

## Three Sonnets on Prayer by Richard Chenevix Trench

Lord, what a change within us one short hour  
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make --  
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,  
What parchèd grounds refresh, as with a shower!  
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;  
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,  
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear;  
We kneel how weak, we rise how full of power!  
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,  
Or others -- that we are not always strong;  
That we are ever overborne with care;  
That we should ever weak or heartless be,  
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,  
And joy, and strength, and courage, are with Thee?

A garden so well watered before morn  
Is hotly up, that not the swart sun's blaze  
Down beating with unmitigated rays,  
Nor arid winds from scorching places borne,  
Shall quite prevail to make it bare and shorn  
Of its green beauty -- shall not quite prevail  
That all its morning freshness shall exhale,  
Till evening and the evening dews return --  
A blessing such as this our hearts might reap,  
The freshness of the garden they might share,  
Through the long day a heavenly freshness keep,  
If, knowing how the day and day's glare  
Must beat upon them, we would largely steep  
And water them betimes with dews of prayer.

When hearts are full of yearning tenderness,  
For the loved absent, whom we can not reach --  
By deed or token, gesture or kind speech,  
The spirit's true affection to express;  
When hearts are full of innermost distress,  
And we are doomed to stand inactive by,  
Watching the soul's or body's agony,  
Which human effort helps not to make less --  
Then like a cup capacious to contain  
The overflowings of the heart, is prayer:  
The longing of the souls is satisfied,  
The keenest darts of anguish blunted are;  
And, though we can not cease to yearn or grieve,  
Yet we have learned in patience to abide.