

FaithPrayers

It is our privilege to pray for you

THE GATE OF THE YEAR

.....

And I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year,
“Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.”
And he replied, “Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the Hand of God.
That shall be to you better than light, and safer than a known way.”

Minnie Haskins, 1875-1957

I first read those words some twenty-five years ago on a church bulletin. I went home, cut off the front of the bulletin, and immediately put it on my refrigerator with magnets. I didn't want to lose it. For many years, I would pull it out each January and put it back up. I had no idea where the words came from, as the bulletin simply said the author was “anonymous”. I only knew that something about them spoke deeply to my heart. It was much later that I discovered the author was Miss Minnie Haskins, a grocer's daughter from Bristol, England. It is said that the words came to her while standing on an upstairs balcony one night, looking down a lighted path to the gate at the end of the drive.

The words were made famous by King George VI in his Christmas Day broadcast in 1939, as the Second World War was beginning and the world was in crisis and looking for hope. The poem was brought to King George's attention by his wife, Queen Elizabeth (mother of the current Queen Elizabeth), and they were spoken at her funeral some 63 years later.

These words have impacted so many people. Each time I mention these words to someone familiar with them, their face lights up. Or if they haven't heard them yet, they immediately reply “please send me that poem!” And why? Why do those lines affect us so?

I think it is because we acknowledge the truth of them.

We don't know the future. We don't know what the year will hold. And we know, deep down, that we don't. And yet to know that at that gate, at the head of the year, we do indeed have one place, even in the darkness, that is safe. The hand of God. Better than light. Safer than a known way.

Carved now above the chapel at Windsor Castle, and strewn across an assortment of papers and books around the world, Minnie's poem has the rare honor of residing among the most often quoted works of the entire twentieth century. It has been recited in many languages. It has been set to music.

Besides being a grocer's daughter, Minnie was an academic in both

“My House will be called a House of Prayer for all nations...”

Isaiah 56:7

Matthew 21:13

THE GATE OF THE YEAR (continued)

sociology and philosophy, teaching at the London School of Economics. Yet it is her poem that has come down in history to make its mark. Penned one night while standing on a balcony, watching the lights in the night, seeing a gate at the end of a road.

What is it in your life that you brush aside for “bigger things”? What story, poem, song, dance, words of help, encouraging thought? What meal could be cooked, what hospital visited, what sweater knitted, what new business started, what sermon preached, what lesson taught, what car repaired, what friend made, what trip undertaken, what money given to help?

Maybe, after all, that “little thing” is not so small.

Four lines of a poem. And a world of people have resonated with them.

Thank God that Minnie wrote down her words that night. She continues:

“So I went forth,
And finding the Hand of God,
Trode gladly into the night.
He led me towards the hills
And the breaking of day in the lone east.
So heart be still!”

Blessings to you at the Gate of the Year. May we indeed see daybreak this year, in that lone east, where the sun rises, with good tidings for our earth.

~ Mary Ann Offenstein
Founder

FaithPrayers National Prayer Line



SCRIPTURE OF THE MONTH



**“Now to Him who
is able to do
immeasurably
more than all we
ask or imagine,
according to His
power that is at
work within us, to Him be glory...”**
~ **Ephesians 3:20**

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day a week toll-free prayer line.

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