bent

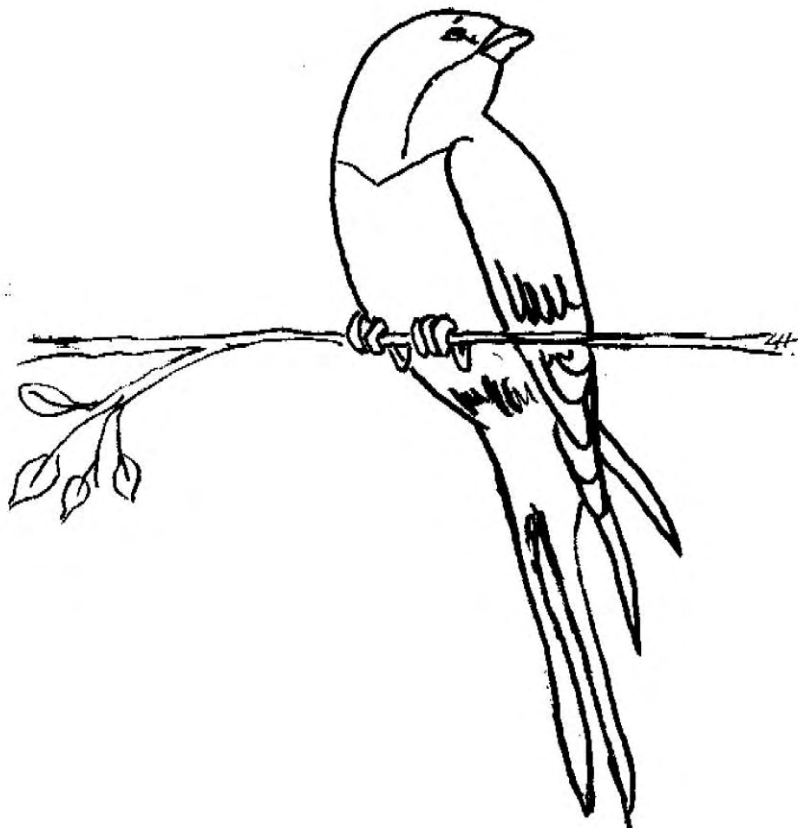


If with philanthropic frame my goods
to poor men's needs I give

And if I pledged myself a martyr burned,
with Jesus soon to live

Ah, foolish one, what wasted sacrificial effort
that would be

If sweet Jesus' saving Love was not
the motivating force in me



Blest Hope

When the final enemy breaches home
And breaks the quivering silver chord
When the clods of the valley fall
Like lead upon the sorrowing soul
When comforting sympathetic words
Like icicles cold are heard

Then maybe, the only hope words
That we shall see, are the ones that say
That the Lord Himself shall descend one day
And the dead in Christ arising first
From 'neath those clammy clods shall burst
And together ne'er to part, we shall rise
To meet our Saviour in the skies

The Prayer That Saves

Prayer for sin is not an expiation
It has no merit of itself in any situation
For the most eloquent prayers are but idle words
If the hearts true sentiments are not heard

And all the flowery words at our command
Are useless if holy desires will not stand
For God has no ear for ceremonials long
His ardent heart craves a different song

But the prayer that comes from an earnest heart
When the simple wants of the soul are part
Of an unspoken cry and with a sense of sin
Winds its chartered course in expectation
Of faith to the Hearer who lovingly feels
That this is the prayer that saved and healed

Friends

We should ever feel a care and friendly interest deep
For the saving of the wayward, impenitent and cheap

But we can with perfect safety, only choose
For friends, those folk we really can't afford to lose

Because they first and foremost seek
The precious company of God to keep

Come Ye Apart

Oh broken heart we hear Him speaking
As other voices growing vain
We wait in quietness, weeping
The silence of the soul makes plain
That gracious, kindly, heavenly strain ,
Even as His atmosphere of rest
Invades the mind with fragrance blest

And 'mid the unsmiling hurrying throng
Who strain at life's wild fascinating song
Are souls who've been revived, they know
A power Divine, men's hearts to show

"Be still and know that I am God."
– Psalm 46:10

"Wait on the Lord:
Be of good courage
And He shall strengthen thine heart:
Wait, I say on the Lord."
– Psalm 27:4

The Dawn Service (1)

'Twas in a prayerful, solitary and early morning hour
That Jesus supplicated wisdom,
grace and plenteous power

Could our headstrong precious children dear
Learn this lesson in the morning of their years?

