

CHARLES KINGSLEY

DAILY THOUGHTS:
SELECTED FROM THE
WRITINGS OF CHARLES
KINGSLEY BY HIS WIFE

Charles Kingsley

**Daily Thoughts: selected
from the writings of
Charles Kingsley by his wife**

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Kingsley C.

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Charles Kingsley
Daily Thoughts: selected from the
writings of Charles Kingsley by his wife

This little Volume, selected from the MS. Note-books, Sermons and Private Letters, as well as from the published Works of my Husband, is dedicated to our children, and to all who feel the blessing of his influence on their daily life and thought.

F. E. K.

July 10, 1884.

January

Welcome, wild North-easter!
Shame it is to see
Odes to every zephyr:
Ne'er a verse to thee.

.

Tired we are of summer,
Tired of gaudy glare,
Showers soft and steaming,
Hot and breathless air.
Tired of listless dreaming
Through the lazy day:
Jovial wind of winter
Turn us out to play!
Sweep the golden reed-beds;
Crisp the lazy dyke;
Hunger into madness
Every plunging pike.
Fill the lake with wild-fowl;
Fill the marsh with snipe;
While on dreary moorlands
Lonely curlew pipe.
Through the black fir forest
Thunder harsh and dry,
Shattering down the snow-flakes
Off the curdled sky.

.

Come; and strong within us
Stir the Viking's blood;
Bracing brain and sinew:
Blow, thou wind of God!

Ode to North-east Wind.

New Year's Day. January 1. ¹

Gather you, gather you, angels of God—
Freedom and Mercy and Truth;
Come! for the earth is grown coward and old;
Come down and renew us her youth.
Wisdom, Self-sacrifice, Daring, and Love,
Haste to the battlefield, stoop from above,

¹ The paper edition of this book has blank pages where the owner can write diary notes, etc. This is why the page numbers in the eText often miss out numbers.—DP.

To the day of the Lord at hand!

The Day of the Lord. 1847.

The Nineteenth Century. January 2

Now, and at no other time: in this same nineteenth century lies our work. Let us thank God that we are here now, and joyfully try to understand *where* we are, and what our work is *here*. As for all superstitions about “the good old times,” and fancies that *they* belonged to God, while this age belongs only to man, blind chance, and the evil one, let us cast them from us as the suggestions of an evil lying spirit, as the natural parents of laziness, pedantry, fanaticism, and unbelief. And therefore let us not fear to ask the meaning of this present day, and of all its different voices—the pressing, noisy, complex present, where our workfield lies, the most intricate of all states of society, and of all schools of literature yet known.

*Introductory Lecture, Queen’s College.
1848.*

Forward. January 3

Let us forward. God leads us. Though blind, shall we be afraid to follow? I do not see my way: I do not care to: but I know that He sees His way, and that I see Him.

Letters and Memories. 1848.

The Noble Life. January 4

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever;
Do noble things, not dream them all day long;
And so make life, and death, and that For Ever
One grand sweet song.

A Farewell. 1856.

Live in the present that you may be ready for the future.

MS.

Duty and Sentiment. January 5

God demands not *sentiment* but *justice*. The Bible knows nothing of “the religious sentiments and emotions” whereof we hear so much talk nowadays. It speaks of *Duty*. “Beloved, if God so loved us, we *ought* to love one another.”

National Sermons. 1851.

The Everlasting Harmony. January 6

If thou art living a righteous and useful life, doing thy duty orderly and cheerfully where God has put thee, then thou in thy humble place art humbly copying the everlasting harmony and melody which is in heaven; the everlasting harmony and melody by which God made the world and all that therein is—and behold it was very good—in the day when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy over the new-created earth, which God had made to be a pattern of His own perfection.

Good News of God Sermons. 1859.

The Keys of Death and Hell. January 7

Fear not. Christ has the keys of death and hell. He has been through them and is alive for evermore. Christ is the *first*, and was loving and just and glorious and almighty before there was any death or hell. And Christ is the *last*, and will be loving and just and glorious and almighty as ever, in that great day when all enemies shall be under His feet, and death shall be destroyed, and death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire.

MS. Sermon. 1857.

A Living God. January 8

Here and there, among rich and poor, there are those whose heart and flesh, whose conscience and whose intellect, cry out for the *Living* God, and will know no peace till they have found Him. For till then they can find no explanation of the three great human questions—Where am I? Whither am I going? What must I do?

Sermons on the Pentateuch. 1862.

The Fairy Gardens. January 9

Of all the blessings which the study of Nature brings to the patient observer, let none, perhaps, be classed higher than this, that the farther he enters into those fairy gardens of life and birth, which Spenser saw and described in his great poem, the more he learns the awful and yet comfortable truth, that they do not belong to him, but to One greater, wiser, lovelier than he; and as he stands, silent with awe, amid the pomp of Nature's ever-busy rest, hears as of old, The Word of the "Lord God walking among the trees of the garden in the cool of the day."

Glaucus. 1855.

Love. January 10

Oh! Love! Love! Love! Love! the same in peasant and in peer! The more honour to you, then, old Love, to *be* the same thing in this world which *is* common to peasant and to peer. They say that you are blind, a dreamer, an exaggerator—a liar, in short! They just know nothing about you, then. You will not see people as they seem—as they have become, no doubt; but why? Because you see

them as they ought to be, and are in some deep way eternally, in the sight of Him who conceived and created them!

Two Years Ago, chap. xiv. 1856.

Life—Love. January 11

We must live nobly to love nobly.

MS.

The Seed of Good. January 12

Never was the young Abbot heard to speak harshly of any human being. “When thou hast tried in vain for seven years,” he used to say, “to convert a sinner, then only wilt thou have a right to suspect him of being a worse man than thyself.” That there is a seed of good in all men, a divine word and spirit striving with all men, a gospel and good news which would turn the hearts of all men, if abbots and priests could but preach it aright, was his favourite doctrine, and one which he used to defend, when at rare intervals he allowed himself to discuss any subject, from the writings of his favourite theologian, Clement of Alexandria.

