

The Service of Sorrow.

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Sermons

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Devotional
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THE
SERVICE OF SORROW.

BY
LUCRETIA P. HALE.

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THE

SERVICE OF SORROW.







THOUGH Night has climbed her highest peak of noon,
And bitter blasts the screaming Autumn whirl,
All night through archways of the bridgèd pearl,
And portals of pure silver, walks the moon.
Walk on, my soul, nor crouch to agony;
Turn cloud to light, and bitterness to joy,
And dross to gold, with glorious alchemy,
Basing thy throne above the world's annoy.
Rest thou above the storm of sorrow and of ruth
That wars beneath; unshaken peace hath won thee.
So shalt thou pierce the woven glooms of truth;
So shall the blessing of the meek be on thee;
So, in thy hour of death, the body's youth,
And honorable eld, shall come upon thee.

TENNYSON.







OUR SUMMER.



THE house to which we came for the summer was far down the village street, just where it began to stray away among the fields and hills. In front was a broad meadow, yellow with cowslips as we reached there, and waving with grass; so that the children, as we left the carriage, instead of waiting for the pleasure of watching the heavy trunks taken down, instead of satisfying their curiosity with hurrying into the house to see what sort of a place we were to spend the summer in, ran away across the road, plunging into the grass

to see if they could reach some of the flowers, — “the real country-flowers !”

In front was this broad meadow, resting the eyes that looked upon it; behind, a stretch of wood that sloped gradually to the foot of some steep hills. Gertrude, when all the bustle of arrival was over, sat at the window; and I could see that the broad, quiet, green meadow was bringing rest already to her tired soul and body. Clara came to her mother's side, and, leaning against her, wondered that all houses were not built with a meadow in front.

Johnie would have liked it better as it was at the house where we dined, where there were geese in a pool by the door; and Martin insisted that brick streets and brick houses were best after all, but he consented to go out and see where the barn was.

A short rest and quiet, while the boys went into the barn, and the girls hurried up stairs “to choose their rooms,” and the mother and I, in the few moments of silence, looked out over the green grass. The rest was soon

broken by the squabbles of the two older girls, who wanted the same room; for they never would think of sharing it. Each came down with her own complaint and her own plea. "Clara always had the best," complained Ellen; "it was but fair she should have the first choice for once." And Clara insisted that "the oldest had a right to choose; and she was the oldest." And dreamy Rosa, the third girl, was appealed to by both sides, and gave answer in favor of either.

By this time, the boys came in, and Martin had kicked John, and there were more troubles to be attended to; so Gertrude turned away from her meadow, and set to work to compose a peace.

But the meadow was still there. That could not be taken away from us. And Gertrude, after calming the children in some wonderful way, set me in a comfortable chair by the window, "to rest after the journey," while she went up stairs to settle this weighty question of the rooms, bearing the boys along with her.

So I was left alone to rest, and to wonder at the quiet, and to wonder over again at the power that had brought about the quiet. For Gertrude had, all her life, herself been a spoiled child. And when my brother died, and left her, his wife, with seven children to manage, and children very difficult to rule, the first question was, who could take care of Gertrude? She had always been taken care of, petted, caressed, cloyed almost with the goods of life. She had never been allowed the care of her house or her children. Frank could not bear an anxious shade upon her face. "His wife should never drudge, nor wear herself out, like other women." So he heaped upon her luxuries, gratified her tastes, answered her wants before she could speak them, and insisted upon taking all care upon himself. And she had submitted.

I was just beginning to discover that this serenity of Gertrude's was true submission. For now, with the necessity, there developed in her the power of rule. For the time of trial

had come. The friend who had tried to shield her from all care and sorrow could not save her from this greatest grief of all, from the separation of death.

How impossible it is for us to pick out only the joys of life for our friends to live upon! Every one who lives, must live through his own amount of hardship and suffering. Even the hyacinth, in the soft air of the greenhouse, has to break through the hard rind of its shell, must cut through the heavy clod laid over it, before its germ can find its way up into the warm air. It must have the same fight after light and sunshine that the snowdrop outside in the flower border has.

It is very useless in us to plan quiet, shielded lives for our friends, much as we would long to do it,—useless and foolish. Care, sickness, and death, we have no power to shut out. No one else can live our life for us. Every man must live for himself, must bear his own sorrow, must find out for himself the earnestness of his own life.

And, thank God! all these things, so beyond our little grasp, lie in his hands. Care and sickness and death come through the hands of God as do the joys of life. In looking back, what hour of our own sorrows would we have given up, where only our own happiness has been affected? In remembering the strength that has come to us from conflict, we remember, too, the triumph, — the peace so hardly wrung. The way of the cross has become the way of light. We could not see the path before. We were groping, cast down, overwhelmed. Now, as we look back, the light of success shines over the dark moment, and we are grateful for its deepest agony.

As I look back upon my past life, and recall the long hours of wearisome sickness; shorter, sudden pangs of more overwhelming sorrow; moments and hours which I could never have borne to look forward to, — I can recognize the strength that came out of the weakness, the power that was born of the sorrow. I might shudder to pass through them again, but I

could not bear to cut them out of the history of my life. I could not do without the strength they gave.

This bitter baptism we would fain spare our friends. We would like to save them from the evil, not being well able to tell what is for them, the evil or the good. So still for Gertrude I was planning and hoping for quiet and ease, hoping that this undisturbed summer's life might give her rest from her great sorrow, time for her mourning, and repose after the sudden grief into which we had been thrown.

The voices of the children sounded down to me, as they were coming back through the entries, — happy, satisfied voices. Gertrude had arranged every thing.

“To be sure there was only one chamber looking into the cherry-tree, but cherries would not last all summer long; and Ellen should have the room over the little porch, and Rosa the dressing-room; and the boys the large room in the end, where their voices would not disturb Aunt Ann's morning nap. As for

cherries, too, there were trees in the garden that all could climb."

"Oh, yes!" said Ellen; "lazy Clara might eat the cherries from her window-seat, but it would be far jollier to climb the tree."

Whether a fresh contest arose, I do not know, as the voices went off into another room, and began to settle about the furniture.

I went on wondering at Gertrude's power.

But a character, indeed, that has any moral force in it, is spoiled no more by favors and luxuries than it is crushed by adversities. It is only weak souls that are hurt by indulgence. The spoiled child, nursed and petted by its parents, has not the heart to appreciate the self-sacrifice with which they devote themselves to its happiness. It selfishly absorbs all the goods laid within its reach, and vegetates in its own atmosphere of self. Very often, it despises the very idolatry upon which it is fed; and, as it grows up, fancies itself superior to the kind souls that have not given themselves time to grow. It can never appreciate the grandeur

of the larger souls that have been willing to yield to all its desires. Theirs may have been a mistaken fondness, but they have been growing larger and greater by the very act of giving.

But there is a way of receiving generously, as there is a way of giving ungenerously. The habit of receiving, or submitting to benefits, may have a cramping power, but not upon a noble soul. It is waiting its own time for giving, and is gathering strength in its inaction. The time of inaction may be too prolonged, and the soul grow rusty from want of using its weapons; but a rich nature finds always some use for its soil, even if it has not been ploughed and harrowed for corn and grain.

After all, thought I, it is not the quiet, sunny meadow that Gertrude is needing in her trials. She is beginning upon her true duties, — upon the action of life. She has been helped too long, and now she is to help others. She was right in insisting that Clara and Ellen should

not go back to the boarding-school from which they were summoned at their father's sudden death. She declared, too, that she was fully able to take care of little fragile Rosa. And she was very sure she could contend with the boys, especially in the country, where there was plenty to occupy them.

"It is strange, indeed, that any one should doubt that I could take care of my own children," she said, with a pained smile, sadder in its way than any I had yet seen on her face.

Brave heart! she let Fred, the oldest boy, go back to his regiment. She was willing to have him follow in his father's steps, I believe, even to the end.

I heard her brave, cheery voice again as she came down stairs with the children. They wanted to make a procession to take me to my room, if I were quite rested now. It overlooked my meadow, and a cushioned chair waited me there; and Ellen had put a mug of the yellow cowslips on the window-sill, and Gertrude had scattered round some home-like,

pretty things she had taken from her trunk, that took away the look of newness from the room, and gave it an air of welcome.

"Now go down, wild beasts," she said to the children, who were beginning to be noisy again, "and I will come directly, and go with Johnie to see his chickens."

I looked at her with wonder, and then with gratitude at all she was doing for me.

"Our summer's consolations are beginning," she said, as she looked out of the window. "I can see they are to be very various, — an open place for us to look out upon and to think in, — and an open space for the children to play in."

"Repose and action for you," I said; "but I fear there is to be too much of the last."

"Oh, no; not yet, not yet!" she cried out. "I am not strong enough to think now: it is better for me to have to act."

There was a sudden call for her, and she went away; and so our summer begun. We had out-of-doors and in-doors to help us, and

friends who spoke with look and word, and books and letters to read. And some of this comfort I laid by in store, thinking it might continue to help me, if I held on to it; that it might help me again, or that it might be of service to others; and it lies all together in the following pages.





THE REPOSE OF THE MEADOW.



AFTER the shock of a great sorrow, one of our first feelings is a consciousness of the want of sympathy of all nature with our grief. The day is bright and glad, the sun shines, the flowers open gayly, and the birds flutter through the leaves. There is no sigh in answer to ours. No word of comfort comes to *me*. Day after day passes on in the same round, and *my* loss is unnoticed. The happy summer brings the remembrance of former summers with it, — “the crown of sorrow,” this remembering “happier things;” and the

very joy of nature adds a fresh agony to our grief.

This, at least, is one phase of our sorrow. Happily, it is only a part of that bitterness that spreads from our own unhappiness, and overflows and colors all the gayety that surrounds us. Happy it is, rather, that our wishes are not granted; that the heavens do not put on clouds to sympathize in our mourning; that we wake up rather to a glad day, after our own night of tears.

The offices of nature are always repairing: the fresh blades of young grass gather the dead leaves into the soil, and do not stay to mourn over the loss. Without noise, and gently, the healthy sight of the spring comes to renew our worn-out spirits. Our tired eyes rest on the peaceful landscape. If its glad beauty makes no appeal to us, it is our own fault. If only we will be willing to accept each summer day of sunshine as a special gift to our grieved hearts, we shall find a consolation that is new every day.

There are very few truly quiet moments in this busy world of ours. A summer day brings them sometimes, when they cannot be found at any other time. For a little time, one may forget to think, when there is a soft, whispering breeze among the leaves, a hum of insects, a pleasant talking among the birds, a waving in the tall green grass, cloud shadows floating across the meadows, and a quiet and rest there, that spreads at last into the tired brain and heart.

This is not the only comforter. It is no comforter at all, if we have no other to listen to. If we have no work in the world, we can have no comfort in repose. If we do not learn how to seek after the Highest in the depths of our own souls, we cannot learn to feel his presence in outward things. But how many, how various joys, indeed, has the most sorrowing heart!





THE COMFORTER.



LET not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And, if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.

I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye shall see me. Because I live, ye shall live also.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto my Father ; for my Father is greater than I.





OUR ALL IN GOD.



BLESSED is the man who loveth Thee, and his friend in Thee, and his enemy for Thee. For he only loses none dear to him, to whom all are dear in Him who cannot be lost. And who is that but our God, the *God that made heaven and earth, and filleth them*, even by filling them creating them? None loseth, but he who leaveth Thee.

ST. AUGUSTINE.



GOD DISPOSES.

FROM THE GERMAN.



STILLED now be every anxious care ;
See God's great goodness everywhere ;
Leave all to him in perfect rest :
He will do all things for the best.
From grief and care he can set free ;
What he thinks best, that best must be.
For God disposes : if he will,
He can my life with pleasure fill.

In bitter moans if I complain,
These sad complaints are all in vain ;
For more and more my sorrows swell,

As loudly of my griefs I tell,
Rather in patience will I hope,
And to my gracious God look up,
For God disposes, gain or loss,
And joy may come even from my cross.

Slowly the days may pass away,
And time my wish may long delay ;
But yet at last may come the flower,
And then the fruit, oh, blessed hour !
This trust shall over all prevail,
My hope in God shall never fail ;
For well I know my God disposes :
In this firm hope my soul reposes.

I from my soul drive every care,
I give my God a dwelling there :
That always shall my pleasure be
Which he imparts to comfort me ;
For if to-day remains my sorrow,
It may be turned to joy to-morrow.
God disposes ; patient bear ;
Joy may come instead of care.



THE SORROW OF DEATH.



OF all events which bear the character of irremediability, the death of those who are dear to us is undoubtedly of the first rank. To see borne away a part of one's self, and to survive through our grief those affections which made our glory, our strength, our joy, our serenity, and perhaps all these together,—is to feel one's self crushed, impoverished, and pierced through and through. Such regrets, so legitimate, are permitted, as it is a part of our dignity not to lose them; and it is, at the utmost, only against their excess that Chris-

tianity arms us. Only, here as elsewhere, changing our point of view, it makes us penetrate into the reality of our affliction, in order to render it conformable to its divine spirit, and to disengage from it all that embitters or envenoms it.

Christianity is always ready to sanction in us, a consciousness of all that there is sharp, poignant, and cruel in our afflictions. It is always ready to recognize how a blank in joys that have been tasted can become a deep abyss; how the disappearance of one single being can make a desert of this world; how a cruel privation can attach to each moment a weight that hangs heavy upon us, and lacerates us. But, after all these concessions, it asks us, if it is indeed just that an immortal creature should linger over one sad moment in space, in order to extend its shadows over its whole career. It asks if this irremediability of death, incontestable this side of the tomb, holds its power beyond; if faith has ever spoken to us of *eternal* separation; if the friends deplored

are indeed lost, rather than being only absent ; if, finally, being able to hope to recover them some day, we ought not force ourselves to put a rein upon our impatience, hastening by prayer a common deliverance.

MAD. SWETCHINE.





SUBSTITUTION.



WHEN some beloved voice, that was to you
Both sound and sweetness, faileth suddenly ;
And silence, against which you dare not cry,
Aches round you like a strong disease and near, —
What hope? what help? what music will undo
That silence to your sense? Not friendship's sigh,
Nor reason's subtle count. Not melody
Of viols, nor of pipes that Faunus blew.
Not songs of poets, nor of nightingales,
Whose hearts leap upwards through the cypress-
trees
To the clear moon! Nor yet the spheric laws
Self-chanted, — nor the angels' sweet all-hails,
Met in the smile of God. Nay, none of these.
Speak thou, availing Christ, and fill this pause.



CONSOLATION.



ALL are not taken : there are left behind
Living beloveds, tender looks to bring,
And make the daylight still a happy thing ;
And tender voices to make soft the wind.
But if it were not so ; if I could find
No love in all the world for comforting,
Nor any path but hollowly did ring,
Where “ dust to dust ” the love from life disjoined ;
And if, before those sepulchres unmoving,
I stood alone (as some forsaken lamb
Goes bleating up the moors in weary dearth),
Crying, “ Where are ye, O my loved and loving ? ”
I know a voice would sound, “ Daughter, I AM.
Can I suffice for HEAVEN, and not for earth ? ”

E. B. BROWNING.



“BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN; FOR
THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED.”



THESE words come with a certainty of strength and consolation. For this, we are willing to believe them, and hold on to them even in our darkest moments; yes, in the very depth of our grief. For they do not say, “Thou art comforted now.” They do not say, that, with the shadow of desolation, there comes at the same time hope. They do not impress upon us a duty, that we are to find or look for comfort directly. The comfort is *not now*. The blessing comes *in the* sorrowing, not without it; the comfort *shall* come afterwards. If we did not feel the whole

weight of the desolation, the whole depth of the sorrow, if there were in us no true mourning, then there were no blessing.

How could it be otherwise? How could we ever have thanked enough for the gift, if we could have calmly and quietly seen it taken away? We were leaning upon a strong arm: suddenly it is snatched away from us. The voice that used to greet us every day, cheerfully, is silent all at once. No answer, no word, comes back to us. We were living on day after day happily, finding out all the joys there are in living, when suddenly we are brought before the gateway into another life. This companion, this very one who was close by our side, whose hands we held, whose breath was on our cheek, has gone, — has disappeared behind that door that shuts us out from word or touch or look. We are left alone in the silence. Behind, with us, remain all the plans we two had made together for to-morrow, for next year, — *together!* but I am left alone. And what is that life upon which he has entered?—

of which I can know nothing, in which I can take no share. Alone? Yes; for with this separation has come the strange lesson of death, that teaches us, that, however closely we may be bound to each other, there comes this breaking of ties to cut us off one from the other; that love or health or human will cannot hold us together; that there is one road we must walk alone. Let there be ever so many friends to come with kind and sympathizing words, there are none that break up this sense of loneliness.

Let it come; let it bring with it the deepest feeling of sorrow. Do not try to turn away from the sensation of grief as though it could be avoided. It will come, however you long to hide it and cover it up. Look it in the face, and find out how great the sorrow is. Learn all its depths; taste all its bitterness; and do not persuade yourself that it is gladness or joy. This is the moment for courage, and it is the time when courage should come, if ever; for it is the hour of struggle.

God is very good, indeed. Sometimes we are so stunned by the blow we have received, we do not know how great is its evil; and then gradually we come to the strength to bear it. But even when we cannot see all the details of our grief, when we are so overwhelmed with sorrow that we cannot look beyond, it is the very heartiness of our grief that will help us. Then we shall have sounded all the depths of loneliness and desolation; and, staggering and uncertain, we shall learn that we have found God.

He must be near us then, when we cry out in the agony of our sorrow.

If we had turned away from our mourning, if we had looked out for shallow and superficial consolations, we would not have seen Him. We might, perhaps, have filled up the empty spaces around us with something that for a while would have made us feel less lonely; but we should have gone away from Him. The blessing was with us *when we mourned.*

But is not such grief selfish? Are there not our duties to others, and our gratitude for all the blessings we have beside? And should we forget all these in our sorrow?

The truth is, that such sudden separations as those made by death — for these are always sudden — must bring us all back to self. They wake up self-consciousness: they make a silent space for a little while around our hearts to give us time to inquire about ourselves. If we do not stop to question ourselves, to ask what kind of life this is in which we are still left, and how we mean to manage with it; if we do not stop to think what has become of that spirit that has left behind these cold tools with which it worked on earth, these hands that labored in love, this brain that thinks no longer, these eyes that will not open again to gladden us like sunshine, and these lips that are never to speak more; ah! if we do not stop to wonder about that new life, and to mourn bitterly, bitterly for the life that has closed, — then it will be very hopeless for this

poor self of ours, and we shall need again and again death and parting and agony to wake us up to the thought of self; and the mourning cannot be blessed.

In such grief there is little danger of stagnation or selfishness. The duties of life come up, and hold out their hands as comforters; and thankfulness for the friends we have, and for their sympathy, stands by the side of the deep sorrow. The blacker its shadow, the brighter is the sunshine all around.

“They *shall be* comforted.” Those words have a certainty in them that resounds in our hearts. They *shall be* comforted; not yet, not now; we may mourn on still, indeed we must, and learn the meaning of sorrow, but we *shall be* comforted. Not with the shallow comfort that time will make us forget our grief. No; happily, our sorrow is too great to be forgotten. It will stay with us; we will never give it up. It will take hold of our hearts. It is this sorrow that has planted God there, that has made us venture to call ourselves “followers

of Christ." It is this that has ennobled our life here, and has made it worth while to live. It is this that has set us to thinking about another world, and has made us dare to think of immortality.

Because we could not believe that we had laid beneath the ground all of that dear friend who was something more to us than voice or form, or sweet face to look upon; because we learned the bitterness of parting, — we were forced to believe in immortality. It is death that has taken us into the presence of God. It was strange indeed, that we must wait for that. It was strange that we did not find Him every day, in happy, laughing hours, in sunny gleams in woods, or by the sea! No, we were in too great a hurry then; we could not stop for so great a thought. We could not stop till He stopped us by the side of this cold, un-moving form; by the silence; by the agony of the waking of the morrow; by the mourning for the dear child, — the little child that stayed but a few days; the helpful sister, mother,

father, friend, brother, that *made* our lives for us, and who now are *making* for us that other life.