What freshness, joy and sweetness dawning clear
Would wipe away the souls dark night of bitter tears



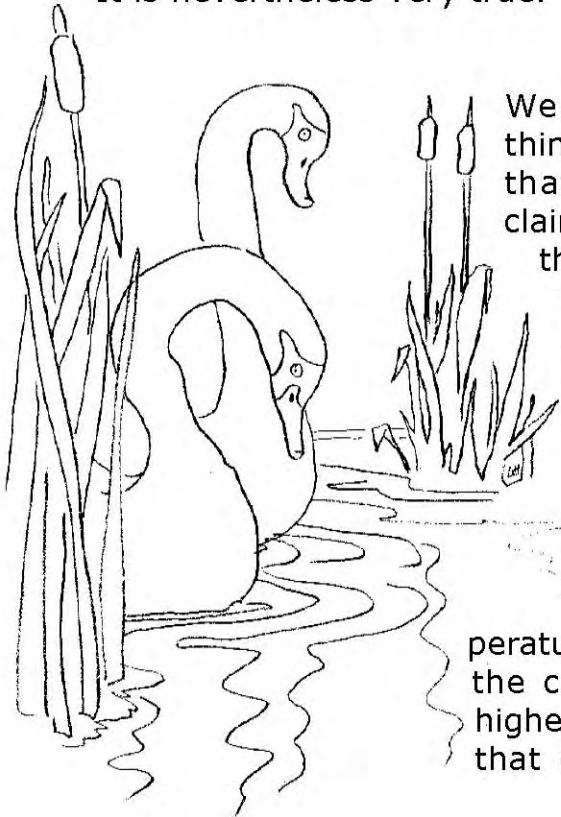
The Dawn Service (2)

Conversion's perfect day , it came ... it went
It's grace, a precious credit long's been spent
Rolling years it took for me to learn
That dayspring's flush is all I have to turn
Another consecration, fresh-born in dew's of dawn
Into expectant gifts of love that say
These few moments fleeting, they're Yours today

We cannot give You weeks and years
For we have not received their tears
And tomorrows care is not yet mine
But for today, my God, please use it Thine

The Father of the Bride...

I tend to find weddings to be places where you are likely to hear lots of good advice. I don't know why we do that, since the parties for whom it was intended are probably not concentrating very well anyway, and given a day or so down the track those certain parties would probably be hard-pressed to remember anything resembling good advice. So you will be glad to know this evening, I'm not going to offer my usual seven hints for preserving an exciting and happy marriage. But I will say this that if indeed a happy marriage is something you really want [and we want it for you] then it's going to be something that both of you will have to work at. Because [and wait for the cliché] happy marriages don't just happen. How often have we heard that? It is nevertheless very true.



The other evening, Wednesday evening I think, my wife said to me that the radio had proclaimed on the news that the minimum temperature in Inverell, Thursday morning, was going to be 0 degrees. I was sitting at the computer at the time trying to put a few words on this bit of paper. And, by-the-way, minimum temperatures where we live on the coast are considerably higher than that. However, that comment by my wife

started a train of thought. It put me in mind of some wonderful things you just don't forget about your childhood.

One of those pleasant memories was hurrying down to the kitchen on cold winter mornings and feeling the warm floor under my feet. We lived in New Zealand at the time and there are some cold spots there. The worst part was getting out from under the pile of blankets and putting my bare feet on the cold floor. I didn't waste any time getting to the kitchen because I knew the old stove would be fired up and the floors would be warm.

I sure enjoyed the warmth. It was wonderful. But it didn't come about without effort. My dad cut and split the wood. It was my job to carry and store the wood. As I recall it took a lot of effort to keep that fire going , but it was worth it considering the alternative – cold feet. We all enjoyed the warmth and so we did our part to keep the home fires burning.

What worries me is that many of the marriages I hear about today become loveless utilitarian relationships, sustained merely to protect children, property, shared careers and other business interests. In other words they're pretty cold.