Above all, Abbot Philamon stopped by stern rebuke any attempt to revile either heretics or heathens. “On the Catholic Church alone,” he used to say, “lies the blame of all heresy and unbelief; for if she were but for one day that which she ought to be, the world would be converted before nightfall.”

Hypatia, chap. xxx. 1852.

Danger of Thinking vaguely. January 13

Watch against any fallacies in your ideas which may arise, not from disingenuousness, but from allowing yourself in moments of feeling to think vaguely, and not to attach precise meaning to your words. Without any cold caution of expression, it is a duty we owe to God’s truth, and to our own happiness and the happiness of those around us, to think and speak as correctly as we can. Almost all heresy, schism, and misunderstandings, between either churches or individuals who ought to be one, have arisen from this fault of an involved and vague style of thought.

MS. 1842.

The Possession of Faith. January 14

I don’t want to possess a faith, I want a faith which will possess me.

Hypatia, chap. xvii. 1852.

The Eternal Life. January 15

Eternally, and for ever, in heaven, says St. John, Christ says and is and does what prophets prophesied of Him that He would say and be and do. “I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright Morning Star. And let him that is athirst, come: and whosoever will, let him take of the

Water of Life freely.” For ever Christ calls to every anxious soul, every afflicted soul, to every man who is ashamed of himself, and angry with himself, and longs to live a gentler, nobler, purer, truer, and more useful life, “Come, and live for ever the eternal life of righteousness, holiness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, which is the one true and only salvation bought for us by the precious blood of Christ our Lord.” Amen.

Water of Life Sermons. 1865

The Golden Cup of Youth. January 16

Ah, glorious twenty-one, with your inexhaustible powers of doing and enjoying, eating and hungering, sleeping and sitting up, reading and playing! Happy are those who still possess you, and can take their fill of your golden cup, steadied, but not saddened, by the remembrance that for all things a good and loving God will bring them to judgment!

Happier still those who (like a few) retain in body and soul the health and buoyancy of twenty-one on to the very verge of forty, and, seeming to grow younger-hearted as they grow older-headed, can cast off care and work at a moment’s warning, laugh and frolic now as they did twenty years ago, and say with Wordsworth—

“So was it when I was a boy,
So let it be when I am old,
Or let me die.”

Two Years Ago, chap. xix. 1856.

Work and Duty. January 17

If a man is busy, and busy about his duty, what more does he require for time or for eternity?

Chalk Stream Studies. 1856.

Members of Christ. January 18

. . . Would you be humble, daughter?
You must look up, not down, and see yourself
A paltry atom, sap-transmitting vein
Of Christ’s vast vine; the pettiest joint and member
Of His great body. . . .

. . . Let thyself die—
And dying, rise again to fuller life.
To be a whole is to be small and weak—
To be a part is to be great and mighty
In the one spirit of the mighty whole—
The spirit of the martyrs and the saints.

*Saint’s Tragedy, Act ii. Scene vi.
1847.*

Beauty a Sacrament. January 19

Never lose an opportunity of seeing anything beautiful. Beauty is God's handwriting—a way-side sacrament; welcome it in every fair face, every fair sky, every fair flower, and thank Him for it, who is the Fountain of all loveliness, and drink it in simply and earnestly with all your eyes; it is a charmed draught, a cup of blessing.

True Words to Brave Men. 1844.

The Ideal of Rank. January 20

With Christianity came in the thought that domination meant responsibility, that responsibility demanded virtue. The words which denoted Rank came to denote, likewise, high moral excellencies.

The *nobilis*, or man who was known, and therefore subject to public opinion, was bound to behave nobly. The gentle-man—gentile-man—who respected his own gens, or family, or pedigree, was bound to be gentle. The courtier who had picked up at court some touch of Roman civilisation from Roman ecclesiastics was bound to be courteous. He who held an “honour,” or “edel” of land, was bound to be honourable; and he who held a “weorthig,” or “worthy,” thereof, was bound himself to be worthy.

Lectures on Ancien Régime. 1866.

An Indulgent God. January 21

A merely indulgent God would be an unjust God, and a cruel God likewise. If God be just, as He is, then He has boundless pity for those who are weak, but boundless wrath for the strong who misuse the weak. Boundless pity for those who are ignorant, misled, and out of the right way; but boundless wrath for those who mislead them and put them out of the right way.

Discipline Sermons. 1867.

The Fifty-First Psalm. January 22

It is such utterances as these which have given for now many hundred years their priceless value to the little Book of Psalms ascribed to the shepherd outlaw of the Judean hills, which have sent the sound of his name into all lands throughout all the world. Every form of human sorrow, doubt, struggle, error, sin—the nun agonising in the cloister; the settler struggling for his life in Transatlantic forests; the pauper shivering over the embers in his hovel and waiting for kind death; the man of business striving to keep his honour pure amid the temptations of commerce; the prodigal son starving in the far country and recollecting the words which he learnt long ago at his mother's knee; the peasant boy trudging afield in the chill dawn and remembering that the Lord is his Shepherd, therefore he will not want—all shapes of humanity have found, and will find to the end of time, a word said here to their inmost hearts. . . .

Sermons on David. 1866.

Waiting for Death. January 23

Death, beautiful, wise, kind Death, when will you come and tell me what I want to know? I courted you once and many a time, brave old Death, only to give rest to the weary. That was a coward's wish—and so you would not come. . . . I was not worthy of you. And now I will not hunt you any more, old Death. Do you bide your time, and I mine. . . . Only when you come, give me not rest but work. Give work to the idle, freedom to the chained, sight to the blind!

Two Years Ago, chap. xv. 1856.

The One Refuge. January 24

Safe! There is no safety but from God, and that comes by prayer and faith.

Hypatia. 1852.

Future Identity. January 25

I believe that the union of those who have loved here will in the next world amount to perfect identity, that they will look back on the expressions of affection here as mere meagre strugglings after and approximation to the union which then will be perfect. Perfect!

Letters and Memories. 1842.

