

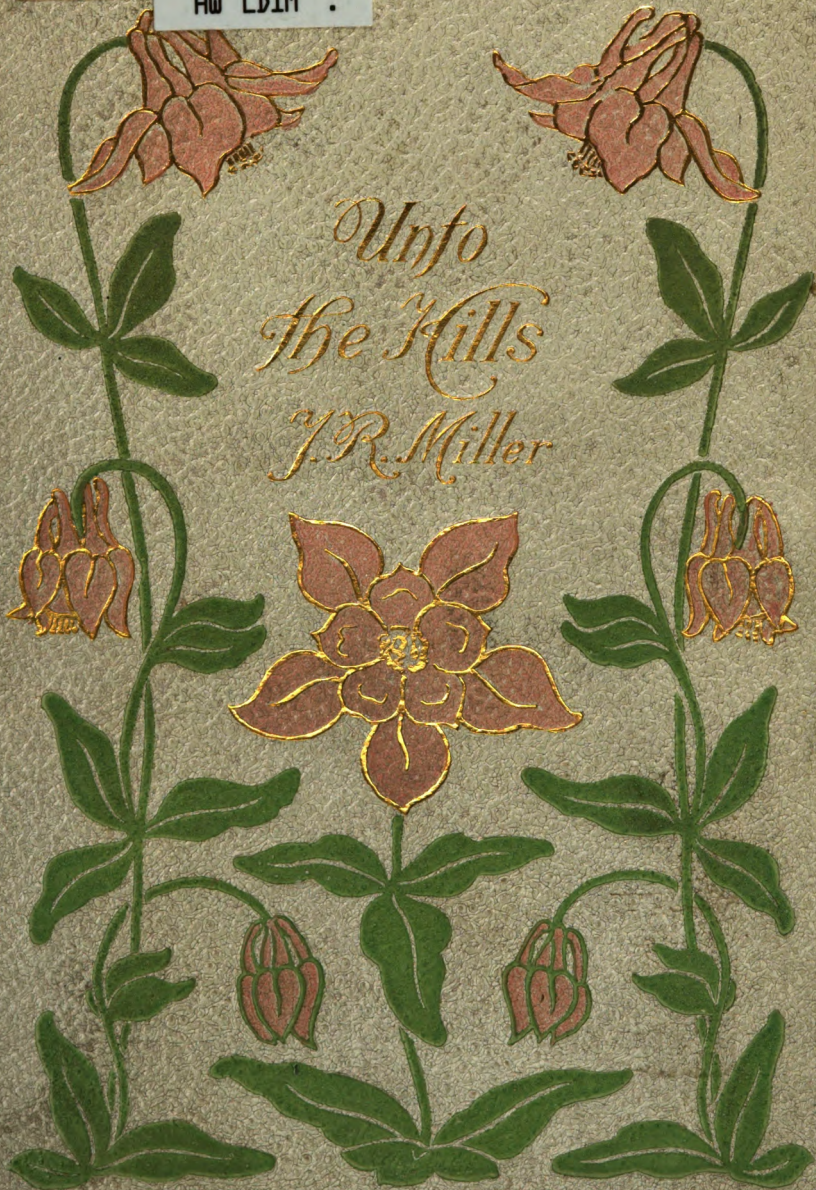
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THOMAS Y. CROWELL & COMPANY,
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UNTO THE HILLS

A MEDITATION ON THE ONE HUNDRED AND
TWENTY-FIRST PSALM

BY

J. R. MILLER, D.D.

Author of "Things to Live For," "Beside the Still
Waters," "Secrets of Happy Home Life," etc.

*"Walking through the lowland here,
I know the hills of God are near."*

NEW YORK: 46 EAST 14TH STREET
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GIFT OF
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Not many of us at least are living at our best. We linger in the lowlands because we are afraid to climb into the mountains. The steepness and ruggedness dismay us, and so we stay in the misty valleys and do not learn the mystery of the hills. We do not know what we lose in our self-indulgence, what glory awaits us if only we had courage for the mountain climb, what blessing we should find if only we would move to the uplands of God.

J. R. M.

PHILADELPHIA.