A cold utilitarian relationship doesn't particularly appeal to me, nor you – I hope. And so I'm suggesting to you, today, the addition of a little fuel to the love fires of your marriage. And that fuel I suggest is effort. When you consider the cold alternative I think it's worth it.

Mother and I wish you all the very very best and a happy future together. Thanks everybody for coming. ... Have a happy time everybody.

– *The Father of the Bride*

The Best Policy

It isn't chance
that guides us through this life but once

For providence decrees
that water from the bridge must flee

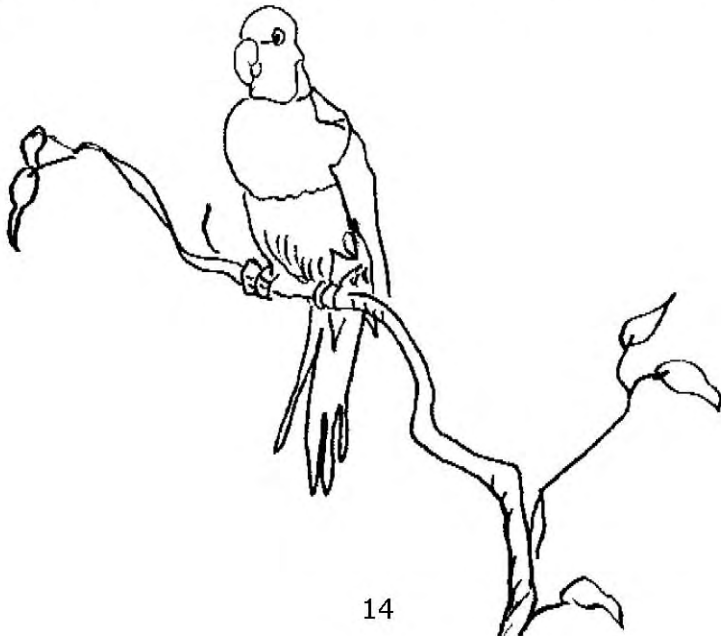
We come not back
the second time to rectify our gaffes*

Then why do we try
the honest and contrived to harmonize?

Such can never see
to act as one and in agreement be

May God and right
ever be the subject of our thought and fight

(*gaffe – a blunder; an indiscreet act or remark – OED)



Comparatively Speaking

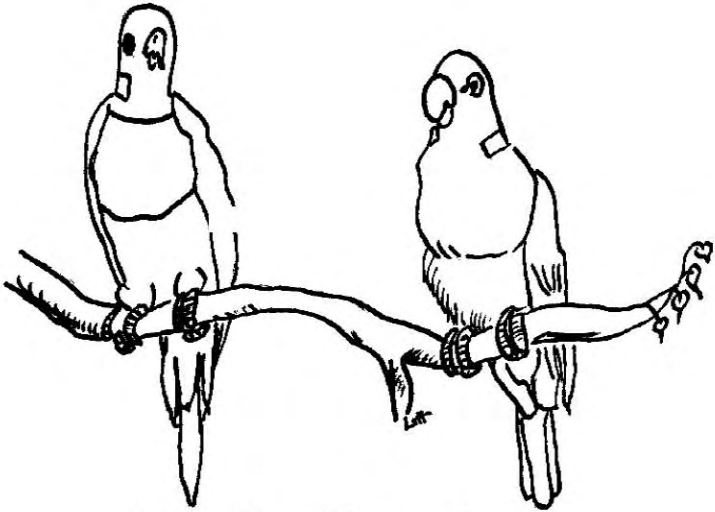
Six stories high it was, a mansion novel
Sixty feet of it, above his brother's hovel
But on that account, he was no nearer heaven
Than his poor neighbour, hunger craven
For on a day of grief he did come down
And lay six feet beneath the ground
And the poorer man when he was dead
"Was laid no lower," the preacher said

We do not prize a lovely tree
Because it grows on a mountain free
Nor despise another sown and in a valley grown
But we appreciate or otherwise and declare
The quality of the fruit they bear
Friend, never look back to see how far
You've left some other Christian marred.
Look! See how far short of Christ you be?
Take courage brother and run for that
In a word look "forward" and never back

