Poetry

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INDEX

A CHILD'S GIVING
A NEW YEAR
ANGELS
BELIEF
BEWARE
CAN THEY TELL?
CELEBRATION OF LIFE
CHRISTMAS
CHURCH
COMFORT
COMMITTAL
COULD IT HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT?
DAY'S END
DEATH
DUSK
FEAR
FORGIVENESS FOR ALL
FRIENDSHIP
FROM GOD
GOD NEEDED
GOD'S SUPREMACY

GOD’S WAYS
GOOD FRIDAY
EASTER FOR EVER
HEAVEN
I’LL FOLLOW
IN HOUSE LANGUAGE
IN THE NIGHT
IS THERE A GOD?
IT’S A BLESSING
IT’S OVER
LIBERTY!
LOVE POEM TO GOD
ME?
MIRACLES
NEVER
NIGGLING ACHE
NIGHT WATCH
OLD AGE
ON CHRISTMAS DAY
OTHERS
PALM SUNDAY
PENTECOST
PILATE
PRICELESS
RETIREMENT
SHEPHERDS
STAR OF WONDER
TALKING ABOUT JESUS
THE CROSS
THE FIERCEST STORM
THE HAND OF GOD
THE HEALING CRUSADE
THE REBELS CRY!
THE SAVIOUR OF ALL
THE THINGS WE SAY
THEY’RE MINE
THOSE BORING SERMONS!
TOO MUCH
TRUST

UNHAPPY PEOPLE
WELCOMES!

HEAVEN

It may be that we wonder
What heaven will be like,
We ask what kind of people
Enjoy eternal life?
Some saints with golden haloes
Or martyrs of the faith-
Brave souls who died believing
They'd lived for Jesus' sake?-
Those who died too young to know
What sin could ever mean?
Or pious folk who've journeyed
And now embrace their dream?
But what about the people
Who make mistakes each day?
Are they debarred from entry
Is that the price they pay?
Is heaven just for the perfect
For those who never sin?
Who is considered worthy
By right to enter in?
Are not all saints still human
And flawed, with feet of clay?
Must all such imperfections
Our hopelessness display?
It's true that those unworthy
God's heaven can never see,
The smallest sin would tarnish
God's awesome purity;
So is our living worthless
Must we admit defeat?
Is heaven really not, then
Where we, our God, can meet?
A thousand hallelujahs

Drown out that dreadful thought!-
We are assured we're worthy
By all that Jesus wrought,-
Our guilt he bore at Cal'vry,
Sin's penalty he paid,
And heaven is now awaiting
All those by grace he's saved.
The day we stand before him
No judgement need we fear-
We'll hear the words of Jesus:
'My child, you're welcome here!
Back to index

COMFORT

Can those who mourn be comforted
Now life is not the same,
When many thoughts invade the mind
And cause such endless pain?
The where and why we can't resolve,
No matter how we try,
The sorrow that can haunt us so
Has caused us many a sigh;
The places we could once enjoy
Too many memories hold,
Familiar sights so hard to bear
As scenes once more unfold;
Though others, too, may pass this way,
The grief, no one can share,
Each breaking heart, so personal is,
It seems beyond repair.
The photographs stare from the wall
Immobilized in time,
They cannot speak but seem to say,
"It's part of God's design,-
You may not understand his plan
And doubts may often come
But in his mercy, God has said
"Come home, your work is done."'

We hear God's word for those we love
Now in eternity
But is there hope for loneliness
Which hurts so dreadfully?
"Blessed are those who mourn", Christ said
"for comfort I will give
And those who cast their sin on me,
They shall for ever live."
Each moment of each passing day
God freely gives his grace,
We may not understand just how,
He fills all time and space;
But God is faithful to his word,
And hears each anguished prayer,
He gently comforts those who mourn
With gracious loving care.
Back to index

WELCOMES!

He'll (She'll) be waiting on that morning
When the dead in Christ will rise,
He'll (She'll) be standing there with Jesus
With the angels by his(her) side;
Then the reason for the parting
And the sorrows you now feel,
You will hear the explanation
And the grief, at last, will heal.
For the present, death is awesome,
Overwhelming us with dread,
But we know that death was conquered
When the blood of Christ was shed.
Though they sealed the tomb securely,
Jesus rose and lives today,
So we sorrow for the moment
But the fear he takes away;
No captive can the grave now hold
If belief in Christ is true,

For everyone who trust God's Word
Has been promised life anew;
It's a life without restriction,
It's how life was meant to be,
It's where tears are never needed,
It's God's promised legacy.
But could heaven be so perfect
When the ones we love aren't there?
It would be the sort of Heaven
That we'd find so hard to bear.
He'll be waiting on that morning,
When the dead in Christ will rise,
He'll be standing there with Jesus,
There'll be welcomes, not goodbyes!
Back to index

THEY'RE MINE

It's so hard not to worry
When things are going wrong;
But those who trust in Jesus
Will find they are made strong.
He takes the cares we carry-
The burdens of the day,
And when we feel most anxious,
"They're mine," we'll hear him say.
Back to index

THE THINGS WE SAY

"You're in our prayers" we kindly say,
And make a mental note to pray,
But so much else diverts our thoughts
Our well laid plans oft go astray,
Our promise was sincerely made
But often seem a cruel charade.

"Give us a ring if we can help"
The words are said with true intent,

We sympathise, and at the time,
No one would doubt our words are meant,
But time goes by and we forget
The heartaches that will not relent.

"We understand just how you feel"
We're heard to say to those bereaved;
But only they have lived their lives
And know the heartbreak of their need;
We meant it well, but it's not true,-
We cannot share what they go through.

Sometimes replacing words by deeds
Could better meet the needs they face-
Could give the comfort they require
And be a channel of God's grace,
A thousand words can not replace
The gesture of a warm embrace.
Back to index

THE FIERCEST STORM

By human toil, life's highest mountains man can climb,
Intensity of trials reduce,
And make life bearable once more.
But God empowers and mountains lose their awful dread,
Ways round and through, below, above
Are found to make our spirits soar.

Some rivers are too wide, too dangerous to cross,
Their depth our bound'ries firmly set,
Our island daily shrinks yet more.
But he who trod the surface of a troubled sea
And bade his child to imitate,
Can guide us through what lies before.

The darkness of the night when even shadows fail
And fear with empty laughter comes
To ridicule and scorn,

But Jesus died and rose and hope anew was born;
Who walks with him need never fear
The dangers of the fiercest storm.
Back to index

LIBERTY!

The guns have ceased their firing,
The trenches now are still,
The men have paid their sacrifice,
Their final act of will.
No crosses yet are ready
To mark their ordered rest,
But comrades cradle bodies
Of men who did their best.
No bands of brass are playing,
No laurel wreaths are theirs-
Just silence of surrender,
Some to death and some to cares.
It's over, save the counting,
'Tommy's won' the papers said,
But the whisper of the trees
Sounds the anthem of the dead.
Back to index

I'LL FOLLOW

Lord,
I'll follow you just when and where
You may decide my life to use,
And even if your will for me
Means that my will I cannot choose,
I'll follow still, I'll follow still,
Until I know I've done your will.

Lord,
I'll follow you, whate'er the cost
And if what I possess might mean

I am held back and might retreat,
Remind me, Lord, of Calvary's scene.
I'll follow still, I'll follow still,
Until I know I've done your will.

Lord,
I'll follow you though others mock,
Your life in mine shall be my aim,
No taunts shall change the choice I've made,
And only Jesus will I claim.
I'll follow still, I'll follow still,
Until I know I'd done your will.