Only by our mourning can we find out this. Let us not stay our tears, nor check our sorrow. It will be worst of all, if we cannot learn to feel it.





THE VISION.



THESSE are they that came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in his temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

As ye are partakers of the suffering, so shall ye also be of the consolation.

Behold, we count them happy which endure.



PRAYER OF ARCHBISHOP LAUD'S.

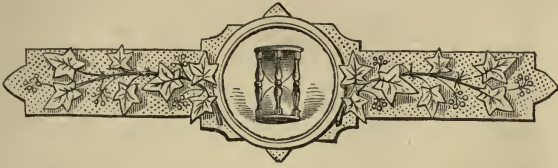


THAT which I cannot foresee, I beseech thee prevent; that which I cannot withstand, I beseech thee master; that which I do not fear, I beseech thee unmask and prostrate, — that, being delivered from all danger, both of soul and body, I may praise thee, the Deliverer, and see how happy a thing it is to make the Lord of hosts my helper in the day of trouble, as well as in the day of joy.



Undoubtedly the Christian suffers: he suffers deeply, because it is a dignity to suffer; and he would possess all dignities. Still more, he suffers always; for God, who has created the consolation, has not created forgetfulness.

MAD. SWETCHINE.



HOW SHALL I TAKE SORROW?



MANY times have you heard of the fruitful blessings of sorrow. But is it such a blessing, when one storm gathers after another above us, and we remain always the same? Heaven help us, when every hot hour of suffering serves only to inflame the evil desires in the heart! How, then, can such evil desires ever be removed from us? Sorrows, indeed, are the fruit-bearing inundations of the Nile; but, friends, they are not so, if they pass over rocky ground. Sorrow is indeed the storm-wind beneath whose blast the sparks of

the love of God must be blown into a flame ; but, friends, the spark must first be there in order that the flame may follow. It is heart-rending to see sorrow discharge itself upon sorrow over many men ; and they lie unmoved. Like the stones in the street, they are trodden under foot ; it rains, the sun shines again, and they remain still what they are, — stones.

When the hour of sorrow comes, if there is not already in the heart something of a holy drawing towards God, then awakens defiance instead of humility, blasphemy in the place of prayer. "If thou wilt not as I will," cries the perverse man, "then I will not as thou wilt," and gives God the go-by in his soul. Only where the love of God dwells in the soul, even without a clear consciousness of it, can sorrow lead to God. Have you seen the flowers that, in a close cellar, turn their heads towards the side where the sun appears? so the heart of man in the night of sorrow, when there is a trace of God living within. Through all the night of bitterness, it seeks for the crevice

through which the eternal light shall fall into the darkness ; and seeks and drinks, and grows even more thirsty. Only in such hearts, in the silent night of sorrow, does prayer begin to tone forth ; only in such hearts is that prayer reached which pours itself out, as the apostle says, in groanings that cannot be uttered.

THOLUCK.

The old Book says, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." I would mend it by saying, The Lord giveth, giveth, giveth. He takes away a form, He gives a spirit ; He takes away the presence, and gives a memory and a hope ; He takes away a friend, and gives an angel ; He takes away the support of an earthly home, and gives the pledge of a heavenly one beyond it ; He takes away the objects of time, and gives eternity ; He takes away the uses of the material and of the fleshly, and gives the great hereafter of blessed life ; He takes away one who walks by our side, He gives us a spirit that is with us here, every-

where and every day, that never leaves the door, that is always sitting in the chair, that is always filling the chamber, that is always bestowing gifts. The Lord takes away the dust, the form, the touch, the embrace ; and gives to us the whole human nature, a fresh revelation of power and truth and greatness and goodness, that was concealed from us by this fine transparency of the flesh. God gives us Death, the great revealer, the great restorer, the true and beautiful friend who tells us what our friends were, and how dear they were ; and awakes in our hearts that dear, deep longing which is the earnest of the immortal life.

Nothing that has truly lived perishes : there is no death to truth, to wisdom, to aspiration. There is no decay to love. It may take a hundred forms, but it will preserve a strong consistency ; and the root that is planted here in the earth will grow and grow until it puts on immortality. It may ripen here, but it will flower in the great world that is to come. Let us not think that God dies when our friend

dies, or that the hand of Providence is closed when our friend's hand drops. Dear friends, let us not be so short-sighted and foolish as to imagine, that, outside the horizon that bounds our eyesight, there is no eternal law, no infinite spirit, no endless love, no perfect goodness, no never-ceasing thought. Out of that hand of God we can never drop; if our bark sink, 'tis to another sea, and that sea is the ocean of divine immortality. Let us, O friends! with manly heart, with cheerfulness, with joy and triumph, stand by the remains of our dearly beloved brother. If he was brave, let us be brave; if he was true, let us try to strengthen ourselves; if he has helped us, let us return the grace by helping our brother as he helped us; and may the spirit that went with him to the end go also to the end with us, that we, too, may meet the inevitable hour, and say that it is blessed.

REV. O. B. FROTHINGHAM.



CLEANSING FIRES.



LET thy gold be cast in the furnace,
Thy red gold, precious and bright ;
Do not fear the hungry fire,
 With its caverns of burning light, —
And thy gold shall return more precious,
 Free from every spot and stain ;
For gold must be tried by fire,
 As a heart must be tried by pain.

In the cruel fire of sorrow,
 Cast thy heart ; do not faint or wail ;
Let thy hand be firm and steady,
 Do not let thy spirit quail :
But wait when the trial is over,
 And take thy heart again ;
For as gold is tried by fire,
 So a heart must be tried by pain.

I shall know by the gleam and glitter
Of the golden chain you wear,
By your heart's calm strength in loving,
Of the fire they have had to bear.
Beat on, true heart, for ever ;
Shine bright, strong golden chain ;
And bless the cleansing fire,
And the furnace of living pain.

A. A. PROCTOR.





SORROW.

SERMON, BY T. COLANI.

(Translated from the French.)



“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”—
JAMES i. 2-4.

THE highest happiness, pure as a cloudless sky, calm as a sea, undisturbed by a single breath of wind, — a perfect happiness is a thing so rare among human beings, that Pagan antiquity looked upon it as a subject of terror, and turned away with horror from the wretch who was laden with such felicity. For

the gods, doubtless, elevated him above the earth only to precipitate him from a higher point, in their anger. And, in truth, this perfect happiness, if it has ever existed elsewhere than in fable, was an anomaly, a sort of monstrosity. No day dawns without bringing to us its portion of uneasiness, of grief, of suffering. You can class all the persons of your acquaintance in one of these three categories : many do not have what they desire, — fortune, honors, health, a position, a family ; others have the good that they wish, but something prevents them from enjoying it completely and tranquilly, and this is generally a fear of losing it, or the ennui which accompanies its possession ; others, finally, have no longer that blessing which made the charm of their lives, and which now, to their torment, they imagine was without alloy. You frequently hear said, "A year ago, ten years ago, before this terrible blow, I was entirely content with my lot ;" or else, "When I shall have made my fortune, when I shall have a home, when I shall have

established my children, I shall have happier days." But do you ever hear, "Now, in this position, nothing is wanting to my wishes"? Men speak much of their past happiness, much of their happiness to come, little or not at all of their present happiness. It is because happiness — that, at least, that we seek outside of ourselves, or a fortunate conjunction of circumstances — is, with few exceptions, a dream. Reality presents us quite a different thing, — pleasures, doubtless, but mingled with distaste; joy, but sadness also; enjoyments, but trials too; tribulations, tears, mourning: our daily bread is, as it were, salted with bitterness. As long as your earthly pilgrimage will last, the pale phantom of sorrow will walk silent at your side, filling you with an indefinable fear by its presence, even when it will no longer chain you with its icy hand. You can no more get rid of it than you can get rid of yourself.

Thus the gospel does not pretend to suppress sorrow. It understands humanity too well to repeat the mad utterance of a haughty

philosophy, "Pain, thou art only a name." Pain, according to the gospel, is much more than a name, — the most real of realities. When St. Paul shows us how God will subject all things to the Son, he says that the last thing that will resist this transformation of the universe will be death, the king of terror, the personification of sorrow. This will last longer than all the rest. Christianity, then, acknowledges seriously the bitter things of life. Yet it gives them a new and divine significance, so that, while feeling them vividly, we can accept them with gratitude, and rejoice as in an excellent gift. The warrior, who sees his blood flow in battle, suffers as much as the daily laborer who wounds himself, a victim to his own carelessness: on either side the physical ill is the same; but the consciousness of a duty nobly accomplished, and the hope of a glorious recompense, give the soldier the sweetest of satisfactions. This gaping wound, in his eyes, is something different from that of mere tortured fibres: it has a meaning; it is

the token of valor. Thus, all is not necessarily painful in sorrow; and this is what allows St. James to begin his sententious Epistle with the lines I have read you. He has just addressed his readers: "James to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting." In the Greek, this last word signifies properly "joy." But in what shall they rejoice, these despised beings whom the world loads with a double opprobrium, because they are Jews by origin, and because they are of the sect of the crucified? Is there not an irony in accosting them with a salutation so gay and worldly at once as this phrase, "joy"? Yes, joy. "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." And he explains himself: it is by these tribulations they will become "perfect and entire." Now he who wishes the end wishes the means. Whoever desires to lift himself to the full stature of man must then submit himself willingly to the yoke of suffering. Brethren, let us consider this admirable saying, and learn from James how tribulation is necessary for our

spiritual education, and how we can make it turn to our advantage.

“Trial,” says our text, “produces patience,” renunciation, sacrifice; trial detaches us from the earth, and this is the first step towards eternal life.

Man, you know, is placed on the confines of two worlds; the world of sense, and the world of spirit. At first, at the moment of birth, the physical life is all-powerful, leaving no place for the moral life, which seems as yet scarcely a germ. But this germ is to develop itself by degrees, to render itself independent of the physical life, and to end even by absorbing it, transforming it, and reducing it to its own service. Ah! well, brethren, without the suffering of the body, never would the spirit become free of its fetters, never should we go beyond the animal instincts. This is humiliating to say, but it is true; for we are much greater sensualists than we dare to avow, and material pleasures have inconceivable attractions for us. Say, conscientiously, do you feel your-

self strong enough to be sure, that a continued satisfaction of the body would not swallow up your soul in a mortal sleep? Do you feel strong enough to do without sickness, and those innumerable little discomforts which sting us incessantly, without precisely making us suffer? For myself, brethren, I should not be willing that all this should be taken from me at any price. I know it too well, hardly should I be freed from it than matter would take an irresistible, perhaps a limitless, ascendancy over me. It is, then, fortunate that God has placed distaste by the side of pleasure, so that the one engenders the other infallibly, each giving a counterpoise to the other. It is happy, too, that God has distributed to the human race, and especially to civilized nations, a certain quantity of evils which force us to seek our happiness higher than in the physical life. Yes, the suffering of the body is good, — very good. When it is feeble, it shakes our materialism; when it is strong, it overthrows it, whether we will or no. The sick man bound

to his couch by weakness, tortured by fever, broken down by sleeplessness, is indeed obliged to renounce pleasure, and to resign himself to live another life than that of the senses.

The body is not, besides, the sole power with which God disputes for our soul, and against which he employs suffering as a powerful dissolvent. We form a portion of society, and we play there a varied part; nothing more legitimate, since God has so ordered it. Only, our reputation, our influence, our fortune, ought to be no more than means, — means for doing good; and, too often, we make of them the end, the sole end, of our efforts. This is why God strikes us in our reputation, our influence, our fortune, in order to detach us from them violently. It is permitted us to seek for ease, to enjoy an honorable fortune, but on the express condition, that we make use of this gold as an instrument for the relief of our brethren. As soon as we amass it for the purpose of heaping it up, in order to count it, to touch it, or even with the intention of creating for our-

selves a life without care or without duty, an epicurean retreat, — we glide over the fatal precipice of egotism. And, if God has pity upon us, he will hasten to chastise us, to render our speculations vain. He will suspend our business affairs, will let our factories stand idle, destroy our harvests; in a word, ruin our fortune; in order to save our souls. So it is by an effort of his grace that he deigns to annihilate our influence in the world, when we abuse it. You desire to occupy a certain place as administrator, judge, or professor; and you might do there much good, effectively. You wish that the crowd would adopt your political sentiments or your religious opinions, and I can believe they might have reason to felicitate themselves. But look at the bottom of your heart, and see, if self, with its pride and cupidity, counts for nothing in this ambition. In this case, the most truly fortunate thing that could happen to you would be for you to strike against the breakers, and to see all your hopes there dashed to pieces. I would say the same

of our reputation. We are certainly right in clinging to the esteem of our fellow-men, since this esteem is like the perfume that gives price to social life. But let us take care that we do not sacrifice our dignity to the desire of shining, our convictions to a wish to please, our conscience to vanity. It would then be a thousand times better to submit to the keenest humiliations, and receive affronts, that, penetrating to the roots of our self-love, might perhaps extirpate it. Doubtless it is sad to be poor, it is sad to be conquered, it is sad to be disgraced. We tremble at contact with these evils, as the body shudders and shrinks beneath the cold knife of the operator; and yet I hesitate not to affirm, that poverty or defeat or shame is from time to time indispensable to repress our worldly spirit.

But to suffer bodily, or in our social relations, does not suffice. There is a point in our being to which the chain that draws us towards evil is yet more firmly riveted; a point, in consequence, upon which God must

bring to bear a suffering more concentrated : this spot is the heart.

It is often repeated, that the Eternal Being forbids us to love too much those who are dear to us, and that, if he strikes us through our affections, it is in order to diminish them. This view, I must say, seems to me little in harmony with the laws of the kingdom of God. It is not forbidden us to love too much, to devote ourselves, to sacrifice and forget ourselves *too much* (this last need scarcely be urged) ; but it is forbidden to love ourselves in others, to seek in the affections our own satisfaction alone, — and no fault is more frequent. How many fathers and mothers there are who cherish their children, and consecrate to their education large sums of money ; who incessantly occupy themselves with them ; and who, under this appearance of love, hide a gross selfishness, since they wish not to render their children happy, but to be happy themselves in their children ! How many married people there are who love passionately husband or

wife, on condition of their bending to every caprice, of abdicating all personality in order to be moulded in their own stamp, to become in their lives a mere piece of furniture! But let us leave such affection, falsely so called, and let us penetrate more deeply into the heart. Does it never happen that we love in our friend just his faults? A little coquetry, a little malice, a little anger, sets off a character admirably, and gives it a certain piquancy. This amuses us. And in how many other such cases do we not place our own passing pleasure above our friend's true happiness! Such a meanness do all those commit, who, dreading to trouble the charm of tender effusions, allow their children, husband, wife, or friend to go straight towards evil, without ever warning them: it matters little that one good quality after another is lost, provided the friend is there, proving by his presence the charm of a fresh emotion.

This selfishness, to which we give ourselves with a sort of abandonment, as though it were

a virtue, can be combated only by a very bitter suffering; and thanks be rendered to God, that He does not spare it us. Who will enumerate the sufferings of the heart? Three thousand years, poets have not ceased to labor in this field, and every day they make a new discovery there. We love, and are not loved; and we suffer. We love, and are loved, and still we suffer; for we are separated by the abyss of space, or the still more deep abyss that circumstances plough up for us. Or else, in the midst of the deepest emotions, a poignant surprise is suddenly awakened; we just discover that the union of souls contains ever something incomplete and terrestrial: perhaps even in the folds of that heart that was believed to be nobleness and devotion itself, there is found some hideous defect. Shall I paint to you what we feel, when, leaning over the being whose life made our only joy, we see the pale, thin face grow yet more pale, and the eyes — those eyes that brought a ray from the soul — languish, dull and fixed? What can

we do then? We moan like the lioness who defends her cub. We plead against the strong God. We argue with him that He is deceived; that it is not us whom He should smite; that He has not the right; that, if He wishes to chastise us, it is not this cherished being whom He should snatch from us. We supplicate him to ravish fortune, health, honors; but that He should leave us this life, that He should suspend his sentence, that He should wait at least a few moments. The prayers are vain. God goes straight to the end, and, with one blow, crops down our felicity. Now, detachment, renunciation, is easy: there is nothing to detach ourselves from, nothing more to renounce. Terrible God! where we found a world of joy, thou hast placed nothingness. Ask not, if we submit: hast thou left us the choice? Thou hast crushed us. Yes, thy arguments are without reply. Yes, we confess that our hearts needed to be torn, since thou hast willed it.

Patience, detachment from the world, is not yet the divine life, but only the soil in which

this life ought to put forth. "That ye may be perfect," says St. James, "let patience have her perfect work."

Avoid, my brethren, the dejection into which so many souls plunge: you would risk there all profit from your trials. They who fall there remain sad, dejected, without vigor or energy; refining upon their sadness, finding a bitter pleasure in renewing, through the imagination, the sense of the blow with which they have been struck. Believe me, this torpor is fatal. At any price, gather up your strength: your suffering would become a sort of habit, that is to say, it would cease to be serious; and (what now strikes you with horror) you would end by affecting sorrow.

Besides, why should you be overwhelmed, all you who pass through tribulation?

Are you an invalid, and are a thousand joys wanting to you? But the joys of the soul are not interdicted you. In limiting you with regard to the body, God has wished to crowd you back, as it were, to the regions of the spirit:

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follow this current that leads towards him, and soon you will perceive that God can make himself felt in our hearts in a manner as positively as material objects place themselves before our eyes. The activity that others direct towards outward things, you will turn within: now, as a Father of the Church has said, the interior things are also the superior. You will experience this; you will acquire a delicacy of feeling of which humanity seems hardly capable; you will feel pleasures, by the side of which sensual enjoyments will appear not only gross, but dull and cold. It has frequently been observed, that those who suffer from long and cruel disease (all other sufferings end by deadening themselves) reach a singular development; that piety unfolds in them into an exquisite flower; that perhaps they alone, here below, have a foretaste of the life to come; and, too, they alone present an image of the man of Gethsemane. Is not such a fate glorious? and is it paid for too dearly with the price of a few torturing pains?

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But, to reach this, it is not enough to submit to suffering, — sombre and passive ; it is necessary to aid it at work in our soul, tearing from before it every root of evil. Oh, you who are smitten in your body, apply yourselves to this inner work ! If God has not given this supreme benediction, if perhaps sufferings too intolerable allow you neither to imagine nor to feel any joy whatever, He will, at least, sustain you enough that your patience may incessantly renew itself, being always living, always true.

And you who are touched in your fortune, your influence, your reputation, ill success appears to be your portion, and all that there is discouraging in the world, — that rock of Sisyphus that is eternally falling back, — it might perhaps be permitted you, you at least, to maintain a mournful resignation. But why so ? Because you have not obtained or have lost an agreeable position, do you believe yourself out of place in the world ? You would have wished to be rich, and, behold, you are

poor; you would have liked to fulfil public duties, and you are a simple citizen; you would have wished to possess the esteem and love of your fellows, and you are hated by all. Ah! well, my brother, poor, simple citizen, hated as you are, be henceforth God's workman. Put your hand to the plough without any personal pre-occupation, without looking back to contemplate the ruins of your other projects, without calculating whether this time you will harvest the fruit of the sweat of your brow. In order to be of God's workers, it is not necessary to have the use of long leisure, or high authority, or great treasures. Bring only your indigence, with the nobleness of a soldier of Christ, and you will already have done much. This generation needs preachers who teach it by their example of frugality and moderation: be one of these preachers by simply showing yourself content with your lot. And since this generation has gone so far as to believe no longer in the strength of convictions, let it see, — you whose services it has

repulsed, and whom it overwhelms with its disdain — let it see that a man's convictions are colors far more sacred on the day of defeat than on the day of victory. But, at the same time, let your constancy show nothing of chagrin, of spite, or misanthropy. Be so much the more gentle and affectionate, the more you are rebuffed. How can you complain of being condemned to inaction, when a career so fine is open for your need of activity? However crushed your life may seem, you can do an immense deal of good; you can be intensely happy.