Friendship. January 26

A friend once won need never be lost, if we will be only trusty and true ourselves. Friends may part, not merely in body, but in spirit, for a while. In the bustle of business and the accidents of life, they may lose sight of each other for years; and more, they may begin to differ in their success in life, in their opinions, in their habits, and there may be, for a time, coldness and estrangement between them, but not for ever if each will be trusty and true. For then they will be like two ships who set sail at morning from the same port, and ere night-fall lose sight of each other, and go each on its own course and at its own pace for many days, through many storms and seas, and yet meet again, and find themselves lying side by side in the same haven when their long voyage is past.

Water of Life Sermons.

Night and Morning. January 27

It is morning somewhere or other now, and it will be morning here again to-morrow. “Good times and bad times and all times pass over.” I learnt that lesson out of old Bewick's Vignettes, and it has stood me in good stead this many a year.

Two Years Ago, chap. i. 1856.

Communion with the Blessed Dead. January 28

Shall we not recollect the blessed dead above all in Holy Communion, and give thanks for them there—at that holy table at which the Church triumphant and the Church militant meet in the communion of saints? Where Christ is they are; and, therefore, if Christ be there, may not they be there likewise? May not they be near us though unseen? like us claiming their share in the eternal sacrifice, like us partaking of that spiritual body and blood which is as much the life of saints in heaven as it is of penitent sinners on earth? May it not be so? It is a mystery into which we will not look too far. But this at least is true, that they are with Him where He is.

MS. Sermon.

The Great Law. January 29

True rest can only be attained as Christ attained it, through labour. True glory can only be attained in earth or heaven through self-sacrifice. Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; whosoever will lose his life shall save it.

All Saints' Day Sermons. 1870.

The Coming Kingdom. January 30

There is a God-appointed theocracy promised to us, and which we must wait for, when all the diseased and false systems of this world shall be swept away, and Christ's feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives, and the twelve apostles shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel!

All this shall come, and blessed is that servant whom his Lord when He cometh shall find ready!

All this we shall not see before we die, but we shall see it when we rise in the perfect material and spiritual ideal, in the kingdom of God!

Letters and Memories.

Christ's Coming. January 31

Christ may come to us when our thoughts are cleaving to the ground, and ready to grow earthy of the earth—through noble poetry, noble music, noble art—through aught which awakens once more in us the instinct of the true, the beautiful, and the good. He may come to us when our souls are restless and weary, through the repose of Nature—the repose of the lonely snow-peak and of the sleeping forest, of the clouds of sunset and of the summer sea, and whisper Peace. Or He may come, as He comes on winter nights to many a gallant soul—not in the repose of Nature, but in her rage—in howling storm and blinding foam and ruthless rocks and whelming surge—and whisper to them even so—as the sea swallows all of them which *it* can take—of calm beyond, which this world cannot give and cannot take away.

And therefore let us say in utter faith, Come as Thou seest best—but in whatsoever way Thou comest, Even so come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Last Sermon. MS. 1874.

SAINTS' DAYS, FASTS, & FESTIVALS

Since we gave up at the Reformation the superstitious practice of praying to the saints, Saints' Days have sunk—and, indeed, sunk too much—into neglect. We forget too often still, that though praying to any saint or angel, or other created being, is contrary both to reason and Scripture, yet it is according to reason and to Scripture to commemorate them. That is, to remember them, to study their characters, and to thank God for them,—both for the virtues He bestowed on them, and the example which He has given us in them.

MS. Sermon.

JANUARY 6

The Epiphany,

Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles

On this day the Lord Jesus was first shown to the Gentiles. The word Epiphany means “showing.” The Wise Men were worshippers of the true God, though in a dim confused way; and they had learnt enough of what true faith, true greatness was, not to be staggered and fall into unbelief when they saw the King of the Jews laid, not in a palace, but in a manger, tended by a poor village maiden. And therefore God bestowed on them the great honour that they first of all—Gentiles—should see the glory and the love of God in the face of Jesus Christ. God grant that they may not rise up against us in the Day of Judgment and condemn us! They had but a small spark, a dim ray, of the Light which lighteth every man who cometh into the world; but they were more faithful to that little than many of us, who live in the full sunshine of the Gospel, with Christ's Spirit, Christ's Sacraments, Christ's Churches,—means of grace and hopes of glory of which they never dreamed.

Town and Country Sermons.

JANUARY 25

Conversion of St. Paul, Apostle and Martyr

How did St. Paul look on his past life? There is no sentimental melancholy in him. He is saved, and he knows it. He is an Apostle, and he stands boldly on his dignity. He is cheerful, hopeful, joyful. And yet, when he speaks of the past, it is with noble shame and sorrow that he calls himself the chief of sinners, not worthy to be called an Apostle, because he persecuted the Church of Christ.

What he is, he will not deny; what he was, he will not forget; lest he should forget that in him, that is, in his flesh—his natural character—dwelleth no good thing; lest he should forget that the good which he does, *he* does not, but Christ which dwelleth in him; lest he should grow careless, puffed up, self-indulgent; lest he should neglect to subdue his evil passions; and so, after preaching to others, himself become a castaway.

Town and Country Sermons.

February

. . . Every winter,
When the great sun has turned his face away,
The earth goes down into the vale of grief,
And fasts, and weeps, and shrouds herself in sables,
Leaving her wedding garments to decay;
Then leaps in spring to his returning kisses.

Saint's Tragedy, Act iii. Scene i.

Out of the morning land,
Over the snow-drifts,
Beautiful Freya came,
Tripping to Scoring.
White were the moorlands,
And frozen before her;
Green were the moorlands,
And blooming behind her.
Out of her gold locks
Shaking the spring flowers,
Out of her garments
Shaking the south wind,
Around in the birches
Awaking the throstles,
Love and love-giving,
Came she to Scoring.

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The Longbeard's Saga. 1852.

Virtue. February 1

The first and last business of every human being, whatever his station, party, creed, capacities, tastes, duties, is morality; virtue, virtue, always virtue. Nothing that man will ever invent will absolve him from the universal necessity of being good as God is good, righteous as God is righteous, holy as God is holy.

