

November 28

When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? Job 34:29

WHO but He, the 'God of all comfort,' can give quietness in the midst of tumults which rise upon the soul like sudden storms upon the sea? Like ocean mariners in peril,

we cry unto Him, and He bringeth us to the desired haven--blessed haven--of quietness and peace in God.

What is the cry which brings this answer of peace? It is not a prayer that all occasion for disturbance shall be removed, for it is not always the divine will to bring

peace to the human spirit in that way; it is not always the best way. But there is a cry which never fails to bring the quietness in which none can 'make trouble.' It is the prayer for sweet, trustful loving acquiescence in the will of God." Z. '96-259 R2058:3

R2058 (From Harvest Truth Database V8.0 2013)

"HE GIVETH QUIETNESS"

"WHEN he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?" And ⁽¹⁾who but he, the 'God of all comfort,' can give quietness in the midst of tumults which rise upon the soul like sudden storms upon the sea? Like ocean mariners in peril, we cry unto him, and he bringeth us to the desired haven-- blessed haven--of quietness and peace in God.

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"May thy will, not mine, be done;
May thy will and mine be one;
Peace I ask--but peace must be,
Lord, in being one with Thee."

"What is it which disturbs my spirit? Is it anxiety about my work, my finances, my reputation, my friends? Suppose my Father in heaven should hear my prayer and remove every apparent cause for unrest in regard to one or all of these matters to-day. That would not give settled peace, for in a life so full of uncertainties as this, new occasions of anxiety would probably arise to-morrow.

"But if I say, 'Lord, let each one of these matters which concern my peace of mind so closely be under thy control; order all entirely

according to thy will, for thou art my Father and my Friend; thy will is that thy children should have the very best in all things; and thou knowest what is best for me,' what a place of rest is that! How the sense of too heavy responsibility rolls off; how the distracting care is shifted from the heart too weak to bear it to the strong shoulder upon which the government of all things rightfully and easily rests.

"If this experience of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price, is not realized at once, we must not be discouraged. It is not only of a great price as to value, but it often costs a great price to gain it.

"It follows successive battles, often repeated self-surrender, and multiplied trials in which the unflinching care and love of God have been clearly manifested. We were watching the sea waves under the northeast wind; how disturbed and dark they were! Suddenly, with a fierceness that seemed cruel, the rain fell in torrents, and the unresisting waters grew perfectly calm as under an overwhelming surprise. When the storm had passed, the setting sun shone gloriously, and the quieted waters were beautiful in colors of rose and gold.

"Nature has its spiritual correspondences. Surprise comes upon surprise, sudden, overwhelming. The spirit which once tossed restlessly in chafing winds of lesser trials sinks in sweet submission under heavier griefs. We learn that even in the storm God was, and at last his conscious love, his abiding presence, his unvarying peace--the beauty of Godlikeness--glorify the character and life." -- *Selected.*

⁽¹⁾ Nov. 28 Manna, Job 34:29

R5402 "Elihu's words were as wise as any of those spoken by Job's comforters--probably wiser; but they were merely human wisdom, so far as we can discern. In *Chapter 34:29* he asks the question, "When He [Jehovah] giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?" Evidently the young man sought to draw a line in the criticism of Job, agreeing with neither Job nor his friends, but endeavoring to be moderate in his position. He defended the Almighty, claiming that if God had not so ordered, Job's adversities could not have come upon him.

To Elihu it seemed clear that God had a hand in Job's experiences. Satan could not have sent all these calamities unless God had permitted it. Neither man nor angel of whatever rank could thwart the Divine will. God, not Job, had the authority to decide what should be done. God alone had the right to order all of life's affairs. Incidentally Elihu showed that Job was more righteous than were his friends; and that while he was imperfect, like all, yet he was not being punished on this account.

A DIFFICULT LESSON FOR MANY

The Christian may very well draw a lesson from Elihu's question. Although the words are not inspired, yet they are very wise. We can recognize the truth they contain--that when God purposes to give peace, quietness, the whole Universe will be in obedience to His Laws, and *none* can make trouble.

