

THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Commander Evangeline Booth in this Prison Sunday Message Points the Way to True Freedom

“The Sun of Righteousness...with healing in His wings” — Malachi 4:2

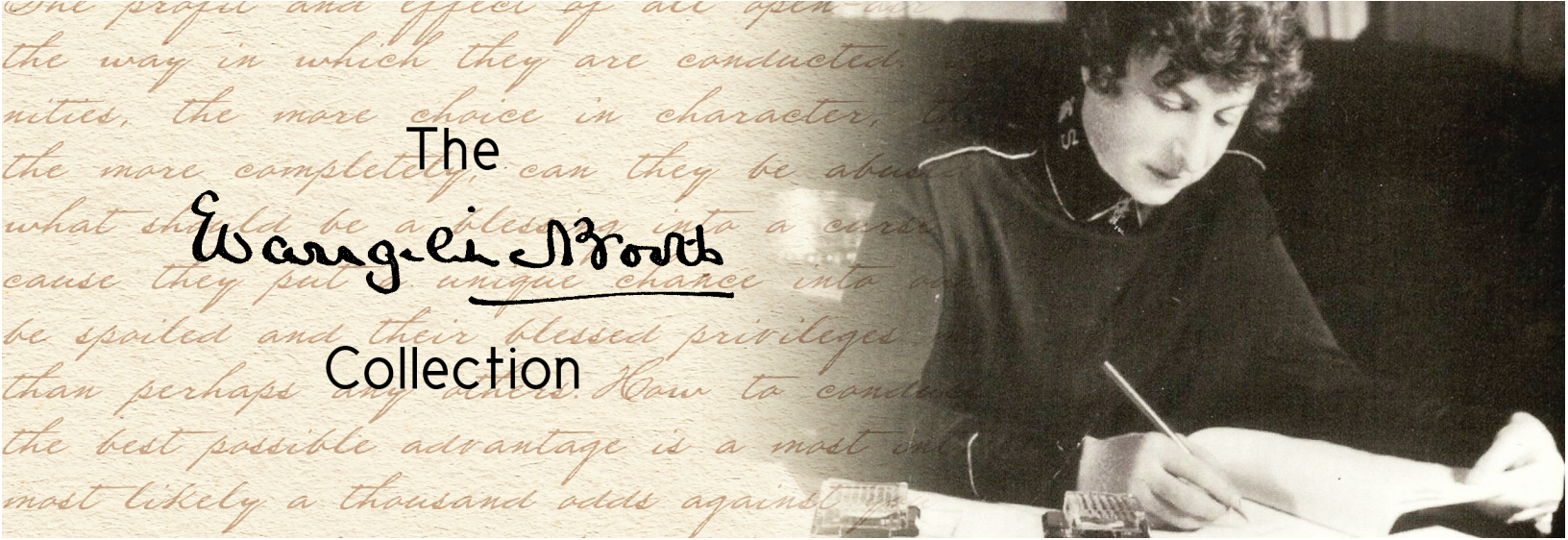
This Sun, our Sun, has risen, and there is healing in His wings. If there are wrongs in our lives He has not put right; if there is grief He has not assuaged; if there are hidden depths of our hearts that His beams have not purified; if there are sour, mildewed, cobwebbed holes and corners in which lurk the slimy creatures of vice and passion; if there are sins that have not been forgiven; if there is anything at all in us that is contrary in nature to the purity, love and wisdom of God it is just because we have our backs turned to this great Sun, and so are making darkness for ourselves, or are living in the shadows of doubt and fear and estrangement from our Heavenly Father.

A UNIVERSE-FILLING SUNSHINE

I often speak of God’s mercy as a sea without any shore. It is. And God’s love is a universe-filling sunshine whose beams reach from uttermost star to uttermost star, and then beyond to all eternity.

You who sit in the gloom of the prison cell, how I wish you would turn your faces toward this Sun! Open to its purifying, healing, life-giving rays every corner of your long-closed heart. There is healing in His wings!

For many years men read the phrase used here by the Prophet Malachi without seeing in it anything more than a beautiful and poetic reference to the glory of Christ. But photographs taken of the sun during recent eclipses have shown that there are rays extending from the main body of this great luminary, invisible at ordinary times owing to the brightness of the whole, which have a strange likeness to wings. Then it was remembered that the ancient Assyrian sculptors depicted the sun with just such wings as the symbol of supreme power, and at once the picture of the Saviour of the world as the great Sun was enlarged in meaning.



"But," you may ask, "what has all this to do with me, shut away from the world, held in prison for my misdeeds, with despair and desperation as twin companions who fill my ears with temptations to give way to evil and turn my hand against every man?"