Sermons on David. 1866.

Happiness. February 2

God has not only made things beautiful; He has made things happy; whatever misery there is in the world there is no denying that. Misery is the exception; happiness is the rule. No rational man ever heard a bird sing without feeling that the bird was happy, and that if God made that bird He

made it to be happy, and He takes pleasure in its happiness, though no human ear should ever hear its song, no human heart should ever share in its joy.

All Saints' Day Sermons. 1871.

A Dream of the Future. February 3

God grant that the day may come when in front of the dwellings of the poor we may see real fountains—not like the drinking-fountains, useful as they are, which you see here and there about the streets, with a tiny dribble of water to a great deal of expensive stone, but real fountains, which shall leap, and sparkle, and splash, and gurgle, and fill the place with life and light and coolness; and sing in the people's ears the sweetest of all earthly songs—save the song of a mother over her child—the song of “The Laughing Water.”

The Air Mothers. 1872.

Bondage of Custom. February 4

Strive all your life to free men from the bondage of *custom* and *self*, the two great elements of the world that lieth in wickedness.

MS. Letter. 1842.

Henceforth let no man peering down
Through the dim glittering mine of future years
Say to himself, “Too much! this cannot be!”
To-day and custom wall up our horizon:
Before the hourly miracle of life
Blindfold we stand, and sigh, as though God were not.

Saint's Tragedy, Act i. Scene ii.
1847.

The Childlike Mind. February 5

There comes a time when we must *narrow* our sphere of thought much, that we may *truly enlarge* it! we must, *artificialised* as we *have* been, return to the rudiments of life, to children's pleasures, that we may find easily, through their transparent simplicity, spiritual laws which we may apply to the more intricate spheres of art and science.

MS. Letter. 1842.

Unselfish Prayer. February 6

The Lord's Prayer teaches that we are members of a family, when He tells us to pray not “*My* Father” but “*Our* Father;” not “*my* soul be saved,” but “*Thy* kingdom come;” not “give *me*” but “give *us* our daily bread;” not “forgive *me*,” but “forgive *us* our trespasses,” and that only as we forgive others; not “lead *me* not,” but “lead *us* not into temptation;” not “deliver *me*,” but “deliver *us* from

evil.” After *that* manner our Lord tells us to pray, and in proportion as we pray in that manner, just so far, and no farther, will God hear our prayers.

National Sermons. 1850.

God is Light. February 7

All the deep things of God are bright, for God is Light. God’s arbitrary will and almighty power may seem dark by themselves though deep, but that is because they do not involve His moral character. Join them with the fact that He is a God of mercy as well as justice; remember that His essence is love, and the thunder-cloud will blaze with dewy gold, full of soft rain and pure light.

MS. Letter. 1844.

The Veil Lifted. February 8

Science is, I verily believe, like virtue, its own exceeding great reward. I can conceive few human states more enviable than that of the man to whom—panting in the foul laboratory, or watching for his life in the tropic forest—Isis shall for a moment lift her sacred veil and show him, once and for ever, the thing he dreamed not of, some law, or even mere hint of a law, explaining one fact: but explaining with it a thousand more, connecting them all with each other and with the mighty whole, till order and meaning shoots through some old chaos of scattered observations. Is not that a joy, a prize, which wealth cannot give nor poverty take away? What it may lead to he knows not. Of what use it may be he knows not. But this he knows, that somewhere it must lead, of some use it will be. For it is a truth.

*Lectures on Science and Superstition.
1866.*

All Science One. February 9

Physical and spiritual science seem to the world to be distinct. One sight of God as we shall some day see Him will show us that they are indissolubly and eternally the same.

MS.

Passion and Reason. February 10

Passion and reason in a healthy mind ought to be inseparable. We need not be passionless because we reason correctly. Strange to say, one’s feelings will often sharpen one’s knowledge of the truth, as they do one’s powers of action.

MS. 1843.

Enthusiasm and Tact. February 11

. . . People smile at the “enthusiasm of youth”—that enthusiasm which they themselves secretly look back at with a sigh, perhaps unconscious that it is partly their own fault that they ever lost it. . . .

Do not fear being considered an enthusiast. What matter? But pray for *tact*, the true tact which love alone can give, to prevent scandalising a weak brother.

Letters and Memories. 1842.

Be earnest, earnest, earnest; mad, if thou wilt:
Do what thou dost as if the stake were heaven, And that thy last deed ere the judgment-day.
When all's done, nothing's done. There's rest above—
Below let work be death, if work be love!

Saint's Tragedy, Act ii. Scene viii. 1847.

The Eternal Good. February 12

“God hath showed thee what is good,” . . . what is good in itself, and of itself—the one very eternal and absolute good, which was with God and in God and from God, before all worlds, and will be for ever, without changing, or growing less or greater, eternally the same good—the good which would be just as good and just and right and lovely and glorious if there were no world, no men, no angels, no heaven, no hell, and God were alone in His own abyss.

Sermons for the Times. 1855.

Awfulness of Words. February 13

A difference in words is a very awful and important difference; a difference in words is a difference in things. Words are very awful and wonderful things, for they come from the most awful and wonderful of all beings, Jesus Christ, The Word. He puts words into men's minds. He made all things, and He made words to express those things. And woe to those who use the wrong words about anything.

Village Sermons. 1848.

A Wise Woman. February 14

What wisdom she had she did not pick off the hedge, like blackberries. God is too kind to give away wisdom after that useless fashion. So she had to earn her wisdom, and to work hard, and suffer much ere she attained it. And in attaining she endured strange adventures and great sorrows; and yet they would not have given her the wisdom had she not had something in herself which gave her wit to understand her lessons, and skill and courage to do what they taught her. There had been many names for that something before she was born, there have been many names for it since, but her father and mother called it the Grace of God.

Unfinished Novel. 1869.

Charity the one Influence. February 15

The older we grow, the more we understand our own lives and histories, the more we shall see that the spirit of wisdom is the spirit of love; that the true way to gain influence over our fellow-men is to have charity towards them. That is a hard lesson to learn; and all those who learn it generally learn it late; almost—God forgive us—too late.