*I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains :
From whence shall my help come ?
My help cometh from the Lord,
Which made heaven and earth.
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved :
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.
Behold, he that keepeth Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord is thy keeper :
The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day,
Nor the moon by night.
The Lord shall keep thee from all evil ;
He shall keep thy soul.
The Lord shall keep thy going out and thy coming in,
From this time forth and for evermore.*

UNTO THE HILLS.

“Tis like a narrow valley land,
This earthly way of mine ;
Before me, clad in glory grand,
I see the hills divine.
Those heights the saintly long have trod,
The hills of hope, the hills of God!

“ Unto them oft I lift mine eyes
That oft with tears are wet,
And through the mists they calmly rise
Where sun no more shall set.
To me forever grand and fair,
The hills of God — my help is there !”

It is good always to look up. Thousands of people dwarf their lives and hinder the possibilities of growth in their souls by looking downward. They keep their eyes entangled ever in mere earthly sights, and miss the glories of the hills that pierce the clouds and of the heavens that bend over them.

A story is told of a man who one day in his youth found a gold coin on the street. Ever after this he kept his eyes on the ground as he walked, watching for coins. During a long lifetime he found a goodly number of pieces of gold and silver,

but meanwhile he never saw the flowers, the plants, and the trees which grew in such wondrous beauty everywhere; he never saw the hills, the mountains, the sweet valleys, the picturesque landscapes; he never saw the blue sky. To him this fair world meant only a dusty road, dreary and unbeautiful, merely a place in which to look for coins.

This really is the story of the life of thousands of men. They never lift their eyes off the earth. They live only to gather money, to add field to field, to scheme for power or to find pleasure. Or, if their quest be a little higher, it is still only for earthly things. They never lift up their eyes to the hills. There is no blue sky in their picture. They cherish no heavenly visions. They are without God in the world.

We grow in the direction in which our eyes habitually turn. We become like that on which we look much and intently. We were created to look up. The Greek word for man means the upward-looking. An old writer said, "God gave to man a face directed upward and bade him look at the heavens, and raise his uplifted countenance toward the stars." Yet there are many who never look upward at all. They do not pray. They never send a thought toward God. They never recognize the Father from whose hands come all the blessings they enjoy. They seek no help from

the heavens. They have no eye for the things that are unseen.

Not to this class belongs the author of the one hundred and twenty-first psalm. He begins his pilgrim song by saying, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains." This is one of the fifteen psalms called "Songs of Degrees," or "Songs of Ascents." Probably they were sung by the people as they went up to Jerusalem to the feasts. This particular psalm, it is supposed, was sung by the caravans when, on the evening before entering the holy city, they encamped within sight of the mountains that made a wall round about Jerusalem. The sight of the mountains gave the pilgrims great joy, for it told them that close beneath those hill-tops nestled the city which they so much loved, with its temple of marble and gold in which God dwelt.

"I lift up mine eyes unto the mountains," sang the glad pilgrim. The sight he beheld not only produced rapture in his heart, but it also gave him a wonderful sense of safety. In another of the "Songs of Ascents" the pilgrims sang :

They that trust in the Lord
Are as mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth
for ever.

As the mountains are round about Jerusalem,
So the Lord is round about his people,
From this time forth and for evermore.

Thus the mountains became a picture or symbol of God. They suggested the divine defence. The pilgrims looked unto the hills and thought of God. Here we get our lesson. We should train our eyes to look habitually to God as our help and defence.

THE BLESSING OF THE MOUNTAINS.

Mountains have always had a remarkable influence on the minds of men. They figure largely in the Bible story. It was on Mount Sinai that God appeared to Moses in a series of wonderful manifestations. The mountain burned with fire. The people dared not approach it. Yet Moses met God there. It was on Mount Moriah that the temple was built. Jesus was transfigured on Mount Hermon. And other mountains in Palestine were made forever sacred by our Lord's nights of prayer on their cold summits. It was on the Mount of Olives that the Master's feet last stood on this earth, where he spoke his parting words and gave his last blessing, and from which he ascended. In the Scriptures mountains are symbols of perpetuity — the everlasting mountains. God's righteousness is compared to the great mountains. The mountains are said to bring peace to the people. Mountains were refuges to which men fled in time of danger; in one of the psalms a hunted soul is exhorted to flee as a bird to its mountain.