NOTHING CAN SHUT HIM OUT

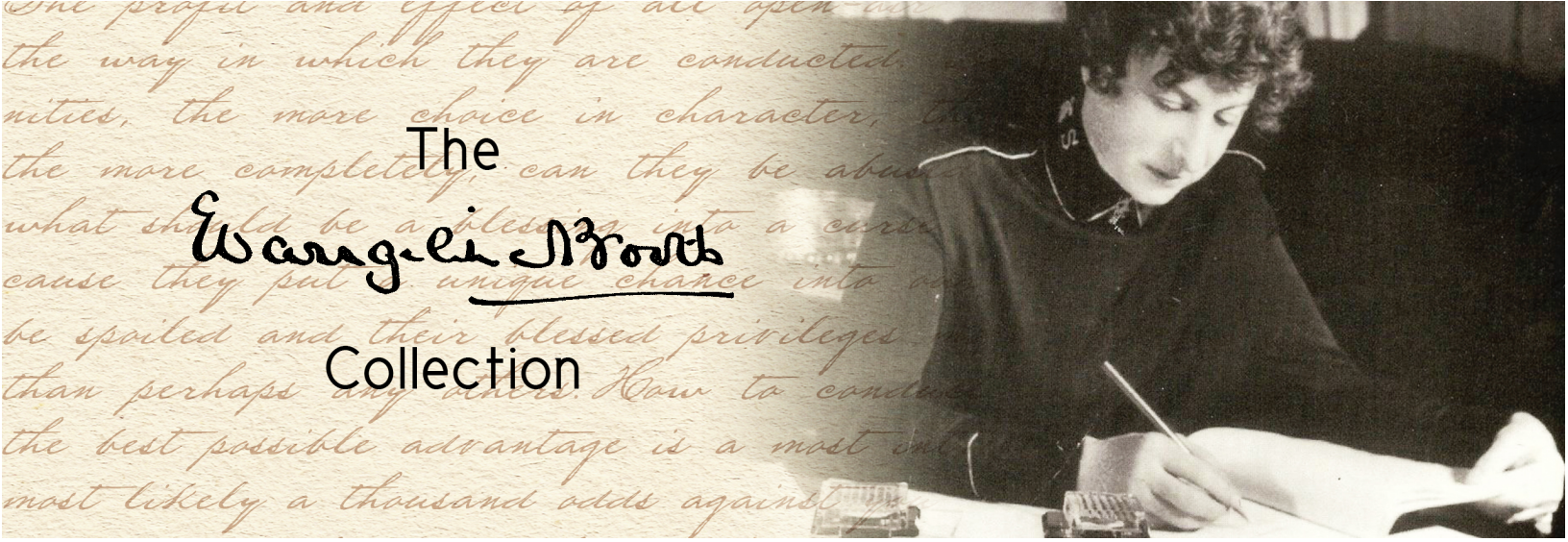
The rising of the Sun of Righteousness holds for you individually everything that the ancient Assyrian symbol signified.

No circumstance can so shut you in that His all-powerful rays cannot reach you; no past can make your sky so black that these cannot penetrate the darkness; no walls are so thick that they can keep them out. At this moment, whoever and wherever you are, whatever may be your condition, the Sun of Righteousness may come into your life.

He will bring to you the power you need to enable you to conquer yourself — to get on your feet if you have fallen, and to keep on your feet when you are up again. You may say, or the devil, who wants to keep you in darkness and in bondage, may suggest to you that you have fallen too often, and slipped too far from God; but, listen! The broken body of Jesus Christ will bridge any chasm yawning between sin and salvation! God has not given you up; the nail-pierced hands of the Lamb of Calvary are outflung to meet you, and what He touches He heals and strengthens, and will keep if you will let Him.

You may have tried, and tried, and tried to regain lost ground and failed. I tell you only Jesus can help you; He is the all-powerful Sun of Righteousness to whose grace there is no limit.

Then, in the wings of the Sun of Righteousness there is light. You know what light means to anyone who is lost in the dark. Are you not, some of you to whom I am especially writing, groping about in the darkness, looking, looking, looking, but seeing only the ghosts of your evil doings as they come up out of the years gone by? Do you not know what it is to feel you are utterly helpless, blanketed in by gloom that mortal sight, unaided, cannot pierce? What you must do if you want to see is to tear from your eyes the bandages of doubt and just look. The Sunshine of



Heaven is all around you. The darkness in which sinners live is the darkness they make for themselves by shutting out the Light. Look now to Jesus. What do you see in Him? — Just an historic figure, a good and beautiful one, 'tis true, but as distant from any effect upon your life and heart as a marble statue in the art gallery? Or, perhaps, a little better than that — you feel some stirrings of your mind as you think of His wisdom, His purity, His self-sacrifice; but still, you let Him go with just a passing thought.