And you, brothers and sisters, whose hearts bleed with a wound ever new, I do not say to you, "Recover happiness by ceasing to love, or by transporting your love to some other object." For affection is not a flower to be gathered by the roadside, whose perfume we may breathe with delight, and can then fling away with indifference as soon as it has faded in our grasp. But I say to you, "Recover your happiness by loving yet more, with a love

more disinterested, with a love that is active and devoted."

If, in smiting you through the being whom you cherish most deeply, God has, nevertheless, favored you, by leaving him still with you, your conduct is traced clearly. Does he suffer? Consecrate yourself to softening his sufferings, and especially to sustaining him; which is more difficult than might be believed. Await no reward. Be careful to keep no kind of account current in which you will inscribe, on one side, your own pains that you have taken, and, on the other, the testimonies of his gratitude. Serve him with no after-thought of happiness, and you will see that your sacrifice will bring it home to you. But, perhaps, his faults, his vices, cost you tears. The task will be much harder; but it will not be above your powers. It seems to me almost impossible that by force of true charity, tender and persevering, you will not succeed in bringing him back into the right way. Let there be no trace of self-love in your affection. Love, as

God loves us, for us, for our own good, and not for his own satisfaction. Love without feebleness and without waywardness, always incapable of compromising with conscience; but constantly ready to give *yourself*, always filled with an unchanging hope. Hope is the force reserved especially for this trial.

Is not this, too, a consolation for you who are separated from a friend by the abyss of the tomb? You know that sooner or later you will rejoin him; and very often you sigh with impatience, thinking of death. But until then it is necessary to live, day after day. Perhaps with Job you cry, "Wherefore is life given to those who are bitter in soul, who rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?" Why does God leave you life? In order that your affection may purify itself, like gold in the crucible, freeing itself by the fire of tribulation from all alloy of selfishness. It was easy for you to love when you enjoyed the sweet talks, the long unfoldings of soul to soul, the indefinable charm of

meeting face to face : you will learn now to love in silence and solitude and darkness, without any thing to recall that such a heart is comprehending you. You had, until now, a thousand pleasing ways of showing and expressing your affection ; you will henceforth have but one, and that is an austere one : it is to labor incessantly for your own improvement, to fulfil your duties, great and small, with a severe conscience. As soon as your love is no longer selfish, it will no longer contain any thing selfishly exclusive : purified and fortified by the Holy Spirit, without ceasing to be personal, it must needs overflow from your heart upon the world in a shower of gentleness, patience, benevolence, and charity.

Of all men who have ever traversed the earth, none has suffered so much as Christ ; because in suffering, above all things, did we need a divine guide. His body was scourged, put upon the cross, pierced with nails, exposed to a burning sun, until life was crushed out from it by excess of pain. And already had

he known all the bitterness in which society can steep us ; poverty, with scorn and anguish heaped upon it ; want of success, with its regrets and agitations ; hatred, with its insults and its calumnies. Were the pains of the heart lacking, when his mother and his brothers wished to take possession of him as of a wretched madman ; when he saw his apostles persevere in their gross, carnal views ; when he understood that one of the twelve was preparing to sell him for thirty pieces of silver ; and when, in Gethsemane, he begged his three disciples in vain to watch one hour with him ; and when, in the Prætorium, he perceived among the soldiers and priests only one friendly face, and this friend denied him even three times ? "The Lord," says the Scripture, "turning, then looked upon Peter ; and Peter went out and wept bitterly." I believe it, indeed : from what eyes would tears have not been wrung at a glance of such ineffable sadness ?

But see, too, in the midst of all these tribulations, how strong Christ was. What activity,

what energy, what valor! And then what serenity, calmness, and sweetness! See what a man can be and can do amid the most vivid trials. Or rather it is through these trials that Jesus became our Saviour; and it is through our trials, too, my brothers, that we shall be like him. Yet it is not enough that we are smitten. We may suffer enormously, and yet remain selfish, sensual, perverse. If the most unhappy were necessarily the most virtuous, the lower stratum of the social world were a school of sanctity. For nowhere is there greater suffering. Affliction elevates us only when, by our own consent, it works patience; and then, if, with our own assistance, patience has its perfect work. It requires our own will.

But, alas! who wills it? Some, to reduce as low as possible the office of grief, cease to live, and set themselves to vegetate in a hot-house, where they stop up all the chinks with care, for fear a breath shall disturb their quiet. Others live in the open air, take part in what-

ever is agitating, even provoke suffering; but, as soon as they feel its sting, you see them ask of the universe all its distractions, in order to direct their thoughts and to forget. Ah! it is not only for the evils of the body that a method has been invented to render ourselves insensible.

Brethren, let us never use this *moral chloroform*, but let us allow — oh! resolutely allow suffering to penetrate our souls, and transfigure us into the image of Christ.





THE soul that suffers is stronger than the soul that rejoices. Remember this, also, that you are bound to suffer whatever is put upon you. And it does by no means follow, that, because it is *not the work of God, it is not His will*. This is a comfort we need not deny ourselves, through pride, as we deny ourselves the comfort of our kind.

E. SHEPARD.



I HAVE also felt much perplexed as to what submission really is, whether we ought to *like* all that happens to us, as well as to take it without complaining. But Hugh says, submission does not mean we are to call bitter things sweet, or to try to feel them so; but that we are to take them, however we dislike them, without a murmur, being sure that the bitterest are really good, because God sends them.

MRS. KITTY TREVILYAN.



FROM LETTERS OF JOUBERT TO A
FRIEND.



I OFFER your affliction to your reason and to time : these alone can help you. In the name of Heaven, do not reject the future, and let the present pass on. You have met with irreparable losses, but you have not yet reached the middle of your career ; and life, in its extent, may offer you unexpected compensations. Do not commit such an outrage upon Providence as to believe that it has exhausted its treasures for you, and that it has not still some with which to make you amends. Great gifts may yet await you. Nature, which is full of

pains, is full, too, of consolations. You would be unwise to repulse them. Until they present themselves, accept, at least, the light distractions offered you by all the objects that surround you. There is in that part of our moral faculties that we call our sensibility, a disposition to excess, a sort of irritability that needs to be tempered by the pure and peaceable enjoyments of the senses. If the senses are held in inaction, the soul becomes dry as a plant without dew. I beg you, mingle some sensations with your sentiments; love some odors, some colors, sounds, and savors, or you will be far from wise. God has blest us with varied gifts; some He has created for the soul, some for the body. Would you dare to accept but one-half of the goods his hand offers, and disdain and reject the other? Surely you would be punished for it.

For myself, if I may venture to mention myself as example, I fulfil, as I best can, under all the circumstances, the duty of being happy. I am always as much so as I can be; and, if I

am but little, I say to God, "Thou seest, Lord, I cannot do more. Pardon it for the sake of my infirmity, and the course of events."

I do not pretend to be insensible, indeed, to any of the accidents of life; and I should be sorry to be so. But, in the infinite multitude of ways by which we can be affected, there is not one of these events, happy or sad, that is not capable of producing in us a sublime and noble sentiment. It is this sentiment that I seek. I rapidly pass by all the others to stay only at this. Thus my sorrows, as well as my joys, are eternal. When my soul has been able to attain this, it clings to it, and for ever. Every day I am conscious of some that have lasted from my cradle. But these pure griefs are as good as joy; and I know, by my own experience, that affliction even is no enemy to happiness; that is to say, to the state in which the soul finds a constant satisfaction in itself. It matters little if it is content with events, so long as its way of submitting to them renders it content with itself. The soul finds content

by the perfecting of a sensibility, which, well taught and guided, knows how to extract honey from every thing. It can be found even in pain.

But you fear, you say, in accepting consolation, you may outrage and wound the *dear shades*, the *sacred manes*, of your friends. Here is an exaggeration of language and of sentiment that I should treat with no consideration.

No honest affection can wound hearts that are noble. If in our terrestrial imperfection we feel jealousy, it must cease and fall away with the clay that environs our nature. Beyond this life, all is purity, all is goodness. Ah! even in this world, one might find a soul so great as not to be wounded by so kind a sentiment, if, in the rude envelope in which our hearts are hidden, and in the blindness in which our pride steepes us, we did not fancy that the love of which others than ourselves is the object is an exclusion, and humiliating to the love that is given to us; if we did not sup-

pose that in giving to others something is taken from us, that we are exiled when they are admitted, that we are despoiled when others come in for a share. We wish to be loved alone, for fear of not being loved at all.

But celestial intelligences feel very differently : the idea of "sharing," which for us in our blindness is inseparable from the idea of diminution, because one does not operate without the other in the material objects that our hands touch incessantly, offers to these clear-sighted beings only an impression of extent that pleases and rejoices them.

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None of the letters that you have written me have afflicted me as much as the last. I see, then, how deep is your wound ; and, in some degree, how irremediable. Your soul has taken sides with your desolation, and reasons as that pleases. All turns to sadness for you, and your reflections tend only to draw from every thing some subject for dejection. I have taken the wrong road. I have occupied you

too much with your misfortune, wishing to render it lighter for you. Your whole soul is sick ; but, since I have imprudently provoked it to reason upon its malady, I will not leave some of your observations without answer, nor those opinions unexplained which I have not sufficiently developed.

No : the friends that we have lost are not honored by such excessive grief, which honors no one ; because it exposes more the weakness and the stubbornness of those who display it than the grandeur of the loss to which they have submitted. There is a certain lady of fashion, who, for the death of a child four days old, has lamented more, has wept more, and persisted in deeper show of grief, than is done for beings whose life was of the greatest value. What honors those who are no more is a moderate grief, whose very moderation permits it to be as lasting as the life of him who feels it, because it exhausts neither his soul nor body ; a lofty grief, that allows the occupations and even the relaxations of life to pass on in its

very presence ; a calm grief, which sets us at war neither with fate nor with the world nor with ourselves, and which pervades a soul at peace, in the moments of its leisure, without interrupting its intercourse with the living and the dead.





THE BATTLE SUMMER.



THE summer came, full of anxiety and dread. It was the terrible summer, the saddest of the war, when the army lay before Richmond, when we were waiting and waiting, and to all our expectations there came only a sad answer and the news of death. The sad message came to us too; sorrow upon sorrow. I have heard that it is often so; that, when one sorrow comes, another follows in its train. I cannot say if it is so, and who could venture? I know not who can read the law of such things, except in this, to find that all must be for good.

Perhaps one grief gives the strength for bearing another, and brings along certain consolations, opens certain fountains of strength unknown before. However it is, with us grief came upon grief, after many happy years.

It was a time of darkness for all. It was hard to look forward and hope, and we seemed to be all moving in a heavy dream. For one of the qualities of a terrible dream is its utter hopelessness. We seem, then, to be bound hand and foot, or we are forced to run, or compelled into some inevitable destiny. And so, in return, all very hopeless times seem like fearful dreams. Could we only wake from them! But where is the hope?

Our waking came with the news of another death, — Gertrude's oldest boy. He died, brave to the last, in the midst of battle. Our boy! This was all we could know of him. All! And was not this enough? It is happy when the death corresponds to the life, and the life is only an illustration of the death.

When the life has been courageous and unselfish, then we can believe that the death is brave and noble. We need not ask for any death-bed scene nor words of parting; for the brave act speaks better.

"God be thanked that he could die so," we say in our agony, while we knew, that, as he had lived bravely always, he could only die so. This is a strange sorrow we feel for those who die for the sake of a great cause. It is a sorrow mingled with a great pride, if they belong to us. In its bitterest moments, we feel that we could not have it otherwise.

A great gift has he given in offering his life. He showed how precious it was in the very act of giving it away.

"Wo unto that man by whom the offence cometh!" I said to Gertrude, in thinking of the evil that had caused the war, and the authors of the evil. She changed the words. "*Alas* for them!" she said. She had grown very gentle. The sorrow was sad: to have caused the sorrow had been far more bitter.

Her suffering was too deep for bitterness ; and her other loss did help in bearing this. It would have been so hard for *him* to part with his oldest son. "But how proud he would have been !"

There were many others to suffer with us. Certain words came to us to strengthen us, that we often repeated.

"Think it not strange, concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you."

A great sufferer said this long ago. This *fiery trial*, as it was, he found *no strange thing*, and would have us find it so. And more still, he says, "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings."

And this death of the young and brave was to become no strange thing to all of us. Ah, how many hearts were torn with sorrow, how many homes made desolate !

A new, strange thing it was at first, indeed ; for this was our first lesson in the horrors of war. It was hard, at first, to consent to such

a thing, that war should be ; harder still to find how many of the choicest must be sacrificed to it, that just these must fall for the sake of the purification of the country. "Rejoice!" How could we rejoice? how could the mother be willing to part with her son, and the wife with her husband — joyfully? Yet it was so. In the midst of the most hopeless days, they could rejoice. But of this very sorrow came courage and joy. They had become partakers of Christ's sufferings; they who gave their lives, and those who must mourn for them.

For Jesus said, "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." And for us, all these have offered up their lives; to keep away war and bloodshed from our firesides and homes. For others more helpless, too, they have laid down their lives, — the young leader in the same grave with those whose rights and liberty he was defending. What death more glorious! What life in death!

And we, too, must glory in being partakers

of such sufferings. Listen to the words of Christ:—

“Verily I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

“He that loveth his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s shall keep it unto life eternal.”

We must all some time part with those dearest to us. We must all die ourselves. It is out of the *manner* of our death and life that grows the life eternal.





GOD IS PRESENT IN OUR TROUBLE.



O GOD! thou hast cast us off; thou hast scattered us; thou hast been displeased. O turn thyself to us again! Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it. Heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.

Thou hast showed thy people hard things; thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.

Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth, that thy beloved may be delivered: save with thy right hand, and hear me.

Hear my cry, O God! attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee: when my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.

O thou that hearest prayer! unto thee shall all flesh come.

By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation! who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea.





IN PRESENCE OF BATTLE.



BELIEVE me, nowhere does one think more rarely of dying than in camp among the dying. Man is here a flame, not ashes. The colors are seen borne along, waving over the current of battle, but high above the graves that it cuts through, and those who are opening the graves. And the throb of death, though it were our own, appears only as one more motion, the last, against the enemy. Strength and right here elevate the feelings: there is no chamber anguish to stifle them. In the midst of the kingdom of ideas and

deeds, which nowhere stand so near each other as in battle, is the fleshly life easily given up; and if a forlorn child or a trembling old man stands calling for your saving hand, then you go forth against the barbarous horde like a lion, and the flash of powder seems like the silver-flash of life.

J. P. RICHTER.





THE DIVINE

LIFE.



THE divinest life the All-Father ever sent into this world, — I will make no irreverent comparison, — the life of his own Holy Spirit, for his own highest designs, continued here but a little over thirty years; yet was it long enough for its own perfecting, and readiness to be glorified, long enough for doing all the Father's will, and long enough for sending light, comfort, and a saving power over the world and through the ages. And those who have most resembled that highest one, how often do we see them fade in death, or rather

flower up into immortality, in the dew of their youth, or the prime of their beauty and power ! Heaven wants them, and opens its pearly gates for them ; and they go up in the light of the morning sun to be crowned, and forwarded on their eternal course.

And this life, over whose close we meditate and pray and weep to-day, — do not murmur that it has been short in the reckoning of our earthly calendar. Think rather how rich, how beautiful, how highly inspired and nobly spent it has been, — and still is ; for is it not here still, here in its dear and sacred memories, and all the sweet companionships of the spirit ? Was he ever so dearly loved as to-day ? Was he ever so near as now to those to whom he has been always nearest ?

REV. GEORGE PUTNAM.



THE SOLDIER'S DEATH IN BATTLE.

SERMON, BY F. BRETSCHNEIDER.

(Translated from the German.)

“And, when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And, at the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani! which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias. And one ran, and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down. And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom. And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.”

— MARK xv. 33-39.

WHEN we see beloved friends snatched from our side; when into the silent kingdom of the dead is borne the youth in

the bloom of his years, or the revered head of a family in the fulness of power and activity, we mourn deeply, and our sorrow flows in a stream of hot tears. But, at the same time, we find a consolation in the thought that their death was not owing to human passions or follies, but that it followed the customary course of nature ; and that the beloved one met with the death-struggle peacefully, on his bed, surrounded by friends, and consoled by their words and support.

But if the wickedness of a murderer, the violence of an assassin, has forcibly shortened the life of an innocent being ; if we greet the pale corpse of him, who, going forth as a peaceful wanderer, met with death from the hand of human wickedness, then our heart shudders before the terrible lot of such a victim. For he was obliged to breathe out his life violently through the crime of his brother ; not in the arms of dear friends, but beneath the blows of a bloodthirsty wretch ; not with the consoling sympathy of love, but amid the fren-

zy of anger and rage. Wherefore, O Infinite Goodness! do our bowed hearts sigh? Wherefore must this innocent man be subject to the wickedness of his murderer?

Yet, dear friends, what is the loss of one man, compared with that of hundreds and thousands? Compare the sight of one murdered man with that of a battle-field, where thousands lie dead, or in the death-struggle, and where their life has been suddenly cut off by violence. What must our hearts feel at such a sight! How anxiously should we cry to heaven, Wherefore, O wise and infinite Providence! must these thousands be sacrificed to death, and in such a way, — through the hands of their own brothers?

* For twenty years has war raged over one part of the world: over the whole country are battle-fields moistened with man's blood. Restlessly rages now the sword of war in many

* This was preached in the year 1812, when the French army, together with the German, was turning towards Russia.

lands, and a new spectacle of destruction threatens to disclose itself.

Thousands will find their end in this great struggle. The conquerors of our people draw near for this strife, and the angel of death will surely enter among them. Can we be indifferent, brethren, to this destined sacrifice? Should it not fill us with pain and sorrow?

Yet remember that you live in a world where the holiest and the noblest are often victims to human violence and cruelty, or at least appear so; in a world where peace has not its home, but strife; where even the Son of God, when he brought the blessings of God to mankind, found death upon the cross. Look upon this death of your Lord, to the solemnization of which this day is consecrated. It was far more painful this death; far more cruel and extraordinary, than the end of those who pour out their blood upon the battle-field. But it has some striking resemblances to the death of the fallen warrior, which are instructive, and consoling for us too, if we consider them closely.

It will be worthy of the day of our Lord's death to compare the death of Jesus to that of so many bloody victims of war; and it will bring trust to our hearts to discover, in this comparison, reasons for consolation for the fate of our brethren who are doomed to death.

The evangelist describes the last bitter struggle of the Redeemer, his death-struggle. The description, simple and unadorned as it is, strikes every feeling heart, that tries to picture this noblest of men. He was wounded painfully; surrounded by a rude, unfeeling crowd, whom he would fain have benefited; mocked by scorning enemies, and now he is dying a lingering death. More terrible was his lot, more bitter than that of the warrior falling in battle. For he fights on for this booty of his life; but Jesus could only suffer. He finds, when he falls, often some consoler who lightens the struggle of death; but Jesus had not one to console him. He dies in the field of glory and honor, and his name will be held sacred among the brave; but Jesus died a shameful death, —

that of a despised criminal. The soldier falls by the side of noble companions in arms; but Jesus died surrounded by malefactors thrust out from society. Yet dissimilar as is the manner of their death in many respects, on the other side is the resemblance great between the death of Jesus and that of the fallen soldier.

First, let us consider in what does this resemblance consist. Then what consolation can we draw from it for the death of the victims of war.

I. The resemblance does not lie deeply concealed. We find it in these points: that Jesus was in the bloom of his years; that he was forced to die a violent and painful death, as a victim to human passions, and with claims to happiness and reward all unfulfilled.

They were taken away in the bloom of their years. In his thirty-third year, at that age of fresh life when the full power of man has just developed itself, at a time when his capabilities were at their height, with all those powers for teaching and making happy that

world to which his blessed activity was giving a new form, — in this very time did the wickedness of his enemies snatch Jesus away, shortening his days, and drawing him violently to his grave, in the very current of a life full of activity and beauty. Similar to this is the fate of most soldiers who fall on the battle-field. Most of them stand in the fairest bloom of their youth. They are youths who have scarcely left the shelter of their parental homes; men, in the fulness of their strength, and gifted by nature with a blooming health, which promises them every claim to a long life. They are at the age when the powers of the body and soul are at their freshest, the claims upon life and happiness at their strongest, and the hold upon hope and joy is the firmest. These, too, does destiny snatch away in the midst of a life full to its brim. It smites them down in the midst of their course.