The Quartette

We hear not their angel voices sprite
We see them not with natural sight
But their hands are linked around the sphere
With sleepless vigil the evil hosts at bay they steer
Till the final forehead with the seal is placed
And fades times echo on Love's sweet melody of grace

And so, dear friend of mine, it's crystal clear
That **now** today, is the accepted time of year
Why shilly - shally, loiter, ponder and delay?
When Now's the time we ought to kneel and pray



Help For Us

Inspired by Patriachs and Prophets, p421

Help for us He has provided,
in His strength we may be free
Weak points are attacked by Satan,
but overcome we need not be.
However great life's pressures
bring upon the soul to bear
Temptations boldest blast,
cannot with sin excuses share

Earth's freshest morn, Hell's blackest night,
they have no compulsion
Anyone to evil do, transgression's choice in source
is our invention
Though sport of circumstance is hard,
and unexpectedly brings tension
Provision ample He has provided,
in His will we may be free
Weakness may be loved by Satan,
but overcome?.. We need not be!

Doers or Dudes

He reaps a hunger crop of spirit need
Who diligently sows with hunger seed
Take sower Laziness, poor gentle fellow
He's spawned the clamour child Want
Sweet child of ease, but hardly mellow

Yon craving Need of this wanting hour
For doers not dudes you justly plead
Ornamentals fine may be, visions bright they power
But on dreams they dine, and forgetting the deeds
They finally kneel to those who oft for pain
And loss, as soldiers true and game
Marching forth
And counting not the hardness of the course
They by the inward eye of faith
The heavenly vision followed.

We may have heaven in our mouths, how sweet
But really, we're not there until it's in our feet
For it's not tongues titillating loquacity
But rather feet walking, saith *The Follow Me*.

True Love (a fragment)

Love is not revealed in only words and claims
It's more than pain in bones of burning flame
God's love is shown and proved in actions strong
It endures test and trial though time be long

So when with care you truly Love without offence
With grit you stand your ground in faulty man's defence.

Remember

A Paraphrase of Ecclesiastes 12

Remember now my son
 your Maker, in days of zestful youth and fun
For shrinking years will while away
 and soon your thoughts will say
"This tired old journey's walk with time
 with joyless eyes I see"
For the unsought day will come
 when hesitating eyesight dim will be
When shaft of sun and misty moonlight sweet
 is hard to tell between
When twinkling starry luminescence fades
 and each day bright seems
Overcast and dark and filled
 with clouds of fear and doubt and rain
And arms that once so strong and quick
 will shake, and legs will pain
And precious grinders stained and few
 will make it difficult to chew
And life's view will be a vista seen
 through some hazy half drawn screen
While microphone is deaf to noisy streets
 and ears will scarcely tune
The wheat-mill strong
 as it grinds the music to the young girl's song
Nor will rousing come with dawn
 as feathered folks their songs adorn
Fear with you will climb the heights
 and danger hides in streets at night
With whited hair like almond spray
 you'll drag yourself along each day
And rest each stop like a tired old grasshopper
 rests the previous hop

.....Cont.

Then sweet desire for life will fail
and the final step and final rest, look hale
And folks for you will mourn
just as they have grieved for others yore
Yet there will be no turning back
for the precious silver chain has snapped
The golden lamp of life it's beams have paled
the pulley's rope has failed
And the God-given water vibrant sent
from the broken earthen pitcher's spent

Decay and rust will seize your frame
as the Maker's spark returns to dust
"For life is vain an idle dream
and nothing lasts," so goes the preacher's theme
After all is said and done
there's really only one thing that finally matters son,
Do you respect your Father dear
and act what He says in commandments clear?
There's no doubt He's seen whate'er we've been,
including our every secret scheme
Whether it was good and true
or whether it enshrined a tainted evil residue.



The Babes and the Prudent

His gracious deeds of love and compassion done
With wondering awe, gazed the angel throng
But the prying, curious crowds of Capernaum
Saw not their faces, nor heard their song

Men's actions strange, indifferent; evokes
The thought that time and eternity were themes
Scarce worthy of the minds of better folk
For priest and ruler, scribe and pharisee

Cavilled long on endless theory and tradition;
Stubborn their grip on customs ceremonial, yet
While the superficial vied for No. 1 position
Mankind's Saviour, they did perchance forget

And yet there was a few, who suffered grace
To touch and cleanse the heart, a lowly few,
Unlearned? Yes, but with an insight rare, placed
Value real, and gloried Him, as Friend, Messiah true

*"At that time Jesus answered and said,
I thank thee, O Father,
Lord of heaven and earth,
Because thou hast hid these things from the prudent
And revealed them unto babes." Matt. 11:25*

O Father just,
What you did for them, please do for us.