Westminster Sermons.

The Ascetic Painters. February 16

We owe much (notwithstanding their partial and Manichean idea of beauty) to the early ascetic painters. Their works are a possession for ever. No future school of religious art will be able to rise to eminence without learning from them their secret. They taught artists, and priests, and laymen, too, that beauty is only worthy of admiration when it is the outward sacrament of the beauty of the soul within; they helped to deliver men from that idolatry to merely animal strength and loveliness into which they were in danger of falling in ferocious ages, and among the relics of Roman luxury.

Miscellanies. 1849.

Reveries. February 17

Beware of giving way to reveries. Have always some employment in your hands. Look forward to the future with hope. Build castles if you will, but only bright ones, and *not too many*.

Letters and Memories. 1842.

Woman's Mission. February 18

It is the glory of woman that she was sent into the world to live for others rather than for herself; and therefore, I should say, let her smallest rights be respected, her smallest wrongs redressed; but let her never be persuaded to forget that she is sent into the world to teach man—what I believe she has been teaching him all along, even in the savage state, namely, that there is something more necessary than the claiming of rights, and that is, the performing of duties; to teach him specially, in these so-called intellectual days, that there is something more than intellect, and that is—purity and virtue.

Lecture on Thrift. 1869.

The Heroic Life. February 19

Provided we attain at last to the truly heroic and divine life, which is the life of virtue, it will matter little to us by what wild and weary ways, or through what painful and humiliating processes, we have arrived thither. If God has loved us, if God will receive us, then let us submit loyally and humbly to His law—“whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.”

All Saints' Day Sermons.

The Wages of Sin. February 20

It is sometimes said, “The greater the sinner the greater the saint.” I do not believe it. I do not see it. It stands to reason—if a man loses his way and finds it again, he is so much the less forward on his way, surely, by all the time he has spent in getting back into the way.

And if any of you fancy you can sin without being punished, remember that the prodigal son is punished most severely. He does not get off freely the moment he chooses to repent, as false preachers will tell you. Even after he does repent and resolves to go back to his father's house he has

a long journey home in poverty and misery, footsore, hungry, and all but despairing. But when he does get home; when he shows he has learnt the bitter lesson; when all he dares to ask is, “Make me as one of thy hired servants,”—he is received as freely as the rest.

Water of Life Sermons. 1864.

Silent Depths. February 21

Our mightiest feelings are always those which remain most unspoken. The most intense lovers and the greatest poets have generally, I think, written very little personal love-poetry, while they have shown in fictitious characters a knowledge of the passion too painfully intimate to be spoken of in the first person.

MS. 1843.

True Justification. February 22

God grant us to be among those who wish to be really justified by faith, by being made just persons by faith,—who cannot satisfy either their conscience or their reason by fancying that God looks on them as right when they know themselves to be wrong; and who cannot help trusting that union with Christ must be something real and substantial, and not merely a metaphor and a flower of rhetoric.

MS. 1854.

A Present Hell. February 23

“Ay,” he muttered, “sing awa’, . . . wi’ pretty fancies and gran’ words, and gang to hell for it.”
“To hell, Mr. Mackaye?”

“Ay, to a verra real hell, Alton Locke, laddie—a warse ane than any fiend’s kitchen or subterranean Smithfield that ye’ll hear o’ in the pulpits—the hell on earth o’ being a flunkey, and a humbug, and a useless peacock, wasting God’s gifts on your ain lusts and pleasures—and kenning it—and not being able to get oot o’ it for the chains of vanity and self-indulgence.”

Alton Locke, chap. viii. 1849.

Time and Eternity. February 24

Eternity does not mean merely some future endless duration, but that ever-present *moral* world, governed by ever-living and absolutely necessary laws, in which we and all spirits are now; and in which we should be equally, whether time and space, extension and duration, and the whole material universe to which they belong, became nothing this moment, or lasted endlessly.

Theologica Germanica. 1854.

Christ’s Life. February 25

What was Christ’s life? Not one of deep speculations, quiet thoughts, and bright visions, but a life of fighting against evil; earnest, awful prayers and struggles within, continued labour of body

and mind without; insult, and danger, and confusion, and violent exertion, and bitter sorrow. This was Christ's life. This was St. Peter's, and St. James's, and St. John's life afterwards.

Village Sermons. 1849.

The Higher Education. February 26

In teaching women we must try to make our deepest lessons bear on the great purpose of unfolding Woman's own calling in all ages—her especial calling in this one. We must incite them to realise the chivalrous belief of our old forefathers among their Saxon forests, that something Divine dwelt in the counsels of woman: but, on the other hand, we must continually remind them that they will attain that divine instinct, not by renouncing their sex, but by fulfilling it; by becoming true women, and not bad imitations of men; by educating their heads for the sake of their hearts, not their hearts for the sake of their heads; by claiming woman's divine vocation as the priestess of purity, of beauty, and of love.

*Introductory Lecture, Queen's College.
1848.*

God's Kingdom. February 27

Philamon had gone forth to see the world, and he had seen it; and he had learnt that God's kingdom was not a kingdom of fanatics yelling for a doctrine, but of willing, loving, obedient hearts.

Hypatia, chap. xxiii. 1852.

Sowing and Reaping. February 28

So it is, that by every crime, folly, even neglect of theirs, men drive a thorn into their own flesh, which will trouble them for years to come, it may be to their dying day—

Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small;
Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all—

as those who neglect their fellow-creatures will discover, by the most patent, undeniable proofs, in that last great day, when the rich and poor shall meet together, and then, at last, discover too that the Lord is the Maker of them all.

All Saints' Day Sermons. 1871.