Again, Jesus died, not in the course of nature, not in the arms of cherishing, consoling love, but by a violent and very painful death.

It was not to the strength of disease, not to the weakness of age, nor the exhaustion of his powers in the service of duty or of mankind, that Jesus yielded up his life; but on the cross did he let loose the blood of that noble body, and wounds the most painful forced him to taste the bitterness of death drop by drop, and rent with violence the ties that bound him to life. He had not the consolation of dying in the arms of his friends or his loving mother; no friendly counsel, no loving help, lightened the pain of his death-agony: forsaken by too timid friends, surrounded by an unfeeling mob, mocked by revengeful enemies, he died without sympathy, without consolation, without love or help, so that he cried out from the depth of his soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And how it must have heightened his sorrow, and embittered his last hour, to have left his mother, whose joy he was, all unconsolated behind; to have forsaken his friends and disciples, who needed him still so sorely!

Look now to the victims of war : their death is like the death of Jesus. They, too, do not die quietly in their beds, with strength gradually failing ; but violently does the sword or the ball rend the firm threads of their blooming life. They, too, often shed their blood in wounds that let the bitter cup of their death empty itself drop by drop : they, too, die far from their fatherland, far from their own : they too, in their last moments, have no alleviation, no consolation, no help : they, too, in their death-struggle, are not seldom exposed to the ill-treatment and cruelty of an embittered enemy ; and often leave behind friends, who through their death are thrown into mourning, — parents to whom they were consolation and joy, wives and children whose protectors they were and ought to have been.

And Jesus died as a victim to human passions. It is well known that a part of the Jews — Pharisees and Sadducees, especially — hated the Redeemer bitterly, because he, the incorruptible and undismayed friend of truth and

virtue, disclosed their crimes and their hypocrisy unsparingly ; and they feared, if he should be recognized as the Messiah, to lose their influence over the people. Thus it was to envy, ambition, revenge, and other such passions, that Jesus died a victim. And is it otherwise with soldiers falling in battle? Are they not victims to human passions? It is difficult to find a reasonable ground for plunging mankind into the necessity of carrying on war. It is far more difficult to think it possible, that nations and rulers, on either side, can claim to lay the causes of their strife upon grounds of justice and equity, if they would only listen as willingly to the voice of reason as to the voice of passion. It is the passions of men that kindle war ; and this terrible evil brings its burden especially on the nation whose passions have been the original cause of the war : on this nation is charged the guilt of all the blood that is shed, and all the victims of war fall as victims to its passions.

Jesus died, too, with claims upon happiness

and reward all unfulfilled. Jesus, our Master, could make every claim to the fairest joys of life. In the short period of his life, he had accomplished much that was good and great; had won much for his friends, his country, and posterity: he had been the benefactor of many thousands; he might, had he lived longer, have been their benefactor in a still higher degree, and have enlarged his circle of influence over his whole nation and other nations, and might claim all the fruit that the blossoms of a noble and useful life promise and deserve. But these blossoms withered beneath the hand of death; these fruits, the cross snatched from him; the world was still owing him his life's deserts.

So is it with the greater part of those who fall in war. There are, it is true, some unworthy ones among them, for whom it may seem a punishment well deserved that they were cut off by the sword; but the greater part of those who fall are men who can make every claim to earthly promise. The wide field of life still

offers to them many a garland of joy, — quiet, enticing happiness in the bosom of domestic life ; the peace of the secure citizen : the whole expanse of permitted joys, full of beauty, lies like a fair meadow spread before their hopeful gaze. Only one thing separates them from this longed-for bliss of peaceful life, — the years which they have consecrated to the service of arms, to the defence of their fatherland. But that peace, towards which they were looking, is not to be theirs. The battle-cry sounds ; the angel of death snatches them away ; and, like the vanishing image of a dream, the happiness and reward of life fades from their fainting eyes.

I have said enough to show, that the dying Redeemer resembles in many respects those who die as innocent victims to war.

Let us now gather courage by considering this resemblance on its instructive and consoling side.

We can see that Jesus, though he died in the bloom of his youth, had yet reached the goal

of his earthly life. Great was the day's work that the Lord was to accomplish, greater than was ever set for any mortal before or after him. He was to cause the light of divine truth to dawn upon those who walked in darkness, and who sat in the shadow of death ; to destroy the mastery of error and superstition, of sin and folly : he was to set up the kingdom of truth, goodness, and hope ; and to carry on the high work of the redemption of the human race and its blessedness for ever. A great, an extraordinary work,—greater than it would appear possible for any human life to enter upon and accomplish. And yet only three years were granted to Jesus for its vast objects. In his thirtieth year, he entered upon his great work ; and, in his thirty-third, he died upon the cross. Who would not have believed that God indeed had forsaken him, and the whole aim of his life had been frustrated by his early death? Yet this was not the case. Though he died in the bloom of his years, yet he had lived long enough for his great

work, and had reached the aim for which he lived on earth.

So, too, the soldier, though he is snatched away in the fulness of his years, may have reached the aim of his earthly life. For what is the aim for which mortals are born? What is the prize for which they strive as this life's booty? It is not merely to live, and to live so long that the body outlives itself, and of itself decays and crumbles away. Neither is it that we run through a certain course of changes; that we all become men, fathers of families, and aged gray-beards. For to have grown old means not to have lived; else would the existence of dead rocks, that have seen centuries pass by, appear preferable to the soul-inspired drama of human life. Neither can it be the aim of our earthly existence to drink in pleasures, and the fulness of our desires, though many would willingly persuade us so. For it is not the desire and the joys of wanton pleasure that unfold the rich powers of the human soul, or form them, and bring them

nearer to completion. It is only too apparent, that the Creator of this earth we inhabit made it not merely for a scene of joy, but rather for discipline and improvement; and therefore he made it a theatre of many sorrows and struggles. This only can we acknowledge as the *highest* aim of our earthly life, to perfect ourselves, to prepare and discipline our souls for a more complete existence. With this aim did the Son of God come upon earth; for this he died upon the cross.

But, dear friends, to reach this object of our earthly life, must we wait for manhood? must we grow gray? The wise man rightly says, "Honorable age is not that which standeth in the length of time, nor that is measured by the number of years. But wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age."

It is true the wisdom of the gray-beard may be riper, his virtue firmer, his power of overcoming the world and living to God stronger. But the youth who is cut off by the

sword slumbers not ; he is active in a higher field of life ; he will there, perhaps, stride forwards more speedily to perfection than would have been possible for him here. He has, by his early death, lost nothing in this incomplete world that he will not find in the fields of immortality.

But is it not always to be deplored, that the falling soldier, though he may have fulfilled the purpose of his life, must yet bleed as a victim to human passions ?

Jesus, our Lord, bled as sacrifice to human passions, but in appearance only. He died in reality in consequence of God's unrecognized beneficent designs. The nearest cause of his death was, it is true, no other than the hatred and revenge of his enemies, — the result of human passions ; but these passions were blind instruments in the hands of God. For, according to the decree of the Heavenly Father, Jesus was to die this death ; by this, he was to fulfil the holy work of redemption, and found a reconciliation by which we should

become heirs of a new life and eternal blessedness. He seems to have bled on the cross only from the hatred of his enemies ; but he died according to the holy decrees of God. So, too, fall the soldiers in battle. It is true the human passions, that light up such destructive wars, were the first cause of their death ; but even these passions stood at the service of Divine Providence. It is the decree of Divine Wisdom, that most of what is good on earth must spring from destruction and dissolution. As in nature, so in the world of man. Millions of plants and animals must turn to dust in order to form the fruitful soil which covers the surface of the earth, and nourishes countless millions of living beings. Storms and tempests must arise, in order to render the air pure, healthy, and fruitful. The earth must be wounded and torn, and all the grass and weeds must be rooted from it, in order that the field may be covered with the blessing of grain. So is it, my friends, with the world of humanity. We must labor, — with all our strength must we

labor for life, and its every enjoyment. Pain and loss, even agony, it is that makes us wise. Even the Son of God could open the way for us to eternal happiness only through suffering. Destruction, war, and other great calamities, are what give new life to mankind, and with their violent throbs better the condition of the world. Even the great battle of a nation, carried on for many years, is a period when mankind passes through great sufferings to a new majesty, even if our eyes are too short-sighted to look into the purposes of Providence, and our life too transient to see them carried out. But for these purposes, and not for the passions of men, did all those thousands bleed whom the sword of war has mowed to earth ; for these purposes will all those bleed whom war must snatch away in the future. They serve no human leader but the Lord of all Lords and the King of all Kings. They fall, not before the decrees of earth, but those of heaven.

But you will say, brethren, how little consolation is there in this for them, for us, that just

they must be the victims ; that *these* must die so painful a death, while their brothers will pass away quietly in their beds, nursed lovingly and carefully ; that they must see all their claims to the joy of life destroyed, while their brothers taste peacefully all the happiness of life ! What have these done, that they must sacrifice the happiness of their life for the good of posterity ? What can make amends to them for such a sacrifice ? What can give our wounded hearts balsam and consolation ?

Let us look to the Lord, the Beginner and the Finisher of our faith. He both knew the joy, and suffered the cross ; he died a sad, painful death ; he died with claims unfulfilled, — claims to the happiness and the joy of life.

Again : the Divine Providence was able to make him complete amends. "Through suffering," so he himself said to his friends, after his resurrection, "through suffering must the Son of God pass on to his glory." For all that he suffered, for all that he lacked, did his Father reward him beyond measure. For God awak-

ened him from the dead, and raised him to heaven : He has given him a name that is above all names, and has set him to be Ruler and Judge of his redeemed, — over the living and the dead. Those, too, who, in the counsels of God, have lost their lives in bloody warfare, the goodness of the Heavenly Father will richly reward. It is true, there may be among them those who are unworthy and stained with crime, who may look upon it as a righteous punishment, if they are cut off by the sword. But the greater number of these fallen warriors have not deserved the suffering and agony, and the early, bloody death they have met with. But God will reward them as He rewarded Jesus in his sufferings. For their agony in the last moment of their life, for their unfulfilled claims upon this life, they will find hereafter a rich reparation. For, "if we die with Jesus, so shall we live with him ; if we suffer, then shall we reign with him."* Yes, the immeasurable universe of that God who is love is not too

* 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

poor to make up to us a thousand fold for every joy that is snatched from us here, in the dwellings of the immortal; his eternity is not too small in joys to make amends for the sufferings of a few moments of terror. For no eye hath seen, nor hath ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God hath prepared for those who love him, when He leads them out from the storms of this life into eternal peace.

Then let the concealed future bring sorrows and anguish and death: we will not be terrified. Then, though death may conquer in the dark valleys of earth, and demand its youthful and its bloody victims; though the scourge of war sweep devastatingly over thousands of lives, let us not be terrified, let us not murmur! For our lives lie in thy hands, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. To thee do all creatures live and die. Nothing can separate us from thee and thy kingdom. Thou hast prepared for us, thy redeemed, after the hard struggle of this life, a dwelling of pure joy in the fields of

eternal peace. Then shall we, with Jesus, our friend, rest from the bitter struggle that rent soul from body. Then will the remembrance of all the terrors of this life seem like a heavy dream, out of which we shall wake to blessedness; and, overwhelmed with joy, we shall acknowledge in our stammering words what the song of praise from the just made perfect echoes out through heaven, "Lord, the sufferings of the past time are not worthy to be compared with the glory beyond measure that is revealed in us."





A CHILD'S DEATH.



THOU touchest us lightly, O God! in our grief;
But how rough is thy touch in our prosperous
hours!

All was bright; but thou camest, so dreadful and
brief,
Like a thunder-bolt falling in gardens of flowers.

My children! my children! they clustered all round
me,
Like a rampart which sorrow could never break
through;
Each change in their beautiful lives only bound me
In a spell of delight which no care could undo.

But the eldest, O Father! how glorious he was,
With the soul looking out through his fountain-like
eyes!

Thou lovest Thy Sole-born; and had I not cause
The treasure thou gavest me, Father, to prize?

But the lily-bed lies beaten down by the rain,
And the tallest has gone from the place where he
grew, —

My tallest! my fairest! Oh, let me complain!
For all life is unroofed, and the tempests beat
through.

I murmur not, Father: my will is with thee;
I knew at the first that my darling was thine.
Hadst thou taken him earlier, O Father! — but see!
Thou hadst left him so long, that I dreamed he was
mine.

Thou hast taken the fairest; he was fairest to me.
Thou hast taken the fairest; 'tis always thy way.
Thou hast taken the dearest; was he dearest to
thee?

Thou art welcome, thrice welcome; — yet woe is
the day!

Thou hast honored my child by the speed of thy
choice ;

Thou hast crowned him with glory, o'erwhelmed
him with mirth :

He sings up in heaven with his sweet sounding
voice,

While I, a saint's mother, am weeping on earth.

Yet oh for that voice which is thrilling through
heaven,

One moment my ears with its music to slake !

Oh, no ! not for worlds would I have him regiven,

Yet I long to have back what I would not retake.

I grudge him, and grudge him not. Father, thou
knowest

The foolish confessions of innocent sorrow :

It is thus, in thy husbandry, Saviour, thou sowest

The grief of to-day for the grace of to-morrow.

Thou art blooming in heaven, my blossom, my
pride ;

And thy beauty makes Jesus and Mary more glad :

Saints' mothers have sung when their eldest-born
died,

Oh why, my own saint, is thy mother so sad ?

Go, go with thy God, with thy Saviour, my child !
Thou art His, I am His, and thy sisters are His ;
But to-day thy fond mother with sorrow is wild,
To think that her son is an angel in bliss !

Oh ! forgive me, dear Saviour, on heaven's bright
shore,
Should I still in my child find a separate joy !
While I lie in the light of thy face evermore,
May I think heaven brighter, because of my boy !

F. W. FABER.





THE DISCIPLINE OF USELESSNESS.



IN the re-action of the Christianity of our day, of *muscular* Christianity, our prayers, all our books of devotion, share in the earnest appeal to active duties. The poor invalid, with broken heart, day after day listens to the exhortations to work by way of prayer; sees with a sigh how the idler is despised, and what a burden the shiftless and lazy are upon society. There is very little room for the weak and the useless in *our* world: even the books that only the invalids have time to read, preach the economies of nature and the vice of idleness.

This literature is far more healthy indeed for the sick and the feeble than weak books framed only for them. The inspiring breezes of activity are as necessary for them as for the busy workers. Such strengthening doses can rouse from listlessness, and help the sick man to cure himself. Religion is not merely a binding up of the soul ; but it must bind up the body too, and is its wisest physician. The fresh blast of the spring air must be let into the sick room, and must blow out the dust from the curtains, and purify the dead atmosphere. And the freshness of active life must come in. The sick life and the outside life must not be separated. The one is as much "a life" as the other ; and each needs the other.

Only in our sick rooms, in acknowledging this glory of usefulness, we must remember that there are consolations even in uselessness. These are very hard for the weak heart of the invalid to find. "The use of uselessness," — can such a thing be?

And what would become of us, if such a

thing could not be? What does the bravest and the strongest accomplish in comparison with his desires? Can the most active benefactor look back with satisfaction on his work? If he could, how despicable would he be! What are our human efforts to create happiness, all put together, in comparison with the joy that a blade of grass gives? Indeed, how can we ever balance use and uselessness? How can we ever judge a life? How can we tell, with our shortness of sight, what are defeats and what are victories? Even Christ said, "It is finished," in the hour from which Christianity took its date. The few hours of a little child's life, — how precious they are to us! Would we change them for one of the stars?

What have we ever done ourselves in the world? Is it so very much missed? Have we a right to complain that our handful of the gleaning has dropped out of the sheaf unnoticed?

These questionings are not the consolation I .

would bring forward. It would be no consolation in our uselessness to dwell upon all the failures in the world, nor on our own pettiness. But such questionings lead us to put a true test to the activity of life, and show us how it is that *mere* doing is not living. But what is?

To us the trouble is, that our idle life *looks* very easy. The hard workers would like sometimes to change with us. They would be so glad of a few hours' rest, — a *few hours*. But they gladly get up from it, when any pleasure or duty calls, while we must stay. By this time, we have learned to know we would willingly decline the pleasure: such sweets look cloying to us now; but the struggle is in giving up help for *others*, — hours of work at the Sanitary Commission or the hospital, and all the while seeing the workers wearing themselves out, day after day, with too much work, and to know that we cannot come to the rescue, that we are not even the forlorn hope, that we have no strength to offer, — shall never have.

We must see the work we might have done, left undone. What is worse, we must see others take upon themselves our work, when they have quite as much of their own as they ought to bear. We grow very sharp-sighted in these unoccupied hours, and can see what is needed here and there, and have not earned the right to mend the work. We have an outside view of life, as a bystander looks upon a game of chess; but we cannot even move a pawn.

Besides all this, what is worse still, our helplessness adds to the work of the world. The care of us makes one more care. Ah! though it may look easy, all this is very hard to bear. It is hard when we misconceive our powers, and believe, if we could only have health, we might have done much to help the world. It is harder in our discouraged hours, when we believe that we should never have been of any use, sick or well; and that we were born to be a clog and weight,—to be in everybody's way.

If we could only stop at the first part of this complaint, "born to be a clog," that would allow that we were born to be something. The brake on the cars, the clog on the coach going down hill, are as necessary as the horses and the steam engine. The train has to stop now and then : it is dangerous for the carriage to go down hill too fast. So a nation needs a war when it is too prosperous ; and homes that are likely to grow too gay and frivolous can afford the few serious thoughts that a sick room suggests.

This thought should serve to create a respect from others towards those who are suffering from sickness ; but it does not help the "clogs" and the "brakes" themselves. It would add self-conceit to the other trials that their friends must suffer through them, to dwell upon any advantages gained from their sickness and weakness ; and they are the very last to be able to perceive them, and surely should be the very last to get any consolation from being the clogs for forming the bitter element in life.

No : it is only in bravely acknowledging our utter uselessness that we can find our help. It is here that shines in the broad ray of comfort. Allow that we have nothing to give in return, that we are utterly dependent, and we suddenly discover what is the joy of receiving. We have learned what we never knew before, — what friendship is, what love is. We have the power of accepting gladly. These are mere words to those who have never known the depression there is in this feeling of absolute physical dependence. Every one has had some little taste of the bitterness of dependence, and shrinks from it. But the invalid experiences it day after day ; too feeble to move ; hands too weak for work ; eyes aching so that it is impossible to read, or even to move them to look in the face of a friend ; head too confused for thought ; the whole body too full of pain for rest. One must be many days and weeks or years in such a state to learn what is the blessedness of friends, to appreciate their sympathy and forbearance in our weakness,

their cheerfulness and their thoughtfulness. Blessed as it is to give, we have learned the less noble, less elevating blessedness of receiving. Because it is less elevating, it is more difficult to learn and to acknowledge. Only a long dependence on the goodness of others can teach it. Our poor, discouraged self-respect comes in to help us. "Ah! we must indeed be *something* to them, if they can love us so."

I do not mean that it is only in becoming sick and helpless that we find out our friends: I mean that in our sickness and helplessness we find one feature in this love of our friends, that we never can find otherwise. It is the giving and returning that makes the delight in most friendship, and that keeps up the activity of our love. Unconsciously, without acknowledging it, we make account of what we receive and what we give, and are anxious to return as fast as we accept. This is our healthy life.

In our invalid days, we learn how to receive; and in this we need to be generous. It requires some generosity to be willing to receive;

and, when we have learned to do it, we find in the very bottom of the cup, in the bitterest dregs we have to drink, this one compensation, — the knowledge of this sacrificing love of our friends.

Of this it might be useless to speak; for those who are well, and are able to pay their own debts in friendship, ought not to be able to understand it. But it is in this submission, with the support that comes in submitting, that we get a glimpse of one of the positions in which we stand towards God.