If we have difficulties, if we have persecutions, if we have troubles of any kind we should look to God. We should say: This thing could not happen to me unless the Lord permitted it. We have come under special Divine care. God has promised that

all things shall work together for good to us who are His children. The lesson of trust is one of those difficult lessons for us to learn and apply-- to realize that all of life's experiences are under Divine supervision and that nothing can happen to us but what is for our highest good. This is not now true of the world, but merely of God's family. By and by God will make all things work out blessings for the world.

It is in respect to these who are His children that all things now work for good. When we are in difficulty, we are to look up in confidence and trust to the Lord. Our Heavenly Father wishes us to exercise faith in Him. St. Peter tells us that we are "kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." Therefore we greatly rejoice, even "though now for a season we are in heaviness through manifold trials" and temptations. "The trial of your faith is much more precious than that of gold that perisheth."--1 Peter 1:5-7.

FALSE PEACE OF MANY

There is another way by which some may have quietness. Many in the world enjoy a measure of peace, or rest from worry. Yet they are unaware of the great truths which we enjoy, and are in blindness, ignorance, superstition, error, through Satan's delusions. They have a feeling of security and ease, through the blinding influence of error and falsehood. Those of the world who come into relationship with God, are therefore sometimes awakened from false security. Then they gain the true peace and rest of heart. The Lord says: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." No true rest can be gained otherwise.

The Lord's people have a peace and

rest of mind through the knowledge of the Lord's Plan, the knowledge of His Justice, Mercy and Love, and a blessed realization that He is *our* God. All these things give us peace and quiet and rest of mind. While the world are troubled more or less, God's children have a peace that the world knows not of, that the world can neither give nor take away. And when the trials are all over, the Lord will make up for all the troubles of the present time, for all His children have suffered. We shall then look back on these trials and consider them but light afflictions, only for a moment.--2 Corinthians 4:17.

TESTS OF LOYALTY AND DEVOTION

When the Lord permits great clouds of trouble to come upon us, we should first look to see if we can discern any wrongdoing in ourselves which might properly bring chastisement. We *should* have joy in the Lord. But perhaps we have not been living close enough to the Lord. Yet these clouds of affliction do not necessarily mean that we have not been living close to Him, as we have seen in the case of Job.

We remember likewise in the experiences of our Lord Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before His crucifixion, how He said to His disciples, Peter, James and John, "My soul is *exceeding sorrowful*, even unto *death*." We remember that God did not give Him quietness, but allowed trouble like a great flood to sweep over His soul. He was troubled to know surely whether He had been entirely loyal, faithful and obedient, as was necessary to maintain the Father's favor. We are told by the Apostle Paul that our Lord Jesus "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was

able to save Him out of death--and was heard."--Hebrews 5:7.

We find that the Father sent His angel to minister unto His dear Son, in His deep distress. As soon as the angel had given our Lord the assurance of the Father that He was well pleasing in His life and conduct, He became perfectly calm. And the assurance sustained Him in all the trying experiences which followed--the trial before the Sanhedrin, before Pilate, the treatment of the soldiers, the journey on the way to Calvary, and in the midst of the trying process of execution which followed.

Only at the last, when the Father, because Jesus must take the sinner's place, withdrew His presence from Him in His dying moment did our Lord manifest disturbance of mind. Then He cried out in agony of soul, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" It was necessary for our Lord to experience the entire cutting off from God and from all relationship to God, in order to pay the full penalty for Adam's sin. This experience was at the very last moment. The Heavenly Father permitted this, for it was necessary to our Lord that He should realize the meaning of the sinner's separation from God.

We do not consider it necessary that in every case our Lord's true and faithful followers should have a similar experience. We are not, as was our Redeemer, the Ransom, the Sin-bearer for the world; but it

would not be surprising if some may have similar experiences to those of our Lord. Some of the saints have died, exclaiming: "I am sweeping through the gates of the New Jerusalem!" while others have had dying experiences more like those of our Lord, and have cried out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

We can be content to leave our experiences entirely in the hands of Him who loves us, and can have an inward peace and calm and a rest of soul, knowing that no outward storm will be permitted but such as the Father sees will bring forth in us the peaceable fruits of righteousness, if we are properly exercised thereby."