By their elevation above the plains and valleys, mountains naturally suggest the lifting up of the thoughts of men from lower to higher things. God was supposed to choose the hills for his dwelling-places on the earth, and hence the mountains suggested the home and the sanctuary of God. Thus they became sacred. Even idolatry chose the "high places" for the sites of its altars and thus desecrated many a lofty spot.

The sight of a hill or a mountain made the devout Jew think of God. This is the thought that was in the mind of the writer of this psalm — "I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains." The sight of the mountains as he approached them brought the presence of God very nigh to him. He was safe under the shadow of those everlasting hills, because God was there and was watching him in tender love.

It is interesting to think a little of the blessings that come from the mountains to the plains, and to the whole earth. Mountains and hills are not mere accidents in the form and structure of the earth's surface. In wisdom and love God lifted them up, like great cathedral spires, that they might minister to the health, the beauty, the fertility, and the joy of the world. Think of this earth as a vast flat surface from sea to sea, with no valleys, no hills, no mountains. How dreary, how monoto-

nous it would be ! But that is not all. Wonderful are the benefits of the mountains ! —

Ruskin names three great offices which mountains fulfil. They give motion and direction to water, determining the channels of the rivers, so that men can build their homes and cities in places where they know the streams will continue to flow. Then they are the great ventilators of the earth ; generating perpetual currents of air to pour down into the plains, carrying health and comfort on their invisible wings. The third use of mountains is to provide for the constant renewal of the soils of the earth. Continually streams carry down the wear and waste from the rocks, and sand and clay from the banks of the ravines, each current bearing its burden of blessing of rich earth to be cast on some favored spot in the fields and vales below, to add to their fertility.

There are other benefits for which we are indebted to the mountains. Among many, “the various medicinal plants which are nestled among their rocks, the delicate pasturage which they furnish for cattle, the forests in which they bear timber for shipping, the stones they supply for building, or the ores of metal which they collect into spots open to discovery and easy for working.”¹ But these are secondary benefits ; the three

¹ Ruskin.

great utilities which have been named show mountains to be even indispensable to human existence. The vast rugged ranges which rise like mighty walls and seem so full of terror and threatening are really sources of happiness and good for our earth.

All this had its analogy in the thought of the pilgrim, as in the evening he lifted up his eyes unto the mountains round about Jerusalem. He thought of God, and of the grace and goodness which were in God for his people in the world. What the mountains are to the earth in benefit and blessing, God is to his people.

In portions of the great West of the United States there are vast tracts of land which not so many years ago were only deserts. The soil was wondrously fertile, but there was no water. Little rain fell and scarcely anything would grow. Yet yonder all the while were the mountains with their melting snows and their flowing streams. All that was needed to transform these desert valleys into gardens was to bring the blessing of the mountains to them. Men lifted up their eyes to the hills for help, and the result is seen to-day in the great orange groves and all the unparalleled luxuriance of Southern California, and in the garden beauty and fertility of other portions of the country.

This is a parable. All over the world there are

men and women with possibilities of rich spiritual life. They might become great blessings in the world. They might be like trees bearing much fruit for the glory of God and to feed the world's hungers. But with all their natural gifts their lives are like deserts. They live only for themselves. They do not know the secret of service. They are weak in the presence of the world's evil and fall before its temptations. They have no power to help others in their deep needs.

Yet all the while, yonder rise the hills of God above their heads, with their treasures of life and power, available to faith and prayer. If only they would lift up their eyes to the mountains they would find what they need to change the desert of their lives into gardens. If through the channels of faith and love they would bring the grace of heaven down into their barrenness and emptiness they would henceforth be like fields which the Lord hath blessed.

It is God that men need. They may have wisdom, learning, eloquence, strength, courage, and a gentle heart, — all the elements which make power; but without God they lack that which alone will make any life rich in beauty and blessing. We know, for example, what a wondrous change was wrought in the disciples of Christ by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon them, on the day of Pente-

cost. From weakness they became strong. Their dulness was transformed into vivid life. The blessing of the hills had been emptied upon them.

THE INVISIBLE MOUNTAINS.