Some of the old books are fond of dwelling upon our insignificance in God's creation, that He asks nothing of us, while we need all things from him; words which, if often used in our time, have an air of false humility. They are depressing and discouraging to the Christian soldier. It is a sort of humility that the veriest weed in a garden-patch would not think of wearing.

A true humility must have nothing to do with abjectness. The guest takes the lowest

place, waiting to be called to a higher. If we were indeed worms, born only to grovel on the ground, there would be no *humility* in placing ourselves low as the ground. We must voluntarily cast ourselves there from a greater height. It would have been no offering of humility, if it had not been a rich velvet cloak that Raleigh flung down before the queen. One must first be proud, in order to be able to be humble.

We need not debase the offering we make of ourselves to God in our own esteem, particularly as He made us, and not we ourselves.

Yet it would be better for us, if we could more often be conscious of our dependence upon a Higher Being. And just as long sickness, with a long period of weakness, wrings from us the confession, that it is a pleasure to be so served as we are by the love of our friends, it teaches us, at the same time, our dependence, and our pleasure in dependence upon God. We begin to see more clearly that the ordering of things does lie in his hand; that we need not make ourselves uneasy be-

cause our day's work in the world has failed. There are other workmen; if not, there is Himself.

This sort of submission is the true "waiting upon God," and gives us an idea of the true quality of patience. A poor, querulous, wavering patience, it may look to be on the outside; but it must needs be wavering. It finds its support only in an utter, hourly dependence upon God; and the heart is constantly rebelling. If the struggle for this patience were not a constant one, if by one effort it could be made certain, it would be only a dull endurance, not patience gained. It is for these stormy hours of such lonely battle that I have found one prayer helpful.

"My God, give me strength, if it is thy will; if not, patience. *Not patience, if it is not thy will.*"





WORDS OF CHRIST, DAVID, AND PAUL.



HAVE faith in God. Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. Whosoever shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye

pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: He is my defence; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength and my refuge is in God.

If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.





BE STRONG.



BE strong to *hope*, O Heart!
Though day is bright,
The stars can only shine
In the dark night.
Be strong, O heart of mine!
Look towards the light.

Be strong to *bear*, O Heart!
Nothing is vain:
Strive not; for life is care,
And God sends pain.
Heaven is above, and there
Rest will remain.

Be strong to *love*, O Heart!
Love knows not wrong:
Didst thou love — creatures even,
Life were not long;
Didst thou love God in Heaven,
Thou wouldst be strong.

A. A. PROCTOR.



ACQUAINTED WITH GRIEF.



IT is no wonder that we apply these words to Christ; for in this we find our closest brotherhood. He was a man of sorrows. He could pray that the bitter cup might pass from Him, so near was He to the mortal agony. Yet He could ask it only if it were God's will, so near was He to the Divine comfort. With His grief, let us take His courage; in His loneliness, let us find with Him the Father.



LET me be weak a little, in order to be strong much, so that I may dry up my tears quickly, and proceed to serve thee better, — even if it be with my patience only.

LEIGH HUNT.



PAST SUFFERING.



IT is a good thing to think of, that we are better prepared to judge our troubles when they are passed than while their stress is on us. If our troubles slay us, there needs proof that we shall not immediately rejoice therefor; and, if we survive them, there are always considerations which make us not sorry to have suffered. Who so proud as he that has suffered? The least complaint of another provokes his self-conceit. No soldier was ever ashamed of his scars. No athlete was ever sorry for the care and exertion which his high

condition cost him. And so the exercise of pain and care and sorrow, which develop the intellectual gladiator, and make him strong by experience and insight, is never remembered but with pride and pleasure. A thousand years of suffering are but as yesterday when it is past; but the present pride of a lofty soul sends light and glory over all the future.

OPTIMISM.





SEEN AND UNSEEN.



THE wind ahead, the billows high,
A whited wave, but sable sky ;
And many a league of tossing sea,
Between the hearts I love and me.

The wind ahead ! day after day
These weary words the sailors say ;
To weeks the days are lengthened now,
Still mounts the surge to meet our prow.

Through longing day and lingering night,
I still accuse Time's lagging flight,
Or gaze out o'er the envious sea
That keeps the hearts I love from me.

Yet, ah! how shallow is all grief!
How instant is the deep relief!
And what a hypocrite am I
To feign forlorn, to 'plain and sigh!

The wind ahead? The wind is free!
For evermore it favoereth me;
To shores of God still blowing fair,
O'er seas of God my bark doth bear.

This surging brine, I do not sail,
This blast adverse is not my gale;
'Tis here I only seem to be,
But really sail another sea, —

Another sea, pure sky its waves,
Whose beauty hides no yawning graves;
A sea all haven, whereupon
No helpless bark to wreck hath gone.

The winds that o'er my ocean run
Reach through all worlds beyond the sun;
Through life and death, thro' fate, through time,
Grand breaths of God, they sweep sublime.

Eternal trades, they cannot veer,
And, blowing, teach us how to steer ;
And well for him whose joy, whose care,
Is but to keep before them fair.

O thou God's mariner, heart of mine !
Spread canvas to the airs divine ;
Spread sail, and let thy Fortune be
Forgotten in thy Destiny.

For Destiny pursues us well,
By sea, by land, through heaven or hell ;
It suffers Death alone to die,
Bids Life all change and chance defy.

Would earth's dark ocean suck thee down ?
Earth's ocean, thou, O Life ! shalt drown ;
Shalt flood it with thy finer wave,
And, sepulchred, entomb thy grave.

Life loveth life and good ; then trust :
What most the spirit would, it must.
Deep wishes in the heart that be,
Are blossoms of necessity.

A thread of Law runs through thy prayer,
Stronger than iron cables are ;
And love, and longing toward her goal,
Are pilots sweet to guide the soul.

So Life must live, and Soul must sail,
And Unseen over Seen prevail ;
And all God's argosies come to shore,
Let ocean smile or rage and roar.

And so, 'mid storm or calm, my bark
With snowy wake still nears her mark ;
Cheerly the trades of being blow,
And sweeping down the wind I go.

D. A. WASSON.





THE BURDEN OF LIFE.



THERE are sad, distrustful moments, when our existence seems a terrible enigma, from which we cannot turn away. We are waiting, and seem to hear every sand of life dropping. The idea of an eternal life gives us a shudder ; for we do not yet know what we are going to do with this. We are conscious of a longing for something higher than our present selves, and find within us only the same means we have tried to work with over and over again. We have got tired of our own faults, and yet are nourishing somewhere a little petty

self-conceit, that all the time excuses them to us. If only something would come to stir us from our despondency!

There are times when it seems as if even a sharp sorrow would be a blessing, to rouse us from the torpor of our souls. We see that others, who have been brought near an actual suffering, have found a serenity that we cannot understand. I have often heard a longing expressed, by those who are surrounded with sunshine and placid days, for some *event* to come, something to happen to break up the monotony of life. But this complaint of those who live only on the excitements of life, and find a disgust in the tame moments that must come between its gay hours, is sometimes uttered by those who are more serious. The complaints, perhaps, come from a similar cause. There has been a time of excitement, and now there is a time of flatness. The energies have been spent in a great work, and now follows the time of exhaustion.

Whatever the cause, the dejection is none the

less certain, and the despondency the harder to bear, because there is no accountable reason for it. Here it is, something to be struggled with, — the burden of life.

The burden is the heavier, because it is thoroughly selfish. It is filled with a self-dissatisfaction, — not the healthy kind that rises from a true humility, but the grasping kind, that seeks for so much, it is forced to be disappointed. If we could only forget ourselves for awhile in some grand duty into which we could fling ourselves!

But God leaves us sometimes to create our own fortunes. To some He has given great deficiencies, that they are forced to fill up for themselves; and in this way have built up their own characters. We say that "circumstances" have been against them. On the contrary, it is their circumstances that have called out their energies, and have made them what they are by forcing them into activity.

Perhaps, then, those are most the creators of their fortunes who have had "every wish

granted," as we say; who have lived a quiet, comfortable, common-place life, without any singular event to call out a singular talent, or any shock to wake up an unknown power. They must create an object for themselves. They do not have to work to earn bread. They have no great responsibilities of wealth to attend to. No one depends upon them for teaching; for they are the ones who have always been carefully taught. Their time is always at their own disposal; but, alas! they have nothing to do with the time. All is so well-ordered, there is nothing left to order for themselves.

These it is who must show an unwonted strength, if they create a career for themselves. Is it possible?

With God, all things are possible.

Only, is not to take God's name into a life that is only trivial and insignificant a blasphemy? By a great sorrow, one may indeed call upon God. What has our flat, unprofitable life to do with the Lord of the worlds?

And here we reach the depths of the thank-

lessness of our hearts. We do not know how to draw near to Him in thanksgiving, though we know there is no one else to whom we can go in sorrow.

This thanklessness is a part of the apathy of our soul. How can we thank Him for the existence that brings us no joy? And where shall we find this joy in life?

“ In the midst of the deep sea and in storm, to lie with a soul full of sorrow,—that is truly not an unbearable affliction. There is struggle, pressure, and despair; there we can console ourselves with the thought, ‘ If I can bear it no longer, I may lie down and die.’ Then one is so stunned, so overwhelmed, that one cannot measure one’s woe. But when the storm is at rest, and the calm of a so-called pleasant existence begins; when we have nothing to struggle with, nothing to subdue; when life spreads before and around us in an easy, a golden freedom; when no weighty, decided duties spur the thoughts, rule the acts; when we have time and leisure to feel, to think, to measure our sorrow over and over, and through and through,—look you, then sorrow ends, and misery begins; and the

most miserable side of the misery is that it makes one weary, — weary. The first condition of our being is a *whole life*, — that is, a life which is claimed; over full by our duties; to which, as of course, belong struggles, bitterness, and cares of every kind. But it is this empty existence that can be likened to a crushed sea-shell, and which, like no other, makes one miserable.”

A terrible burden to bear is “this empty existence,” — the most miserable to be borne.

But whose fault is it that this “existence” is empty? The power lies in every one’s hands to fill it. In olden times, this tried soul that could find nothing worthy of life would have gone into a convent, with the pretext of serving God, only to make there a shrine to itself, to spend its time in counting up its own faults, and selfishly deploring its selfishness.

But now, there is no room for those who would “rather die” than live; no such chance for killing the heart and walling up the feelings. If you need a sorrow to ripen your soul, it is easily found. If God has not thought

best to bring it into your own home, it is that you may go and find it in another. If you have no prayer to offer for yourself, pray for the countless sufferers on either side. If you want to know what sorrow is, think of those who have given sons to the war, who are left alone because right was to be bought by the blood of those dearest to them. If you believe you have no sympathy from those who have followed Christ in suffering as he did, think of the tender love with which he spoke to the young man who had much possessions, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter into the kingdom of God!" How hard! Yes, he who is to us the type of the greatest suffering of mankind saw that just this trial was hard to bear.

Pass out from your own life, since it seems so tasteless, and enter with a full heart into that of others. Wake up to the new life that every day brings, the sun that fetches the morning, the spring that opens the leaves, the glad song of the birds, the gay colors of

the flowers. Take joy to those who are morose and unkind. Insist upon it. In order to carry them cheer, you will have to be cheerful yourself. Because an apparently easy lot has been given you, spread some of its joy over the waste places. Carry your gifts that you despise to those who need them. If you need the sorrow, go where it is bitterest and heaviest, in order to weep with those who weep; and, as Mary found her Master in the place whence she thought they had taken him, you will find God in the empty existence, in that vacant life that seemed such a burden.

It is our own heart that needs to be warmed. There is too much love of self there, too little thoughtfulness and love for others. It is just here that we need to warm and heat ourselves with thinking of the life of Christ, to remember that his first and greatest law was "to love one's neighbor as one's self." Let us awaken our souls to that "enthusiasm of humanity" to which the author of "Ecce Homo" would arouse us, as he shows how it was, Christ

bound men to himself, and so bound them to each other.

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

For ye have the poor with you always; and, whensoever ye will, ye may do them good.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.





WHO SHALL DELIVER ME?



GOD strengthen me to bear myself,
That heaviest weight of all to bear ;
Inalienable weight of care.

All others are outside myself :
I lock my door, and bar them out, —
The turmoil, tedium, gad-about.

I lock my door upon myself,
And bar them out ; but who shall wall
Self from myself, most loathed of all ?

If I could once lay down myself,
And start self-purged upon the race
That all must run ! Death runs apace.

If I could set aside myself,
And start with lightened heart upon
The road by all men overgone !

God harden me against myself,
This coward with pathetic voice
Who craves the ease and rest and joys ;

Myself, arch traitor to myself ;
My hollowest friend, my deadliest foe,
My clog whatever road I go.

Yet One there is can curb myself,
Can roll the strangling load from me,
Break off the yoke and set me free.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI, in the "Argosy."





A GAY, serene spirit is the source of all that is noble and good. Whatever is accomplished of the greatest and the noblest sort flows from such a disposition. Petty, gloomy souls, that only mourn the past and dread the future, are not capable of seizing upon the holiest moments of life, of enjoying and making use of them as they should.

SCHILLER.

Think, we are walking every hour of the day in that fairy world of glory and beauty without knowing it. And people call it "this every-day life," and this "work-a-day" world! Can we not understand a little how it is that God finds it for our profit to lead us sometimes into the shadows?

KITTY TREVILYAN.



GOOD AND EVIL.



WE should avoid the exaggerations of a rash philosophy which falsely inscribes itself as opposed to our natural sentiments.

The groaning chorus of the discouraged repeats constantly, "All is vain, all is empty; the earth is a valley of tears, and happiness is an illusive word, an irony that insults our griefs." This is a literary declamation, belied every day by our actions and our sentiments; every day accepted and said again, like an eloquent complaint on which we pride our-

selves. It appears well to complain thus; and we associate, with the greatest security, unlimited effusions on the infinite wonders of an omnipotent goodness with endless lamentations upon the miseries of existence, and the sad nothingness of the world through which it flows. Such amplifications of rhetoric in favor of two sides would be fit only for the schools.

Yes, there are frightful evils; but there is much great and truly good in the world. Happiness exists: it is not very rare, it is even easy. But it is right to say, that it is neither sure nor durable. What is not easy, what is often impossible, is to avoid unhappiness; and unhappiness is no more of an illusion than happiness. Sorrow is real: it leaves more profound traces than happiness. In itself, it is without consolation, although it may be the occasion for wise thoughts, noble resolutions, generous efforts. All this does not rise from sorrow, but from the liberty of the soul and the power of reason. A proof of this is, that unhappiness often dejects, enervates, corrupts. Good

does not then come from the evil: it comes only from good. And here it is the good that is in us which re-acts against the evil of our destiny. Far from pain being a good, it is good only to conquer it, or rather to conquer ourselves in spite of it.

But to conquer is not to console ourselves; and I shall never insist enough upon the difference which separates the question of duty from the question of happiness. Morality does not require that we should strive to unnaturalize our most irresistible impressions, to change our joys into miseries, and our miseries into joys. This temerity of philosophers and theologians in belying human nature, or re-making it, inspired sometimes by a praiseworthy dream of an artificial perfection, is very often an abuse of inventive subtlety, a pretension to know more than common sense teaches.

CHARLES DE REMUSAT.



DISAPPOINTMENT.

SERMON, FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY, BY CHRISTOPH F. AMMON.

(Translated from the German.)



WE are often led to ask, why the New Year's Day, which ought to inspire every one with joy and fresh cheerfulness in his life's course, is celebrated by so many with a dull indifference, or even by many with visible sadness. And we discover the cause plainly in a silent grief over wishes unfulfilled. So long as the year is passing on in the midst of its course, we follow willingly the plan of life once marked out with zeal and perseverance, we are not easily led away from our projects by chance interruptions or obstacles.

We often hope where there is little to be hoped for, and are always reckoning upon a happy chance which may give a favorable turn to our affairs, and may bring a happy result to our plans.

But, on the first day of a new year, our old hopes and expectations are wont to disappear with the old year. We stand on a cross road, where we must needs lift up our heads, and give a new direction to our course in life. We discover with pain, that we have persevered in vain; have striven, fought, struggled in vain: and the less we feel within us the power and activity of spirit then for adapting ourselves to the present, or for breaking open a new course for our wishes, the more sadly, the more bowed down and troubled, do we sink into an anxious melancholy and hopelessness. So fearful is the power of evil upon earth, that even there where the spirit of good has raised its head victoriously, the evil is not utterly destroyed and conquered. New cares arise, new passions awaken, and new obstacles start up;

old habits of thought and action are destroyed ; hopes and wishes are torn away, in which the delight and happiness of the fairest joys were bound up.

There is no doubt that we, all of us, have more or less cause to yield to sensations of sorrow over our disappointed plans. The uncertain present, the insecure future, the interruption of our dearest projects, the slow backwardness in our household prosperity, on all sides offer us occasions for dissatisfaction and discontent ; and we no longer find in the narrowing circle of our friends that confidence and openness which formerly brought us so many happy hours. But is it right towards God and our consciences to nourish such sensations, and cherish such adverse feelings? Is it wise or worthy of a Christian to grieve in silence, and destroy his best powers in such a struggle of inward bitterness? Shall we draw nearer by a single step to the goal of our wishes, if we arm ourselves with old weapons to meet the emergencies of a new year? and shall we have the

slightest influence over the direction, course, or result of its events, unless we yield the former standpoint of our prejudices and passions? Shall we not, rather, when the course of the sun is opening to us a new year, direct an inquiring glance upon ourselves and our welfare? Should we not consider all that lies within the circle of our influence, with repose, unrestraint, and with carefully measured prudence? Should we not reflect on what in our ways, our projects, and our deeds, might be made better, more pure, more noble? Should we not finally enjoy the many good things the present offers us with satisfaction, thankfulness, and gladness; and yield ourselves to the hope, that *the future, under God's guidance, will be the best and kindest consoler for our disappointed wishes and expectations?* Oh, the awakening from the dreams of a false happiness in which we have cradled ourselves is so bitter! The number of the days allotted to our journey in life is so small and insignificant!

The seeking after the one thing needful, the searching after the higher and eternal life, can bear so little delay and postponement, that we cannot quickly enough collect and compose ourselves on our entrance on a new, perhaps the last, circle of an earthly being, to raise our eyes to the Father of light and purity, to lay down all our cares and burdens at the foot of his throne, and to beg of him power and strength that we may complete our course with earnestness and confidence, with peace and gladness. Our prayer is thanksgiving and praise, and our thanksgiving is prayer for new blessings and new grace : we enter before his presence in silent devotion.

“And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.”—LUKE ii. 21.

Little as the parents of Jesus must have doubted, that the name which was given to him on his acceptance into the covenant of his peo-

ple had reference to the spiritual salvation of his nation and mankind in general, yet they were not free from the more bodily expectation, that he would take the throne of his father David, and that his kingdom would have no end. The fatherly friend and protector of his youth passed away too early from the stage to utter aloud his hopes; but of Mary, who pleased herself with the glory and in the miracles of her son, we know with certainty, that she needed the reminder, "My hour is not yet come." And of his brethren, the Scripture informs us, they believed not in him, because he did not openly reveal himself to the world. It is evident that the desires with which Jesus was brought to the circumcision by his relations did not reach their fulfilment, because they had not considered the signs of the times, nor looked freely and unrestrainedly enough into the future. We would then, by way of aiding our conscientious inquiry into the past and the future, consider the great truth, that the future under God's guidance is the best consoler for

our disappointed wishes. Let it teach us in the first place, why we have till now been disappointed in so many of our wishes; and we may then console ourselves with the inquiry, how we may reach them more securely in the future, and bring them to completion.

If we look into the future with the conviction that it rests under God's guidance, it becomes in the first place our teacher, because it brings us to a complete insight into the reason that our wishes have until now been disappointed. On a day like to-day, the thought comes to us of itself, that many of our hopes must have failed of success, either because we did not know what was good for us, or because we did not always seek after this good with patience and prudence, or because we wished to perform all through our own strength without God's assistance.

