

THOUGHTS DURING SICKNESS

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Thoughts During Sickness by Robert Brett

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ROBERT BRETT

**THOUGHTS
DURING SICKNESS**

THOUGHTS
DURING
SICKNESS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE DOCTRINE OF THE CROSS," AND
"DEVOTIONS FOR THE SICK-ROOM."

H. Burt

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TO THE
SICK AND AFFLICTED,
AND
TO THOSE DEAR FRIENDS
WHOSE KINDNESS AND SYMPATHY SMOOTHED THE BED OF SICKNESS,
THESE PAGES ARE DEDICATED
WITH
THE CHRISTIAN AFFECTION
AND
GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE
OF
THE AUTHOR.

R. B. *abb*

PREFATORY REMARKS.

It is much to be deplored, that whilst religious tales, books of devotion, and sermons, are multiplied beyond measure, there should be such a scarcity of sound Christian biography, written in a healthy tone, and imparting that *experimental* knowledge which is above all price, by shewing us how devout men are sustained by Divine grace under all the trials and conflicts of life. It would be an inestimable blessing to most of us, to turn from the *excitement* and *unreality* in which we are content to live, and learn how men feel in sickness and death, when the *realities* of time and eternity are unfolded to their souls. In this point of view the common-place experience of ordinary Christians may not be without its use; and on this ground alone can the writer justify the publication of the thoughts which exercised his own mind during a long and trying illness. As a simple record of God's loving-kindness they may,

he hopes, afford some consolation to those in like condition, and awaken the thoughtless to remember "the hour of death, and the day of judgment."

Large quotations from the Holy Scriptures have been introduced with the two-fold object of drawing the sick to the closer study of the fountain of eternal truth, and confirming my own feeble statements.

The blessings and trials of sickness are both very great, but they can only be realized by those who have passed through the fiery ordeal. And even among these it is the thoughtful earnest Christian only who will discern and receive the blessing, and so profit by its trials as to be better fitted to serve God and succour his suffering brethren. The thoughtless and selfish will come forth from the furnace as indifferent to the feelings of others, as though themselves had never been tried. It is difficult for persons in health so to throw themselves into the condition of the sick, as to enter into their conflicts, and realize their difficulties and infirmities. They forget that the mind is bowed down by the sufferings and prostration of the body, and therefore unequal to sustain calmly the conflict it has to endure. To be patient, resigned, calm, and trustful, is by no means easy to those in the full possession of mental and bodily vigour, how much less so must it be to one enfeebled by suffering; to one brought

into contact with the invisible world and those tremendous realities which dissipate the shadows of time and sense, call up the past, and disclose the future. Surely a fellow-christian on whom God has laid His hand, whether in sorrow or in pain, demands our deepest commiseration, sympathy, and help. Mere compassion and pity will never enable us to reach the secret springs of sorrow which lie deep in the human heart: to touch them, apply the healing balm, and afford real support and comfort to souls weighed down by affliction, we must seek a large portion of that *sympathy* which moves the loving heart of Jesus to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and ever flows forth to succour every form of human woe. A *sympathy* which needed not the ties of blood and kindred to call it forth, but ever responded to the claims of a common brotherhood and the wail of suffering humanity! How large a portion of His earthly ministry was spent in going from city to city, healing all manner of sicknesses, both mental and bodily. He went forth in the fulness of His divine compassion, neither breaking the bruised reed, nor quenching the smoking flax; but binding up the broken-hearted, and inviting the weary and heavy laden to come to Him, that they might find rest for their souls; "Giving unto them that mourn in Sion, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." And even

now, on His throne of glory, His sacred heart is so moved with tender sympathy and compassion towards His suffering brethren, that He stoops to listen to their every sigh, and to send them help from His holy sanctuary; and not only so, but He likewise sends His holy Angels to "minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation."

If then we would rightly fulfil this blessed mission, of ministering to and sympathizing with the sick members of Christ, and thereby become co-workers with Him and His holy Angels, we must learn of our Divine Exemplar, and live in close communion with Him, be filled with His spirit, and tread in His steps. To no class are such opportunities afforded of following the example of the Great Physician, in relieving the doubts, fears, anxieties, and sorrows that harass and oppress the minds of the sick and afflicted, as to *medical men*, who in the practice of their high vocation are the servants and ministers of God, appointed to discover and apply the various remedies provided by the all-bountiful Father, for the alleviation and removal of the manifold ills which sin has entailed on our bodies. In the prosecution of this their own proper work, how much may they also do to cheer and sustain the incorruptible spirit, when weighed down by the pressure of the corruptible body, and thereby facilitate the action of remedies, and the cure of their patients. How often will a word or even a *look* of encourage-