

THE DAY THOU GAVEST

– A Meditation --

Scripture citations are to the King James Version unless noted otherwise.



The words of the hymn chosen as the subject of our meditation were written by the Rev. John Ellerton (1826-1893). Usually set to the tune, St. Clement, this evocative, wistful song of praise has long been a favourite in Britain.

Stanza First

**The day Thou gavest, Lord, is ended
The darkness falls at Thy behest;
To thee our morning hymns ascended,
Thy praise shall sanctify our rest.**

THE SUFFERING JOB reflected on the fragile state of humanity (Job 34: 15). Our bodies follow a regime dictated by laws and principles laid down before our existence. And so we are obliged within the compass of the diurnal cycle to rest and renew our powers in sleep – a universal observance that attests to a Creator having ordained the arrangement. As the rain falls and the sun shines upon on both the righteous and the unrighteous (Matt. 5: 45) – an irrefutable fact – we are obliged to admit we are subject to a power greater than our own. Those of an atheistic bent, however soaked or tanned they may be, repudiate the notion, though unable to deny the natural phenomena. The wise acknowledge the God of heaven and render praise due to Him.

Stanza Second

**We thank thee that thy Church, unsleeping,
While Earth rolls onward into light,
Through all the world, her watch is keeping,
And rests not now by day or night.**

Stanza Third

**As o'er each continent and island
The dawn leads on another day,
The voice of prayer is never silent,
Nor dies the strain of praise away.**

God's people, scattered and wakeful across the earth, maintained watch through countless sunrises for their promised deliverance. Sprinkled through the various denominations, these comprised the Little Flock, encouraged by Jesus to 'fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom' (Luke 12: 32). These were they who during the Gospel Age pressed on in faith under difficult and treacherous times, hopeful eyes fixed on Christ's return (Rev. 6: 10).

Stanza Fourth

**The sun that bids us rest is waking
Our brethren 'neath the western sky,
And hour by hour fresh lips are making
Thy wondrous doings heard on high.**

United by their faith in Christ as Saviour and King – unified not necessarily by any *denominational* doctrine – the Church occupied that gap of time between the resurrection of Christ and the termination of the Gospel Age – a history that ushered in our modern era, the principal feature of which is the 'time of trouble', prophesied by the Lord Jesus – the time in which we now live (Matt. 24: 21, 22).

Stanza Fifth

**So be it, Lord; thy throne shall never,
Like earth's proud empires, pass away;
Thy kingdom stands, and grows forever,
Till all thy creatures own thy sway.**

The culmination of this popular and beautiful hymn ends with the happiest of prospects. Gone are the war-making powers, corruption, violence and all wickedness from earth. The rule of God not only will stand secure, but will grow, overspreading the globe until all humanity enters into this eternal kingdom, a veritable heaven on earth, in which there will be no suffering, persecution, distress or dying (Isa. 35). Then the paean of praise to Jehovah and the Lamb will reverberate over land and ocean, inviting all people to enter the Kingdom:

. . . as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

– 1 Cor. 2: 9