

LOVING AND GIVING.

Because He loved He gave  
Himself for love of us!  
Who would another save  
Must give his heart's love thus;  
The worthiest gifts must always wait  
Till Love unlock the golden gate.

Some gifts are only alms  
That have no love behind;  
In them there are no balms  
To heal the troubled mind;  
Who gives them has nor joy nor pain,  
Who takes them has but little gain.

But he gives more than gold  
Who gives, because he must,  
Riches of worth untold,  
Treasures of love and trust;  
Giving himself he cannot live;  
Unless his heart and hands may give.

So learn thou to bestow  
From the great Giver, Christ;  
Love's gifts will freely flow  
When the heart keeps its trust;  
And no one stops to count the cost  
Whose whole glad life in love is lost.  
—Marianne Farningham.

WOULD OUR WAY BE BETTER.

BY THE REV. J. R. MILLER, D.D.

Would it be better if we had the direction of our own affairs? So, sometimes, we are tempted to think. If this were permitted to us no doubt there would be a great change in the method of what we now call Providence. We would at once eliminate all that is painful and unpleasant in our lot. We would have only prosperities, with no adversities, only joys, with no sorrows. We would exclude pain from our life and all trouble. The days would all be sunny, with no clouds or storms. The paths would all be mossy and strewn with flowers, without thorns or any rough places.

All this has a very pleasing aspect for us when we think of it lightly and in a superficial way. Would not that be better than as we have it now? Would we not be happier, and would not life mean more to us in blessing and good, if we could direct our own affairs, and leave out whatever is painful, bitter, adverse or sorrowful? So most of us would probably say at first, before we have thought of the question deeply and looked on to the end. But really the greatest misfortune that could come to us in this world would be to have the direction of the affairs and the shaping of the experiences of our lives put into our own hands. We have no wisdom to know what is best for ourselves. Today is not all of life—there is a long future, perhaps many years in this world, and then immortality hereafter. What would give us greatest happiness in the days to come. Present gratification might cost us untold loss and hurt in the future.

Our wants and our real needs are not always the same. We want pleasure, plenty, prosperity—perhaps we need pain, self-denial, the giving up of things that we greatly prize. We shrink from suffering, from sacrifice, from struggle—perhaps these are the very experiences which will do the most for us, which will bring out in us the best possibilities of our natures, which will fit us for the largest service to God and man.

There is something wonderfully inspiring in the thought that God has a

plan and a purpose for our lives, for each life. We do not come drifting into this world, and we do not drift through it, like waifs on the ocean. We are sent from God, each one of us with a divine thought for His life—something God wants us to do, some place He wants us to fill. All through our lives we are in the hands of God, who chooses our place and orders our circumstances and is ready to make all things work together for our good. Our part in all this is the acceptance of God's will for our lives, as that will is made known to us day by day. If we thus acquiesce in the divine way for us we shall fulfil the divine purpose.

It is the highest honor that could be conferred upon us to occupy such a place in the thought of God. We cannot doubt that His way for us is better than ours, since He is infinitely wiser than we are. It may be painful and hard, but in the pain and the hardness there is blessing.

One is called apart from active life and shut up in a sick room. It seems to him that his time is being wasted. There are many things that need to be done and which he might have done instead of lying there with folded hands in the darkened room. People to whom his life is a continual blessing miss him when he comes not. He seems in his idleness to be leaving a great blank where there ought to have been many good deeds and gentle ministeries. Besides this loss to others and to the work of the world, sickness is most costly to the sick man himself. Its money cost is great. Then its burden of suffering is great.

What is there to compensate for all this loss and cost to make the long illness really a blessing. Is there anything? If we were directing the affairs of our own lives, we would not put the sickness in. Is it possible that God's way is better than ours would have been?

Of course we may not claim to know all the reasons there are in the divine mind for the pains and sufferings that come into our lives, or what God's design is for us in these trials. Without discovering any reasons at all, we may still trust God who loves us with an infinite love and whose wisdom also is infinite. But we can think of some ways in which it is possible for blessing and good to come out of sick room experience.