Lord,
I'll follow you, my Saviour King,
And die to self, to rise to life,
I'll dedicate myself each day
To be a living sacrifice.
I'll follow still, I'll follow still,
Until I know I've done your will.
Back to index

GOD'S WAYS

A lady, bereaved of the one she loved most,
Is looking for comfort and hope,
The words that she hears seem so shallow and crass,
She wants to know how she can cope.
It seems too simplistic to say "Jesus cares-
He knows the extent of your pain"
When hearts that are breaking and hurting so much,
And everything seems all in vain.
An unemployed man who is at his wits end
Is worried from morning till night,
He's looking for something to lighten his load
To get some relief from his plight.
It seems too simplistic to say "Jesus cares-
He knows the extent of your pain"
When hearts that are breaking and hurting so much,

And everything seems all in vain.
The sad little children who love mum and dad,
But parents are fighting like mad,
There's shouting in anger and slamming of doors,
And it's all so terribly sad.
It seems too simplistic to say "Jesus cares-
He knows the extent of your pain"
When hearts that are breaking and hurting so much,
And everything seems all in vain.
The drug user wonders about his next fix,
He stumbles alone in the street,
Rejected by people who turn in disgust,
Who look but who seldom will speak.
It seems too simplistic to say "Jesus cares-
He knows the extent of your pain"
When hearts that are breaking and hurting so much,
And everything seems all in vain.
An illness has come to a neighbour nearby,
The prospects are known to be bleak,
There's fear for the future and all it might hold
And faith is becoming so weak.
It seems too simplistic to say "Jesus cares-
He knows the extent of your pain,"
When hearts that are breaking and hurting so much,
And everything seems all in vain.
But the ways God uses are not those of man,
However well meaning our deeds;
Though sometimes a channel of grace we may be,
His miracles meet all man's needs!
Back to index

GOD'S SUPREMACY

If Herod's plan had worked,
And Jesus had been killed
Before he had the chance to live
And see God's plan fulfilled,
Then God's omnipotence
Would fail that very day-

If Herod's scheme were to succeed,
How pointless then to pray;
Man would in triumph boast
His actions could prevail
He'd cynically assume God's place
If prayer could not avail.
But God is greater far
Than any human mind,
He sees beyond man's sabotage,
To rescue lost mankind
What madness comes on man
To think he could succeed,
To live and rule, control the world
And meet its every need?
What man with just a word
Could earth or heaven make
Or know that every act performed
Is made without mistake?
Could he man's heart discern,
Capriciousness explain,
Or bring to life a living soul
And all its years sustain?
Alone God reigns in power,
Unequalled and divine,
And man subservient has to be
To his supreme design.
Back to index

GOD NEEDED

God needed a womb to birth him a Son,
When Mary he chose, the work was begun.
God needed a man to father his Son,
When Joseph he chose, the work was begun.
God needed a home to nurture his Son,
In Bethlehem’s stall, the work was begun.
God needed a way to instruct his Son,
By those in God’s house, the work was begun.
God needed to show his love through his Son,

And people believed- the work was begun.
God needed a day to honour his Son,
When he was baptized, the work was begun.
God needed assent from Jesus his Son,
"Not my will, but yours", the work was begun.
God needed to say,"Come home now my Son"
The time has now come, the work was begun.
God needed to have, in heaven, his Son,
To plead for our cause, the work was begun.
God needed to show the way to his Son,
When Pentecost dawned, the work was begun.
God needed us all to worship his Son,
When we owned his name, the work was begun.
God needed his home to welcome his Son,
When Christians arrive, the work has begun.
God's needs are fulfilled through Jesus his Son,
God wants us in heaven, the work has begun.
God welcomes us home because of his Son,
The work he began is finished and done!
Back to index

FORGIVENESS FOR ALL

A man who lives along the street
Is not the sort you'd like to meet,
He's rude and rough and quite uncouth,
He's not my type to tell the truth.
The heav'n I see is not for him,
God surely wouldn't let *him* in!

A girl on drugs who doesn't care-
Who drives her neighbours to despair,
She takes and takes and never gives
And says its how she wants to live;
Could heaven really be a place
For those who choose their lives to waste?

The smart young man who's found a way
To get rich quick while others pay,

He laughs at those with honest views
And doesn't care when people lose;
Could he the heavenly gates pass through?
What travesty could make that true?

Why should I pray for such as these,
And weep for them on bended knees,
When if they entered heav'n's preserve,
It would be more than they deserve?
Must I assume I need do more
No longer Godlessness ignore?

And then I think of why Christ died,
When he that day was crucified,
He asked his Father to forgive
The ones who wouldn't let him live,
If he in love could think that way,
I cannot look the other way.
Back to index

FEAR
It's in the middle of the night
When loneliness appears,
When worry overwhelms the mind
And amplifies the fears;
While those we love sweet slumber keep
The nightmare runs amok,
Each moment lasts a lengthy hour
And fears all reason mock;
'What', 'if', and 'when' replace the 'why',
The worst seems poised to fall,
The dark, the thought encourages,
There seems no hope at all.
O haste it on, if it must be,
Reveal the world unknown,
It is the passage that we fear,
The one we walk alone.

[Pause]

Not yet, despite the hellish night
For dawn perspective brings;
Another day some faith to find
To grasp the heavenly things.
But night is coming all too soon
Again with fear and dread,
The torture of the words unsaid
Borne silently instead.
To those whose eyes turn to their God
And urgent help implore,
The presence of the Comforter
Their peace of mind restore.
Back to index

CAN THEY TELL?

Can they tell I've been with Jesus,
Does my life, his life reflect,
Can his kindness and compassion
Both be seen by all I've met;
Do my words bring consolation,
Carry balm as his would do,
Can the worried and the anxious
Find his strength in me, anew;
Do the lonely sense his presence
When I take their hand in mine,
Do they recognise the Saviour-
In the human, see divine;
Do they see how much he loves them
By the way I show I care,
Do they get an honest picture
Of the one whose name I bear?
May the world see only Jesus
When they turn their eyes on me,
May they see I've made the journey
All the way to Calvary.
Back to index

A NEW YEAR

Untouched, unspoilt,
A brand new year,
So full of hope,
Perhaps some fear,
Some tasks to do,
Some trials endure,
New friends to meet,
Old habits cure;
And time to spare
To love and care
When others won't,
And burdens share.
But most of all,
Our God to praise,
And every day
Walk in his ways;
And when the year
Is past and gone,
May God be pleased
With all we've done.

Back to index

FROM GOD

'I send you the babe in the manger,
My gift out of love for you all,
Take care of him, please, he is precious,
This child in the Bethlehem stall;
His task is enormous and complex,
The sin of the world he must bear,
And even if you would reject him,
Consider how much I must care;
From grandeur in heaven I sent him,
Where angels his bidding obeyed,
The offer with which I entrust him,
You'll see in his life is displayed;
I send him because he is sinless,
A pattern of all you can be,

Released from the bondage of Satan
For ever from sin to be free;
I give you my Son as your Saviour
No other your sin can atone
In him is the way of salvation,
In Jesus and Jesus alone.
Back to index

IT'S OVER

The guns have ceased their firing,
The trenches now are still,
The men have paid their sacrifice,
Their final act of will.
No crosses yet are ready
To mark their ordered rest,
But comrades cradle bodies
Of men who did their best.
No bands of brass are playing,
No laurel wreaths are theirs-
Just silence of surrender,
Some to death and some to cares.
It's over, save the counting,
'Tommy's won' the papers said,
But the whisper of the trees
Sounds the anthem of the dead.

Far from the fields of battle,
In hamlet and in town,
The masons carve on marble
The names of those gunned down;
The photos now are fading,
The medals lie in drawers,
Such is the end for soldiers
Who fight in all the wars.
Back to index

BELIEF

Belief is not that easy
When our world is crumbling fast,
As circumstances worsen,
And shadows round us cast.
The needed strength and answers
Seem a million miles away,
We feel such devastation
That lasts throughout each day.
Belief is not that easy
When the problems all appear,
It seems that our tomorrows
Hold all the things we fear.
Believing is not feeling,
Feelings change too easily
It's resting in God's promise-
God answers faithfully
Belief is simply trusting
In God's providential care
And knowing he is faithful
Through days of dark despair.
Believing is relying
That the word of God is true,
That God will hear and answer,
And bring us safely through.
Belief is never easy
If the cross makes no appeal,
For there the Saviour showed us
His love for us is real.

Back to index

ON CHRISTMAS DAY

On Christmas Day, the presents
Lie underneath the tree,
And everyone starts guessing,
'What can my present be?'
It's obvious from the laughter
How much the presents mean,
The thoughts behind the choices

Enrich each Christmas scene;
The baby who is sleeping
In lowly manger stall
Is left without a present
It's his birthday, after all!
Is there some gift to offer
To the Saviour of men
Who gave himself so freely
At little Bethlehem?
The gift he most desires
And always will accept,
Is confession of our sins
Over which we have wept.
Giving to God is Christmas,
It's why he came to earth,
Let's give our lives to Jesus
On this the Saviour's birth.
Back to index

THE SAVIOUR OF ALL

No room in the inn,
No crib but a stall,
But Jesus was born
The Saviour of all.