The Church Catechism. February 29

Did it ever strike you that the simple, noble, old Church Catechism, without one word about rewards and punishments, heaven or hell, begins to talk to the child, like a true English Catechism as it is, about that glorious old English key-word Duty? It calls on the child to confess its own duty, and teaches it that its duty is something most human, simple, everyday—commonplace, if you will call it so. And I rejoice in the thought that the Church Catechism teaches that the child's duty is commonplace. I rejoice that in what it says about our duty to God and our neighbour, it says not one word about counsels of perfection, or those frames and feelings which depend, believe me, principally

on the state of people's bodily health, on the constitution of their nerves, and the temper of their brain; but that it requires nothing except what a little child can do as well as a grown person, a labouring man as well as a divine, a plain farmer as well as the most refined, devout, imaginative lady.

Sermons for the Times. 1855.

SAINTS' DAYS, FASTS, & FESTIVALS

FEBRUARY 2

The Presentation of Christ in the Temple,

commonly called

The Purification of the Virgin Mary

Little children may think of Christ as a child now and always. For to them He is always the Babe of Bethlehem. Let them not say to themselves, "Christ is grown up long ago." He is, and yet He is not. His life is eternal in the heavens, above all change of time and space. . . . Such is the sacred heart of Jesus—all things to all. To the strong He can be strongest, to the weak weakest of all.

With the aged and dying He goes down for ever to the grave; and yet with you children Christ lies for ever on His mother's bosom, and looks up for ever into His mother's face, full of young life and happiness and innocence, the Everlasting Christ-child, in whom you must believe, whom you must love, to whom you must offer up your childish prayers.

*The Christ-child,
Sermons, (Good News of God).*

FEBRUARY 24. St. Matthias, Apostle and Martyr

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. They rest from their labours—all their struggles, failures, past and over for ever. But their works follow them. The good which they did on earth—*that* is not past and over. It cannot die. It lives and grows for ever, following on in their path long after they are dead, and bearing fruit unto everlasting life, not only in them, but in men whom they never saw, and in generations yet unborn.

Sermons (Good News of God).

Ash Wednesday

There is a repentance too deep for words—too deep for all confessionals, penances, and emotions or acts of contrition; the repentance, not of the excitable, theatric Southern, unstable as water even in his most violent remorse, but of the still, deep-hearted Northern, whose pride breaks

slowly and silently, but breaks once for all; who tells to God what he will never tell to man, and having told it, is a new creature from that day forth for ever.

Two Years Ago, chap. xviii.

The True Fast

The *rationale* of Fasting is to give up habitual indulgences for a time, lest they become our masters—artificial *necessities*.

MS.

March

Early in the Springtime, on raw and windy mornings,
Beneath the freezing house-eaves, I heard the starlings sing—
Ah! dreary March month, is this then a time for building wearily?
Sad, sad, to think that the year is but begun!

Late in the Autumn, on still and cloudless evenings,
Among the golden reed-beds I heard the starlings sing—
Ah! that sweet March month, when we and our mates were courting
merrily;
Sad, sad, to think that the year is all but done.

The Starlings.

Knowledge and Love. March 1

Knowledge and Love are reciprocal. He who loves knows. He who knows loves. Saint John is the example of the first; Saint Paul of the second.

Letters and Memories. 1842.

A Charm of Birds. March 2

Little do most people know how much there is to learn—what variety of character, as well as variety of motion, may be distinguished by the practised ear in a “charm of birds”—from the wild cry of the missel-thrush, ringing from afar in the first bright days of March a passage of one or two bars repeated three or four times, and then another and another, clear and sweet and yet defiant—for the great “storm-cock” loves to sing when rain and wind is coming on, and faces the elements as boldly as he faces hawk and crow—down to the delicate warble of the wren, who slips out of his hole in the brown bank where he has huddled through the frost with wife and children, all folded in each other’s arms like human beings. Yet even he, sitting at his house-door in the low sunlight, says grace for all mercies in a song so rapid, so shrill, so loud, and yet so delicately modulated, that you wonder at the amount of soul within that tiny body; and then stops suddenly, like a child that has said its lesson or got to the end of a sermon, gives a self-satisfied flirt of his tail, and goes in again to sleep.

Prose Idylls. 1866.

Tact of the Heart. March 3

Random shots are dangerous and cruel, likely to hit the wrong person and hurt his feelings unnecessarily. It is very easy to say a hard thing, but not so easy to say it to the right person at the right time.

MS.

Special Providences. March 4

I believe not only in “special providences,” but in the whole universe as one infinite complexity of special providences.

Letters and Memories.

The grain of dust is a thought of God; God’s power made it; God’s wisdom gave it whatsoever properties or qualities it may possess. God’s providence has put it in the place where it is now, and has ordained that it should be in that place at that moment, by a train of causes and effects which reaches back to the very creation of the universe. The grain of dust can no more go from God’s presence or flee from God’s Spirit than you or I can.

Town Geology. 1871.

Be Calm. March 5

Strive daily and hourly to be calm; to stop yourself forcibly and recall your mind to a sense of what you are, where you are going, and whither you ought to be tending. This is most painful discipline, but most wholesome.

MS. Letter. 1842.

Self-sacrifice and Personality. March 6

What a strange mystery is that of mutual self-sacrifice! to exist for one moment for another! the perfection of human bliss! And does not love teach us two things? First, that self-sacrifice, the living for others, is the law of our perfect being, and next, that by and in self-sacrifice alone can we attain to the perfect apprehension of ourselves, our own personality, our own duty, our own bliss.

So that the mystics are utterly wrong when they fancy that self-sacrifice can be attained by self-annihilation. Self-sacrifice, instead of destroying the sense of personality, perfects it.

MS. Letter. 1843.

Follow your Star. March 7

I believe with Dante, “*se tu segui la tua Stella,*” that He who ordained my star will not lead me *into* temptation but *through* it. Without Him all places and methods of life are equally dangerous, with Him all equally safe.

Letters and Memories. 1848.

Reverence for Books. March 8

This is the age of *books*. And we should reverence books. Consider! except a living man there is nothing more wonderful than a book—a message to us from the dead, from human souls whom we never saw, who lived perhaps thousands of miles away, and yet in those little sheets of paper speak to us, amuse us, terrify us, teach us, comfort us, open their hearts to us as brothers!