R4103 "To the world it might appear that the trials, the testings, the scoffs, the slanders to which faithfulness to the Lord is sure to expose, would rob life of all its pleasures. But not so: "When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?" (Job 34:29.) All the Lord's people are surely being taught the lesson enunciated by the Apostle--that we must learn to rejoice in tribulation, and to be patient because of our hope, which, as an anchor sure and steadfast, has entered within the veil. Quite to the contrary of what the world would suppose, our own experiences, and the testimony of many of the household of faith, assure us that no other people in all the world are so happy, so contented, so joyful in the house of their pilgrimage as are

we. The poet has well said:

"Think what spirit dwells within thee,
Think what Father's smiles are thine,
Think how Jesus died to save thee--
Child of heaven, canst thou repine?"

If, momentarily, earth-born clouds and shadows do to some degree becloud our pathway, it is but for a brief season until we hear the voice of our Father and of our Savior assuring us of "Love divine, all love excelling." Before our mental vision comes the bright picture of the first manifestation of divine love on our behalf--in the redemption accomplished by our dear Redeemer; then the call of the Little Flock, and the fact that the way of attainment thereto has been made so clear to us...

Our sighs and tears are indeed called for as we think of our dear friends and neighbors who are still blind to these glorious things. Yet the murmur is hushed and the tears dried, as we hearken to the voice of him that speaketh from heaven, assuring us that his love and sympathy for the groaning creation are far greater than ours, and that he has made ample provision for every man, and that in his "due time" all shall have the necessary knowledge and the necessary assistance to a participation in the glorious "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began." --Acts 3:19-23."

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THE MINISTRY OF SORROW

"Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord!" "When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?"

— Psalm 130:1; Job 34:29. —

THE life of every human being has its lights and shadows, its heights of joy and its depths of sorrow. These make up a large part of the warp and the woof of experience; and the web of character which flows from the active loom of life, will be fine and beautiful or coarse and homely, according to the skill and carefulness with which the individual weaves into it the threads of experience. In every life, in the present reign of sin and evil the somber shades predominate; and to such an extent is this true that the Word of God aptly describes the human family in their present condition as a groaning creation. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together until now," says the Apostle. The children of God are no exception to this universal rule; we also "groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the deliverance of our Body"--our company, the Body of Christ.--Romans 8:22,23.

But while we are waiting for our deliverance, the daily experiences of life have a most important mission to us, and the manner in which we receive them should be a matter of deepest concern; for according to the use we make of them, each day's prosperity or its adversity and trial bear to us a blessing or a curse. Those experiences which we are accustomed to regard as prosperous often have in them subtle dangers. If wealth increases or friends multiply or a large measure of earthly joy comes to us, how almost imperceptibly the heart finds its satisfaction in the things of earth! But when the keen edge of sorrow and disappointment is felt, when riches or health fail, when friends forsake, and enemies take up a reproach against us, the natural tendency is to despondency and despair.

Just here is a very important part of the great warfare of the Christian's life. He must fight the tendencies of his old nature and must confidently claim and expect the victory, in the strength of the great Captain of his salvation. He must not yield to the alluring influences of favorable outward conditions, neither must he sink beneath the weight of trials and adversity. He must not permit any experience in life, however hard and painful, to sour and harden him or make him bitter, morose or unloving. Nor may he allow pride or love of show, or self-righteousness, to feed upon the temporal blessings which the Lord in His loving providence has given him to prove his faithfulness as a steward.