A writer tells of a man who, though he lived on barren, level land beside the sea, was always talking to his neighbors of the purple mountains which his eyes saw. The neighbors could see no mountains and laughed at his delusion, as they called it. Still he persisted in his belief, and one day he sailed away to find these mountains of his dreams, and returned in due time laden with treasures. The world laughs when a Christian sings of the visions of his faith and lifts up his eyes unto the invisible hills which he says he sees. But the most real things in the universe are the things of Christian faith. St. Paul tells us that the things which are seen are only temporal — for time, unsubstantial, unreal; and that the things which are unseen are the eternal things — the real, enduring things. The mountains which our natural eyes can see shall depart. Even now they are crumbling to dust, and some day they will be gone. Those who seek refuge in them will then be left without home or shelter. But when earth's mountains have crumbled the hills of God will stand firm and eternal. Th who lift up their eyes to

these heavenly heights will never be disappointed in their trust.

HELP FROM THE HILLS.

It is the thought of refuge and help that is prominently in the mind of the pilgrim :

I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains :
From whence shall my help come?
My help cometh from the Lord,
Which made heaven and earth.

He expects help to come down to him from the hills; that is, he looks for help in his danger and need from God. The world has no shelter for him, but God will be his defence. Too many people look only about them for comfort and aid when they are in trouble. When they have sorrow they turn to human friends for consolation. Human love is very sweet in the day of adversity. We never can be thankful enough for the comfort that comes to us through those who enter the shadows of our grief with their wise help. But if this be all, very small are our consolations. Those, however, who, when the earthly lights go out, lift up their eyes to the mountains where the light of God shines in undimmed glory, find everlasting consolation. God is enough, though all else be gone. As Mrs. Browning sings:

If I could find
No love in all the world for comforting,
I know a voice would sound, " Daughter, I am.
Can I suffice for heaven, and not for earth? "

So it is in temptation. There are those who in the deep valley of struggle fight the battle without any help from the hills. They seek only earthly help. They appeal to their brothers when the battle goes hard against them; but human allies are not enough in our struggles with the enemy of souls. Happy are they who in their sore conflicts lift up their eyes unto the hills. There is One who is a master of struggle with temptation, for he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, and is able, therefore, to succor them that are tempted.

In the story of the Exodus there is a beautiful incident which illustrates this truth. The people of Israel were fighting with strong enemies in the valley of Rephidim. Moses commanded Joshua to lead the army into battle. "I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand," said Moses. While we fight our battles in earth's vales, our victorious Captain is on the hills of God, holding up his hands in intercession, and we cannot fail.

We are reminded as we read this story of a night

in the human life of our Lord. He had sent his disciples out on the sea in their fishing-boat and himself had gone into a mountain to pray. Night came on and the boat was in the midst of the lake. A storm arose and the winds tossed the little craft as if it had been a leaf on the waters. The disciples were distressed in rowing. Where was the Master all this while? He was up on the mountain engaged in prayer. But he was not indifferent to his disciples in their peril in the storm. It was night and dark, but we are told that from his place on the mountain he saw them toiling and distressed in rowing. No darkness hides from his eye. Not only did he see them, but we read further in Mark's graphic narrative that, "about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking on the sea." From the hills came the help in the time of sore need. An eye that slept not was watching them; a love that failed not was guarding them.

THE DIVINE KEEPING.

The great blessing of this psalm is the wonderful divine keeping. Over and over again in different forms of words we have the assurance of a guardianship which covers all life. First, we have the thought of the power that guards us. He who keeps us made heaven and earth. This assures us that he is able to keep us. Great are our needs

and our dangers, but God is omnipotent; there is nothing we can ever possibly need to have done for our defence which he cannot do. What sublime confidence it gives us to think that he who loves us so and is committed so absolutely to our protection is the eternal God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, who fainteth not, neither is weary!

The keeping is also individual. "He that keepeth Israel . . . is thy keeper." The guardian of Israel as a nation is also the guardian of each person. No thought has in it more comfort than this, that the lowliest and the weakest believer has for his own personal keeper the mighty God. The Scriptures assure us that each individual child of God is personally known to the Father and is dear to his heart. The Good Shepherd watches over his sheep as a flock, but he also knows and calls each sheep by name. "You are as much the object of God's solicitude as if none lived but yourself. He has counted the hairs of your head. He has numbered your sighs and your smiles."

