

The Christian Life.

A PRAYER.

I ask not
When shall the day be done and, rest
come on;
I pray not
That soon from me the "curse of toil"
be done;
I seek not
A sluggard's couch with drowsy curtain
drawn.
But give me
Time to fight the battle out as best I
may;
And give me
Strength and peace to labor still at even-
ing's gray;
Then let me
Sleep as one who toiled afield through
all the day.

Kindness of Unanswered Prayers.

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

There are some of our prayers which God loves us too well to answer. If he did what we plead with him, sometimes agonizingly, to do, he would withdraw from us great blessings. But he would rather resist our pleadings and disappoint us than impoverish our life by letting us have what we want.

In one of St. Peter's epistles is a little phrase of three words which casts a world of light on many things in life which seem hard. The writer is speaking of trials, and says: "Now for a little while, if need be, ye shall be put to grief." "If need be" is the illuminating clause in this sentence. It shines like a star with heavenly light upon the darkness and pain of sorrow. There is a divine reason for the trouble which we long to get rid of. There is a blessing in the thing which is so hard to bear. To take it away would be to take a good, a Divine gift out of our life.

A marginal reading of an oft-quoted promise tells us that "Our Burden is the Gift of God to Us." This thought changes the meaning of the experience in our life which is so hard to bear. A burden is something heavy, something hard to carry. It weighs us down, so that we feel as if we must faint beneath it. It is natural for us to want to get rid of it. We say we could go on much more easily, with much more celerity, if we could only lay off our heavy load. So we pray God to take it away from us.

But just then our eyes catches sight of the alternative reading, gift—our burden is God's gift to us. This unlovely, heavy, crushing thing, under which we are bowing in weakness—it is a gift from God to us. A gift from God! Then it must be good; there must be something gracious and loving in it. God would not give us something merely to make us suffer. He does not take pleasure in making our lives hard for us. This unwelcome thing, this that causes us so much pain, unfolds in its unattractiveness a secret blessing. It is something we could not afford to have taken away. If only we could see the hidden treasures of good thing there is in it, we would no longer cry to God to have it removed.

The promise, therefore, about our burdens, is not that when we bring them to God he will lift them away. Very graciously does God tell us to cast them upon him. This is one of the privileges of trust—we may take everything

to God. But we are not told that we will be relieved of the heavy load we take to him, or that it will be lightened even so much as a feather's weight. Here is where many good people lose their faith. They thought that when they brought their troubles to God he would take them away. Now they cry to him in their distress, from the midst of their difficulties, as they wait under the shadow of imminent sorrow, but nothing is changed, the bitterness does not become less bitter, the load gets no lighter, the torturing trouble is not removed. "God does not hear my prayer," the trembling heart says.

When we remember Peter's "If Need Be," and the Psalmist's "Thy Burden is a gift from God," a new light falls upon the mystery. There is a meaning for this suffering, this sorrow, this hard struggle, this time of pinching want—it must stay until its work is done. The work of God which seems so empty of good, so full of evil, wraps up in its rough coat a diamond of Divine love and grace. A man picked up a large, round pebble. It seemed only a coarse-grained stone. But his trained eye saw something shining beneath the roughness and coarseness. He held in his hand a treasure which proved to be worth thousands of dollars. The experiences of our life which we look upon as most undesirable, which are so hard to endure, which we cry to God to have taken away—they have hidden in their unloveliness rich gifts of God.

It would be unkind in our Father to take away these things which we plead with him to remove. His kindness is shown rather in refusing our prayers. We cast the burden upon him as he bids us do, but it is still on our own shoulder—he does not carry it for us. Yet the prayer is answered, answered, too, in a far better way than if the heavy weight were lifted off. "He shall sustain thee" is the promise. Instead of bearing the load for us, he gives us strength so we can bear it ourselves. Thus we get the blessing of the "need be," and we do not lose the gift of God which came in the burden.

Besides, we are Divinely strengthened, and rise to new power as Christians. For it is a great deal better for us if God makes us strong, so we can carry our own loads, than if he carried them for us. It were better that Peter and John at the Beautiful Gate should make the lame man well, so that he needed no more to beg, than if they had given him alms enough to provide for him a whole year. God is much more eager to make something of us that he is to give us an easy time just for a few days. —London Baptist.

When tempted to sin against self, others and God, to feed the appetites, passions and lusts and starve the soul, to contract evil habits, to propagate them and to defy God's holy laws of simplicity, self-denial and purity, don't yield. When tempted to hurry, fret and complain, to doubt, distil doubt, and disturb the faith, peace and tranquility of others, to belie your profession, your Bible and your God, don't yield. When tempted to follow the world's fashions, customs and principles, to be proud, independent and self-sufficient, to be inconsiderate, over-bearing and domineering, don't yield.