One look into a future guided by God recalls to us, firstly, that we till now have been disappointed in our wishes, because we knew

not what was good for us. Of all that makes mankind truly satisfied and happy, a kind Providence permits no one to want. Nature is rich and powerful enough to give us all food, health, and clothing; and the higher gifts of knowledge and virtue which create the true happiness of a reasonable being, God gives always *without measure*, as he himself is illimitably holy, kind, and merciful. * But, in the passing year, how little have we thought of the true needs of our nature, of the higher blessings of the spirit! How often have we considered that which is only a means and a preparation for better things as our highest and only object! Yes, often have we been like children who prefer the sparkling, the noisy, the dazzling, to the useful, the necessary, and the noble. We have wished only to increase our own property, to add gain to gain; and forgot, at the same time, that a man "liveth not by having much goods." We wished to feel happy in the lavishness of expense, in our rich ornaments, in brilliant raiment; and

forgot that "life is more than meat, and the body than raiment." We did not deny ourselves any amusement, any pleasures, any intoxicating delight; and forgot that dissipation is the mother of ill-humor, and that luxurious enjoyment is the death of true joy. We have wished to live in our own quiet circle, withdrawn from the world, to live only for ourselves and our own hearts; and forgot that for man, yet imperfect, this is a source of bitterness and melancholy. We have wished only to attract attention, to win only honor, rank, and pre-eminence; and forgot that ambition presses the sting of pain into our hearts, if it is not led and moderated by an inner repose of conscience. Ought you to wonder that the past year has deceived you in all these expectations? Was it not wholesome and beneficial for you, that a higher hand denied you that which led you so blindly to your ruin? "What man is there of you, who, if his child ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if a fish, will he give him a serpent? How much more

will your Father in heaven give good gifts to them that ask him ! ”

Yes : not in vain do you to-day cast an inquiring glance upon the past year ; not, in vain does the thought arise within you, that it was your own fault that you have not been as happy this year as you would have wished. The year that greeted you so kindly, when you were fulfilling your duty, discloses to you on one side the secret of your disappointed wishes, because it reminds you that you often knew not what is good for you.

But, when we have known better, we have not always sought for it with the necessary patience and prudence : this is another discovery which the future, led by God, offers us with regard to our disappointed wishes. You were not wrong, if in the course of the past year you planned a greater activity in your business, an increase in your wealth and property ; but “ your hour was not yet come.” The moment for becoming satisfied and happy was not yet to be yours. You have failed to

reach the goal of your wishes, because you pursued it too impatiently, — with too rash and too bold zeal. You were not wrong when you aimed at making a name for yourself in your art, your profession, or business; and at being looked upon with respect and applause by others. But there were many others before you who surpassed you in attainments and merits. The lot of being honored and distinguished did not yet belong to you; and you have injured yourself in public opinion by seeking to compel honor and glory before you were ripe and worthy of it. And now look at the *means* that you chose to reach your aim. Was it prudent that by play, fortune, or venturesome undertakings, you wished to become rich, and neglect diligence and activity in your calling? Was it prudent that you demanded a high price for your wares, your industry, or your services; and thereby lost the praise of honesty, modesty, and equity? Was it prudent that you expected to strengthen and restore your impaired health by art and skill,

and then neglected the laws of order and moderation? And how if you sought the wisdom of life in wholly false ways?—if, instead of learning from the fathers, you wished to draw every thing from yourself and the fulness of your own self-conceit?—if, instead of cultivating your own talents in quiet, you sought to obtain flattering friends to extol you and cry you up? Instead of winning true love by inner worth, have you not striven for a permanent connection in life by frivolous acquaintances and ambiguous attachments? Have you not fancied you had served your fatherland with zeal, firmness, and activity, when in truth you have labored for yourself, for your own advantage, to the injury of the public? Let us confess, under that wise ordinance of God in which the present and the future are bound together, our wishes must, until now, have needs necessarily been disappointed; because we did not strive after their fulfilment with the necessary repose and prudence.

Here we meet again with this fault, that we

wished to complete all by *ourselves without God's assistance*. In the industry necessary in our business, in many undertakings for the increase of our wealth, in diligent application for the support, advancement, and elevation of our domestic happiness, we have perhaps not failed as *children of this world*; only we were of the opinion that we could do all this through our own strength and prudence. We were unwilling to see that the creature takes only what the Lord of his destiny procures for him according to his fatherly wisdom and goodness; we were too secure and proud to beg of him blessing and prosperity in humble submission. Should we, then, wonder if he has denied us what we have not deserved? Is it not easy to explain why our purposes and schemes have met with hindrance and delay? Must it not become evident why it is that the goal towards which we have stretched our hands has constantly been torn from us, and removed into the far distance? Yes, indeed: even with regard to our own wishes, it lies not according to any

man's will. "I returned, and saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill: but time and chance happeneth to them all."

However clear-sighted, rich, and honored one may be, yet what we have is less than what we miss. The ignorant and the learned, the needy and the fortunate, the prince and beggar, without exception, carry about with them new endeavors and new schemes; and, if they ask, at the entrance of a new year, wherefore they have been disappointed the past year in so many wishes, they cannot avoid the warning remembrance that only the proud confidence in their own power has deceived and deluded them. In so painful an experience, how sensitive should this discovery make us to the consolation that a future led by God offers us, if we will only observe the *conditions* under which we may promise ourselves to-day a happier lot! It is this which we now have to consider.

In order that the future, under God's guidance, may crown your wishes, let them first be awakened by a higher impulse. You think it would be a great earthly happiness, if you could walk in the circle of your friends, beautiful, adorned, and admired : it is much too little and narrow, what you choose. Wish rather to be skilled in your art, profession, or calling : for, in the hour when you wish this in earnest, you will busy yourself with high examples ; you will advance beyond the circle of your mediocrity eagerly and with spirit ; you will *be* more perfect, more distinguished, more worthy of the admiration of others. You think it would be a great blessing to have the control of great sums, if you could shine brilliantly in a pompous display of expense, if you could live every day nobly and joyfully. This is much too common and petty for you to desire : wish rather to be rich in inner advantages, in the virtues of modesty, of self-control, and of friendly benevolence ; for, in the very hour when you wish this in earnest, you will prepare

for yourself new estimation, — a new source of satisfaction and joy. You have thought till now it was an enviable lot to go about with distinguished people, to be friendly with the great, to approach princes and kings. This that you prefer is much too little, too small. Wish earnestly only to be nearer God, and sure of his favorable approbation; for, the very hour you wish this earnestly, your spirit itself will soar higher, and peace, dignity, power, and strength will rejoice your very soul. For this reason we are loosed from the lordship of the past; for this we are called a chosen race, and a kingly priesthood, because the love of the Father has waxed stronger and more mighty in us than the love of this world: for if God has not allowed our sensual and earthly desires to be realized, yet he gives us richly the better things that we need as Christians and immortals. Under his guidance, the future comes to meet us with promises that shall not fail, if we only know how to ennoble our wishes, and give them a higher impulse.

But also we must be led by the principle of sparing our best and innermost wishes for heaven. Health and strength of body are, of course, essential conditions of our activity and happiness in life. Yet you cannot always succeed with the greatest regularity and moderation in being free from weakness, pain, and sickness. If you are now wise, you submit silently to the unavoidable lot of *an earthly nature*, and await a better condition in the land of unperishable things, where the more beautiful and noble raiment of a heavenly being is prepared for you. Clearness, harmony, and completeness of knowledge and ideas, are essential peculiarities of the true wisdom of life; yet, in your present state of knowledge, there is darkness and mystery everywhere. It is inconceivable to you how God could permit upon earth so much injustice, so many acts of violence, so much oppression of innocence. If you are wise, you await the issue, and look longingly towards the future revelations of God, when you can draw from the source of light,

when you can loose the riddle of life, and look upon your destiny in its whole course. Do you bear in your breast a wound that no consolation or balm on earth can heal? Have you lost a friend, a beloved, a wife or husband, with whose loss every blossom of joy is broken away? Do you feel a longing within you for something higher and more blessed, for which the earth offers no satisfaction? Walk on consoled, and grieve not: let your faith, your longing, your love, lead you to the hopes and wishes that heaven only can fulfil, and secure, to your everlasting joy. No impatience or doubting dissatisfaction can hasten God's wise purposes and counsels. Therefore let us humble our hearts under the dispensations of his mighty hand, and bring to him confidingly the sacrifice of our resignation and submission. Even the happiest future on earth can only prepare us for the blessed joys of the heart that God has arranged for his friends, and therefore nothing is more fit than that we should reserve our best and noblest wishes for heaven.

Whatever, on the contrary, this earth can and ought to afford to us, for this we ought to strive, even with persevering and unwearied activity, in order that the future may no longer disappoint our wishes. If it is painful to you that you have been able to perform so little, to win so little in your profession, your art, or your calling, then beware of becoming dispirited, or seeking your fortune in some false path: an upright and firm will, under God's guidance, brings the victory infallibly, and will win, even for you, the reward and the blessing that your long-waiting heart has desired. If it is bitter to you that you as yet have not found a free circle of influence, that unexpected obstacles have opposed your anticipations and aspirations, oh! beware of giving way to anger, sadness, or bitterness: for God has decreed the reward of faithfulness, not to the restless, the distrusting, but to the persevering, childlike will; and, if your heart only continues firm, so shall you praise the Lord who is the strength of your countenance and

your God. Is it painful to you that you have not till now obtained by labor the necessities for your family, that you cannot maintain your household properly, that you could scarcely afford what belongs to the necessary maintenance of life, — be sure not to let your hands lie in your lap, or to live only half-way, inconsiderately, despairing in confidence and faith. A firm will never fails, and a diligent hand never grows poor: even before you suspect it, will the weight of sorrow be lightened for you, and a prospect for the future be opened to you, free from care. "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

Already a great advance is made towards the fulfilment of your disappointed wishes, if you only continue persevering in your diligence and activity.

And so there is only wanting to our happiness a truly living confidence, childlike, and submissive to the guidance of Him who leaves not one of our best wishes unfulfilled. "There

hath not entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." For he oversees all our needs and all our hopes : he knows the day and hour that "no man knoweth, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

Without this confidence, what would avail our wearisome strivings at a time when the past becomes involved in the present, and both enter into a struggle with the decisive future, pressing upon us more than ever the appeal of the holy poet, "Commit your way unto the Lord : trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass"? Yes, to thee, the Eternal One, "who alone doeth great wonders, whose mercy endureth for ever," we lift up our hearts in childlike devotion, in this new circle of time, developing itself under thy guidance !





NIGHT MUSINGS.

FROM THE GERMAN.



WHEN, through the dark and weary night,
Sleepless I lie, and long for light ;
Oppressed with care, and filled with grief, —
Where shall I turn to find relief?
My sighs, O God ! rise up to thee :
My Father, come and comfort me.

When wet with tears I eat my bread,
While sorrow bows my drooping head,
How sore and great my grief may be,
My God will still remember me ;
For He has ever led his child
Where thorns have torn, or roses smiled.

How have I pondered long and late,
And questioned of my future fate !
And then at length the welcome day
Has driven these clouds of doubt away.

So I will trust thee, and from hence,
In God place all my confidence.

Oh, give me patience that I may
Throw anxious fear and care away !
My anchor firm be constant prayer,
My God will hear, my God will care.
My willing spirit, Lord, sustain,
Till my weak flesh new strength may gain.

I have no want, if I have thee ;
Thou carest for those I love and me ;
Through life and death there shines above,
The sun of grace, a Father's love :
Thus in full trust my care shall cease,
And find in God a perfect peace.

And when the final hour has come,
To heaven's own rest he calls me home ;
My weary eyes he shuts in peace,
And to my soul gives glad release.
The time and place he orders right,
When to the world I say Good-night ;
For so for ever God disposes :
Gently in death my eyes he closes.

S. P. H.



TRoubles WHICH COME TO US THROUGH THE
MISTAKES OR MISCONDUCT OF OTHERS.



A GREAT variety and very severe trials may come to us from these causes. Very hard are they to bear, and very peculiar and careful must be the training to fit the soul to bear them. The personal sorrow of a feeble or diseased body is hard to endure. But it has its alleviations; it comes directly from the Father's hand; it comes perhaps gradually, and we learn by degrees to bear it; or it comes in a violent shock which at first stuns and benumbs the faculties, and the gradual softening of the pain or rallying from the weakness is

such a blessing that the great beginning of the pain is forgotten. We have no reproaches to make to ourselves, and we have the sympathy and help of loving friends, and confidence and trust in the Heavenly Father and Physician: we lie still in his hand, and await his time.

The far sorer trouble of separation from those we love comes to us also directly from above. He gave, and he takes away. Our loss is their gain. We must sit still, and wait, and look up, and pray and trust. Our Saviour has gone before to prepare the mansions. The departed are in their "little cells of felicity:" they await us there.

There is another kind of grief which is sometimes put into the list of the ills that flesh is heir to, — what is called adversity, a change of fortune or loss of property or of worldly position; but this seems so light, compared with these others, that it hardly deserves a place in this catalogue. If we have healthy bodies, and loving friends, and brave hearts, shall we not

have our Heavenly Father to give us meat to eat, and clothes to wear? "He knoweth ye have need of these things."

But where is the heart of man or woman who could not, if he dared, tell of heavier sorrow, one harder to bear than any of these? Many years ago, a poor laboring woman was sympathizing with a friend who had just been parted from the husband of her youth, the loving father of her little family of children, one of the wisest, tenderest, best of men. "Oh, me!" she said, "you have had a heavy loss: the Lord give you strength to bear it! But a living trouble is worse than a dead one." It was perhaps a coarse, rude expression; but she was a woman of but little culture, who had had the hard struggle of life in some of its rudest forms. No historian or romancer had been by to tell of her early youth, and the steps by which her husband had been led along and astray, till, long before her old age, at the time of which I speak, he had yielded to temptation, had acquired ruinous habits, had become

harsh and severe and improvident. She had borne and reared seven children in her poverty, and with the fountain nature had provided for each new-comer she had nourished another child beside, and thus been a mother to fourteen children; and the earnings from this source had been the chief support of the family. From the desolate house, where, however, were the decencies and comforts of life; and the bereft mother, who had still all she needed for her children, — her mind turned to her own little cottage over which brooded the heavy shadow of her blighted hopes; and where the struggle for daily bread, and the attempt to keep peace, was constant and urgent. But she was a brave woman, kept up a good heart; her children grew up and helped, or died and left her; and in later years, as she used to express it in her homely phrase, “she got the better of the old man:” he was unable to go out and procure what was the source of all their trouble. “She only gave him a little on his birthday.” He died several years

before she did ; and she was able to live on in her solitary little home, of which she managed to remain the owner, until, in her great age and increasing infirmity, she consented to exchange it for a comfortable room in the poor-house. She survived husband and children ; but she had a brave, devout heart. Almost to the last, she answered by her presence "the blest summons to the house of God ;" and, in her simple faith, lived and died in peace and hope.

All have not this poor woman's trials ; but there are few who are not in some way or fashion wounded in the house of their friends. How are these troubles to be met and borne ?

In the first place, let great care be taken that the pain which we attribute entirely to the fault of another does not come from our own hearts. Are we quite free from envy and jealousy, and selfishness in all its forms ? Do we take great care to think no evil, not to magnify the faults of others, not to attribute motives of action to others which we are not certain are founded in

truth? Selfishness, though we often do not know it, is at the bottom of almost all the trouble that comes up between men. Why should you care so much for yourself, if those about you are good and happy? Why should you be disturbed, if it is not exactly in the way you think best? Why be troubled at the fear that others do not do you justice, or do not think of you at all? If they are good, you think of them, and love them; if they are unworthy, it is no matter what they think. An old writer says, "Perhaps, if he who thinks ill of you knew you as well as you know yourself, he would think far worse."

But, beyond these sentimental and perhaps imaginary causes of trouble, there is a still deeper and darker shadow: one whom we tenderly love, for whom we would gladly lay down our life, is led astray from the Father, from the Lord Jesus, from the paths of goodness and hope. We have striven, we have watched, we have prayed; but temptation is strong, and man is weak, and hope is almost

lost. But never despair. Pray on, hope on, strive on. Watch especially that you do not, even by well-meant efforts, make harder the returning step: never quench the smoking flax, nor breathe out the kindling flame of penitence; but stand ever ready with an outstretched hand, and remember the condition on which the Lord has bidden us ask to have our trespasses forgiven.

Try not to look forward to something worse than you are now suffering. Time is a great alleviator, and you know not what God has in store for you. If you have any experience of life, you must have learned how utterly vain and futile it is to attempt to imagine what may happen in the future. Never, in your abhorrence of the sin, allow any thing but tenderness to the sinner to live in your heart. Do not allow yourself to dwell on the faults or mistakes that cause you pain; but turn aside from them, and try to look out and cherish every spark of goodness that remains. And how few are the hearts in which all God's grace is

put out! One poor old woman lived to see all her troubles cleared away, all the faults of those she loved forgotten. Her poor, feeble body parted gently from her aspiring and happy soul, which has doubtless found its home and its happy place in the mansions of the blest.

In misunderstandings among relatives and friends, which often cause exquisite pain, and lead sometimes to separation of what God has joined together by birth or sacrament, do not dwell upon what caused the first rupture, nor ask who took the first step across the stream which separates you; but rather try to see who shall enter first the returning path. Let the past be forgotten and forgiven, and be hopeful and trustful for the future. Life is too short to be spent in unkindness, and separation of dear ones.

What makes this form of trial most hard to meet is, that it is one which we cannot speak openly of to our friends. Fain would we hide our trouble from every eye. We cannot bear

that the most intimate companion should guess our sorrow. It is long before we confess it to ourselves. The poor Irish woman who is rescued by the police-officer from the cruelty of her half-insane husband shrinks the next morning from testifying to her injuries before the magistrate, in order that he may be sent to prison; but very probably pays his fine from her own hard earnings, and goes home with him, to have the same scene renewed when the momentary terror of judgment has passed away.

Patience, prayer, and hope should never cease; and they will not fail in the end. When nothing can be done but to continue in the exercise of these graces, try to turn the mind as much as possible from the source of the sorrow. Accept the comforts and alleviations that come from other sources; and perhaps, in a way that we know not or think not of, relief shall come. "Fret not thyself," says the Psalmist; and, if you have power to follow his counsel, you will stand firm and free to help

forward the wanderer whenever he shall begin his returning and ascending way. And God ever is found ready to help those who try to help themselves.

* * *





JUDGE NOT.



JUDGE not: the workings of his brain
And of his heart thou canst not see:
What looks to thy dim eyes a stain,
In God's pure light may only be
A scar, brought from some well-won field,
Where thou wouldst only faint and yield.

The look, the air, that frets thy sight,
May be a token, that, below,
The soul has closed in deadly fight
With some internal, fiery foe,
Whose glance would scorch thy smiling grace,
And cast thee shuddering on thy face.

The fall thou darest to despise —
 May be, the slackened angel's hand
Has suffered it, that he may rise
 And take a firmer, surer stand ;
Or, trusting less to earthly things,
May henceforth learn to use his wings.

And judge none lost ; but wait and see,
 With hopeful pity, not disdain :
The depth of the abyss may be
 The measure of the height of pain
And love and glory, that may raise
This soul to God in after-days.

A. A. PROCTOR.





THERE is indeed a miracle of resignation to be performed with regard to those evils that come to us from individuals: it is this, to make them transparent, and to show us God behind them. From the moment we have seen Him through the light veil of events and men, then insults, offences, the most intentional wrongs and the most direct, are only the divine finger tracing the way of mercy which leads to future happiness. Our evils can yet make us suffer; but they no longer contain poison. From the rank of masters, our enemies descend to that of instruments. Those who believed they commanded, are seen to obey.

MAD. SWETCHINE.



SADNESS AND GLADNESS.



THERE was a glory in my house,
And it is fled ;
There was a baby at my heart,
And it is dead.

And when I sit and think of him,
I am so sad,
That half it seems that nevermore
Can I be glad.

If you had known this baby mine,
He was so sweet ;
You would have gone a journey just
To kiss his feet.