We ought to reverence books, to look at them as awful and mighty things. If they are good and true, whether they are about religion or politics, trade or medicine, they are the message of Christ, the Maker of all things, the Teacher of all truth, which He has put into the heart of some men to speak. And at the last day, be sure of it, we shall have to render an account—a strict account—of the books which we have read, and of the way in which we have obeyed what we read, just as if we had had so many prophets or angels sent to us.

Village Sermons. 1849.

The Unknown Future. March 9

As for the things which God has prepared for those who love Him, the Bible tells me that no man can conceive them, and therefore I believe that I cannot conceive them. God has conceived them; God has prepared them; God is our Father. That is enough.

Sermons for the Times. 1855.

Secular and Sacred. March 10

I grudge the epithet of “*secular*” to any matter whatsoever. But more; I deny it to anything which God has made, even to the tiniest of insects, the most insignificant grain of dust. To those who believe in God, and try to see all things in God, the most minute natural phenomenon cannot be secular. It must be divine, I say deliberately, divine, and I can use no less lofty word.

Town Geology. 1871.

Content or Happy? March 11

My friends, whether you will be the happier for any knowledge of physical science, or for any other knowledge whatsoever, I cannot tell. That lies in the decision of a higher Power than I; and, indeed, to speak honestly, I do not think that any branch of physical science is likely, at first at least, to make you happy. Neither is the study of your fellow-men. Neither is religion itself. We were not sent into the world to be happy, but to be right—at least, poor creatures that we are—as right as we can be, and we must be content with being right, and not happy. . . . And we shall be made truly wise if we be made content; content, too, not only with what we can understand, but content with what we do not understand—the habit of mind which theologians call (and rightly) faith in God, true and solid faith, which comes often out of sadness and out of doubt.

Lecture on Bio-geology. 1869.

Duty of Man to Man. March 12

Each man can learn something from his neighbour; at least he can learn this—to have patience with his neighbour, to live and let live.

Peace! peace! Anything which is not *wrong* for the sake of heaven-born Peace!

Town and Country Sermons. 1861.

Blessing of a True Friend. March 13

A blessed thing it is for any man or woman to have a friend, one human soul whom we can trust utterly, who knows the best and worst of us, and who loves us in spite of all our faults; who will speak the honest truth to us, while the world flatters us to our face, and laughs at us behind our back; who will give us counsel and reproof in the days of prosperity and self-conceit; but who, again, will comfort and encourage us in the day of difficulty and sorrow, when the world leaves us alone to fight our battle as we can.

It is only the great-hearted who can be true friends: the mean and cowardly can never know what true friendship means.

Sermons on David. 1866.

True Heroines. March 14

What is the commonest, and yet the least remembered form of heroism? The heroism of an average mother. Ah! when I think of that broad fact I gather hope again for poor humanity, and this dark world looks bright, this diseased world looks wholesome to me once more, because, whatever else it is or is not full of, it is at least full of mothers.

Lecture on Heroism. 1873.

Secret Atheism. March 15

There is little hope that we shall learn the lessons God is for ever teaching us in the events of life till we get rid of our secret Atheism, till we give up the notion that God only visits now and then to disorder and destroy His own handiwork, and take back the old scriptural notion that God is visiting all day long for ever, to give order and life to His own work, to set it right where it goes wrong, and re-create it whenever it decays.

Water of Life Sermons. 1866.

Tolerance. March 16

If we really love God and long to do good and work for God, if we really love our neighbours and wish to help them, we shall have no heart to quarrel about *how* the good is to be done, provided *it is done*. “Master,” said St. John, “we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and he followeth not us; wilt Thou that we forbid him? And Jesus said, Forbid him not.”

Sermons.

The Hopes of Old Age. March 17

Christianity alone deprives old age of its bitterness, making it the gate of heaven. Our bodies will fade and grow weak and shapeless, just when we shall not want them, being ready and in close expectation of that resurrection of the flesh which is the great promise of Christianity (no miserable fancies about “pure souls” escaped from matter, but)—of bodies, *our* bodies, beloved, beautiful,

ministers to us in all our joys, sufferers with us in all our sorrows—yea, our very own selves raised up again to live and love in a manner inconceivable from its perfection.

MS. 1842.

. . . No! I can wait:
Another body!—Ah, new limbs are ready,
Free, pure, instinct with soul through every nerve,
Kept for us in the treasuries of God!

Santa Maura. 1852.

The Highest Study for Man, March 18

Man is *not*, as the poet said, “the noblest study of mankind.” God is the noblest study of man, and Him we can study in three ways. 1st. From His image as developed in Christ the Ideal, and in all good men—great good men. 2dly. From His works. 3dly. From His dealings in history; this is the real philosophy of history.

Letters and Memories. 1842.

Eclecticism. March 19

An eclectic, if it mean anything, means this—one who in any branch of art or science refuses to acknowledge Bacon’s great law, that “Nature is only conquered by obeying her;” who will not take a full and reverent view of the whole mass of facts with which he has to deal, and from them deducing the fundamental laws of his subject, obey them whithersoever they may lead; but who picks and chooses out of them just so many as may be pleasant to his private taste, and then constructs a partial system which differs from the essential ideas of Nature in proportion to the number of facts which he has determined to discard.

Miscellanies. 1849.

Duty. March 20

Duty, be it in a small matter or a great, is duty still; the command of Heaven; the eldest voice of God. And it is only they who are faithful in a few things who will be faithful over many things; only they who do their duty in everyday and trivial matters who will fulfil them on great occasions.

Sermons for the Times. 1855.

The Great Unknown. March 21

“Brother,” said the abbot, “make ready for me the divine elements, that I may consecrate them.” And he asking the reason therefor, the saint replied, “That I may partake thereof with all my brethren before I depart hence. For know assuredly that within the seventh day I shall migrate to the celestial mansions. For this night stood by me in a dream those two women whom I love, and for whom I pray, the one clothed in a white, the other in a ruby-coloured garment, and holding each other by

the hand, who said to me, ‘*That life after death is not such a one as you fancy: come, therefore, and behold what it is like.*’”

Hypatia, chap. xxx. 1852.

