

# The Quiet Hour

## GO FORWARD

And the Lord said unto Moses,  
Wherefore criest thou unto Me?  
Speak unto the children of Israel,  
that they go forward.—Exod. xiv.:  
15.

"For a web begun God sends the  
thread."  
Over and over these words I read,  
And I said to myself, with an easy  
air,  
"What need to burden myself with  
care  
If this be true,  
Or attempt to do  
More than my duty? For here is  
proof  
That we are to hold ourselves aloof  
Until from the Master we receive  
The thread for the web we are to  
weave!"

So day after day I sat beside  
The loom, as if both my hands were  
tied,  
With idle shuttle and slackened warp,  
Useless as strings of an untuned  
harp;  
For I took no part  
With hand or heart  
In the work of the world. To the  
cry of need,  
The voice of the children, I gave no  
heed.  
"When the task is ready for me," I  
said,  
"God will be sure to supply the  
thread."

Others might go in cellars and slums,  
And weave a web out of scraps and  
thrums,  
Finding excuse for the daily toil,  
The reckless waste of life's precious  
oil;  
But as for me,  
I could not see  
How I was to follow them, or be-  
lieve  
That the needed strength I should re-  
ceive,  
Unless I waited, howe'er time sped,  
For God to send me the promised  
thread.

I had no strength of my own, I  
knew,  
No wisdom to guide, no skill to do,  
And must wait at ease for the word  
of command,  
For the message I surely should un-  
derstand,  
Else all in vain  
Were the stress and strain,  
For the thread would break and the  
web be spoiled—  
A poor result for the hours I'd  
toiled;  
And my heart and my conscience  
would be at strife  
O'er the broken threads of a wasted  
life.

But all at once, like a gem exhumed,  
The word "begun"—by a light il-  
lumed—  
From the rest of the text stood bold-  
ly out,  
By the finger of God revealed, no  
doubt;  
And shocked and dazed,  
Ashamed, amazed,  
I saw, as I had not seen before,  
The truer meaning the sentence bore,  
And read as Belshazzar might have  
read:  
"For a web 'begun' God sends the  
thread."

The man himself, with his mind and  
heart,  
To the Holy City must make a  
start  
Ere he finds in his hands the mystic  
clue  
That shall lead him life's ways safe-  
ly through.  
And if loom and reel  
And spinning-wheel  
Idle and empty stand to-day,  
We must reason give for the long de-  
lay.

Since the voice of the Master has  
plainly said,  
"For a web begun God sends the  
thread."  
—Josephine Pollard.

The Bible is a wonderfully balanced  
book, and if we wish to be perfect  
as our Father in Heaven is perfect,  
we must keep the balance true be-  
tween virtues which seem almost to  
oppose each other. Generosity may  
become a sin if it is not balanced by  
prudence; gentleness may do terrible  
harm (as in the case of Eli and his  
sons) unless it is kept steady by  
wise firmness. So even trust in  
God—one of the greatest of the  
greatest of the Christian graces—  
will make a soul weak unless it is  
balanced by reasonable self-reliance  
and healthy endeavor. We see this  
all through the Bible records, even in  
the Acts of the Apostles, where the  
infant Church is so plainly led by  
the Holy Spirit. But the story told  
in our text is an object lesson, bring-  
ing this great truth to a focus.  
Moses was not blamed for praying to  
God when he found himself at the  
head of a frightened host, with the  
sea before and the enemy behind.



AT THE BEND OF THE STREAM

But he was told that God would not  
help them unless they tried to help  
themselves. They must make a  
start—"Go forward!"—then their  
Divine Leader was pledged to supply  
all needful help. It is the same  
principle that must always be used  
in education. The teacher will give  
help that is absolutely necessary, but  
will not injure the pupil doing for  
him what he is able to do himself.

We must trust God to make our  
way clear for us, step by step, and  
yet we must not expect Him to  
carry us when He has given us  
strength to walk. For instance, I  
am still uncertain whether my lame-  
ness will force me to give up the  
settlement work for a time—I have  
tried to work for God, and if He  
wants me to do that particular kind  
of work He will give me strength for  
it—but I must not, for that reason,  
lie with hands folded in martyr-like  
submission and wait for work to  
come my way. Head and hands are  
still capable of being used in the  
Master's service, even if I can't race  
about in the old energetic fashion.  
We are all ordered to "go for-  
ward!" Even if the whole body  
should be tied helpless in bed the  
soul can go forward—can, if the will  
is bent in progress, go forward more  
swiftly than in times of health;  
though it is a great mistake to  
fancy that it is easier to live a  
saintly life in times of sickness—on  
the contrary, it is far harder. Most  
people have hours of longing for  
greater opportunities of usefulness.

