

LEAVES FOR QUIET HOURS

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649014798

Leaves for quiet hours by George Matheson

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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GEORGE MATHESON

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BY

GEORGE MATHESON, F.R.S.E., D.D., LL.D.

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AUTHOR OF "THE REPRESENTATIVE MEN OF THE BIBLE"

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NEW YORK
A. C. ARMSTRONG & SON
3 & 5 WEST 18th STREET, NEAR 5th AVENUE

1904

prayer or of an invocation. But I hope that these two parts will never be divided in holy wedlock—that every fresh thought will be tinged with the heart's emotion, and that every emotion of the heart will be winged by the inspiration of a thought. A devotional book is believed to be a very simple thing. It ought to be the most difficult composition in the world, for it should aim at the marriage of qualities which are commonly supposed to be antagonistic—the insight of the thinker and the fervour of the worshipper. My own conviction has increasingly been that the hours of our deepest devotion are precisely in those moments when we catch fresh glimpses of hidden things.

G. M.

EDINBURGH, 1904.

LEAVES FOR QUIET HOURS

THE MAIN USE OF THE CHRISTIAN ARMOUR.

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."—EPHESIANS VI. 13.

WHAT a strange conclusion to so martial a war-cry! The soldier is generally told to put on his armour for the sake of the battle; here it is for the sake of the camp. To the common view the arduous thing in a Christian's life is the hour of conflict; to Paul it is the hour after conflict. If you or I had written this verse we should have put it thus: "Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand awaiting the foe, and finally to withstand when the foe has come." But Paul reverses the process. To him the withstanding is the less difficult of the two.

The greatest danger he sees for the Christian soldier is just at the point where he has "done all." And is not Paul right in his perception! Is not the arduous bit of a Christian's life rather the camp than the field! When a man feels he is surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, it is comparatively easy to lay aside every weight. But when there is no outward battle, no visible foe, no possible wreath for the victor, when the field is his own heart and the enemy his own wish and the spectator his own conscience, when there is no human voice to cry "Well done!" and no public opinion to say "He has fought a good fight!"—that is the time when he needs the Christian armour.

Lord, arm me for the silence! Often in my hour of trial I am brave when duty has to be done and weak when it is over. In the first fire of my bereavement I have to rise up from before my dead. There are letters to be written; there are sad offices to be performed; there are friends to be bidden to the funeral. And I go through them calmly; I feel as if something supported me; men say, "How bravely he bears it!" But when the