Loss nor Gain, March 22

Nothing is more expensive than penuriousness; nothing more anxious than carelessness; and every duty which is bidden to wait returns with seven fresh duties at its back.

Sermons for the Times. 1855.

Ancient Greek Education, March 23

We talk of education now. Are we more educated than were the ancient Greeks? Do we know anything about education, physical, intellectual, æsthetic (religious education in our sense of the word of course they had none), of which they have not taught us at least the rudiments? Are there not some branches of education which they perfected once and for ever, leaving us northern barbarians to follow or not to follow their example? To produce health, that is, harmony and sympathy, proportion and grace, in every faculty of mind and body—that was their notion of education.

Ah! the waste of health and strength in the young! The waste, too, of anxiety and misery in those who love and tend them! How much of it might be saved by a little rational education in those laws of nature which are the will of God about the welfare of our bodies, and which, therefore, we are as much bound to know and to obey as we are bound to know and to obey the spiritual laws whereon depend the welfare of our souls.

Lecture on Thrift. 1869.

Body and Soul. March 24

Exalt me with Thee, O Lord, to know the mystery of life, that I may use the earthly as the appointed expression and type of the heavenly, and, by using to Thy glory the natural body, may be fit to be exalted to the use of the spiritual body. Amen.

MS. 1842.

Moderation. March 25

Let us pray for that great—I had almost said that crowning grace and virtue of Moderation, what St. Paul calls sobriety and a sound mind. Let us pray for moderate appetites, moderate passions, moderate honours, moderate gains, moderate joys; and if sorrows be needed to chasten us, moderate sorrows. Let us not long violently after, or wish too eagerly to rise in life.

Water of Life Sermons. 1869.

Poetry in the Slums. March 26

“True poetry, like true charity, my laddie, begins at home. . . . Hech! is there no the heaven above them there, and the hell beneath them? and God frowning, and the devil grinning? No poetry

there! Is no the verra idea of the classic tragedy defined to be man conquered by circumstance? canna ye see it there? And the verra idea of the modern tragedy, man conquering circumstance? and I'll show ye that too—in many a garret where no eye but the good God's enters to see the patience, and the fortitude, and the self-sacrifice, and the love stronger than death, that's shining in those dark places of the earth.”

“Ah, poetry's grand—but fact is grander; God and Satan are grander. All around ye, in every gin-shop and costermonger's cellar, are God and Satan at death-grips; every garret is a haill Paradise Lost or Paradise Regained.”

Alton Locke, chap. viii. 1849.

Time and Eternity. March 27

. . . Our life's floor
Is laid upon Eternity; no crack in it
But shows the underlying heaven.

Saint's Tragedy, Act iii. Scene ii.

Work. March 28

Yes. Life is meant for work, and not for ease; to labour in danger and in dread, to do a little good ere the night comes when no man can work, instead of trying to realise for oneself a paradise; not even Bunyan's shepherd-paradise, much less Fourier's casino-paradise, and perhaps, least of all, because most selfish and isolated of all, our own art-paradise, the apotheosis of loafing, as Claude calls it.

Prose Idylls. 1849.

Teaching of Pictures. March 29

Pictures raise blessed thoughts in me. Why not in you, my toiling brother? Those landscapes painted by loving, wise, old Claude two hundred years ago, are still as fresh as ever. How still the meadows are! How pure and free that vault of deep blue sky! No wonder that thy worn heart, as thou lookest, sighs aloud, “Oh, that I had wings as a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest.” Ah! but gayer meadows and bluer skies await thee *in the world to come*—that fairyland made real—“the new heavens and the new earth” which God hath prepared for the pure and the loving, the just, and the brave, who have conquered in this sore fight of life.

True Words for Brave Men. 1849.

Voluntary Heroism. March 30

Any man or woman, in any age and under any circumstances, who *will, can* live the heroic life and exercise heroic influences.

It is of the essence of self-sacrifice, and therefore of heroism, that it should be voluntary; a work of supererogation, at least, towards society and man; an act to which the hero or heroine is not bound by duty, but which is above though not against duty.

Lecture on Heroism. 1872.

The Ideal Holy One. March 31

Have you never cried in your hearts with longing, almost with impatience, “Surely, surely, there is an ideal Holy One somewhere—or else, how could have arisen in my mind the conception, however faint, of an ideal holiness? But where? oh, where? Not in the world around strewn with unholiness.

Not in myself, unholy too, without and within. Is there a Holy One, whom I may contemplate with utter delight? and if so, where is He? Oh, that I might behold, if but for a moment, His perfect beauty, even though, as in the fable of Semele of old, ‘the lightning of His glance were death.’” . . .

And then, oh, then—has there not come that for which our spirit was athirst—the very breath of pure air, the very gleam of pure light, the very strain of pure music—for it is the very music of the spheres—in those words, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come”?

Yes, whatever else is unholy, there is a Holy One—spotless and undefiled, serene and self-contained. Whatever else I cannot trust, there is One whom I can trust utterly. Whatever else I am dissatisfied with, there is One whom I can contemplate with utter satisfaction, and bathe my stained soul in that eternal fount of purity. And who is He? Who, save the Cause and Maker and Ruler of all things past, present, and to come?

Sermon on All Saints’ Day. 1874.

Charles Kingsley’s Dying Words,

“HOW BEAUTIFUL GOD IS.”

SAINTS’ DAYS, FASTS, & FESTIVALS

MARCH 25

The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin,

commonly called

Lady Day

It is one of the glories of our holy religion, and one of the ways by which the Gospel takes such hold on our hearts, that, mixed up with the grandest and most mysterious and most divine matters, are the simplest, the most tender, the most human. What more grand, or deep, or divine words can we say than, “I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,”—and yet what more simple, human, and tender words can we say than, “Who was born of

the Virgin Mary”? For what more beautiful sight on earth than a young mother with her babe upon her knee? Beautiful in itself; but doubly beautiful to those who can say, “I believe in Him who was born of the Virgin Mary.”

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