But still there's a world
Where people don't care
That God, through his Son,
His world wants to share.

If there is no room
He waits for their call
He does not intrude,
The Saviour of all.

He offers his grace,
Demands not at all,

His love must suffice
His grace must enthrall.

No room in the inn
We sadly recall,
But welcome today,
The Saviour of all!

Back to index

OTHERS

Do you see people smile yet there's pain and distress,
It disguises the hurt that's inside,
Do you hear words so right, yet the tone is all wrong
And it's clear there is something to hide?
Do you see tears in eyes that would flow if they dared,
But they're held back for fear they will show;
Do you hear stifled sighs but they somehow escape
And the world seems too busy to know?
Do you see love rejected in children's young eyes,
When they're suffering from daily neglect;
Does the image remain when the scenes have long gone
And your heart tells you not to forget?
Are you moved when you notice injustice abounds,
And you see people just walk away;
Or you reach out to those who are sorely distressed
When their suffering gets worse every day?
Then your heart has been touched by the crucified Christ
And your spirit, anointed and blessed
For the needs of the world are the marks Christians bear
Giving love to the sad and oppressed.

Back to index

CHURCH

All churches are fine if they are like mine
With steeples which soar to the sky;

The gargoyles look down with fiercesome frowns
On people who idly pass by;
Each window is named, exquisitely stained
Depicting a martyr or saint;
Reserved family pews with all the best views
And kneelers and cushions so quaint;
Tombstones at angles, graveyards in tangles
Confused by the organ's great chords;
Crypts all mysterious, banners victorious,
And plaques with their ancient awards;
Vicar is droning, deaf people moaning;
Appeals for more money are made;
Elders are sleeping, woodworm is creeping,
The murals continue to fade;
Effigies resting, children protesting;
The Eucharist now must begin;
Wine is transforming, grace is adorning,
Jesus, the Lord, has come in!
Back to index

ANGELS
I've never seen an angel,
A heavenly one I mean,
(Some people are angelic
And those, I've often seen).
I've never seen an angel,
Nor had one speak to me;
No whispered conversation
Arriving mystically
I've never seen an angel,
And heard some startling news;
Perhaps I'm so suspicious,
His message I'd confuse.
I've never seen an angel
With wings all fluffy white,
Who meets me in my prayer time
Or in the dead of night.
I've never seen an angel,
And often wonder why;

It’s hard to think of beings
Who look like us but fly.
I’ve never seen an angel,
Nor caught a sight of them,
But shepherds in the fields have,
In fields at Bethlehem
I’ve never seen an angel,
They don’t appear to me,
I sense, ‘though, they are present
They’re here, invisibly.
I’ve never seen an angel,
Perhaps there is no need,
God proved he lives, at Calv’ry
And faith is all we need
Back to index

BEWARE
I’m great at giving good advice,
It’s always free as well;
The range of topics is quite vast,-
As friends of mine will tell.
A clever cliché I’ll provide,
An adage for each day,
In every kind of circumstance
There’s something I can say.
From troubled times to broken hearts,
All these I understand;
The platitudes come thick and fast,
And always one to hand.
Beware of me, all care worn souls
Who long for words of calm;
Who trusts in man and not in God
Will miss the healing balm.
The one who to the Saviour guides
The desperate and the lost,
Is truer friend by far than me,
Avoid me at all cost!

Back to index

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Not while I walk the hills
And watch the scudding clouds drift by
Will I allow my mind to doubt
That God exists;
Creation cannot be by chance,
For less than God could not achieve,
He gives to me the very life I breathe,
For God exists.
Not while I see the trees
In autumn's rich and royal clothes
Will I to other source assign
Creation's plan;
Too much exists that complements,
A lighted earth from shining moon
A rising sun dispels the morning gloom
For God exists.
Not while I see the stars
Suspended in their majesty
Will I believe that man is king,
For God exists;
No human mind the planets rule,
Yet he who planned the galaxy
Loved me as far as Calvary,
My God exists!
Back to index

CHRISTMAS

Christmas is a lovely time
Crispy snow and church bells chime;
Stony faces all relax,
Somehow Christmas means all that;
Little children being good,
Overeating Christmas pud,
Grandma's sitting near the fire
Out of tune with TV choir;

Mums in kitchens stuffing birds
Callers come with kindly words,
Tinsel glitters on the tree
Santa's coming presently;
Dad's asleep and snoring hard,
Granddad's proving quite a card;
Chestnuts which we seldom eat
Roasted, make a seasonal treat;
No one wants to be unkind
Pleasantries we try to find,
What a nicer world it is
When we try to be like this;
Maybe if we really pray
Christmas could be every day!
Back to index

COMMITTAL
(For reciting at a funeral service)

Journey to the heavenly city,
Meet your Saviour, Lord and King,
Wear the crown reserved just for you,
Show him all the love you bring.
Wear the robe he waits to give you
Listen to his proud 'Well Done'!
Hear the angels' welcome chorus,
All in praise to God's own Son.
Take your place among the people
All redeemed at Calvary,
Safe for ever in his presence
Now and for eternity.
Join the heavenly hosts in worship,
Meet the saints who've gone before;
At the throne of grace he'll meet you
At his feet your life outpour;
Let his glory be your glory,
Claim the promise he has made;
Lo, a new creation dawning,
All sins debts he has repaid.

There receive your heav'nly treasure
Known to God and God alone,
So deserved and rightly given,
All the fruit for him you've sown.
Rest in him, O faithful servant,
Now secure from earthly claim,
We entrust you to his keeping
In our Saviour's precious name.
Back to index

COULD IT HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT?
If thorns did not exist,
No hideous crown would there have been;
If trees had never grown,
No cross would ever have been seen;
If spears had not been made,
Its thrust could not have pierced his side;
If I had never sinned,
Jesus, my Lord, need not have died.

If Pilate had been brave,
False charges would have been dismissed;
If vows High Priests had kept,
Their word would not have been at risk;
If Peter had not fled,
At least there would have been one friend;
If Judas had been true,
For him, no tragic traitor's end.

If Mary had said 'no',
God's planning must have been revised;
If angels failed their task,
Some other plan must be devised
If God so loved the world,
The cross, the tomb, the natural fears
Took place, but not by chance;
By chance? Not in a million years!
Back to index

DAY'S END

Day's end is beckoning fast,
Its triumphs and its trials must cease
'Though some have seemed so vast.
"More time, more time," I cried,
"One pair of hands is all I have,
You know how hard I've tried!"

Day's end is beckoning fast,
And every thought and every deed
Must be the very last.
"More time, more time," I cried
"So little time, so much to do."
Will there be shame or pride?

Day's end is beckoning fast,
A thousand things I meant to do,
But now the time is past.
"More time, more time," I cried
There is no more, the hands have stopped,
Now comes the great divide.

Before the judgement seat
The record of our lives unveiled,
Entire and quite complete.
"More time, more time," I cried.
"Hush, child," the smiling judge replies,
"I see my blood applied!"

Back to index

DEATH

Death here on earth comes to us all,
It came to us through Adam's fall;
God had not planned that we should die,
It pains him when we grieve and cry.
He made us for companionship,
To have, with him, true fellowship.
Despite commandments to obey,
Man chose to go his selfish way,

And much has suffered since that day.
Since steps were seen to go astray;
Death is the wage of sin, we read
(No choice in that-we're Adam's seed;)
But Jesus came, and took our place,
Now there is hope for Adam's race.
The one who puts his trust in Christ-
Believes in Calvary's sacrifice-
No longer fears the ancient law,
He lives by grace for evermore.
The body can be laid to rest
The spirit it has borne is blessed.
God's Son has died that we might live,
The cross is there new hope to give.
Take comfort from God's Word today,
He is the truth, the life, the way.
Through death God welcomes to his home
All those who claim to be his own.
Our loved ones we shall see again
If all believe in Jesus' name.
Back to index

DUSK

Each day there comes a time called dusk
That twilight 'in between'.
The street lights shine self consciously
Not needed, yet still seen;
The stars a million miles away,
The watery moon in sight,
When day and evening argue long,
Before the fall of night.
The sun sinks slowly in the west,
Reluctantly descends,
And people draw their curtains closed
Before the daylight ends.
'Tis not the night one fears to come,
For darkness has its charm,
Not light or dark for this is dusk,
Which brings such strange alarm.