He could not walk a single step,
Nor speak a word ;
But then he was as blithe and gay
As any bird

That ever sat on orchard bough,
And trilled its song,
Until the listener fancied it
As sweet and strong

As if from lips of angels he
Had heard it flow ;
Such angels as thy hand could paint,
Angelico !

You cannot think how many things
He learned to know,
Before the swift, swift angel came,
And bade him go.

So that my neighbors said of him,
He was so wise
That he was never meant for earth,
But for the skies.

But I would not believe a word
Of what they said ;
Nor will I even now, although
My boy is dead.

For God would be most wicked, if,
When all the earth
Is in the travail of a new
And heavenly birth,

As often as a little Christ is found,
With human breath,
He, like another Herod, should resolve
Upon its death.

But should you ask me how it is
That yours can stay,
Though mine must spread his little wing,
And fly away, —

I could but say, that God, who made
This heart of mine,
Must have intended that its love
Should be the sign

Of his own love ; and that if he
 Can think it right
To turn my joy to sorrow, and
 My day to night,

I cannot doubt that he will turn,
 In other ways,
My winter darkness to the light
 Of summer days.

I know that God gives nothing to
 Us for a day ;
That what he gives he never cares
 To take away.

And when he comes and seems to make
 Our glory less,
It is that by and bye we may
 The more confess,

That he has made it brighter than
 It was before ;
A glory shining on and on
 For evermore.

And when I sit and think of this,
I am so glad,
That half it seems that nevermore
Can I be sad.

J. W. C. in the Monthly Religious Magazine.





IMMORTALITY.



WHEN the sound of some voice dear to us "stops suddenly," we are brought directly to the closed door into the silent land. The great questionings come up again freshly as to that "beyond." Where have they gone who were with us just now? What is their new life? Is it a complete sundering of the old one? Can they hear us? Are they nearer the presence of God?

A crowd of uncertain questions: but in the doubt comes one certainty; it is of the immortality of this life that has passed out of our

sight. This friend, whom I can see no more, whose eyes are closed and voice stilled, was made up of more than eye or sound could express, of something besides the "mortal." In the life we shared together, there was something besides what was expressed by word or look, or by the senses.

Not that all these were of little value. Now, more than ever, I know what I possessed before, in that bodily presence, in that cheerfulness of look and word, in that support which only a glance could give. What a vacant place! And nothing can ever fill it. I feel as if, in those happier days, I never knew what was the full blessing of this presence that is gone, or valued it enough, or asked enough from that voice, or gave thanks enough for all the joy it brought. No memory, no sense of spiritual presence, can restore the full happiness of that nearness both of soul and body. Such parting as this cannot make us prize less the joy that the senses can bring; it heightens only all the happiness that has gone, and

makes us homesick and longing for all that went before.

It is this homesickness and longing that opens to us the other world. Our hearts must needs follow those who have gone towards it. We suddenly find, that, though the gift of that presence was what made our life rich, it was not all in touch or look, but because these told us things of the spirit, — that our highest friendly intercourse was often in silences or in unexpressed words. And this part of our life and theirs suddenly opens itself. We find that such a life could not die with the dissolution of the senses; it must continue and find a new life and a home in which to express itself.

It is because we feel they cannot die that we begin to build up the thought of the other world. "Death leads us with a gentle hand" into this silent land.

Of this future life we have one certainty, that it cannot be where God is not. These parting spirits, wherever they have gone, must go to meet Him. We still have, then, one place

where we may meet them, — in our prayers to God. Here is a true communion of all those who lift their hearts to God, to which we are compelled when the grave has shut us out from all other union with our friends.

No wonder, then, that for those who have grown familiar with death, the other world seems a place more real than this. It is peopled with those who are most dear to them. The thought of it lifts them up more nearly to the thought of God. No wonder that, in the constant contemplation of its spiritual joys, the cares of this life should seem very petty and distasteful, and the way seem very long that leads to it.

But we none of us know the hour that will call us there. Let us thank God that it is so. If we had such an hour appointed, and if we believed it necessary to make such preparation for it as many would lead us to think, this world would indeed be the valley of tears that some would represent it. On the contrary, let us think, that, seeing we are some day to part

from these gifts with which God has surrounded us, we ought to value them as long as we have them. Ah, how should we regret it, if we had shortened the happy hours of our intercourse with a dear friend in our lamenting that he must leave us! And what shall we have to say if God shall ask us, where is our joy at this beautiful world that He has created for us, and what right we have to another, since we knew not well what to do with this?

If our life here is to be a preparation for another world, it must follow that our senses are given us for a high purpose, to teach our souls with what they bring to our consciousness. If our memory brings back to us the thought of any kindness we might have paid to a friend that has died, any gratefulness we might have shown him, we regret it with all our hearts; and it is the bitterest part of our sorrow. So, too, we shall regret our want of gratitude for the joys of this world, our forgetfulness of the rich life there is in every day, our repining and longing for another world,

for which perhaps we shall so make ourselves more unfit than for this. Our longing after those higher joys ought only to refine those that are given us here, and exist by the side of them, as the consciousness of our friend in the other life holds its place in the midst of the memories of our happiness together here.

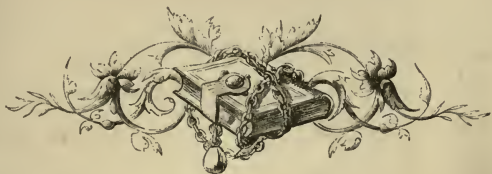
The changes in this life are apt to be gentle and gradual. And why not this last change? The soul, when it forsakes the body, composes it to rest, leaves a peaceful smile around the mouth, which often shows that the parting of soul and body has been triumphant as well as happy. I often think that one of the surprises of that new life may be, that all the time it has been so near, and the entrance to it so easy, — a waking less violent than from a tired night into a tired day.

No eye hath seen, nor ear hath heard, nor heart conceived, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him. Then, too, "I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things

present nor things to come, nor height nor depth nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

For God is to be found in death as in life, in things present as in things to come. Not height or depth, no, nor *any other creature*, is to separate us from Him. Our love for "any other creature"! Perhaps there is danger that a blind selfish love this way might lead us from Him. But no: rather let it lead us towards Him through life, through death, into that Presence where we both may meet again.





THE PRESENCE OF GOD.



AND what indeed could adversity do, since the more one loves God, the less one is sensitive to misfortune? What death or life; since God is conqueror of the one, and giver of the other? Or angels or powers; since all are his ministers, — some for justice, and some for mercy? Or things present or things to come; since a heart full of God sees nothing, hopes for nothing but in Him? What are heights and depths; since the height of heaven is promised to him who loves Him, and the depth of the abyss to him who loves Him not? Let us,

then, do our best to bend our head beneath the blow that strikes us, and thus render thanks to the just Judge, the kind Father, the powerful Remunerator, from whom comes correction and trial. Let us consider that all our afflictions come from Him, and we shall take them with submission; that they are the laws of our nature, and we shall receive them with patience; that they are the punishment of our faults, and we shall be resigned; that they are fatherly chastisements to free us from other and greater evils, and we shall be grateful; that they are the promoters of our virtue, and we shall take them with confident courage; that they are the crucible of our rewards, and we shall welcome them with joy.

G. BARBIERI.





THE MYSTERY.



BEHOLD, I show you a mystery! We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruption shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?

The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.



OF DEATH.



GENERALLY speaking, death seems to have been made terrible only to keep us the more willingly and safely in life, only to make us take the greater care of our present vitality, and of our qualifications for its enjoyment. Before we come to the pass, others have gone through it, whose disappearance has made it less terrible, whom we may be even glad to follow; and, when we arrive at it, there is reason to believe that, under no circumstances but such as guilt or superstition darkens (and there are hearts that can bring

comfort even to those), does the passage turn out to be any thing like what we thought it, or, if so, in any such degree. There is work to be done by the fact of going through it; and that employs us. There is comfort to be received and given; and that employs us also, and exalts us. And if there is sorrow at parting, and pain in the struggle to breathe, both are often minimized by the parting mind and the unresisting body. Many go out with a sigh; many, as if there had not even been a sigh.

LEIGH HUNT.





THE MEMORY WE LEAVE BEHIND.



PERMIT me a moment to say how I would like to be regretted. Thus shall I show how fine I would think it to be so mourned.

I would wish that my memory should never present itself to my friends without bringing a tear of tenderness to their eyes, and a smile upon their lips. I would wish that they could think of me in the midst of their most intense joys, without ever troubling them; and that even at table, in the midst of their feasts, in rejoicings with strangers, they might make some mention of me. I would wish to have

had enough good fortune, and sufficient good qualities, that it may please them to call up often, for their newer friends, some trait of my kindly humor or of my good sense, or my good heart or good will; and that such recollections may render all hearts more gay, more pleased, and set them in happier mood. I would wish that, till the last, they would thus remember me; that they might be happy in a long life, to remember me the longer. I would wish to have a tomb whither they might come together in fine weather, on a fine day, to speak together of me, with some sadness if they would, but with a gentle sadness that should exclude no joy. I would wish above all, and I would so order it if I could, that during this tender ceremony, in the coming and returning, there should be in all their feelings and their expression nothing lugubrious or forbidding, but that it might rather be something pleasant to see. I would wish, in short, to excite such regrets, that those who should look upon them might neither dread to experience nor to inspire.

It is the image of the terrible regrets one may leave behind, that, in part, renders death so bitter. It is the horrors with which death has been surrounded, that, in their turn, render the regrets of the survivors so terrible. These two causes act perpetually upon each other, and distract the soul, disturbing its most praiseworthy and most inevitable sentiments. It is our passions that have made the idea of our last hour a subject of despair and fright, a hated moment, from which foresight and memory both turn away. Our institutions and our customs, in their turn, have made of it an event whose terrible accompaniments we hasten to forget as soon as possible. Instead of accustoming ourselves from infancy, both in thought and by our senses, to regard this separation only as the moment of a departure on a journey to which there is no return; a journey that we shall one day make ourselves, doubtless to meet each other again in regions now unseen, — we have taken pains to forget nothing that might render it an object of horror. We have

been made to consider it as a chastisement, as the blow of an omnipotent executioner, as a punishment; and our friends, those nearest to us, quit our bed of repose as they would quit the scaffold to which we are sentenced to death. Lift yourself, I conjure you, above such commonplace, low sentiments. You are worthy of a greater elevation, and you have need of it. You are indeed more capable of it than you think; for your grief, just now, calumniates your reason.

JOUBERT.





SONNETS.

SLOWLY and softly let the music go,
As ye wind upwards to the gray church-tower ;
Check the shrill hautboy, let the pipe breathe low ;
Tread lightly on the pathside daisy-flower.
For she ye carry was a gentle bud,
Loved by the unsunned drops of silver dew ;
Her voice was like the whisper of the wood
In prime of even, when the stars are few.
Lay her all gently in the sacred mould ;
Weep with her one brief hour ; then turn away.

“ Rise,” said the Master ; “ come unto the feast : ”
She heard the call, and rose with willing feet.
But, thinking it not otherwise than meet
For such a bidding to put on her best,

She is gone from us for a few short hours
Into her bridal closet, there to wait
For the unfolding of the palace-gate
That gives her entrance to the blissful bowers.
We have not seen her yet, though we have been
Full often to her chamber-door, and oft
Have listened underneath the postern green,
And laid fresh flowers, and whispered short and
soft.

But she hath made no answer, and the day
From the clear west is fading fast away.

H. ALFORD.





IMMORTALITY.

A SERMON PREACHED ON ALL-SAINTS DAY.

BY A. THOLUCK.

(Translated from the German.)



WE stand to-day, my fellow-worshippers, at the end of the Church year. The consideration of the blessings which, through Jesus Christ, have come to our share, has again reached its close; and it remains to us to cast a glance upon that final period in which all the blessings of mercy reach their maturity. The Church of our fatherland has placed the Feast of All-Souls upon this last Sunday of the Church year; and has thus pointed out to us,

that our hopes of a blessed immortality are of a right sort, only when we think of them as a gift of mercy which mankind could not have partaken of, except through the only-begotten Son of God. Consider, then, to-day, all your joyous hopes, your blessed prospects, your sure expectation of the other world; and remember also what the Word of God has told us of the Prince of life, the loving One who says, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and death." Whatever of joyous hope, of blessed prospect, of sure expectation, exists in us, all this shall rest to-day upon the word of the Lord which he utters in John xiv. 19, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

That the heart of the Christian can rest upon no surer ground of a blessed immortality than these emphatic words of our Lord, we will now strive to recognize in this hour, and in the presence of God.

And what other ground have you, who are in the condition to look with hope beyond the

limits of this world? On what other ground can you rest your hopes? Let this be my first question.

When our hearts exult in such a hope, an echo sounds from the rising of the sun to the spot where it goes down, from all people, in all tongues, asking, Is not the peal of resurrection, sounding in every man's heart, testimony enough that the Father speaks an amen to their joyous hopes? Yes: there lies something tremendous in the thought, that all human hearts that have throbbed upon earth have believed this. And, in the harmony of all times and all languages, is it possible that a single voice of doubt could cry out in dissonance? And yet, doubt has entered in, and if it warns us of the numbers of those who, though they have believed in an eternity, yet have found day only on this side the grave, and night upon the other! if it recalls to us how as yet the complete truth has never been the possession of the multitude, but only of the individual, and that there is still more than one voice silent at

every Easter feast of Christendom! if it asks whether still in the world the tender voice of truth is not still before the clamors of falsehood! if it calls upon us to number, not the hearts of those who exult over this or that truth, but the grounds by which they prove it!

Are we, too, willing to give an account of the hope that is within us? Yet why need we speak, if silent nature herself has gained a tongue, and rebukes the doubter to his face? Spring-time, spring-time, that is the season when a Resurrection sermon should be preached more loudly, more forcibly, than from any Church pulpit. When thousands and millions of sleepers awaken, in the wide kingdom of nature, a cry of jubilee, is it not at the same time the funeral peal that leads a sad, desolate scepticism to its grave? So it appears: but, beloved, if our hope is no other than that of the leaves and the buds that again lift their heads in the spring, if it is no other than this, what can counsel us more ill? for, alas! the leaves that the rough winter has shaken off

violently, and has laid in the grave, are not the *same* that come again in spring. I hear, indeed, a sermon on immortality in the joyous tones of spring; but it is for mankind at large, in the abstract, not for me, the dry leaf, that the harvest storm has shaken to the ground. If my heart had no other grounds on which it could build its hope, then were it forsaken indeed.

But is there not a teaching of resurrection that springs from the very depths of the human soul?

When I opened my eyes upon the clear daylight, with it was given me a promise, an earnest of happiness, perfection, and reward. Where is its fulfilment? The few hours of clear pleasure, gathered out of weeks of bitter woe; the days of happiness that, when we have once tasted, we have so thoroughly tasted, that we fling them away like the peel of the juiceless fruit, — is this the fulfilment of that promise with which, on the morning of life, the light of day beamed on the eye of the

waking infant with messages of joy and perfection? Indeed, many a branch on the tree of my life has set its buds; has borne blossoms and fruit indeed; but, when the blossoms began to burst forth in beauty, whence came the poisonous mildew that caused so many of them to die, almost before they had left the bud? Whence came the autumnal shower that stopped the growth of the fruits as they began to form? There are, indeed, more powers in me; yes, in all of us, I know there are more powers than those that ripen under the sun of our earth. It is not possible, it cannot be the will of God, that, like so many unborn children, the cold finger of death should rest upon them, that they should perish for ever.

And, as to my struggle for virtue, I have been defeated indeed; but what though the defeats were as many as the victories! still I have fought well. Before thy altar, high virtue, have I offered the best days of my life, along with the applause of men. I have brought to thee the sacrifice of my gayest hours, through

trust in an eye that sees in secret. And was that an illusion? and was there no living Father's eye there, only emptiness? no eye of a Father to look into the hours of mortal conflict? And will there never come a day of victory for the good man who, in this life, has had the right but not the might?

I hear another voice say: "Do you complain, weak, timid heart? The day for which you are seeking in the future is already given you in the present." "Faint-hearted one," says this voice, "arise; do you mourn that you have not enjoyed enough? Unsatisfied heart, though you have not the right to an hour of enjoyment, not even years satisfy you, — you long for eternities. You complain that on the tree of your life there are blossoms that never come to the budding; and into the wide lap of nature fall millions of flowers that never reach their fruit, for whose sake not a single eye is wet with tears. And this is right. Who would lament over the blossoms that fall to the ground, when, in the harvest, there is fruit

enough on the tree to make the heart laugh with joy? Learn to serve mankind, not yourself alone. What you labor upon perishes not; it lives again in ever-new forms. But as to your virtue. Oh, what a pitiable hireling is that who finds not the fairest reward of victory in the fact of struggling and seeking for victory, but longs weakly for the crown of laurel! And what if the last breath of the dying man, at the end of a well-enjoyed life, full of labor and well fought through, should be actually the last, and for all time? Does the warrior, when the bullet strikes him in the very beginning of the battle, after he has held a little while his position,—does he weep like a woman because he is shut out from the advance, and from the triumph of his army? He has filled his place; he has lived long enough. If you have any heart for mankind, be satisfied. If you must fall at your post, without ever rising again, why will you whimper and lament, instead of bathing your spirit in the prospect of an ever-advancing progress in the conquest

of your race rising onward to the infinite, in the victory in which you have borne your part ?”

Such a voice I hear before the doors of the holy place of the Christian Church ; and at its hollow sound you shudder in your hearts, — you who stand in the communion of the Lord. Then a sound of a cry of victory thunders through the assembly, “Because I live, ye shall live also ;” and, as awakened from a heavy dream, all eyes and all hearts turn whither that cry presses forth.

“I live,” the voice says, and lays a foundation for our hope that neither time nor eternity can shake. He lives in whom “the divine and the human were united ; where all fulness finds its completion.” And through his mere existence he gives us a security that not only *mankind*, but *man* also, — this poor individual, fleeting son of the hour, — is an immortal being. The wise men of this day would grant immortality only to mankind at large ; for their faith is not capable of comprehending, that the heart

of a single transient son of the hour is large enough to take in the fulness of eternity as a temple of God. And indeed, when we see how, even in its boldest flight, the most gifted human soul strives in vain after the full truth; how, even after a struggle of eighty years, a John must cry out, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves;" when we see how the wisdom of each century becomes folly before that of the next; and, alas! when we first enter the huts of misery, and draw near the dying bed of the old man, fallen back again into childishness; or, if you have ever stood in presence of the dying, watching the death struggle, and that glassy eye that gleams only despair, — oh, indeed, it requires much to believe that this solitary, transient son of the hour, that indeed any one of us, can be the man whom God has created in his image, and has created for an eternal life. And yet, "I live," Christ says, and points thus to a fulness of life, even in individual man, that shall not pass away in death. Here you see, in one

mortal, divinity so united with humanity, that even death has no more power over him. Therefore, he speaks in complete consciousness himself of his own power of life: "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." He who allowed that cry of life to resound into the grave of another, "Lazarus, come forth,"—he indeed cannot be the servant of death. I have seen thy majesty, Lord Jesus Christ, as the majesty of the only-begotten Son of the Father; He whom, while He yet walked upon earth, death must needs obey, like a subject servant, — He, I surely know, is no fleeting wave in the stream of mankind.

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"I live," he says, "and you shall live also;" as if he would say, "Oh my beloved disciples! as you may yet be the servants of death, I will indeed keep nothing for my own; my life shall be your life; and where I am, shall my disciples be also." We have looked upon him, and are certain of this. Over this life death could have no power; and should the day come

when all the suns and all the earths, bowed down with the weakness of age, should tumble into a deep abyss, above the falling suns and the falling earths would Christ, the Living One, stand and say, "I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of death and hell." This we know well.

But are we not also, in the very presence of his humanity, conscious of our own? Now his "I live" casts us to the ground; but his "ye shall live also" is our resurrection. What he here but darkly says, — that he will keep nothing to himself, this perfect Son of Man; that all he has he will share with his own, — other passages in Scripture have many times uttered to us more expressly. "For whom he did fore-know, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren," says the Apostle Paul. "Beloved," says John, "now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him."