DEPTHS OF SORROW LEAD TO HEIGHTS OF JOY

Sorrow and griefs may, and perhaps often will, come in like a flood, but the Lord will be our Stay and Strength in every experience

which He permits. The soul that has never known the discipline of sorrow and trouble has never yet learned the joy and preciousness of the Lord's love and helpfulness. It is in seasons of overwhelming sorrow and grief, when we draw near to the Lord, that He draws especially near to us. So the Psalmist found it, when in his deep affliction he cried to God, saying, "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord! Lord, hear my voice; let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!" (Vs. 1,2.) Feeling his own weaknesses and shortcomings, longing for full deliverance from every imperfection, and prophesying of the bountiful provisions of the Divine Plan of Salvation through Christ, he adds, "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities [imputing them to us], O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared [reverenced]."--Vs. 3,4.

How precious are such assurances when the soul is painfully conscious of its infirmities, of its utter inability to fully measure up to the perfect law of righteousness! How blessed it is to know that when our hearts are loyal and true, our God does not mark against us the unavoidable blemishes of our earthen vessel! If we come daily to Him for cleansing, through the merits of our Redeemer, our failures are not imputed to us, but freely forgiven and washed away. The perfect righteousness of our Savior is our glorious dress, arrayed in which we may come to God with humble boldness, courage--even into the presence of the great Jehovah, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

If thus God ignores the infirmities of our flesh, and fully receives us and communes with us as His dear children, we should so regard one another, considering not and charging not against one another the infirmities of the flesh, which each humbly confesses, and which they, like us, are earnestly endeavoring to overcome by the grace of God, to the best of their ability. To each one of the Lord's true children the words of the Apostle apply: "If God be for us, who can be against us?... Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's Elect? Shall that God that justifieth? Who is he that condemneth? Shall Christ that died?" (Romans 8:31,33,34 --Diaglott.) The case is different, however, when the infirmities of the flesh are *cultivated*, indulged in without proper effort to correct them, and are justified, in order that the faults may be continued. Then, indeed, they are charged against us, and if we do not speedily "judge ourselves," and take decisive measures to correct them, the Lord will

Himself judge and chasten us.--1 Cor. 11:31,32.

In the midst of the cares, perplexities and difficulties that come to the children of the Lord, we are to trust Him fully, and to possess our souls in peace and patience! We are to *wait* patiently for the Lord to outwork the issues of our experiences in His own good way. How *necessary* is the patient waiting on the Lord! The Psalmist says, "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His Word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning." (Psalm 130:5, 6.) In every experience of sorrow and distress, and when the strain of the jarring discords and the stinging vexations, and wounds that make the heart bleed, threaten to overwhelm the spirit, let the child of God remember that "He *knows*, and *loves*, and *cares*," and that His ministering angel is ever near us, and that no trial will be permitted to be *too severe*. The dear Master is standing by the crucible, and the furnace heat will never be permitted to grow so intense that the precious gold of our characters shall be destroyed, or even injured. Ah, no! If by His grace the experiences may not work for our good, they will be turned aside. He loves us too well to permit any needless sorrow, any needless suffering.

THE REWARD OF PATIENT WAITING

"Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." (Psalm 37:5-7.) We must not be disappointed and allow our faith to falter when the test of patient endurance is applied, while the outward peace and quietness which we crave tarry long. Our Father has not forgotten us when the answer to our prayers seems to be delayed. Outward peace and calm are not always the conditions best suited to our needs as New Creatures; and we would not desire conditions in which the precious fruits of the Spirit would not grow and develop in us. Therefore, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice." (1 Peter 4:12,13.) He who numbers the very hairs of our heads is never indifferent to the sufferings and needs of His weakest and humblest child. Oh, how sweet is the realization of such loving, abiding care! "When *He* giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?"

The saints have indeed in every sorrow and grief a blessed consolation of which the world is wholly in ignorance. None but the true child of God can know it. What is this consolation? Oh, you who have never enlisted under the banner of the Cross, who have never put yourselves wholly into the hands of the Lord to be moulded and fashioned into His glorious likeness, who have never made an earnest effort to stem the tide of the tendencies of your own fallen nature, who have never contended earnestly for Truth and righteousness in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, what can you know of the sweets of this Divine consolation? It is the precious balm of Gilead for wounded spirits on the battle-field of life, it is the stimulating, refreshing draught for fainting souls, hard pressed by the relentless foe. It is the soothing caress of a loving hand upon the fevered brow of the noble contender for Truth and godliness. It is the gentle whisper of hope and love and courage when heart and flesh are almost failing. This is Divine consolation, the only consolation that has in it any virtue of healing or refreshment. It is reserved alone for those noble souls who are faithfully bearing the burden and heat of the day in the service of the King of kings; while those who listlessly drift with the current of the world and the downward tendencies of the carnal nature can never have an intimation of its sweetness.