Editor's note: Here is an interesting earlier version of the first stanza:

His gracious deeds of love and compassion done
Were regarded with wonder by the angel throng
But the multitudes of Chorizin and Capernaum
With indifference and hardness of heart looked on
Their mindless actions showed that eternity was not
A theme upon which they chose to reflect a lot.

Unbelief

Many, darkness as a garment gather, they say
"We want no special knowledge of thy way,
O God, 'the way I choose let it be mine'
We love the things that separate our souls from thine"

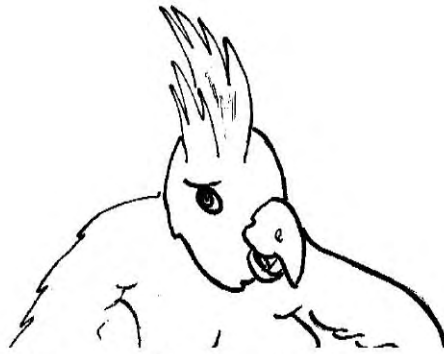
Why is it then that men will not believe and do
When evidence sufficient God gives for them to view?
Because they do not want be convinced, they shout
"We want pegs on which to hang our doubts"

With spirit brave they sight "Proof, proof, give us that,
Provide our unbelief, a testimony of insufficient facts
Give much that pleases well our ideas and situation
As harmonize you must, our will and disposition"

Hope, Sweet Hope

My Jesus said he would go away
And mansions prepare for us one day
That where He is, we may also be
In never fading light His face to see
My heart leaps at the prospect sweet
Heaven blessed abode, it's ours to keep!

I'm glad every moment that Jesus lives
And to us His life of grace He gives.
My weary soul says "Praise the Lord"
There's a fullness in Him we can afford
For why should we die for want of bread
Or starve in a foreign land instead?



Psalm No.1

1. Happy! Yes, well contented is the man
Who shuns the guidance of a Godless plan
Who refuses ways of wicked brothers
And keeps his mouth from criticizing others
2. It delights him, the doing of his Master's letter
And by each day's meditation seeks to know it better
3. Is he not that mighty tree
Planted by still waters free
The one that has much fruit come on
Yet refuses death when drought prolongs
Like the tree the good he does each day
Lives on in trust and never goes away
4. Ungodly men just are not so
Like chaff with every wind they blow
5. Their actions have a voice that speaks
And in the final judgement keeps
The door that's always stood ajar
Firm fixed with bolt and bar
6. There the knowing Judge sees righteous all
And with regret He views the sinners fall

Yokes

Based on the E. G. White comments,
SDA Bible Commentary on Matt. 11:28-30

Men frame yokes for their necks to wear
Of a type that seem really pleasant and fair
Yet the final outcome is nought but gall
Which proves that it wasn't Christ's at all
For His yoke is easy and His burden small

For instance,
The yokes of fashion were never designed
To make the foolish minds of men refined
For the rules of the world in this respect
Are rather vain and do not in character reflect
The Maker's instructions which if made to bend
Cause the neck to chafe at the journey's end

Remember,
The yoke you place upon your frame
Hoping vainly it fits, is not the same
As the measure that the Saviour takes
And never with false estimate makes
A yoke of restraint and obedience true.
It proves of benefit to me and you
For you see it keeps us near His side
While the heaviest lift He does provide

So with grace that yoke we take and giving
Up the struggle stern, and earnestly living
With a sense of our weakness great
And while learning of meekness, we make
That heavenly anointing life's great goal,
And in doing, it never fails to rest the soul

*"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me;
for I am meek and lowly in heart:
and ye shall find rest unto your souls."*

His Tearful Prayer

It is thy day O church, thou bride
With whom thy Husband's law abides
This day of trust must soon be past
The dying sun is low and westering fast

Can it be that it will set and yet
Thou wilt not know, did you forget
The things that belong unto thy peace?