This may appear to us inconceivable when we consider what we now are, — full of sin, blindness, and uncleanness; but faith seizes the promise, and with the eye of faith I see it now already done and completed. With the eye of faith I see you baptized into the death of Christ, and risen with him to the new life in God. With the eye of faith I see you already, the tears of time and its struggles behind you; with him, your first-born brother, taking possession of his throne, sharing his crown, and ruling his inheritance from eternity to eternity. This I see; for I rest upon the words of the Lord, "Because I live, ye shall live also." And the hope of my immortality rests upon a foundation that not time nor can eternity shake away. He in whom the fulness of life has appeared, — He has promised us who believed on Him, that we shall be partakers of his life, giving the other ground upon which our Christian hope of immortality rests.

We walk encircled by death; but, at the same time, the life that we shall live for ever

with him has already begun in us. His "you shall live also" is not merely a promise for eternity, but also for time. "We know," says John, "that we have passed from death unto life." The disciples of Christ "taste the powers of the world to come," writes the apostle to the Hebrews. "We have the first-fruits of the Spirit," writes Paul to the Romans. The Christian, if any man upon earth can have it, has this consciousness, "I do not live my life out utterly upon this earth." Is it not this that gives the force to all these proofs of immortality when they have an influence over the soul? Then it is that such proofs are not cast down by the words of our Master,—on which, as Christians, we support our hopes,—but then first gain their full signification. For it is clear that, taken in the sense in which the child of the world trusts, "I have not yet fully enjoyed, not yet fully labored," there is no firm anchorage. One who is not willing to leave the world, though it is leaving him, may say, "I have not yet fully lived." Such a

one has indeed a feeling that he has lived but superficially, that he has not thoroughly lived ; and hence there rise sweet, soft dreamings, that the life that is here begun must needs go on. But appearances contradict this. All that was *his* enjoyment goes with him to the grave. For him, when it is evening, the streets grow still. Now the window is closed, and now the door ; and scarcely a single step sounds through the street. Thus has his evening come to meet him. The doors of sense are closed. Old age is a silent chamber wherein, undisturbed by this world, the soul should busy itself with the future one. The doors of sense have closed upon him, and have preached to him that all is over for him with this world's pleasures. The evening is the sure messenger of the night. The very thing which is the dearest to him he cannot take away with him. So do all appearances show him that he has outlived himself. And not only is there no firm reason for hoping that he has not outlived *enjoyment* upon earth, he

has also outlived his *work* here. For what has been his work? He has labored: yes, he has built mansions; but no other than those which will fall away together with himself, and sink into the same grave. One building alone can a man raise up for himself that will not crumble with him into his earthly grave, — the temple of a soul consecrated to God. But you — you have outlived your labor, and all appearances teach you so. Are you unwilling to confess that you yourself do not believe in your sweet dreams of immortality? You cannot deny it. Your fear of death gives you the lie. You cannot deny it. A man who grows pale in the presence of death has no sure ground for his hope. Who is there that would faint before the thought of death, who was conscious that the day of his death was to be the day of his birth?

This we believe as Christians. "You shall also live," our Master has said; and we already taste of that life which never ends. The disciples of Christ "taste the powers of the world

to come." They walk on earth and live in heaven. These are only "the first-fruits" which they have received, as Paul calls them; and the apostle calls these first-fruits of the Spirit "the earnest" by which God has sealed them that they are his children.

"My life began when I loved thee," they say to their Lord; and, at the same time, are they conscious that they can love him yet much more. And both their love and their thirst for love is an earnest to them of eternal life. With glorifying and praise and thankfulness they have experienced that they are redeemed from the world, and are transplanted into the kingdom of God. God has begun to rule in them; yet they pray daily, "Thy kingdom come." It is still coming, till God shall be all in all in us. Therefore, let him grow pale who will, the Christian is not terrified, though there sounds forth the message which the prophet brought to the dying king, Hezekiah, "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die." I am not terrified, for my house is easily set in

order ; my accounts are blotted out ; my best possession I take with me ; my dear ones I bequeath to the great Father of the fatherless, to whom belongs heaven and earth ; my body I leave to the earth, and my soul to my Master, who has won it through a long life, and has bought it with his blood. Is not this a blessed lot?

I have not yet lived out my whole of life ;
For Christ has given me of his cup to taste,
And on my heart one tender line has traced.
So, though I should live out this mortal strife,
Yet, in the ages of eternity,
Living and earnest shall my spirit be :
I have not yet lived out the whole of life.

Would you be so blessed? Learn it from experience ; learn it in daily intercourse with the Saviour, who truly lives, and is near to all your souls ; learn what mean the words, " Because I live, you shall live also." Live with Christ, and there is none of you who will not cry out in joyous faith, —

My sorrow, grief, my pain, my anxious care,
In the Lord's sepulchre lie buried deep ;

Near his pale body, in its deathless sleep,
My sorrows, griefs, and cares lie buried there.

The Lord is risen indeed!

Angels to meet him speed!

Where is my pain, my anxious sorrow, where?

Up from the tomb he rose, and left them buried there.





CHRIST MUST NEEDS HAVE SUFFERED.

A SERMON, BY EDWARD E. HALE.

“Christ must needs have suffered.” — ACTS xvii. 3.



OUR first duty as to suffering is to relieve it when we can. If we find a blind child, we strive to restore him to sight, or we send him where his other faculties can be best trained. Or is there danger of fever, or of cholera, in a poor neighborhood, we go to work to see it cleansed, purified, and made safe. And, as the world advances, it succeeds in correcting many forms of suffering. It finds out vaccination; it uses ether in sur-

gery ; it insures men against fire ; it insures widows and orphans, when husbands or fathers die. Our battle with human suffering is thus relieved by occasional victories.

I am afraid that, from these occasional victories, there springs a misapprehension of human suffering or affliction. Are you not conscious sometimes of a lurking feeling, that we might arrange things so that we should be rid of it all? Do you not find that there lurks in you something of the feeling of early times, that some sort of devil brings it all in on us, and that it is a kind of victory won over the intentions of God? That undefined feeling springs, perhaps, from the fact, that we are always trying to relieve the sufferings of others. The false inference is drawn, that some one might have relieved us of ours.

That false inference will be swept away, and a truer view will come in, if we will fairly compare our condition in this matter with that of Jesus. Just after his resurrection, he explained this to the two travellers, on their

way to Emmaus, "that Christ must have suffered." They had not understood it before. I suppose that we Christians of to-day think we do understand it. We acknowledge that *Christ* must have suffered. We build a great deal on *his* suffering. But still I am afraid, that practically we do not understand an important consequence of the lesson; viz., that, if we be Christ's brothers and sisters, in his work, living his life, *we must* suffer too, before we shall work that work through, or live that life through.

We say, very faithfully, "*Christ* was made perfect through suffering." Do we say as faithfully, "If we are ever made perfect, it must be through suffering"? Or do we not think that our suffering comes in as something so made up of human weakness,—the result of human causes,—that we could do very well without it? Do not we look on all suffering as if it all belonged to the class of pain which can be relieved? Is it not carelessly spoken of as one of the mistakes of human

nature, which more advanced civilization or a more pure Christianity will sweep away; as the famines of savage tribes are got rid of when they grow up to civilization,—as the stroke of lightning has been disarmed by one lucky hit of science? *Christ* must needs have suffered. Yes; but do we not look on it as a misfortune, rather than a necessity, when we suffer too?

I. To set ourselves right in this matter, I have said that we might compare our position with *Christ's* own. First, we are to note, that the Gospel theory of life says and promises very little about happiness, or the relief from suffering. It may be doubted if it speaks of it at all. The Gospel takes it for granted, that men who do their duty must suffer. That is the distinction between doing what we ought to do, and mere doing what we "*want*" to do. The Gospel orders a myriad of men forward on a majestic duty,—the re-formation of a world. It calls them to that duty, as children of God. It points to them his well-beloved

Son, his first-born, their elder brother, leading the way. It bids them gird themselves to that work, as children of the Almighty. And, with every whisper and injunction, it shows them that that God is with them all the while. Is their duty with the sick, God is there; with the wicked, God is there; in the wilderness, God is there; on the sea, God is there. Now, in inciting them thus, in compelling them by these high demands, the Gospel does not descend to speak of the agreeableness or elegance or delicacy or happiness of the duty. It takes it for granted that it will require renunciation. Jesus says, in his general orders, "Take up your cross, and follow me." He does not say, "You shall have pleasant weather, if you follow me;" or, "It shall be a broad, easy road, if you follow me;" or, "You shall reap in a field where there are no briars, if you follow me." No. There is a good deal said, on the other hand, about crosses and tears, about narrow paths and thorny ways. For the object is not our hap-

piness : it is the salvation of the world, — the bringing men to God. The campaign is not a sham review, in which we are to be amused. It is a great battle, of which the victory is God's glory. In the beginning of that campaign, it must needs be that Christ suffered. As it goes on, it must needs be we suffer, too.

II. The Gospel does not promise, that we shall be rid of suffering. Jesus seems to have thought as little of abolishing suffering for his brethren as he thought of lifting them at once, without training, to heaven. This is the second feature in his view of it. Not only does he regard it as a necessary incident of human nature, but also he regards it as essential to the hardening and strengthening of our divine nature, necessary to prepare us for heaven. He speaks of suffering, as a matter of course, where infinite souls are shut up in human or limited bodies ; and then he says that it works good for them in the end. He does not say, therefore, "You shall not mourn," as false prophets do ; nor, "You ought not mourn,"

as Job's comforters do; nor, "You do not mourn," as certain stoics do. But he says, "Blessed are they who do mourn." Blessed, — not happy. He does not say, "Happy are those who are not happy." There is no such miserable contradiction as that in the Gospels. That is left to sentimental poetry to tell you —

"There's such a charm in melancholy,
I would not, if I could, be gay;"

or it is left to modern religious tracts to pretend to. It is not the Gospel statement. But Jesus does say, to you who mourn, that you are blessed, — blessed with the presence of an angel, who, if you please, brings you close to God.

III. The Gospel does say, that sorrow and suffering are temporary. Jesus looks at men's life as eternal, — running on for ever; and sometimes speaks of it without alluding to death, regarding that as the transient incident it is, — as I might speak of the history of this country, without alluding to the fact, that part of it was in one century, and part in an-

other. Jesus speaks of life as eternal; and, because he does, there comes in an obscurity sometimes when we try to construe his words, as if he spoke only of the seventy or eighty years which make the beginning of it. Speaking so, he says that trouble, sorrow, grief, are nothing in comparison to the future. But, when he stands by the weeping sisters, he does not say that grief is nothing then. *He* does not say, "You ought not weep;" "You do not weep;" nor, "You will not weep." No. He weeps too.

These seem to me the principles on which sorrow is treated by him, and on which we ought to regard it now: First, sorrow is; and, in a world where physical restraints hem in immortal spirits, sorrow and suffering will be. Second, that sorrow is the gate of wisdom. By it these spirits are trained to their highest life. Christ himself, we know not how, is made perfect through suffering. So Peter the timid fisherman becomes Peter the triumphant apostle. We know how. It is

through the bitter tears of the court of the high-priest's palace. So Christ says, "Blessed are they that mourn." Third, sorrow and suffering are temporary. And, when looking at *eternal* life, Jesus says, "Let not your hearts be troubled," but goes on to show that he means that their trouble of that moment shall be soothed by their hope of the future.

These principles, I think, may be traced out in all his sorrows, and in his blessed interviews with those that mourn.

Thus: they meet a blind man. The disciples try to trace the origin of evil, — a thing I advise you never to do. "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither," says Jesus, and shows that the use of that suffering is in the cure he brings to us, — a lesson we can carry home, every one of us, and apply where we see suffering next which admits a cure. Again: "It has been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say, Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you, and pray for

them that despitefully use you." That is, we are to make use of what we suffer from men as a part of our training for heaven. When he sends out his apostles to preach, "Take nothing for your journey,"—not a staff, not a scrip, nor even money; that is, do not count your own comfort at all in comparison with your effect upon the world; that is all in all. "When you come to a house, say, Peace be upon this house." What if they are not received? What if they meet the sorrow of men who are despised? Then "let your peace return upon yourselves." That is, be more peaceful, more gentle, for the rebuff. Let your sorrow be your training. "Do not think," he goes on, "that I have come to send peace on earth. It is not peace, but a sword." But this enmity shall not last for ever; for "whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father." "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Sorrow is temporary; life, real life, is eternal. And the same is the spirit of the words which

bless so many mourning hearts, when he came to the tomb of Lazarus. He does not say, "You ought not mourn." Why, the sisters are weeping; the people round are weeping; he is weeping himself, — sighing and troubled in spirit. He says through his tears, "Whoso liveth and believeth shall never die. What you see is temporary; life is eternal." The same lesson as when he says that the loss of hand or foot is nothing, the loss of earthly life nothing, if, in that loss, though it were at the stake of agony, one maintain the purity of the immortal soul. As when, just before his own death, he says, in the temple courts, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

In selecting these illustrations from his own words, I have passed along his life in order, taking one quotation for each lesson which he taught us as to our mourning. They are not lessons, however, of that cold kind which are sometimes brought to mourners by those who

have never felt at all. This is not the spirit of what we call Job's comforters, "who jest at scars, but never felt a wound." No. Here are the words of one who knew our sufferings as well as we do. He was homeless; he had friends who failed him; he was surrounded by those who ridiculed him. Eager to serve men, he was said to be in league with devils. Loving all, he was used despitefully, spoken of as a wine-bibber and a madman, and really driven, an outcast, from town to town. It is *he*, who, when death is right before him, tells us that our troubles are but for a moment, and that in heaven we have many mansions. It is *he*, who, surrounded by the men who will take his life, says, "If it die, it will bring forth much fruit;" He, the Man of Sorrows, so well acquainted with grief, who says, "Blessed" — though not happy — "are they that mourn."

So much, in our mourning for the friends we have lost, — our little children, or our strongest, or our best, — do we gain in having the word of God come to us by his lips, in a

human life. It is not the cold comfort of dead words carved out in some table of stone : it is the loving sympathy of a weeping Saviour. It is not the calm, oracular direction of a high-priest, who does not partake of our infirmities, but the blessed love of one who wept with us, hungered with us, and thirsted with us ; whose heart-strings were strained as ours are ; and who passed through all as he begs us to do. It is not, again, the poor human demonstration of one who has worked out a system by which he thinks death can be explained, and who demonstrates to the last, as poor Socrates did, — till the hemlock came : it is the triumphant utterance of that Son of God who died, as he lived, in the full presence of his Father, and to whom the agony of his death was, as the countless agonies of his life, only a part of the suffering which he was eager to share with us, that we might know how to bear ours. So Christ must needs have suffered. So we, if we will do our duty here, and if we will be trained to higher service there, must needs suffer too.



THE SHORE OF ETERNITY.



ALONE! to land alone upon that shore,
With no one sight that we have seen before ;
Things of a different hue,
And the sounds all new,
And fragrances so sweet, the soul may faint.
Alone! Oh that first hour of being a saint!

Alone! to land alone upon that shore
On which no wavelets lisp, no billows roar ;
Perhaps no shape of ground,
Perhaps no sight or sound ;
No forms of earth our fancies to arrange,
But to begin alone that mighty change.

Alone! to land alone upon that shore,
Knowing so well we can return no more ;
 No voice or face of friend,
 None with us to attend
Our disembarking on that awful strand,
But to arrive alone in such a land !

Alone! to land alone upon that shore ;
To begin alone to live for evermore ;
 To have no one to teach
 The manners or the speech
Of that new life, or put us at our ease :
Oh that we might die in pairs or companies !

Alone? No! God hath been there long before ;
Eternally hath waited on that shore
 For us who were to come
 To our eternal home ;
And He hath taught His angels to prepare
In what way we are to be welcomed there.

Like one that waits and watches, He hath sate
As if there were none else for whom to wait ;
 Waiting for us, — for us
 Who keep Him waiting thus,

And who bring less to satisfy His love
Than any other of the souls above.

Alone? The God we know is on that shore,
The God of whose attractions we know more
 Than of those who may appear
 Nearest and dearest here ;
Oh ! is He not the life-long friend we know
More privately than any friend below ?

Alone? The God we trust is on that shore,
The Faithful One whom we have trusted more,
 In trials and in woes,
 Than we have trusted those
On whom we leaned most in our earthly strife :
Oh, we shall trust Him more in that new life !

Alone? The God we love is on that shore,
Love not enough, yet whom we love far more,
 And whom we've loved all through,
 And with a love more true
Than other loves, — yet now shall love Him more ;
True love of Him begins upon that shore.

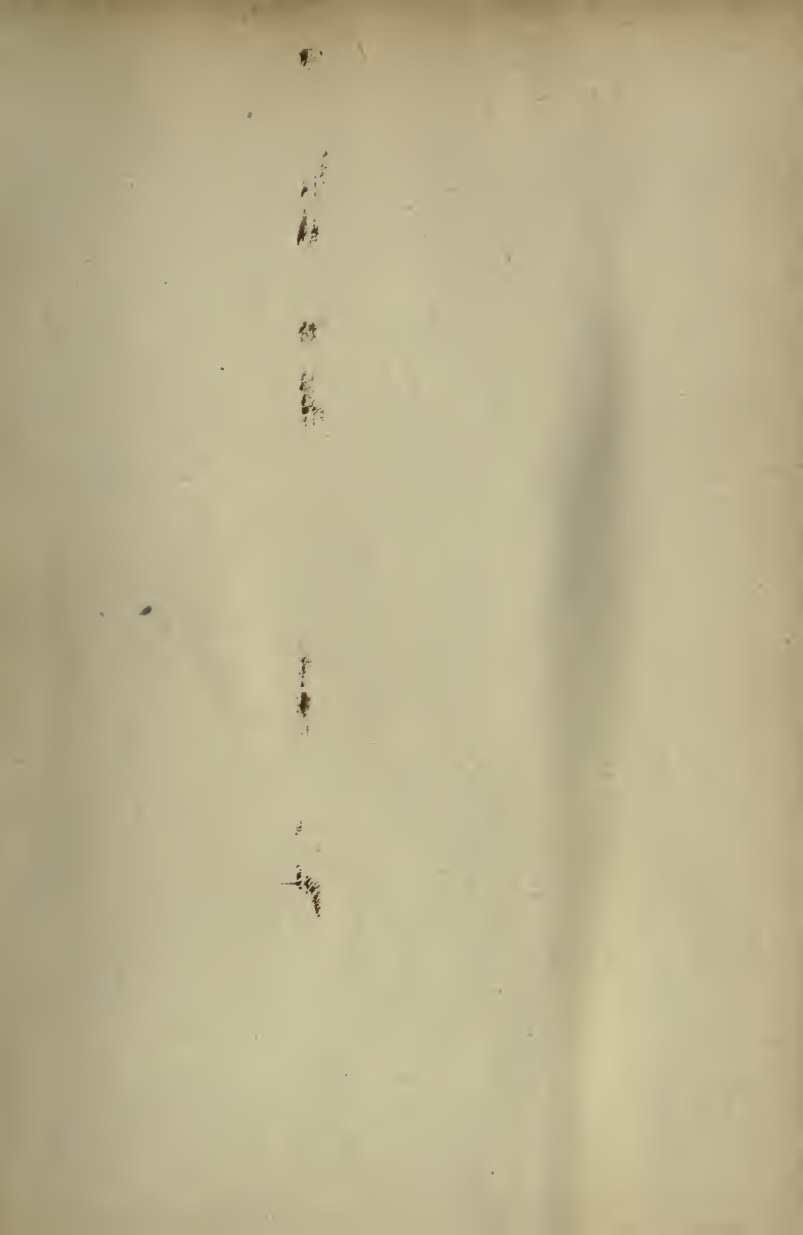
So not alone we land upon that shore ;
'Twill be as though we had been there before.

We shall meet more we know
Than we can meet below,
And find our rest like some returning dove,
And be at home at once with our Eternal Love !

F. W. FABER, D.D.







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