How loving and tender is our God, and how wise and strong! His promises have never failed those who have put their trust in Him. We may feel that our efforts to be good and to do good are very unproductive, that the opposition from without and within is very strong. But it is when we are weak, when we realize our own helplessness and incompetency, that we may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. It is then that we may realize that His strength is made perfect in our weakness. The fact that we are weak and lame does not separate us from the love and power of our God, while we are striving to do His will; for "He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." Then let us more and more lay hold of this strength of the Lord, that we may courageously pursue our course in the narrow way of difficulty and trial. Precious indeed to the saint of God is the ministry of pain and sorrow!

"YE HAVE SEEN THE PATIENCE OF JOB"

The saints of every Age have learned the blessing of afflictions

and sorrows. The Psalmist David says, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes"; and again, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept Thy Word." (Psalm 119:67,71.) God's faithful servant Job suffered almost overwhelming troubles, but the Lord brought him out into a large place when his testings had accomplished their designed effect. He was proven and strengthened by his sore experiences. Few if any of us could suffer more. He suffered the loss of all his property, then of all his children, whom he loved, then of the love and loyalty of his wife; and finally, he was smitten with sore disease-- boils, from head to foot. To crown all, three of his friends came to see him on hearing of his great trials; and instead of being true comforters, they added to his sorrows by insisting that his own sins must have been the cause of all these disasters; that his experiences must surely be punishments from the Lord because of unfaithfulness on his part. Surely poor Job was afflicted!

But did he lose his faith in God? Hear him: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord!" (Job 1:21.) "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." (Job 13:15.) Job was indeed much cast down, but he maintained his integrity of character and his faith in the Lord through all. He did not charge God with injustice, and God did not desert His faithful servant. He reproved his accusers and required them to offer sacrifice, and instructed Job to pray for them, that their trespasses might be overlooked. In the end he was blessed more abundantly than ever before. God made him a great type of the human family, of the troubles of their fallen condition and of their final restoration to all that was lost in Adam, with the blessings of added experiences to make them wise. How faithful is the Lord in all His dealings! Truly His children should never doubt His love; for

"Faith can firmly trust Him,

Come what may."

PRECIOUSNESS OF INTIMATE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

It is when continued trust in the Lord and His many responsive providences in our lives have ripened into precious personal acquaintance and intimacy that we learn to delight in Him. Yes, it is when heart answers to heart, when pleading prayer brings recognized answers of peace, when the Divine love and care have been clearly seen in the guidance of our way, that we can recognize the abiding presence with us of the Father and the Son. Then, however dark may be our way, however severe may be the storm that rages about us, the thought of Divine protection is ever with us, so that as the children of the Lord we are never in despair; though cast down, we are not destroyed; though persecuted, we are never forsaken. We know our Father's hand is ever at the helm, that His love and care are sure and unailing.

Those who have come into real heart sympathy with God have learned to see Him as the Fountain of all goodness and Truth and blessing. To them He is the One altogether lovely. His Law is their delight. His friendship and love are their very life. When the heart has become thus centered in God, it is the most natural impulse to commit its way unto Him. These can truly sing with the poet:

"So on I go, not knowing,

I would not if I might;

I'd rather walk in the dark with God

Than go alone in the light;

I'd rather walk by faith with Him

Than go alone by sight."

