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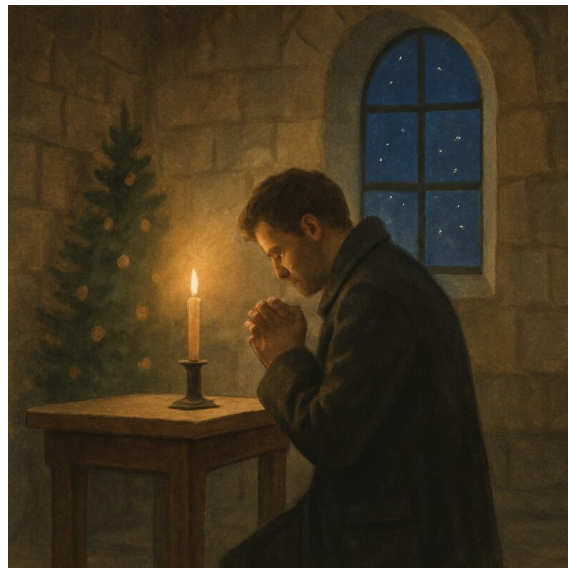
Christmas, 1880

George MacDonald

Great-hearted child, thy very being The Son,
Who know'st the hearts of all us prodigals;—
For who is prodigal but he who has gone
Far from the true to heart it with the false?—
Who, who but thou, that, from the animals',
Know'st all the hearts, up to the Father's own,
Can tell what it would be to be alone!

Alone! No father!—At the very thought
Thou, the eternal light, wast once aghast;
A death in death for thee it almost wrought!
But thou didst haste, about to breathe thy last,
And call'dst out Father ere thy spirit passed,
Exhausted in fulfilling not any vow,
But doing his will who greater is than thou.

That we might know him, thou didst come and live;
That we might find him, thou didst come and die;
The son-heart, brother, thy son-being give—
We too would love the father perfectly,
And to his bosom go back with the cry,
Father, into thy hands I give the heart
Which left thee but to learn how good thou art!



There are but two in all the universe—
The father and his children—not a third;
Nor, all the weary time, fell any curse!
Not once dropped from its nest an unfledged bird
But thou wast with it! Never sorrow stirred
But a love-pull it was upon the chain
That draws the children to the father again!

O Jesus Christ, babe, man, eternal son,
Take pity! we are poor where thou art rich:
Our hearts are small; and yet there is not one
In all thy father's noisy nursery which,
Merry, or mourning in its narrow niche,
Needs not thy father's heart, this very now,
With all his being's being, even as thou!

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