

nov 5

sunday solice - the captive

"return to the stronghold, you prisoners of hope. even today I declare that I will restore double to you."  
zech 9:12

indeed we all are prisoners of one thing or another. the world would hold you captive to all sorts of pleasures and passions. Jesus has come to set us free from all of that but in so doing, He has imprisoned us in hope; prisoners of desire to please Him more and more. ah, but it is the sweetest of captivities and one we have no desire to be free of.

the one who has seen much affliction will not readily part with their copy of the Word of God. another book may seem to others to be identical with their own; but it is not the same, for over their old and tear-stained bible they have written, in characters which are visible to no eyes but their own, the record of experiences, and ever more critical chapter in the stages of their life.

if we are to receive benefit from our captivity we must accept the situation and turn it to the best possible account. fretting over that from which we have been removed or which has been taken away from us, will not make things better, but it will prevent us from improving those which remain. the bond is only tightened by our stretching it to the uttermost.

the impatient horse which will not quietly endure his

halter only strangles himself in his stall. the high-mettled animal that is restive in the yoke only galls his shoulders. and every one will understand the difference between the restless stirrings of a caged bird, breaking its wings against the bars of the cage, and crying, "i can't get out, i can't get out," and the docile canary that sits upon its perch and sings as if it would out rival the lark soaring to heaven's gate.

no calamity can be to us an unbearable burden if we carry it in direct and fervent prayer to God, for even as one in taking shelter from the rain beneath a tree may find on its branches fruit which he looked not for, so we in fleeing for refuge beneath the shadow of God's wing, will always find more in God than we had seen or known before.

it is thus through our trials and afflictions that God gives us fresh revelations of Himself. the glorious result of all our wrestling, we see God face to face, and our lives are preserved. take this to thyself, o captive, and He will give you songs in the night, and turn for us the shadow of death into the morning.

submission to the divine will is the softest pillow on which to recline.

it filled the room, and it filled my life,  
with a glory of source unseen;  
it made me calm in the midst of strife,  
and in winter my heart was green.  
and the birds of promise sang on the tree  
when the storm was breaking on land and sea.

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