The minuteness of this divine keeping is suggested in the words, "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved." The sliding or slipping of the foot is sometimes spoken of in the Scriptures as a type of misfortune. On mountain paths great disaster may result from the slipping of a foot. Many a

life has been lost by a misstep among the crags. But God's care extends even to the feet of his children. "The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord." The meaning of the promise is that those who look to the hills for help have the assurance of actual divine keeping. There are dangers, but those who abide in Christ shall not be overwhelmed by them. He who looks only round about him in time of peril may find love and sympathy, but he will not find the refuge and the strength which he needs. The only safe place to look is "unto the hills."

Seamen grow anxious when for many hours they cannot get a sight of the heavenly bodies to take observations. No one is safe in this trackless world who does not keep his eye upon the heavenly hills. No direction of life is safe but that which looks to God for its guidance. A story is told of a lady travelling through a dense forest in the South. She was overtaken by night and lost her way. The driver dismounted and began to walk about among the trees, trying to find the road. The lady noticed in the dim light of the stars that his face was turned toward the sky. She asked him why he was looking upward, when what he wanted to find was the road in the woods. The man answered, "If I can find the path in the sky I can find the road on the ground." He knew that the

only place in the thick forest where the sky could be seen through the dense branches was where the trees had been cut away in making the road. To find the opening overhead was to find the way on the ground. Ever it is true that earth's right paths are marked out for us in the sky. We must look to the hills in our perplexity for guidance.

THE UNSLEEPING KEEPER.

The next assurance is one of exquisite beauty :

He that keepeth thee will not slumber.
Behold, he that keepeth Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord is thy keeper.

There is no earthly care that is never intermitted. Human love is oft-times wondrously self-forgetful and faithful. It will wear itself out in holy guardianship. But of no human friend can it be said, "He that keepeth thee will not slumber." There is no human eye of which we may say, "It never sleeps." Even in the truest, sweetest home there must be many hours when no eye is watching. But our Keeper never sleeps. He wakes while we sleep. There is never a moment by day or by night when the lowliest child of God anywhere in this great world is not under the eye of his Father, and cannot say in blessed confidence, "Thou, God, seest me." Here, too, as before, the

keeping is both general and specific — “He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. He that keepeth thee will not slumber.” The individual is not lost in the multitude. God counts, and even if one is missing he knows who it is, and all his heart goes into the seeking of the one.

This is the teaching of the whole Bible. “The Lord is my shepherd.” “The Lord is my light and my salvation.” “He calleth his own sheep by name.” We need not trouble ourselves about the vastness of the number of God’s children, nor ask how it is possible for God to think of each one. It is as easy for an infinite Lord to watch over each one of millions as for a finite human father and mother to give individual care to each of their six or eight children. Nor need we perplex ourselves with the questions which science raises — how our heavenly Father in a great system of nature governed by unvarying laws can give any personal care and help to each of his believing ones. This unchanging nature of which men speak so much is our Father’s world, and we need never fear that he will forget the least or the feeblest of his little ones while caring for his vast universe, or that he will ever be powerless to help one of his own in any hour of need, because he cannot interfere with the course of relentless law. He that feeds the

hungry sparrow can hear and answer the cry of his own children.

There is something wondrously quieting and restful in the consciousness that in our helplessness and defencelessness the eye of eternal love is ever watching over us. In times of war, soldiers lie down and sleep in their tents, even in the presence of the enemy, without fear, because all night long sentinels keep guard, with unsleeping eye, about the camp. And so may we rest in perfect peace in the midst of this world's enmities and dangers, because God is keeping watch over us, and he never slumbers nor sleeps.

IN ALL THY WAYS.

In the closing part of the psalm we have the application of the great teaching to all possible experiences of life. "The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night." Amid the perils of noonday and the lurking dangers of midnight, God watches and guards. He keeps us "from all evil" — not only the evils which assail the bodily life, but from the invisible foes which watch for the soul. He will keep us in our going out and our coming in. This is the traveller's word. The divine protection is promised in all the journey, from the departure until the home-coming. It also covers all time — "from this time forth and for evermore."

There is no spot in the universe where the eye of God does not see and where one of his children, cast away by any calamity, would be beyond the circle of his care. And there will be no place in the unopened ages of eternity where one of God's children need fear getting beyond the sweep of his Father's eye, or beyond the shelter of his love.