They hear of others who are out in  
the big world, doing "great" things  
for God, and their own opportunities  
seem so cramped and insignificant.  
But what the Master looks for is  
faithfulness. If you are faithfully  
doing the apparently trifling tasks  
which are all He is at present ask-  
ing from you, then you are pleasing  
Him quite as much—possibly more—  
than those whose sphere of useful-  
ness you are envying. The great  
thing, though, is to "go forward."  
If you are no better than you were  
a year ago, no better than you were  
a month ago, no better than you  
were yesterday, then the Master is  
disappointed. Look back and honest-  
ly seek to find out whether there is  
any improvement. Are your prayers  
more real, and are you trusting  
more in the ever-present God? Are  
you more considerate for the feelings  
of others, more gentle in word and  
manner, more willing to shoulder the  
burdens which lie in your way? Are  
you opening the windows more than  
you used to do, so that the radiant  
sunshine of joy may pour into your  
life from the God of Joy? Don't  
waste much time over retrospect,  
though, for the glorious present and  
infinite future still call you forward.  
Make some real progress to-day.  
Look up into the Master's face and  
ask Him what work He wants you  
to do for Him, what lesson must be  
mastered to-day, and then set your-  
self to the day's work with gladness.

Inapprehensible, we clutch thee!  
Does the fish soar to find the ocean,  
The eagle plunge to find the air,  
That we ask of the stars in motion  
If they have rumor of thee there?  
Not where the wheeling systems  
darken,  
And our benumbed conceiving soars,  
The drift of pinions, would we hark-  
en,  
Beats at our own clay-shuttered  
doors.

The angels keep their ancient places—  
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!  
'Tis ye, 'tis your estranged faces,  
That miss the great resplendent  
thing.

But, when so sad thou canst not  
sadder,  
Cry; and upon thy so sore loss  
Shall shrine the traffic of Jacob's  
ladder  
Pitched betwixt Heaven and Char-  
ing Cross.

Yea, in the night, my Soul my  
daughter,  
Cry, clinging Heaven by the hems;  
And lo, Christ walking on the water,  
Not of Genesareth, but Thames!  
—FRANCIS THOMPSON in the *Athenaeum*

Strengthen our love, O Lord, that  
we  
May in Thine own great love be-  
lieve,  
And opening all our soul to Thee,  
May Thy free gift receive!  
All powers of mind, all force of  
will,  
'May lie in dust when we are dead;  
But love is ours, and shall be still  
When earth and seas are fled.

MY PRAYER.  
Teach me to bear my cross and sing,  
Send me Thy patience from above;  
Teach me to bend my will to Thine;  
So fold me in Thy perfect love.  
—ANNA BENSEL.

He who knows our frame is just,  
Merciful, and compassionate,  
And full of sweet assurances  
And hope; for all the language is,  
That He remembereth we are dust!  
—JOHN G. WHITTIER.

ON THINKING GLAD  
Never mind a change of scene—  
Try a change of thinking,  
What if things were sordid, mean,  
What's the use of blinking?  
Life's not always storm and cloud  
Somewhere stars are shining,  
Try to think your joys out loud,  
Silence all repining.

By degrees, by thinking light,  
Thinking glad and sweetly,  
You'll escape the stress of night,  
Worry gone completely.  
Get the habit looking for  
Sunbeams, pirouetting,  
Tapping gayly at your door—  
Surest cure for fretting.

Needn't fool yourself at all.  
For there's no denying  
E'en above a prison wall  
Song birds are a-flying.  
Wherefore hearken to the song,  
Never mind the prison,  
And you'll find your soul ere long  
Up to freedom risen.  
—JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.

A STUMBLING BLOCK  
Because, professing still to be  
A follower of the Lamb of God,  
I walk in devious paths where he  
Is never seen, has never trod,  
E'en thus it is that some, through  
me,  
The Master's face may never see.

Because, professing to be wise,  
And to have found the Truth, the  
Way,  
I oft am seen in Folly's guise,  
Unmindful whom I thus betray,—  
Yet so it is that some, through me,  
To Heaven's gate may lose the key.

Because, professing his dear name  
Whose love is infinitely great,  
My tongue will even friends defame,  
And flashing eyes oft tell of fate,—  
Alas, alas, that some, through me,  
May, hopeless, face eternity!  
—Sunday School Times.

"Life is but a day in fleetness;  
Richer in all strength and sweet-  
ness  
Grows the striving soul."  
—HOPE.

IN NO STRANGE LAND  
"The Kingdom of God is within  
you."  
O world invisible, we view thee;  
O world intangible, we touch thee;  
O world unknowable, we know thee.