

Poems and Hymns

A collection of works by Arthur Augustus Rees

Introduction

This short work contains a collection of Arthur Augustus Rees' poetry written during his years in Bath and as pastor of Bethesda Free Church, Sunderland

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Lord, has Thou Any Work for Me?

*Lord, hast Thou any work for me;
Then work in me to do it,
The path of duty let me see
And help me to pursue it,
If the work be great or small,
At my Lord and Saviour's call
Obediently I'd take it.*

*If the path be up or down,
Near where precipices frown,
Or along the meadows green,
Or the hedgebank flowers between,
Wide or narrow, smooth or rough,
'Tis Thy path and that's enough
And never I'll forsake it.*

*'Tis good since Thou did'st make it,
For Thee I serve, my chosen Lord,
Thy will I take for Thy dear sake
And deem Thy service pleasant;
Like virtue, 'tis its own reward
And ever is in sweet accord
With my will acquiescent.*

Bath, May 13, 1843

Thy Work - By Thy Spirit - To Thy Glory

*My God, I have three things to ask
First is this: on me
Impose, I pray, the mighty task
Of winning souls for Thee.*

*The second is, that I may do
This blessed work of Thine
In Thy Son's strength and wisdom too
And not the least of mine.*

*The third is this - Oh God I pray
That bringing souls to Thee
Thy glory to my latest day
My only aim may be.*

*If Thou wilt grant this threefold prayer
My soul shall then abide
In safety from the subtle snare
Of spiritual pride.*

Thou are Reality

*I am, oh God, and therefore Thou must be;
if I am real, Thou are Reality.*

*But I have sinned, and Thou must angry be;
If sin is real, Wrath is Reality.*

*But from Thy wrath, in penitence, I flee
And my own sin, - wilt Thou not pardon me?
"Oh, yes, if owning is Reality".*

*I trust in Christ, and have no other plea;
His blood upon the Mercy Seat I see,
From guilt, my God, wilt Thou not set me free?
"Oh yes, if trusting is Reality".*

*Thus freed from guilt, I sorely long to be
From sin's dominion absolutely free;
Wilt Thou not set me free?
"Oh yes, if I see
Thy want and prayer are Reality".*

*I want Thy peace To rule Triumphantly
O'er all the cares and sorrows of my breast;
I want Thy boundless, changeless love to be
The pillow where I lay my griefs to rest;
Shall not Thy love support - Thy peace rule me?
"Yes, if thou trusteth in Reality".*

*Ah, then, I see that Thou would'st make me feel
Religion's nothing, if it be not Real! -
'Tis thus! If thou hast peace and joy in view,
In dealing with the God of Truth - Be True!*

Read, Mark, Learn

*Read, mark, learn
Its pages turn and turn;
And for reward you'll find the Lord.
And your heart within will burn.*

*Dig, search, explore,
With labour more and more;
And for your toil, in this rich soil,
You'll find the golden ore.*

A Wondrous Name

*A wondrous name of God is "Jesus",
Though it be the name of Man;
Let its sound with rapture seize us
As no other music can*

*Oh for minds to comprehend it!
Oh for hearts to feel its worth!
Oh for tongues and feet to send it
Ringing through the listening earth!*

*With this name all heaven is swelling,
With this name all hell is sad;
When on earth this name is telling,
Sinners broken hearts are glad.*

*Name of sweetness, name of power,
Mighty both to foe and friend;
Jesus, speed the promised hour
When the stoutest heart shall cower,
When all knees to Thee shall bend*

In Memory of Thy Cross

*In memory of Thy cross and shame
I take this supper in Thy name;
This juice of grape and flour of wheat
My outward man doth drink and eat.
Oh, may my inward man be fed
With better wine and better bread!
May Thy rich flesh and precious blood
Supply my spirit's daily food.
So in it's strength from day to day
Shall I with joy go on my way.
I thank Thee, Lord, Thou diedst for me;
Oh, may I live and die to Thee!*

Nothing Lost

*To talk with God no breath is lost;
Talk on, talk on!
To walk with God no strength is lost;
Walk on, walk on!
To wait on God, no time is lost;
Wait on, wait on!
To grind the axe no work is lost;
Grind on, grind on!
The work is quicker, better done,
Not needing half the strength laid on.
Grind on*

*Martha stood, but Mary sat;
Martha murmured much at that.
Martha cared, but Mary heard,
Listening to the Master's word;
And the Lord her choice preferred.
Sit on, hear on!*