Are they now hidden from thine eyes?
O that thy sightless blight might cease
Before the sentence sure applies.



My Prayer

O Lord, might this my constant motto be
To ever let Yourself live out Your life in me
To persevere in overcoming every fault so tiring
The wisdom and the strength is found abiding
Not within my baleful soul-sick members
But with You who knows and who remembers
All to well, my spirits frail undone condition
And grace you give to me and all who with contrition
Fall on bended knee and with glad humiliation
Scoop deep the flowing springs of Your salvation

Sun on the Face

When the sunshine of heaven fills the mind
It puts upon a morbid face a smile, the kind
That indicates a constant holy impulse grand
Has formed to help and bless the other man

This Love is Godliness, when self is merged in Christ
'Tis a principle that Satan hates and with the highest
Cunning seen, denies that Jesus shows us how to live
And how to daily die to self
 and how with gratefulness to give
An hour of service free to bless
 the likes of you... And even me

The Upward Look

We often fail by searching wide
For that which close at hand abides

So tried and tempted one look up
Look long and you will see
The heavens are calm and steady be

But in gazing down earth reels and sways
Nothing's sure but sin and rage
So climber bold look up

See there that heavenly hand
Reaching o'er the ramparts grand

He's sure to grasp in strong embrace
The sinner's hand with love and grace
Look up, dear one , look up with faith

The Token Smile

I see a living carpet green
 enshrine those stunning flowers
A reminder, as I look at them
 of happy Eden's bowers
Without a doubt they are an expression of His love
A foretaste of that fairer Eden land above

And does it bring a smile to lips Divine
To see delight upon this face of mine?
And is it but a token small, yet true
Of what He will for us... Yet do?

Wanting?

Silently, unnoticed as the midnight thief, He comes
Gracious Mercy's last decisive offer to His guilty sons
So watching we wait that final fixing moment
Lest coming suddenly He finds us cold and dormant

Some like the political man nurture power and fame
And fashion's child her ornaments she views again
Unmindful the cackling crowd indulgence seeks
Knowing not the Judge the sentence keeps

"Thou art weighed in the balances
 and art wanting found."

What then?

Perilous is the waiting watch of those who weary grow
And turning cling the fond taste
 of the fatal fruit to know.

(From Daniel 5:27 Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.)

Almost Home

We've almost come to that place called home
Soon that Voice, sweeter than a well sung poem
We'll hear, "Enter thou, my son, to my joy and pleasure"
Blessed sacred benediction, timeless, without measure
I want to hear it from immortal lips sincere
I want to shout and praise Him on the throne
And hear my voice re-echo through the courts & domes

God help us and fill us with Thy power and fullness
And finally bring us to Your world of goodness

A Final Explanation

There are homes for wandering pilgrims weary
With robes for the righteous and crowns of glory
There mysteries of grace will unfold like flowers
Under the influence of heavenly showers

All that's perplexed with sorrow and pain
Will then in God's providence be explained
Where finite minds saw confusion and crying
We'll see that **Love** ordered things most trying

As we realize the care of Him who would
Make all things work together for good
We shall rejoice with joy unspeakably glorious
And shout with those ransomed souls victorious.

Finished

Based on The Desire of Ages, p764

Our Father, thou loving fountain sweet of life
unborrowed and underived
How sad that when by choice,
rejectors of Your truth the sowing, reaping
Will find your Presence precious
becomes a bolt of flame and weeping
Though when in time the controversy
was but young in issues understood
And angels comprehended not sin's consequence
for years sustained
That lingering evil seed of doubt,
its deadly fruit of sin and woe remained
But not so when the awesome controversy
great shall ended be
When redemption's plans completed,
and God's character reveals
To all intelligence created, that perfect Law immutable,
a guarantee
That sin and Satan cease with nature manifest,
and seals
A final vindication of His love before a universe who thrill
With shout of voice and heart within the cradle of His will
Well might angels sing
as they looked upon the Saviour's cross
For though they did not then perceive
the controversy entire
Sin's end certain they understood,
man's future life secure from loss
But Christ Himself
He understood the joyful implications higher
And with faiths eye upward gazing,
Sweet Victory uttered "It is finished".

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