In one of his epistles St. Peter sums up the blessings of Christian faith in two great statements. First, he tells us of the inheritance that is kept for us, reserved in heaven, and then he tells us of another keeping—our own keeping by the divine power, as we pass through this world of danger to receive our inheritance. "An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,"—this is the first keeping. We could not take care of our inheritance if it were delivered to us here. Hence it is kept in reserve for us, within the gates of glory, where no loss ever can reach it. Then here is the other keeping: "Who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." While our inheritance is kept for us in heaven, we are guarded on our way to it. Our part is faith. We have but two things to do—our duty, the fragment of God's will that is unrolled to us for the hour, and

then believe, trust. We have nothing to do with the keeping — that is God's part.

In this whole one hundred and twenty-first psalm the keeping is the Lord's—"The Lord is thy keeper." "The Lord is thy shade." "The Lord shall keep thee." There is no human part except, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains." We have only to turn our eyes and hearts continually away from earth's frail refuges, from the shelters which are set up in the valleys, looking unto God and unto God alone for help. If we do this, the keeping of our life will never fail for a moment. If there should be any break in the protection it will be because we leave the divine keeping and take the guardianship of our life into our own hands. The fault then will be ours alone, not God's. Forever true and sure is the old promise, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

We must not conclude, however, that in this divine keeping we shall never know loss or sorrow, that we shall have no struggle of our own with sin and with enemies of our life. There is not in all the Bible a promise that the believer's life will be a sheltered one, an easy one, a life without danger, hardship, or trial. This would not be the best mercy for us. Many of the best things in divine blessing and good come to us through pain — can

come to us in no other way. We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of heaven. There is no other gate of entrance into the kingdom. There are songs we never can learn save in the darkened room, when the curtains are drawn. There are joys we never can experience until we endure pain and loss. There are possibilities of beauty in us which can be brought out only in the furnace of trial. Jesus was made perfect through suffering. That is, even his sinless nature was imperfect yet, incomplete, until he suffered. To take hardship out of our experience would be to rob us of many of our sweetest joys and richest treasures. There are great blessings which can be got only by overcoming — they wait beyond battle lines to be won in victorious struggle. Our burdens are God's gifts to us, each one enfolding a good, a mercy, which we should be poorer not to get, and which we can get only by keeping and carrying the burden. We cannot escape temptation by accepting the divine keeping — there is a beatitude for the man who endureth temptation; but when God keeps us the temptation which we must still meet will have no power to hurt us.

THE MOUNTAINS BRINGING PEACE.

A tourist tells of coming upon a village which nestled on the bosom of a great mountain. He

asked the villagers if they had many storms. "Yes," they replied, "if there is a storm anywhere in the neighborhood it seems to find us out." "How do you account for this?" asked the visitor. They answered, "Those who seem to know say it is because of the mountain which towers above our village. If he sees a cloud anywhere in the horizon he beckons to it until it settles on his brow." The visitor inquired further if they had many accidents from lightning. "Not one," they replied. "We have seen the lightning strike the mountain countless times,—and a grand sight it is,—but no one in the village is ever touched. We have the thunder which shakes our houses, and then we have the rain which fills our gardens with the beauty that every one so much admires."

This is a parable of what Jesus Christ is to us and to all who believe on him. He is the mountain on which the storms break. On Calvary the tempests of ages burst about his head. But all who nestle in his love are sheltered in him. "In me ye shall have peace," he said. He is our eternal Keeper because he took the storms on his own breast that we might hide in quiet safety under the shadow of his love. We lift up our eyes unto the mountains and rest in peace and in confidence because our help cometh from the Lord who made heaven and earth.

Dr. Hugh McMillan, who has taught us so many wonderful lessons from God's Bible of nature, brings us this beautiful illustration down from the almost inaccessible crags of the mountains: "In the midst of the everlasting snows of Mont Blanc — surrounded on every side by glaciers, and elevated many thousands of feet above the valley — there is a solitary projecting rock, where the scanty soil is covered in July with rare Alpine plants. The rays of the sun, reflected by the snow and ice around, shine with double power upon this favored spot, and create a warm, genial climate, in which the flowers bloom in unexampled beauty and luxuriance; while the frozen peaks shelter them from all the storms as in a kind of natural conservatory. Thus the very inhospitable forces of nature minister to the welfare of these flowers.