The darkness draws the light away
So irreversibly;
The robber of the daylight comes
Silent and stealthily.
It hides the dusk just for a while,
But come again it must;
That eerie world of make belief,
Not light, not dark, but 'dusk'.
Back to index

FRIENDSHIP
I met some old friends in town today,
We talked about this and that;
The time passed quickly, needless to say,
It does when you stop and chat;
Their lives had moved on since last we met,
We're older and going grey;
But mem'ries were stirred and time stood still,
When we talked of yesterday.
We shared the dreams we hoped to fulfil,
And spoke of plans we have made,
The conversation ebbed and it flowed,
As times were again replayed.
We listened with care to news now told,
Insights, opinions, too,
We heard successes proudly announced,
Gave credit where praise was due.
We said our goodbyes, 'we'll keep in touch';
True friendship is hard to beat.
If joy like this, even half as much
Could be when Jesus we meet!
If human friendship can be so rich,
And give us so much pleasure,
To meet with Jesus, compared to this,
Must be the greatest treasure.
Back to index

A CHILD'S GIVING
I'd like to give to Jesus

Something he'd really like,
But would he choose my favourite things-
My dog or mountain bike?
I'm sure he's far too busy
To play with what is mine;
Perhaps I'll keep them for him
Until he has more time!
Back to index

IS THERE A GOD?
There can't be a God, so academics proclaim,
Just look at the chaos, believing's insane;
There are children who starve and the world doesn't care,
What kind of God would stand idly and stare?

There are earthquakes and famines and pestilence, too,
If God was so loving, he'd help if he knew;
There are suffering people with awful disease,
What kind of God would ignore all their pleas?

There are nations divided by evil and greed,
If God is so caring, why is there such need
There are despots and tyrants who rule savagely
But what God would view it so carelessly

There's a cross that is horrible, blood stained yet bare,
It's the cross of a man who really does care
It's the cross of a Saviour who promised to come
And give us his life after all we have done.
Back to index

IN HOUSE LANGUAGE
Majors flattened become minors,
D.C. marks just where to go,
Time and key are so important,
As musicians all must know.
Double bars and first time brackets
Hairpins, too, must all be seen,
Lento, largo, largamente,

And all others in between.
Harmony is homophonic,
Or polyphony is there,
Staves are there to set the voices
Pitch is chosen with great care.
All of this is second nature
In the world musicians live,
Those who are not skilled in music
Explanations we must give.
In the church we're likewise guilty,
When familiar terms we share,
We expect the newest member
Of such things to be aware.
Sacrificial lambs and altars,
Sprinkled blood which once atoned,
Are to say the least confusing,
When the Bible is unknown.
Teach us, Lord, the art of teaching
Gently, kindly, truth reveal,
So our words are not mistaken
Make your message crystal clear.
Take the old familiar language,
Clothe it with the Spirit's power
So the ancient meets the modern
In the language of this hour.
Back to index

IT'S A BLESSING
What you see, you think is me,
But 'me' is someone diff'rent;
The 'me' you see I'd love to be
I really am quite diff'rent.
This smile of mine, that looks sublime,
Conceals a frown too often;
I may look fine, most of the time,
It masks me all too often.
Although I seem all squeaky clean,
Inside I'm not so pretty;
If it was seen, this ugly scene

You'd see it wasn't pretty;
But you can't see the nat'ral 'me'
And that is such a blessing;
The 'me' you see is Christ in me
Believe me, that's a blessing!
Back to index

LOVE POEM TO GOD
You find so many ways, dear God,
To show your love to me,-
The beauty of a starry sky,
Majestic canopy;
The rolling hills and wand'ring streams,
And nature's annual fall,
The laughter of a child at play
Oblivious to a call.
You bless me with the gift of sight
And as life's scenes pass by
An imprint of your love I see
Such love!-I wonder 'why'?
You choose to make the sounds appear
And music fills my soul;
My spirit answers to your voice
And blessed, I am made whole.
You sent your Son to die for me.
A cross invaded love,
And sorrow reached you from the earth
And grieved all heaven above.
Your love to me is proved enough
But mine unsaid remains,
For all the words in all the world
Still leave my speech in chains.
How can I tell you all I feel,
For all you are to me?
Could even tongues of angels tell
Love's true intensity?
If words my love cannot convey,
Then must my actions speak,
And by my living day by day

Love's great appeal will meet.
I'll daily walk in holiness,
And by each step I take,
I'll speak the language of my Lord,
Love's covenant to make.
Back to index

ME?
You've chosen me to serve you?
Lord, what are you thinking of!
I'm not extraordinary at all,
No special gifts can I recall;
Lord, what are you thinking of!
You've chosen me to serve you?
Lord, what are you thinking of!
In talents I must end the queue,
I know that's true and so must you;
Lord, what are you thinking of!
You've chosen me to serve you?
Lord, what are you thinking of!
Could this some heavenly error be
Or did I fancy you called me?
Lord, what are you thinking of!
You've chosen me to serve you?
Lord, what are you thinking of!
If this is what is meant to be,
Then you would need to live in me.
Could I perhaps have heard and know
Just what you're thinking of?
Back to index

MIRACLES
We're surrounded by God's miracles,
He provides them every day;
A sunset thrown into the sky,
A dragonfly at play,
The first steps of a child,
The surgeon's skilful knife,
The peace which answers earnest prayer

To end some mindless strife,
A childlike faith born in a man,
The technicolour rainbow,
And tiny seeds sown in the earth
When shoots begin to show,
A stream meandering casually,
The changing Autumn scene
In every day, in every way,
God's miracles are seen.
Back to index

NIGGLING ACHE

Some suffer pains much worse than me,
Some suffer all the time-
Some children who are handicapped,
Complaints far worse than mine.
Tomorrow, next week, sometime soon,
My pain will fade away,
The body find its remedy,
It's nature's natural way.
But tremors will their toll exact
From those of older years;
The days will merge quite seamlessly
And bring irrational fears.
The patient on dialysis
Would willingly exchange
The pain which comes just for a while,
For alien tubes so strange.
The child with blood that will not clot,
Who lives in daily dread,
Who cannot play the simple games
And many a tear will shed,
If only he could be like me
With niggling aches to bear,
He wouldn't sigh and voice complaints
To people everywhere.
My eyes, the world, its wonders see,
The blind are not so blessed;
I hear the music all around,

Some silence brings distress..
No crippled hands, arthritic knees,
Preventing me from work,
No daily drug to ease the pain
Or stop the sudden jerk.
Let twinges and my minor aches
Not cause me to abstain
From all the things I can enjoy;
I really can't complain.
Back to index

NIGHT WATCH
Through the dark of early morn,
Hear the sounds before the dawn,
Heavy lorries passing by,
Tyres upon the tarmac cry;
Does the world no longer sleep-
Must it constant vigil keep?
Trains now lumber noisily
Over points impatiently;
Travellers rise to beat the rush
Adding to the daily crush;
Does the world no longer sleep-
Must it constant vigil keep?
Mail must reach us by sunrise,
At the cost of sleepless eyes;
Airplanes fly mysteriously
In the night skies, stealthily;
Does the world no longer sleep,
Must it constant vigil keep?
In pursuit of wealth and fame
Must there burn an endless flame?
Is there time no more for rest,
Healing for the sorely pressed?
Does the world no longer sleep
Must it constant vigil keep?
Night which passes as the day,
Robbed of time its role to play
Is a darkness without need,

Simply there to feed man’s greed.
Back to index

PRICELESS
Someone must carry the burdens
Of those whose cares are so great,
Someone must listen with patience
To those who hearts almost break;
Someone is needed to offer
Words of comfort and hope,
Someone to trust with the tears
For people unable to cope;
Burdens are heavy to carry,
And patience is costly to bear;
Priceless are those who are willing
The worries of others to share.
Back to index

UNHAPPY PEOPLE
Why are so many people
So discontent with life,
So often temperamental,
Involved in so much strife,
Oblivious to the blessings,
Ungrateful all the time?
They really are unhappy
In misery, sublime.
They can’t have breathed the fresh air
A thousand times a day,
And seen the coloured rainbow,
Or watched a child at play;
When did they want for shelter,
Or sleep with hunger’s pain?
They must have missed the pleasure
Of sunshine after rain;
Did parents never love them,
Was Christmas never fun?
They’re not infirm in wheelchairs,
Disasters haven’t come!