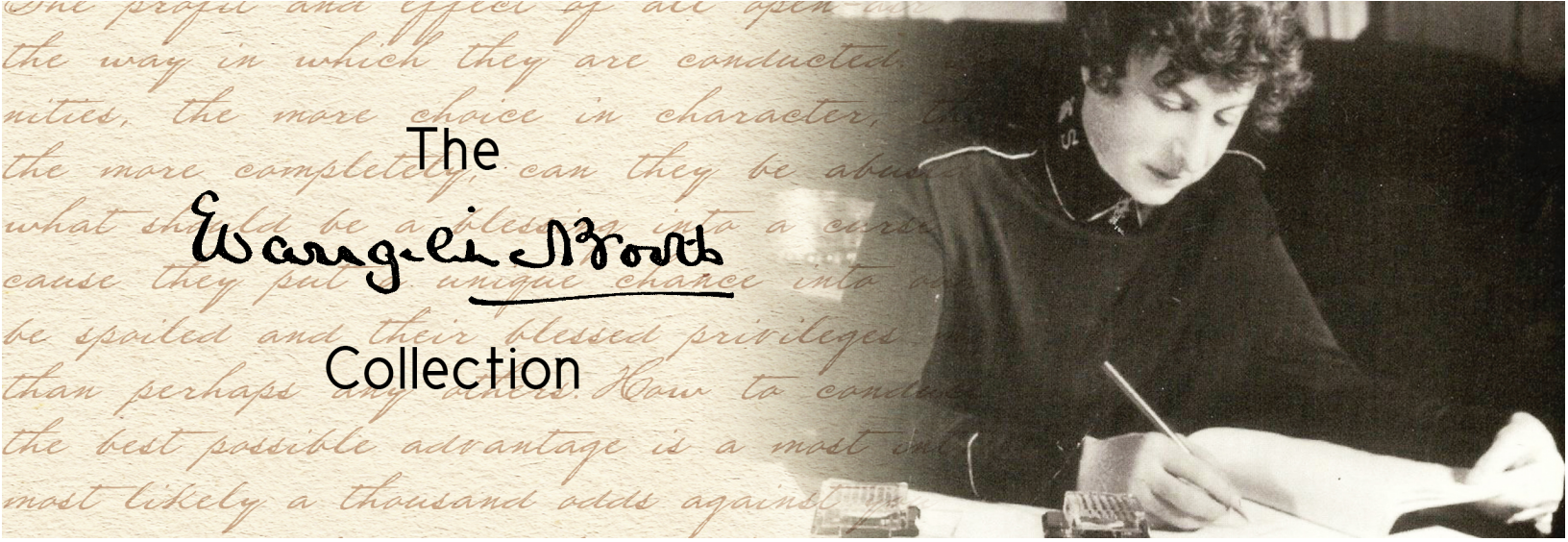
What does he say?

Listen! Look! Listen! Look! Catch His words and gaze upon His face while the Man of Sorrows and He was acquainted with grief, the One who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for your iniquities, turns to you and with eyes that have looked alike into the uttermost love of the Father of all and into the uttermost need of the most deeply fallen of His erring creatures. What does He say? "Look unto Me and be ye saved."

To see some sights one must ascend mountains, or take long journeys. From whence may the sinner gaze with the look that saves upon the Christ of Calvary? Here are no heights to be scaled, no toilsome roads to be traversed, no pilgrimage to be taken, nothing to be done to make oneself better, because nothing can be done! "Where, then, can I go, and what can I do?" you ask me. Here is the way to the Cross. There are just three steps to be taken. They are: conviction of sin, repentance for sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The spot you reach when, realizing you are a sinner, you are sorry you have sinned, you renounce all that is wrong, and you turn in faith to God for pardon, is that from which not only can you see the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, but where he can embrace you with His love, shed upon you His healing influence, cleanse you from everything that is impure, and empower you, as does the sun send forth its warmth over the earth, purifying and healing its elements and strengthening all that is weak.

EVER-INCREASING IN LIGHT

If you have not already done so, do not let another moment pass before you enter upon the experience of this new life, bright, indeed, in its dawn and ever-increasing in light and all those



spiritual delights that are the accompaniments of the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. And if we never see each other on earth, will you not meet me at the end of this life's day, to enjoy forever before the Throne of God the joyous sunlight of endless Morning of Heaven?

(NYWC)

(February 11, 1922)