*Work without God is labour lost;
Work on, work on!
Full you'll soon learn it to your cost;
Toil on, toil on!
Little is much when God is in it;
Man's busiest day's not worth God's minute.
Much is little everywhere
If God the labour do not share;
So work with God, and nothing is lost,
Who works with Him does best and most.
Work on, work on!*

The Secret to Happiness

*Brother wouldst thou happy be?
Live to Him who died for thee,
Live to Jesus Christ alone,
His thou art, and not thine own;
Let His will within thee reign,
Never life to self again.*

A Petition

*By all the prayers I've offered here,
By all the sighs I've heaved,
By every penitential tear
For sins for which I've grieved,
Oh, give me all I've asked, and more!
Into my cup full answers pour,
Until with blessings it flows o'er,
My Jesus*

A Melody

*My heaven born soul is like a well-tuned lute,
Without the player's hands for ever mute-
Waiting, with harmony in every string,
The music of his skilful fingering;
For when the chords the living touch awakes,
What sweetness from each quivering lute-string breaks!
So, blessed Spirit, Thou awake, awake
My poor dumb soul, and holy music make;
By Thy skilled touch call forth the melody,
Sweet to the ear of angels and of Thee-
The thrilling notes of prayer, thanksgiving, praise,
Which hearts unmoved by Thee can never raise;
Oh, let Thy fingers sweep the chords along,
And wake the fervent prayer, the exulting song!*

Written between his two illnesses

Christ is Here, and Christ is All

*House of treasures! Here I find
Food and medicine for the mind,
Sword to wield
Against the foe,
Helm and shield
To ward his blow,
Garments for the heavenly-born
Gems the spirit to adorn,
Songs of praise in sunny hours,
Dirges when the tempest lowers;
But I need not thus go on
Naming treasures one by one.
Why should I the rest recall?
Christ is here, and Christ is all!*

Oh to be Ripe and Ready

*Oh to be ripe and ready
For the change soon at hand!
Oh to be firm and steady
When on Jordan's brink I stand.*

*Oh to be bold and fearless
When death bursts on my view!
Oh to be calm and tearless
When earth I bid adieu!*

*Oh to have no regrettings
When sinks life-day's sun,
No sad, remorseful frettings
For work I've left undone!*

*Oh to need no confession
Of sin I did not know;
But to see each transgression,
And judge it ere I go*

*May heaven to me open,
When my life's race is run;
And may the first word spoken
Be, "faithful soul, well done!"*

*And oh! When in I enter,
May the first sight I see
Be Jesus in the centre
Of myriads saved like me.*

*Or if the Lord's returning
Precludes that I should die,
May my bride's heart be burning
To meet Him in the sky.*

Beginning of 1884 - the year of his death

The Ships on Fire

*The ships on fire! The ships on fire,
Up, all hands to quench the flame;
Ropes and buckets, blankets, hammocks,
Swabs, and sails of every name,
Use them quickly - we're in danger,
Ask not whence the danger came.*

*See! The smoke ascends the hatches,
Suffocating all below;
Up on deck men, fix the gratings,
Stop the vent, and choke the foe.
Work, lads, cheerly, we'll subdue it,
Fire and wind our skill shall know*

*Ah! The flame is bursting upwards,
See! It coils around the mast;
Look! The shrouds are all envelop'd,
Hark! They crackle fierce and fast.
Booms and boats, are now in peril,
And, if they go, hope is past.*

*Closer, hotter, fiercer, louder,
Burns the flames above, below;
Every moment brings us nearer
To the dreadful fiery woe.
Keep to windward - but who chuses,
Let him to the stern-boat go.
Ah! The cruel fire and water
Both our hope of life confound;
Swamp'd the boat is - all within it,
Saved from flames, by floods are drown'd.
What shall we do! Helpless! Hopeless!
Not a speck we see around.*

*Yes! A sail! A sail! To windward,
Cheer up shipmates, still there's hope;
Hark! She hails us - quick, your boats send,
With these foes we cannot cope.
Save us - saves us - quickly save us!
Ere the magazine blows up.
Done it is as soon as spoken,
All on board are rescued now;
Hark! That terrible explosion,
Down she settles by the bow, -
In a minute, not a vestige,
Tells she foundered where or how.*

*Sailors, listen! Conflagration
Soon will wrap the earth you tread,
Even now the smoke is rising,
In thick clouds above your head.
To the lifeboat! To the lifeboat!
Christ, "the first-born from the dead".*

*Sailors, quit the burning vessel,
And your ling'ring wives compel
Bring your fathers, mothers, children,
Ere she fills, and sinks to hell.
Christ is waiting - jump to quickly -
Hip! Hip! Hurrah! - all is well.*

Fast! Opera! Races!