CHASTENED EXPERIENCES.

J. H. HANNAH.

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, it afterward yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." And yet we know that in the "afterward" the peaceable fruits of righteousness are neither so rich nor so abundant as should be. The promising blossoms of spring are nipped by the sharp frosts of indifference and forgetfulness, so that but little real fruit is the result. Whilst there is the heat of the refining fire, the reflection of the Refiner is in the molten metal, but with the cooling of the furnace the reflection dies away. When the heart is softened, many good resolutions are formed, and the whole vista of the future glows with the light of this close contact with God. But somehow the actual experience of later years falls short of these hallowed expectations; the spiritual momentum declines; and we feel with Coleridge that "experience, like the stern lights of a vessel, throws a light only over that part of the course that has already been covered." This, however, is true only because the vision of God has become blurred, and we have not cherished the sacred impulses which once we had. There is a deeper truth in the old Indian legend that when a warrior vanquished an enemy the spirit of the defeated foe entered into the heart of the victor, making him the stronger for all coming conflicts. That old fancy might and should become to us a literal fact in the gathering of moral strength from all the past.

But experiences are peculiarly memorable. The passing by of God's glory whilst we are hidden in the cleft of the rock can never be forgotten. There are things written upon the tablet of the heart which we can well afford never to have erased. There are times when God takes us aside, and it becomes us to guard well the influence of those sacred seasons that their stamp and impress may appear in the whole after life. A Christian who had been all but passed over the river feebly whispered, "I have seen the other world, and I am surprised that Christians should be afraid to die. When I first entered the valley, it was cold and cheerless, and the river looked dark and dreary. But when he came—what a change! Then all was bright; the river was like crystal; and on the stepping-stones across it I passed quite easily to near the other side. So when I recovered and found myself still in the world, I felt a moment's regret that I had not gone home." Could such a picture ever fade from the walls of memory?

Hezekiah furnishes us with a notable example of a man who profited by such a soul-stirring experience. There came a time when he was sick, nigh unto death, and he received a summons to appear before the Supreme Judge and King of the universe. He was crushed by mental and physical distress. The Divine Helper seemed afar off. With a deadly disease upon him, it was an experience of the bitterest sort. When relief seemed far from him he did the very best thing he could do: he cried to God and left his case in his hands. In that model and memorable prayer, he cried: "O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me." God heard his prayer and extended his lease for life fifteen years. And so like one raised from the dead he comes back from the very threshold of eternity and tells us of his experience in the prospect of death. The im-

mediate emergency was passed, but the remembrance of that soul-searching time was something that he wanted to carry with him through all the balance of life. And there are few sentences more pathetic, more tender and more sublime, than when he says, "I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul." Some translate it, "ever after the bitterness of my soul," and this doubtless is the thought. He wanted his life to prove that he had obtained good from the providence under which he had been. He says, "I shall go softly, tenderly, guardedly, watchfully, prayerfully. Now that the trouble is over and the affliction has passed, I will endeavor to retain the impression of it, and to have the same thoughts of it that I had then." And so he lives in a more thoughtful and considerate frame of mind as he thinks of the goodness and kindness of God. May we not learn a practical lesson from all this, and let the "moments on the mount" shed their hallowed influence over what we think the small and ordinary affairs of daily life. "I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly." May we enjoy his favor, and may we obtain his approval. —Can. Baptist.

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"God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will, with the temptation also, make a way to escape." Don't yield.

Dr. Low's Worm Syrup is pleasant to take, always effectual, and as it carries its own Cathartic, there is no need of giving Castor Oil or any purgative afterwards.

When hope is dead, when all earthly help has failed, when the bitter struggle ends in failure—there is God's opportunity; then God works.

A Time for Everything. — The time for Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil is when croupy symptoms appear in the children; when rheumatic pains beset the old; when lumbago, asthma, coughs, colds, catarrh or earache attack either young or old; when burns, scalds, abrasions, contusions or sprains come to any member of the family. In any of these ailments it will give relief and work a cure.

When tempted to lose sight of mercy, love and righteousness, of God, heaven and the eternal reward, of the abundant life, the abundant entrance and the abundant eternity, of judgment, retribution and eternal loss, don't yield. When tempted to be disheartened, discouraged, distracted, don't yield.

For the Overworked.—What are the causes of despondency and melancholy? A disordered liver is one cause and a prime one. A disordered liver means a disordered stomach, and a disordered stomach means disturbance of the nervous system. This brings the whole body into subjection and the victim feels sick all over. Parmelee's Vegetable Pills are a recognized remedy in this state and relief will follow their use.