Have sheets all crisply laundered
Their comforts never shared?
Have holidays been awful,
Good memories never stirred?
They must have seen a sunset
Or watched the birds in flight,
Or seen the stars a- twinkling
As darkness beckons night;
Has Mozart's genius passed them
His notes have failed to hear?
Has Springtime not been welcomed
When flowers in bloom appear?
What happiness they're missing,
While looking for the bad,
No wonder they're unhappy
And always looking sad!
Back to index

OLD AGE

The mornings are worse for the aches and pains,
Arthritis, lumbago to give it their names;
To bend down takes time and cannot be rushed,
Our hopes to go faster are sure to be crushed.
And standing up straight needs some extra thought
As multi contraptions are urgently sought,
Pulleys and zimmers once thought a huge joke
Establish us clearly as 'elderly folk'.
We've handles on walls and sticks in the hall
Strategically placed to prevent a bad fall.
Unlikely it seems when we all start out,
But measles are nothing to ailments like gout.
The telephone rings but cuts off too soon
To get there in time, we'd be over the moon.
It all seems so hectic, why all the rush?
Is life getting faster, or is it just us?
The things of importance really can't wait
The lesson of elders is learned far too late:
Respect for each other and being kind
The greatest, most perfect bequests left behind:

To walk in the way the Master has walked,
To talk in the fashion he graciously talked,
To know sins forgiven in earlier years
Are lessons to learn which can save us from tears.
Back to index

PENTECOST

These men are drunk, they're full of wine
Their actions pierce the soul;
What foolish men behaving thus-
They've lost their self-control!
God speaks to us with gravitas,
In deep religious tones,
Not through some glossolalia
Of babbling human clones!
The Spirit is the breath of God,
Creation's 'tour de force';
He comes and goes as God decrees
A marvellous mystic course.
These men, God's ordered plan dismiss-
His ancient ways ignore,
And by this 'exhibition' urge
New marvels to explore.
Yet those from countries far afield
Their native tongues detect
In men untutored in such skill-
A mystical effect
The living flames upon each head
No human hand designed;
Could it just be that God has come
And caused this fire divine?
Back to index

RETIREMENT

I'm sort of sad in a funny way
-Quite the oddest thing to say-
But looking at the things I've done

It’s been hard, yet it’s been fun.
Now it’s over, in the past,
Can’t believe it’s gone that fast.
There are memories I shall keep,
Dizzy heights and lows so deep;
Confidences locked away,
Hidden from the light of day;
Leading some to know the Lord,
In itself the best reward;
Much, much more I should have done,
In my eagerness to walk, I’ve run;
Travelled far when prayer was best
Putting God to many a test;
Always, always grace was there
Even when I’ve known despair;
God is faithful, that I’ve proved,
If he’s distant, I have moved;
This my willing testament
In his hands I’ve been content.
Back to index

SHEPHERDS
Shepherds there were,
Tending their sheep,
Wise men with gifts
At Jesu’s feet;
Oxen lay down
On stubbly hay,
Such was the place
Where Jesus lay.
No Christmas tree,
No tinsel thread,
No drunkenness,
No aching head,
No money spent
To be like Jones,
No cards exchanged
With annual groans.
No dressing up,

No carols sung,
No midnight mass,
No bells were rung,
But Christmas Day
Is just the same
If we recall
That Jesus came;
Let us rejoice,
Herald his birth,
God incarnate,
Saviour on earth.
Back to index

STAR OF WONDER
There is a star that draws me,
It signifies the way;
Not heav'nly shaped and twinkling,
But shining, bright as day;
It points me to the Saviour
Who came that I might live;
It is a star of wonder
That only God could give.
And though it shines so clearly
I sometimes look away, -
My gaze becomes distracted
And then I start to stray;
But still the star keeps shining
Upon the path ahead, -
It leads me ever onwards
Towards that cattle shed,
'Twas there the Baby Jesus
Was born on Christmas Day;
And millions since have found him
But still men lose their way.
The star- God's word- is shining
For all the world to see, -
It is a star of wonder,
How great God's love must be!
No longer does the manger

The tiny baby hold,
The shepherds and the wise men
Have been and left their gold,
That Christmas scene is hist'ry,
It happened long ago, -
But yet the star shines brightly
It's miracle to show.
Back to index

TALKING ABOUT JESUS
We talk about the weather,
How rain will surely come,
The country's facing ruin
If 'something' isn't done –
We fill the air with sayings
And people wisely nod;
We need to find some moments
To share the things of God.
The cricket and the football
Are spoken of with ease;
Why should the name of Jesus
So many folk displease?
Perhaps it isn't Jesus
Who people so resent;
It could be his disciples -
The folk like us he sent.
A cross is sometimes carried
In sufferance, not with pride;
The pain is seen so clearly,-
False martyrs men deride;
But where the joy of Jesus
Is real in what we claim,
They'll listen to the message
And gladly hear his name.
Back to index

THE CROSS
What is the fascination with the cross
Worn round a thousand necks,

A silent witness to their faith
A way to show respect?
If all the wearers of the sign
It's occupant acclaimed,
Then would the churches overflow
As Christ as Lord is named.
Back to index

THE HAND OF GOD
Sometimes I see the hand of God
In pleasant rolling hills,
Far from our world of war and crime
And ecstasy of pills-
The beauty of a cloudless sky
Untouched by man's design,
A flawless scene of perfect hue,
Eternal without time.
Sometimes I see the hand of God
In fallen snow on snow,
With footprints still to make their mark
As spoors of felines show.
But e'er the wonders of the world
Have time my soul to bless,
I hear the sound of man's discord,
And see him cause distress.
And yet I see the hand of God
In man's poor parody,
For in the cries of crises come,
A hidden melody.
God is in us, his hand is seen,
His wonders are made known;
I see his hand at work today,
Whenever love is shown.
Back to index

THE HEALING CRUSADE
Arms in the air, ecstatically raised,
Thousands expecting, thrilled and amazed;
People disabled, wheelchairs employ,

Others are dancing, radiant with joy.
Christians are off'ring such fervent prayer.
This is the place for freedom from care.
Faith of the saints upholding the frail,
Who else will pray if they were to fail?
Disease is rebuked, and so is fear
No doubt about it, Jesus is here!
Sceptics are silent, lame people walk,
Those who are healed are desperate to talk;
Excitement is mounting, is there more?
'Lord we're believing' now we implore.
Now it's all ending, time to go home,
Leaving together, thoughts all their own.
Why is God silent to man's appeals?
Does he just care for people he heals?
Healings are tokens, loving displays,
No man can fathom all of God's ways;
There is a healing many ignore,
God's greatest healing –Grace for us all.
Back to index

THE REBELS CRY!
Sunday would be a different day;
If I was asked to have my say
I'd lie in bed 'til half past three
And get up just in time for tea;
No more sermons, no more hymns
No more worrying over sins;
I'm for freedom, I'm for pop,
Heavy metal, 'til I drop!
Things would change, I have to say.
If they'd let me have my way.
No more times of holy hush,
Dragged to meetings in a rush;
No more Alphas, no more bands,
No more clapping holy hands;
I'm for freedom, I'm for pop,
Heavy metal, 'til I drop
Things would change, I have to say

If they'd let me have my way.
No more uniforms to wear,
No raised eyebrows if I swear,
No more prayers and no more psalms,
No more talk of Easter palms.
Listen carefully older folk,
What I say is just a joke-
I'm expected to rebel-
Something we do very well!
Pray for patience while we grow
Even when we seem so slow;
Don't despair if we don't fit
We'll get there- just bit by bit.
Look beyond our words and style
Humour us with grace and smile!
Punk today is just our way
'Mods and rockers' were your day,
But inside we're just like you-
People who need loving, too.
Back to index

THOSE BORING SERMONS!
I've counted window panes in church,
And hymns have 'anagrammed';
I've had a wicked gleeful grin
As organ keys have jammed.
I've wondered if that priestly hat
So pointed needs to be;
Perhaps, I thought, the vicar's head
Was some catastrophe.
I've watched the woodworm worm the wood,
And at the ceiling peered;
Could one last hole in timbered joist
Confirm what I most feared-
The saints who in devotion kneel
And pray so fervently
A blessing from above might get-
So unexpectedly!
But still the preacher droneth on