The Master has other work for us besides what we do in our common occupations. We have other lessons to learn besides those we get from books and friends and current events, and through life's ordinary experiences. There is a work to be done in us, in our own hearts and lives, which is even more important than anything assigned to us in the scheme of the world's activities. There are lessons which we can learn much better in the quiet shaded sick room than outside, in the glare of the streets and amid the clamor of earth's strifes. Our shut-in days need never be lost days. Whatever they may cost us in money or in suffering, we need not be poorer when they are over than if we had been busy all the while at the world's tasks.

We need only to accept God's way and go as He leads, and at the end we shall find that in not the smallest matter have we ever been unwisely led, but that at every step He has brought us to some good. We do not know what the future, even the nearest hour of the future, may have for us, but we know that we cannot drift beyond our Father's love and care, and that all that may occur,

darkly or disastrously, will reveal joy and blessing at the end.

Yesterday, when I said, Thy will be done,  
I knew not what that will of Thine would be,  
What clouds would gather black across my sun,  
What storms and desolation waited me;  
I knew Thy love would give me what was best  
And I am glad I could not know the rest.

Thy will be done, I say, and to the scroll  
Of unread years consenting set my name;  
Day after day their pages will unroll  
In shining words that prove Thy love the same,  
Until my years are gathered into one  
Eternal, sanctified,  
Thy will be done.

TAKING AN INTEREST IN OTHERS.

We all owe something to others. We are debtors to our kindred, to our neighbors, to our country, to our enemies. Some men do not acknowledge any such obligation. They are supremely selfish. "Am I my brother's keeper?" This the inquiry of the selfish. Some confess their obligation to their kindred and to those who have benefitted them, but outside of this narrow circle they will not go. The picture of the Good Samaritan in our Lord's parable is full of instruction. The Good Samaritan felt an obligation pressing upon him to come to the help of a fellow-man in distress without asking who he was. He gave his time, his money, his sympathy, his care, to a stranger. He exposed himself to danger for one who had never placed him under any obligation. Human need is a sufficient appeal.

In the Old Testament there is a story of a little Hebrew maid who had been carried away from her home and native country by Syrian marauders. She became a servant of the enemies of her people, and waited on the wife of the commander-in-chief of the armies of the Syrians. Her master was a leper, and she knew it. What did she owe to her master? What had he done for her? Was he not the leader of the armies at whose hands she had suffered? Could anyone blame her if she should wish him harm? She might say, "What care I if he shall be eaten up of leprosy? The sooner he shall be gone the better." But she took an interest in him, and said, "Would to God my master were with the prophet in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy."

It was an easy thing to tell the story of the prophet and the wonders which God wrought through him. It is a simple thing to tell the story of Jesus and the wonderful salvation which He has provided for all men. Some will hear and some will forbear. The fact that some will not hear should not hinder us from telling the good news. The fact that men are not worthy is no reason why we should take no interest in them. We are debtors to all men. The mercy and love of God have placed us under everlasting obligations. The only way we can discharge our obligation is to do whatever we can for those whom we can reach.

Hold on to your hand when you are about to punch, scratch, steal, or do any improper act.

THE SPIRIT'S FILLING.

BY REV. HENRY T. SCOLL.

Disciples of Christ were charged to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high; and the Spirit's filling came upon them as they all, with one accord, were conducting a protracted prayer meeting. To be filled with the Spirit is what may be expected from the profitable prayer meeting of today; and the Spirit's filling is of more worth to us individually than large revenues in silver.

Without the Spirit we would be unregenerate, and except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (John iii: 5). Without the Spirit's guidance in Scripture study, the teachings of the Holy Bible would be foolishness. (1 Cor. ii: 14). Without the Spirit's assistance our petitions would be characterized by ignorance in matter and method. (Rom. viii: 26). Without the Spirit's indwelling, our individual efforts for salvation would be failures, for when we successfully work out our own salvation, it is God the Spirit working in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. (Phil. ii: 12, 13). Without the Spirit's indwelling we would fail to prove ourselves disciples of Christ by bearing much fruit. (John xv: 8; Gal. v: 22-23). Without the indwelling Spirit we could not attain unto acceptable Christlikeness. (2 Cor. iii: 18). Without the indwelling Spirit we would be without God and without hope. (Rom. viii: 9).

Those were evidently profitable prayer meetings at Jerusalem, for the power of the Spirit came to the harmonious and steadfast petitioners. The Spirit led them into the knowledge, and qualified them for the practice of truth; and "as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God." (Rom. viii: 14).—N. Y. Observer.

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