*Fast! Opera! Races!
All in their wrong places.
Weep today, sing tomorrow,
Real the joy, sham the sorrow;
Pharasaic visage borrow
Till the gloomy day is past,
Then take vengeance on the Fast!
Then let men and women chant
Foreign operatic cant.
Then let racing horses run,
'twill be admirable fun.
Up with booths, down with chapels,
Let us buy nuts, pears and apples,
Brandy, whiskey, rum and gin,
To deplore the Nation's sin.
Feasting fitly follows fasting,
Time is short, to death we're hasting,
Why should we our tears be wasting?
We shall weep enough in hell
Let us laugh while we are well.
Ah! Ye foolish men and women,
Be assured a day is coming,
When this scoffing ye will rue,
When your fasting will be true.*

The No-God Missionary

*Ye men of sunderland give ear
And listen to my song
For though it is a weighty theme
It will not keep you long*

*The no-God missionary went
Unto a neighbouring town,
And taught the no-God people there
To put God-missions down.*

*And what the folks beside the Tyne
Were fools enough to bear,
This no-God missionary comes
To teach beside the Wear.*

*But whereas those who go abroad
Proclaim the gospel gratis
The no-God man at home declare
For him this is not satis.*

*"I must have pence and sixpences,
To pay me for my trouble"
Although instead of solid truth
You get a no-God bubble.*

*Though, then, Old Jacob's name he bears,
And unto it adds 'holy'
Nature and name no more agree,
Than wisdom does with folly.*

*An "oak" he rightly may be called,
Like other wooden bodies;
For he must have a wood head
To preach that there no God is.*

*God-missions, say this no-God man,
Have indirectly done,
The shocking deeds in India,
That dare not see the sun.*

*But if God-Missions have produc'd
Such bad results abroad,
Then surely worse at home must flow
From preaching there's no God.*

*And if all missions that are bad,
Must roughly be put down,
Arise ye men of Sunderland
And drum him from the town.*

Where wilt Thou Spend Eternity?

*A question
Where wilt thou spend eternity?
Nay; don't tear down the bill;
This question means but good to thee,
And will be answered still:
To shun the light, or shut the sight,
Thy cup of wrath may fill.
Eternity where wilt thou spend?
Don't say "I cannot tell".
The life thou ledest now will end
In heaven or in hell.
Which?*

A Christian?

*Art thou a Christian? Then with Christ thou'rt dead,
Yea risen with him, and sitt'st at God's right hand,
A child of heaven, by the Spirit led,
A pilgrim, and a stranger in the land,*

*“what meaneth, then, this bleating of the sheep,
This lowing of the oxen in mine ear?”
These Canaanitish sights and sounds that keep
Suspicion on the rack, and wake the fear
That thou art not what thou would'st fain appear-
Than things unseen are cheap, things seen are dear;
The former far away, the latter near?*

*With Jesus dead? Then, why are thou alive
To worldly pleasure, power, pomp and fame?
Why dost thou after earthly riches strive,
And cast dishonour on His name?
With Jesus dead? Alas! In his cold grave
Is never found what thy affections crave.*

*With Jesus risen? Then why stoop so low
To quench thy burning thirst with streams that flow,
From earthly springs, that yield, not bliss, but woe?*

*With Jesus seated on God's right hand?
And yet thou build'st thy peace upon the sand,
For there thy treasure is, thy heart, thy hand!
A soaring eagle, truly thou wouldst be,
If names and things did evermore agree;
Thou art a mole, if ways and habits tell -
Like criers with loud voice, and sounding bell! -
In spite of names, where men's affections dwell.
For thou dost burrow in this blighted earth,
A proof thy heart is where thyself had birth.*

*A child of God? The Spirit as thy guide?
What spirit, then, conducts thee to provide
For worldly lusts that should be mortified?
In shop or warehouse, mansion, equipage,
Parties, excursions, all that is “the rage”,
Thy leader is “the spirit of the age”.
In food and raiment, buying, getting gain,
In seeking pleasure, or in shunning pain,
In tongue, and temper, tastes and trappings, all
That stamps the world - the difference is so small
'twixt them and thee, that keen-eyed judges say,
There is no difference, 'tis the other way.*

*A pilgrim and a stranger in the land?
And yet thou dwell'st in Sodom; cast'st thy lot,
Where Lot cast his; and takest thy slippery stand
Where satan revels, but where God is not;
Where all beneath thy feet is burning hot
With judgment fires, that will soon outburst
On place and people of the Lord accurst.*

*A Christian? Nay, renounce thy name, or be
A man whose name and character agree.*