Surely these have the desires of their heart, and no good thing shall be withheld from them. Their fervent prayers avail much, and in the Lord's good time their righteousness, however much it may now be misunderstood, misrepresented and evil-spoken of, shall be brought forth as the light--clear, cloudless and widely manifest; and their judgment, the justice and righteousness of their course and of their hearts, shall be brought forth as the noonday. Even while we remain here as aliens and foreigners in the enemy's land, we shall be fed, nourished, temporally and spiritually, and shall rejoice and be glad in the "house of our pilgrimage." Precious indeed are the promises of God; and to the praise of His abounding grace, His saints of the past and of the present all bear ample testimony to their fulfillment.

"Who need faint while such a river
Ever flows their thirst to assuage?--
Grace, which like the Lord, the Giver,
Never fails from Age to Age!"

R2230 "SONGS IN THE HOUSE OF OUR
PILGRIMAGE

"Thy statutes have been my songs in the

house of my pilgrimage."--Psa. 119:54.

GOD'S PEOPLE during the Jewish
dispensation as well as during the Gospel

dispensation are spoken of as "pilgrims and
strangers" in the "present evil world." They
are such, because they have heard of "a

better country," whose ruler is God, and whose law is love--"the perfect law of liberty." To such pilgrims the strife for wealth and vain glory, the pride, haughtiness and tinsel that everywhere prevail now, are distasteful; while the battle for wealth or position, especially when it leads to unrighteousness, oppression, slander, envy, strife and every evil work, is repulsive. Having obtained a glimpse of the perfection of divine character with its absoluteness of justice and love, it has become their ideal...

Since we well know that very much in the Psalms was written prophetically, respecting the Christ, head and body, the overcoming Church of the Gospel age, we may well infer that the language of our text had special reference to these pilgrims of the Gospel age. The Apostle says, "We know that if our earthly house of this temporary dwelling place were dissolved, we have a permanent structure of God, a house not made with hands [not produced by human powers] everlasting in the heavens..."

The holy spirit granted us in the present time is a hand payment so to speak, an "earnest" or assurance of the grand and gracious results for which we are hoping and striving, groaning and praying.

"Therefore we are always confident knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body [so long as we feel entirely contented with present conditions--ourselves and our surroundings], we are absent from the Lord." If we were living near to him, "walking with God, we would not feel perfectly satisfied with present attainments, conditions, etc.; but would feel like pilgrims and strangers, seeking a better rest, a better home, "which God hath in reservation for them that love him." But this, as the Apostle explains, is true only of those who walk by faith and not by sight...

All through this pilgrimage we are standing at the bar of our Lord's judgment: he is testing us, proving us, to see whether or not we love him and the things which make for righteousness and peace; and if so, how much we are willing to sacrifice for righteousness' sake. He marks the degree of our love by the measure of our self-denials and self-sacrifices for his sake, the truth's sake...

It is written, he "giveth songs in the night," and "He hath put a new song into my mouth." It causes us no surprise to know that the saints will "be joyful in glory" and sing aloud with the high praises of God in their mouths, when it shall be given to them to execute the judgments written (Psa. 149:4-9); but it may strike some as peculiar that the present conditions of God's people, the condition of imperfection and physical frailty, in which we groan and are burdened, should be a condition in which *songs* and thanksgiving and joy should prevail with us. Nevertheless, this is the divine will, as it is the divine statement, respecting all who are truly overcomers: they are all to be joyful in the house of their pilgrimage. Respecting this joy our Lord declares "Your joy no man taketh from you." "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world

giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."--John 14:27; 16:22.

So then, while there is a measure of groaning because of some burdens on the part of those who have attained to the new life, there are also blessed joys which the world cannot give, neither take away: and these are the source and cause of the unceasing joy and "songs in the night," before the glorious dawn of the new Millennial day: these songs are inspired by the joys granted us in the house of our pilgrimage--while we are actually absent from our "home."