And on and on and on;
I sometimes wish he'd wonder where
His congregation's gone.
The wall plaques are of interest
To pass the sermon time,
I wonder if in future days,
Those bored will notice mine.
But worse than that, I wonder if,
I'll know I've passed away
Or is this really heaven here
Where sermons last all day?
I think that I am still alive
Despite the purgatory
Of listening to a preacher preach
So long and boringly.
The church is full of history,
Reminders of God's power,
Why can't we be excited here
In this the worship hour?
Why is God's presence hard to sense
When he is very real?
Perhaps we think it's just a form,
A form without appeal.
Far greater things we're promised now
Than Jesus did on earth;
I cannot see that happening
Unless there is new birth.
Let's lift our hearts in worship then,
And act out our belief;
The transformation we shall see
Would make such sweet relief!
Back to index

TOO MUCH
The hurtful word,
So often heard,
It must not show,
They cannot know;
I dare not let

My feelings go,
For Christ would not appear.
Their lack of care
Through their despair,
Attacks my guard
And leaves me scarred;
It is so hard,
The daily round,
Maintaining this veneer
Must it be so,
My will forgo,
His life reveal,
My own conceal?
It is too much,
This ‘inasmuch’,
I shed too many a tear.
But if not me,
Who must it be?
Does he in vain
Call me by name?
The marks I bear
Cannot compare
With wounds which are so clear.
On Calvary
Christ died for me,
From cross to grave
My soul to save;
He rose to live
Victoriously,
And welcomes all my fear.
Too much to ask
To take this task,
To live today
Some debt repay?
What sacrifice
Could e’er suffice
For one who gave
Himself to save
A worthless soul

And made me whole?
Back to index

TRUST
Trusting is not a last resort
When other options fade,
Or hoping something comes to pass
When life's last hand is played.
It's trusting God at first, not last,
(For 'trusting' then is fate),
Relying on God's bounteous grace
Which never comes too late;
It's being always in his will,
Content, despite our care,
And knowing he who bids us come
Will meet, with hope, despair.
Back to index

NEVER
You know I am not worthy
That you should wash my feet;
You know the places I have been,
And who I chose to meet;
You know the silent moments
When words I should have said,
When arms of love I should extend
But coldness showed instead;
You know the clouded vision
I struggle to pursue
More filled with self and what I want,
Than what I'm called to do;
You know I am so shallow,
However I protest;
You see beyond the words I speak
The sins I have caressed;
You know I am not worthy
This act of love to own;
You must not wash my feet, dear Lord,
To you my world is known.

You know I am not worthy
That you should bow your knee
You shall not wash my feet today, -
Not for the likes of me!
Back to index

IN THE NIGHT
It's in the early hours,
When everyone's asleep,
And nothing in the world is stirred
And even cats don't creep,
It's then the strangest thoughts invade
And take the mind in flight;
Ah, what unknown paths are found
In the middle of the night.
Back to index

OLD AGE
The mornings are worse for the aches and pains,
Arthritis, lumbago to give them their names;
To bend down takes time and cannot be rushed,
One's hope to go fast is sure to be crushed.
And standing up straight needs some extra thought
Multi contraptions are urgently sought,
Pulleys and zimmers once thought a huge joke
Establish us all as 'elderly folk'.
We've handles on walls and sticks in the hall
Strategically placed to stop a bad fall.
Unlikely it seems when we all start out,
But measles comes second to things like gout.
We hear the phone ring, it cuts off too soon,
If we had time -we'd be over the moon.
It all seems so hectic, why all the rush?
Is life getting faster- is it just us?
The things of importance really can't wait
The lessons of age are learned far too late:
Respect for each other and being kind
The greatest bequests we can leave behind:
Are to walk the same path the Master walked;

To talk in the way he graciously talked,
To know sins forgiven in earlier years;
These are the lessons to save us from tears.
Back to index

PALM SUNDAY

I want to wave a palm leaf
To welcome Jesus here,
I want to shout hosanna
And raise the loudest cheer;
But there are those who hate him
They love their evil ways;
Would I his life endanger
By showering him with praise?
Would it incite reaction
From those who fear his claim,
Would those who crucified him
Just do the same again?
To welcome him in secret
Might seem the prudent choice,
Protecting him from anger,
And silently rejoice.
But Jesus came to offer
Forgiveness for mankind,
How would the world receive it-
The pardon he has signed?
But must I stand by helpless
And watch while love is spurned,
Could I be all that certain
The lessons have been learned?
I'll join the crowd in welcome
But not just for today,
I'll be there when the cross looms
And others drift away.
If Jesus has to suffer
He will not be alone,
The path he chose to follow
Is mine, as well, to own.

Back to index

GOOD FRIDAY

He was just another criminal
Who had to die that day,
The soldiers had their orders
They knew they must obey.
They nailed him to a wooden cross
And left him there to die,
They gambled for his scarlet robe
And then stood idly by;
They didn't care what pain he felt,
Much less what was his crime,
They let the crowd their insults hurl
Blaspheming the divine;
The three who shared a common death
Were viewed with pure disdain
All cries of innocence ignored,
They had themselves to blame.
A hundred times before and more
The soldiers watched such scenes,
Numbed to the cruel, barbaric sight
Impervious to the screams.
But Jesus spoke as no man spoke,
His words were full of love,
From lips though parched his prayer was heard,
"Forgive them, Father God!'
A soldier heard and instantly
Identified the Christ
'The Son of God, he surely is',
The perfect sacrifice.
The spears, the thorns, the nails, the taunts,
Are covered by God's grace
Who comes to Calvary will find
Forgiveness in that place.

Back to index

EASTER FOR EVER

‘Where have you taken him? cried Mary that day
The stone of the tomb she had found rolled away,
‘Why search for him here-he is risen indeed’
A tomb could not hold him, his glory impede;
But still there are many who go to the cross
And see him entombed sensing all they have lost;
They stay in the graveyard of doubt and despair,
Forgetting that Jesus no longer is there.
The tomb remains empty, he needs it no more
God raised him to life and his glory restored;
The sacrifice made we must never forget
Enshrined in our hearts, an unpayable debt
But the gloom of the tomb was banished today
It’s Easter for ever, he lives every day!

Back to index

PILATE

What was in the mind of Pilate
On Resurrection day,
When he heard that Christ had risen
And his guards had run away?
Was he filled with apprehension,
Wondering where the Lord would be?
Did he fear some retribution
For Calvary’s travesty?
Did Pilate live his life in fear
Expecting every day
To see the man he’d crucified?
Could grace his guilt outweigh.
Did he plan his explanation
If Jesus should appear?
Would he justify his action
To salvage his career?
In life he’d found no fault in Christ,
He would have set him free
But for the blood lust of the crowd
Demanding what should be.

Did he wonder if he met him
How Jesus would react?
Would he blame him for what happened,
And some punishment exact?
Did Pilate know the magnitude
Of killing God's own Son?
Did he begin to realise
The dreadful deed he'd done?
Could the homage due to Caesar
Continue now he knew
That life and death were in the hands
Of Christ, the risen Jew?
But Pilate worried needlessly,
His crime went to the cross;
Covered by the blood of Jesus
No sinner need be lost.
Forgiveness came at Calvary
When Christ became the sin
For all the crimes that ever were
And new life could begin.
Did Pilate show remorse, regret,
Repent of his disgrace?
If so, we'll see him on 'that' day-
How wondrous is God's grace!

Back to index

'JUST AS I AM'

Just as I am, I am received,
And loved beyond cruel nails and thorns,
God sees me as his precious child,
Though in the world I am reviled.

The greatest sin man could create,
Can not exclude me from God's love,
The blood of Jesus cleanses me,

From every sin I am set free.

Just as I am, I am received,
Not to remain in that choice place,
My will must yield to God's great plan,
That I shall be a better man.

I cannot stay 'just as I am'
His grace requires I journey on,
That Christ in me the world shall see,
Not what I was-what I can be!

