

too hard for the Lord? He is as able as He is willing to do for them all that they need. He can exempt them from trouble, or support them in it, or deliver them out of it. His power has divided the sea, brought water from the flinty rock, and burst open the doors of the imprisoned. And while the Christian does not now expect any miraculous interposition on his behalf, he believes that the omnipotence of God shall shield him from all real harm, and shall bring him at last in safety to the heavenly kingdom.

Now, it is this intelligent faith in God, and these right feelings towards Him, that give the Christian these songs in the night. Thus exercised, Job was able to say in his best moments, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." Thus exercised, Paul and Silas at midnight sang praises to God in the prison at Philippi, while their feet were made fast in the stocks. Thus exercised, the apostle, when told that the thorn in the flesh must remain, exclaimed, "Most gladly will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Thus exercised, the prophet could exclaim, in the midst of the loss of the fruit of field, fold and stall, "Yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation."

Who gives these songs in the night? "God my Maker." None but He can give these songs. The heart cannot tune itself to sing them. Left to itself it would give forth nothing save the low wail of sorrow, if not the words of bitter and sinful fault-finding with God. Nor can any fellow-creature give these songs. One may be instrumental in helping another to sing them, but only instrumental. The words of divine truth he may quote, or the arguments based thereon, may banish the sorrow and supplant it with joy; but then, after all, it is only instrumentality. The Christian can do nothing of himself as an agent to give comfort to others. Has he not often experienced this? Has he not, for example, often talked and reasoned with the spiritually distressed, and yet his efforts have proved fruitless? Has he not felt, as the darkness and distress were as great as ever, that none but He who made the heart can dispel its doubts,

banish its fears, and still its trembling? Those who, when in trouble, ask the question, "Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?" are conscious that God is the only source whence aid can come. With David they say, "I will lift up mine eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord." Mark the language of appropriation—God *my* Maker—God, who has made my body, and who alone can give me food and raiment and shelter and deliverance in danger—God, who has made my soul, and who alone can give me peace and quietness of mind—God, who has created me a new creature in Christ Jesus, and who alone can give me correct views of his providential dispensations, clear discoveries of my interest in the blessings of the everlasting covenant, gracious and comforting experiences, implicit confidence in His ability and willingness to perfect that which concerneth me—this God is *my* God, in Him I trust, to Him I look."

Is it with us the season of night? We should sing. Not only should we not murmur, we should be cheerful. "Rejoice evermore, yea, I say unto you, Rejoice." Although in the valley of Baca, we should sing as we go. This will be for our spiritual health and comfort: this will redound to the glory of God. Not that we should be stoical; for religion refines our sensibilities and allows us to weep. But even when our eyes are blinded with tears, let our hearts be filled with peace and our tongues with melody. To attain this state we must trust in God—in His wisdom, His goodness, His power. We must meditate upon the design of affliction. It glorifies God. Were it not for the night we should never see the glory of God in the starry firmament. And so were it not for the night of affliction, there are manifestations of the divine character to which we should remain strangers. Affliction is also designed to benefit ourselves. The tree is severely pruned that it may become more fruitful. The surgeon's knife is used that a diseased limb may be lopped off and the body saved. The chisel cuts many a stroke in the stone which is to occupy an important place in a beautiful temple. Then, too, afflictions are comparatively