What are our joys which no man taketh from us? and which persecution and affliction and trouble can only deepen and widen and make more sweet? What joy is this? This joy is a foretaste of the blessings to come, an earnest of our inheritance. It is inspired by confidence in him on whom we have believed: confidence that he is both able and willing to perfect the work which he has begun and which we desire shall be perfected in his own best way: confidence that so long as we are firmly holding to his gracious promises with the arms of our faith, he will not permit us to be separated from him. Who shall separate us from the love of God in Christ? Shall tribulation and persecution? Our confidence is that "no one is able to pluck us out of the Father's hand," and that "the Father himself loveth" us, and will not turn us away so long as we desire to abide obediently in his love. Yea, we are confident that all things are working together for good to those who love God; confident that he who is for us is more powerful than all who can be against us. Such confidence is sure to bring joy beyond the world's comprehension, and a peace of God that passeth all understanding, which keeps the heart.

And such joy, produced by the true gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ received into an honest heart, naturally and properly awakens the "songs in the house of our pilgrimage."

"Mid all the tumult and the strife

I hear the music ringing,

It finds an echo in my soul,

How can I keep from singing."

The word "song" has a wider meaning than simply a musical cadence: it is used in the Scriptures and elsewhere to indicate a joyful message of any kind. For instance, we say, referring to the gospel, the knowledge of the divine plan, "Thou hast put a new song into my mouth, even the loving-kindness of our God." And it is a fact that those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, those who have received the joy which no man can take from them, those who have tasted of the grace of God in Christ, will not only rejoice and literally sing musical songs with their lips, but they will also rejoice to have their entire lives a song of praise and thanksgiving unto God. The song will bubble over on every proper occasion, wherever hearing ears are found: so fully will the cleansed, justified and consecrated heart appreciate God's goodness

and so greatly will it desire to--

"Tell the whole world these blessed tidings, And speak of the time of rest that nears."...

IN THE CLOUDY DAY

It is true, nevertheless, that our Christian experience is not always of a kind calculated to produce an exuberance of spirit: it is doubtless to our advantage that sometimes there are dark hours such as our dear Redeemer experienced when he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." Such experiences no doubt draw us nearer to the fountain of comfort, of joy and peace, and are blessings in disguise, and amongst the "all things" which are working together for our good. But even in the very midst of trials and difficulties, and while cast down so that the songs do not abound, we may nevertheless in all conditions and at all times realize God's love and care and so firmly hold on to the Lord, with the hand of faith, that we would in the darkest moments be able to realize the joy of our Master's sympathy and love and help, and thus have the joy which no disaster of the present time can interrupt.

Despondency and loss of these joys and songs may sometimes result from ill health: in which case, if the illness be the result of selfish gratification, we have room for a lesson and reform; or it may seem to be the result of unselfish fidelity to the service of the truth, along the lines of duty, and if so, as soon as this is recognized, our joys and songs will return. In illustration let us remember Paul and Silas praising God in the prison of Philippi, while their backs were still lacerated and bleeding.

It should be the aim of the Lord's people to cultivate this joy and the conditions favorable to it, daily. The condition of our hearts has much to do with it; for this joy is not wholly dependent upon the heads,-- our knowledge of the divine Word and plan. Its possession and increase depends chiefly upon the heart-- the center of our affections. If we set our affections, our hearts, on earthly things and seek for joy through the various gratifications of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life, etc., we will thereby quench to some extent the spirit of the new mind, and correspondingly decrease the joys of the new mind. On the contrary, the more we overcome the world, the flesh and the devil, the more we seek to do the will of our Father who is in heaven, the more we seek for the fellowship and communion of our dear Redeemer, the more we seek to do those things which are pleasing in his sight, so much the more will we have of the joy and peace which no man taketh from us and which trials, difficulties and persecutions can only make the more sweet and precious.

And the more we have of this new mind, and the closer we are in sympathy with the Lord, the more we will desire to sing heartily "The old, old story of Jesus and his love."

"How happy and blessed the hours,

Since Jesus I always can see!

Sweet prospects, sweet birds and
sweet flowers

Have all gained new sweetness to me."

R2238 "MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU"

"Like a river glorious is God's perfect peace,

Over all victorious in its glad increase.

Perfect--yet it floweth fuller every day;

Perfect--yet it groweth deeper all the way.