LOVE EXPRESSED

If love is calculated
By how much trust is shown,
The daily tasks God gives us
Confirms what must be known-
His love for us is endless,
'Though we so often fail;
Who else would risk his mission
On we who are so frail?
Our promises are fulsome,
Sincerely said and meant,
But e'er the day is ended
We know we must repent.
O that our God *could* trust us
When much may be at stake,
When just a word is needed,
Excuses we create.
God's love is overwhelming
And giv'n without reserve
He trusts us with his message-
More trust than we deserve.
And in return we tell him,
With confidence we trust
The promises he's given
To every one of us;

And when he says he'll carry
Our cares which weigh so much,
We'll give them as requested,
To show our love in trust.
But if love is imperfect
We'll hold our burdens tight,
And say God can't be trusted
To use his awesome might.
If love is seen in trusting
We'll give to him our care
And let him take the worry
We find so hard to bear.
We can't keep back some problems,-
We have to let them go!
To claim that God is trusted,
That 'trusting him' must show.
And those who bring their worries
Will find they're truly blessed,
For loving God by trusting
Will see his love expressed.

'JESUS'

When we hear the name of Jesus
Not used religiously,
Are those who speak in such a way
Aware of Calvary?
Is 'Jesus' just a way to swear-
To mouth obscenity?
Must he, who is the Son of God,
Endure such blasphemy?
Do those who verbally abuse
His precious, lovely name,
Not know his blood was shed for them?
Have they no sense of shame!
Do they not recognise God's love
In giving us his Son?
Could it be true they've never heard

The mighty works he's done?
Lord, grant us courage when we hear
The Saviour's name reviled,
To challenge and to demonstrate
We're proud to be his child.

GOD'S WAYS ARE NOT OUR WAYS

(Isaiah 55:8)

God's ways are not the ways of man,
His power exceeds our might,
We reach, too soon, extremities,
When hope fades from our sight;
We use the word 'impossible'-
A word God can delete;
Compare his miracles each day
To tasks we can't complete;
Who holds the stars in bright array
And resurrects the dead
Can surely take away our fears
Of all that lies ahead.
When words seem sham with emptiness
And echo out of place,
The language of God's silence breathes
The power of mystic grace;
We need not understand his ways
To trust him with our care-
No explanation can suffice
To prove he's everywhere.
Who sees the Saviour on the cross
Can glimpse the Master plan-
The inexplicable displayed-
God's ways, not those of man!

GOD NEEDED

God needed a womb to birth him a Son,
When Mary he chose, the work was begun.
God needed a man to father his Son,
When Joseph he chose, the work was begun.
God needed a home to nurture his Son,
In Bethlehem's stall, the work was begun.
God needed a way to instruct his Son,
By those in God's house, the work was begun.
God needed to show his love through his Son,
And people believed- the work was begun.
God needed a day to honour his Son,
When he was baptized, the work was begun.
God needed assent from Jesus his Son,
"Not my will, but yours", the work was begun.
God needed to say,"Come home now my Son"
The time has now come, the work was begun.
God needed to have, in heaven, his Son,
To plead for our cause, the work was begun.
God needed to show the way to his Son,
When Pentecost dawned, the work was begun.
God needed us all to worship his Son,
When we owned his name, the work was begun.
God needed his home to welcome his Son,
When Christians arrive, the work has begun.
God's needs are fulfilled through Jesus his Son,
God wants us in heaven, the work has begun.
God welcomes us home because of his Son,
The work he began is finished and done!

PASTORING

Just when I'm ready to commune with God
And know the blessing of my time with him,
The phone will ring, some minor crises come
Demanding time before I have begun.

The claim, legitimate in every way
Insists that its priorities be met,
Yet I am desp'rate to receive God's grace,
Awaiting in that sacred, mystic place.
I share the burdens of the sore distressed,
I smile with joy at others' answered prayers,
And wonder if my giving will suffice
To bring to those I meet a glimpse of Christ.
Reserves ebb out, I need that place of grace
Lest I am tempted in my strength to share;
Yet those bereaved and those in deep despair
Must not be left without they know we care.
If there was just some time to be renewed,
To linger in the presence of the Lord,
Then could my ministry achieve its aim
Of bringing glory to the Saviour's name.
But as I lose myself in bringing hope
A miracle occurs within my heart-
God knows how much I long to seek his face,
He brings, just where I am, that mystic place;
And as I speak, his gracious words I hear,
My silences, his presence gently fills-
That which I seek from God in solitude,
He gives when I must serve the multitude.

BELIEF

Belief is not that easy
When our world is crumbling fast,
As circumstances worsen,
And shadows round us cast.
The needed strength and answers
Seem a million miles away,
We feel such devastation
That lasts throughout each day.
Belief is not that easy
When the problems all appear,

It seems that our tomorrows
Hold all the things we fear.
Believing is not feeling,
Feelings change too easily
It's resting in God's promise-
God answers faithfully
Belief is simply trusting
In God's providential care
And knowing he is faithful
Through days of dark despair.
Believing is relying
That the word of God is true,
That God will hear and answer,
And bring us safely through.
Belief is never easy
If the cross makes no appeal,
For there the Saviour showed us
His love for us is real.

BURDENS

Some burdens are carried each day
Their heaviness robbing of hope,
It's sometimes so hard to go on
There's doubt we'll be able to cope;
But those who have friends are so blessed
For sharing can lighten the load-
This message is sent by such friends
We're praying your needs to uphold.

A PRAYER - GOD'S VESSEL

If the vessel that I am cannot be filled,
Cannot receive the Spirit that I need,
Then empty me of all that would prevent
Your gracious act of giving, Lord, I plead.
If the vessel that I am is getting full
Of things that come before the things that should,

A clearer vision grant, that I may choose
To have the very best, not just the good.
If the vessel that I am no longer serves
To share with power salvation's wondrous plan,
Alert me to the barrenness within,
And fill me as you did when I began.

HOW LONG?

Based on the words of Jesus:
'O unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I stay with you and put up with you?" (Luke 9:41)

How long must Jesus be with us
Before his power is known?
How long his promises be heard
Until our trust is shown?

How often must we hear his voice
Assuring, "All is well!"
Before we let our worries go,
And in his presence dwell?

How distant will we choose to be
When Jesus comes to heal,
And comfort us in times of need
To answer our appeal?

How great the sorrow we must cause
To him who loves us so,
When all the gifts that he would give
We carelessly forgo.

How long must Jesus be with us
Before we recognize
His Lordship is our greatest joy,
And veils drop from our eyes?

How great *his* joy when we release
Control of what we fear,
That through the power of mystic grace,
His healing can appear.

ON THAT DAY

If they're missing on that morning
When the dead in Christ will rise,
Will I feel at ease when Jesus
Looks at me with tear filled eyes.
Will my mind turn to the people
I have met along the way,
Will I wonder if I'm guilty
For their absence on that day?
Did I really share the gospel
With conviction and with pride?
Did it not seem that important
To explain why Jesus died?
When the angels sing their welcome
Will my family be there, too?
Will they miss the great awakening
When all things are made anew?
Did the thought of sharing Jesus
With those close, embarrass me?
Are they missing for that reason,
Are they lost eternally?
Will I see my friends rejoicing
As the master greets us all,
Or are there empty spaces
For people I recall?
Did it seem a distant happening
Was I lulled by passing time?
Did I think it didn't matter,
That I mentioned things divine?
Did the urgency of Calv'ry
Find in me reluctancy?
Was the message of salvation,

Shared as it was meant to be?
If they're missing on that morning
When the saints all gather there,
Will it be because the gospel
One of us has failed to share?
On the day we meet with Jesus
And the final trumpets sound,
May we see that none are missing
When we stand on holy ground.

'SEEDS'

Seeds that are sown more of their kind produce,
For mighty oaks, 'tis acorns we must sow;
From ages past no other way is found,
The law of nature says that it is so.
In meadow and in hedgerow it applies,
From tadpole to the frog, it is God's way;
From pupa comes the butterfly we see,
All living things the laws of God obey.
And Christians, too, are birthed by Christian seeds,
God's Spirit feeds and nourishes with care
Examples of the Master's life we sow;
At harvest time the seed its fruit will bear.
But words alone and not the deeds of Christ
Cannot suffice, nor angry turns of phrase,
They cannot fledgling Christians bring to life,
For we are subject to God's sovereign ways.
If we have sown some seed that we regret
It cannot be recalled, its path remake,
But if we plant more seeds of love and grace
They can, and will, the bad seeds soon replace.
If what we sow we know we all must reap,
That sown in us by God must be our seed,
To sow and sow until the harvest time;
This is our task and this must be our creed.