"When first I saw this summer garden in the midst of eternal winter, my heart was touched with the peculiar pathos of the sight. It was an emblem to me of the blessedness to be found even in the midst of a sorrow that blights and chills the whole life. The things that seem to be against us are in reality working together for our good."

The mountains of God do not suggest tropical softness. Fierce storms beat there and the snows never melt. There are lives which seem never to have a day of gentle summer. They are passed

without break amid the stern experiences of struggle, hardship, and suffering. It seems to us that every gentle thing in their souls must perish in the bitter winter of their trials. Yet as we come close to them and look at their lives we find bits of garden beauty nestling where the fiercest storms play. The mountains have their warmth of sunbeams in spite of the cold blasts that sweep amid their crags. The mountains of God are rich in blessing. Even amid their cold peaks the tenderest flowers of grace grow in luxuriant beauty.

The influence of this study should be toward a spiritual uplift in every life. We keep our eyes too much on the earth and do not raise them enough toward heavenly things. It is related of a saintly man that, after journeying for hours beside one of the Swiss lakes, he asked his companion at length if they would soon reach the lake. He had been so absorbed in holy thoughts and spiritual converse that he was altogether unaware of the wondrous natural beauty amid which he had been moving all the while. Perhaps such losing of one's self in contemplation of high themes, such forgetfulness of earth and earthly things, even in communion with God, may be abnormal and unwholesome. This is our Father's world, and we should not despise its loveliness. While we live here our duties

are here, and we should give them our best thought. Everything is to be done in the name of Christ, and the commonest service is holy.

Yet for most of us, certainly, the danger does not lie in this direction. We are not likely to become so lost in thinking of God that we shall lose sight of earth and forget the duties of the common days; we are much more apt to get so entangled in the affairs of this present world that we shall have no room in thought and life for God and the things that are unseen. We need to train our eyes to look to the hills. Thinking of God will lift us Godward.

St. Paul in one of his epistles gives us a sublime vision of the Christian life. He speaks of believers in Christ as raised together with Christ, living now as it were in heaven, where Christ is. Then he exhorts all who are thus raised up to set their minds on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. "For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Thus our true place is in heaven, as to our character, our companionship, our fellowship, and the desires and aspirations of our heart. Although we stay in this world for a time and have our work and our human associations here, we really belong in heaven. Although we must fight our battles in the valleys, yet our true home is in the hills.

Why is it that it is so hard for us to realize this which we know to be the truth about our new Christian life? We believe that our home is in the uplands of God, and yet we linger and loiter in the lowlands, loath to tear ourselves away from their pleasant things. If only we knew how much better are the good things that would be ours in the highlands we would gladly climb away from the vales into the hills.

Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll tells of one who on the eve of consecration felt that the paths of the religious life were hard and stony, and that to follow them would mean a sacrifice of so much that was dear to his habits that he would be miserable for life. But he awoke in the morning and the words were impressed on his mind with overpowering force, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." "Only follow me," an all-persuading voice seemed to say, "and the troubles and fears that haunt you shall vanish forever."

Thus it proves indeed to all who listen to the voice of Christ and follow him. He never promises an easy way. His own path led up to the hill of Calvary, and terrible was the roughness of the way, but glory lay beyond the cross. So it is with those who follow Christ. The way may be hard and steep, but it leads to the mountains of God. There the air is purer and sweeter than in the

valleys, and more invigorating. Men go to the mountains for health; the mountains of God are spiritual sanitariums. Those who dwell there get away from the debilitating influences of earth's valleys and breathe heaven's pure air. There are wonderful secrets of blessing in the hills of God for all who will climb up into them in strong faith and wholesome consecration.

Then, there it is, too, that we find the securest divine keeping. In the hour of danger the prophet's servant saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about his master. So it ever is. The wonderful words of this psalm paint for us a picture of peace which every life of Christian faith should realize. At the centre of the cyclone whose mighty force uproots trees and bears everything before it, is a spot of quiet in which a child might sleep undisturbed. In the centre of this world's fiercest storms and sorest dangers the believer may rest in perfect peace. God is keeping him, and in this omnipotent keeping no evil can touch him.

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