'SALVATION'

If I would pray five times a day
Responding to the call to pray,
Would it be pleasing in God's sight
If in his eyes my words are trite?
And though the minarets invite
From morning to the start of night,
If I obeyed their plaintive call-
Would it redeem my sinful fall?
If I attend at fast and feast
And eat correctly slaughtered meat,
If clothed in tessellated shawl
I pray at Israel's Western Wall,
Could I be sure my sins are cleansed;
Does on such things God's grace depend?
Do rites and customs satisfy
The God who sent his son to die?
If at each door in every street
I visited lost men to greet,
And they would take the tracts I gave
Would this ensure my soul I'd save?
If in the church its creed I say,
On hassock kneel to humbly pray,
Could I salvation's prize then claim
If all I do, I do again?
Do uniforms with "Saved to Serve"
Alone my place in heaven reserve?
Can music offered with great skill
Replace God's death on Calvary's hill?
Will caring for the down and outs
Remove that vague eternal doubt?
What more is asked than what I do
For me to know I'm made anew?
How easily I can forget
That Jesus paid my sinful debt;
Not all the deeds I do for him
Can rid me of a single sin;
Unless his sacrifice I own

Redemption will remain unknown;
None else can for my sins atone-
'Twas through his blood-his blood alone!

A PART OF HEAVEN

I cannot breathe or hardly walk
My heart beats fast, then seems to stall,
I get so tired, I want to sleep,
I dare not stand in case I fall.
Lord hear my prayer, be near I pray,
I need your touch so much today.
My feet won't move when I say go,
Each day there comes another ache,
I can't believe I'm now like this,
My mind's confused, my hands all shake.
Lord hear my prayer, be near I pray,
I need your touch so much today.
I'm worried now, I'm growing old,
I cannot hear, my sight is dim,
I'm far from well and fear the worst,
It seems I hurt in every limb!
Lord hear my prayer, be near I pray,
I need your touch so much today.

"Dear child, I hear and understand,
You need not fear, your steps are planned;
This time will pass, you have my word,
I'll walk with you, come take my hand;
Your strength may fail, my grace will not,
You'll find I'm there when hope seems lost
A part of heaven I have for you,
Come close my child, I'll share your cross."

GOD'S CHOOSING

Some people seem so nat'ral
When called to do God's work,
They're skilled and often gifted,

It’s plain to see their worth;
They have so much to offer,
However hard the task,
It’s really not surprising
They’re people God would ask;
They’d make the best of servants
And serve God with success,
With attributes apparent,
So many they could bless;
But I have no illusions,
My talents are so few
So many could do better
The tasks that I can do.
“My child, I am not looking
For only those you see,-
The ones who are so gifted
Who do things easily;
My choosing and anointing
Equips the ones I call,
I do not have exceptions,
My grace extends to all;
Your background does not matter
Whatever it may be
A world of joy awaits you
When you say ‘yes’ to me!”

THE LIKES OF ME

It’s not the worth I see in me
That fits me for eternity,
It is the blood at Calvary
That Jesus shed so lovingly;
My many words cannot suffice
To substitute Christ’s sacrifice,
For he alone could pay the price
To free me from sin’s deadly vice;
However grandiose my plan

Though better than some other man's
My debt was paid e'er I began
He died for me, God's spotless Lamb;
Yet in my sin, he welcomed me
And through his pain and agony
He ransomed me and set me free;
For *me*-for ***me***! How could this be?
It's not the worth I see in me,
He sees my pride and vanity
But still he calls insistently;
Just as I am? With all you see-
No trace of true humility,
My lack of grace and honesty,
Do you still call the likes of me?

'Remember child, that awful day
When life itself just ebbed away,
When man had truly lost his way,
On Calv'ry's cross they heard me pray
"Forgive, they know not what they do"
I prayed that for "the likes of you"!

IS IT REALLY CHRISTMAS?

That first Christmas morning
Was nothing like ours,
Blesséd Mary was longing
To see daylight hours,
To see without shadows
The stable they shared,-
The birthplace of Jesus
So crudely prepared;
No reindeers or sleigh rides,
No lights twinkling bright,
No crackers or tinsel,
To shimmer that night,
No Santa with presents,
No carols were sung

As lanterns were swinging
And church bells were rung,
No cards bearing greetings,
No family around,
No grandads or grandmas
Could even be found,
Just Mary and Joseph
And ox in the hay,
Not much of a welcome
For Jesus that day.
But is it so different
When some people say,
"Be Merry, it's Christmas,
Be jolly today"?
Yet can this day for them
Still Christmas be called
If in the word 'Christmas'
The Christ is ignored,-
If they do not worship
The child who was born-
The Saviour of all men-
That first Christmas morn?

MARY

Expecting a baby
As thousands had done,
But Mary was different
She carried God's Son,
An angel had told her
The favour she'd found,
The child she was bearing
As King would be crowned;
With privilege came heartache,
Plans cherished must end,
Her innocence questioned
By family and friend;
But grace was extended

From birth to the Cross
And all that was taken
She counted as dross;
She carried a burden
Beyond giving birth,
She followed the footsteps
Of Jesus on earth;
How often she wanted
To spare him the pain
Of people rejecting
His heavenly claim;
But would she have chosen
The task God ordained,
To be in a family
So privileged but shamed?
No mother could watch him,
And stifle her cries
And bear all the anguish
As hope for him dies.
Had God been mistaken
To give her his Son-
The plans he had promised
Had scarcely begun,
A kingdom in tatters,
A king on a cross,
The proof of God's failure
His ultimate loss;
As Mary stood weeping
By grief overcome,
God and his hand maid
Had both lost their son;
The worst that could happen
Had happened that day,
For Mary, her first born,
They'd taken away;
But man in his evil
Can't end what God starts,
And those who will trust him
Have joy in their hearts;

And the grief Mary felt
Was just for a time,
For Jesus is risen
Her Son ***was*** divine.

WHAT KIND OF GOD?

The world looked lost and hope was gone
As God surveyed the scene,
The Paradise in Eden made
And all that could have been;
He saw the wickedness of man
Despite his lavish love,
And heard defiance of his word,
They scoffed at heaven above;
The messengers of truth he sent
Were ridiculed, ignored,
The people who in love he'd birthed
No longer call him Lord;
Despite the miracles he gave
To bless them and inspire,
They turned their backs on Godly ways
Preferring their desires;
Should God despair and start again
With other, better men?
Why should he not, he had just cause,
Not 'if ', we think, but 'when'?
We could not claim it's not deserved,
All history proves the case;
Who could complain if God had said
Our sin exceeds his grace?
What kind of God could see such sin,
And knowing who to blame,
Yet out of love provide for us
Redemption from our shame?
It is the God of Abraham
Of Isaac, Jacob too,
The God who changes not through years,
And to his word is true;
The sins of man can only be

Removed by God's own hand,
But would he come to earth himself
And with such people stand?
Look now and see that shining star
Above a stable bare,
And in a manger for a crib
You'll find the answer there.

NO EXPENSE

So many who this Christmas time
Reject the Saviour's birth,
Will celebrate a cause unknown,
Content with empty mirth;
A glass of wine, a party hat,
Some presents bought and shared,
'It's Christmas now for everyone'
And no expense is spared!
If only they would realise
In all their false pretence,
When Jesus came at Bethlehem,
That God spared no expense.

CHRISTMAS EVE

They were weary, exhausted, ready to sleep,
But prospects for Mary and Joseph were bleak,
The inn was all full and the doors were all barred,
After walking all day, rejection was hard;
That first Christmas eve we remember today,
And get quite nostalgic about ox and hay,
But all they were offered was this cattle shed
When Jesus was born as the angel had said;
The world had to know that a Saviour had come,
That God in his mercy had sent us his Son;
The angels found shepherds in fields watching sheep,
Though long be the nightfall, their watch they must keep;
They journeyed at once to the Bethlehem scene,
Then talked to each other of what it might mean;
God's angels are still calling people to see

The child who was given, a Saviour to be;
And angel has touched ***<u>us</u>*** that journey to make,
A vigil to hold, for the Saviour to wait;
We gather to welcome the Christ child to earth,
Tomorrow is Christmas, the day of his birth;
Heav'n's angels are ready to herald again,
And we are the ones who must tell why he came;
We're now fast approaching that first Christmas morn,
Bend low at the manger, a Saviour is born!