

"Lord, I was Blind!"

Lord, I was blind. I could not see
In thy marred visage any grace;
But now the beauty of Thy face
In radiant vision dawns on me.

Lord, I was deaf. I could not hear
The thrilling music of Thy voice;
But now I hear Thee and rejoice,
And all Thy uttered words are dear.

Lord, I was dumb. I could not speak
The grace and glory of Thy name;
But now, as touched with living flame,
My lips Thine eager praises wake.

Lord, I was dead. I could not stir
My lifeless soul to come to Thee;
But now, since Thou hast quickened me,
I rise from sin's dark sepulchre.

Lord, Thou hast made the blind to see,
The deaf to hear, the dumb to speak,
The dead to live; and lo, I break
The chains of my captivity.

—William Tidd Matoon—

For Christians in Trouble.

There is no promise that the true disciples of Christ shall be exempt from sickness, the infirmities of old age, accident, opposition, grief, pain, perplexity, or temptation. But for each and all these, supports and antidotes are pledged by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

The philosophy of Christ and His apostles includes the use of the natural remedies as far as they will avail without working against the spiritual. It is good to try to find a remedy, and as many evils result from neglect, haste, thoughtlessness, and pernicious habits, the cause once searched for is easily found and the trouble is over. If this cannot be done, the art of closing the mind to it will often work a cure. "Never to mind" is often to annihilate. So great are the results of this that in each generation quacks alike in the physical and moral domain propound it as a discovery of their own.

To avail one's self thereof one must never converse about the cause of trouble. They who can find comfort in perpetually talking about their troubles have more egotism than affliction. It is an excellent cordial to make an inventory of one's blessings. Most chronic complainers could not recite their valued possessions in a day, should they name and briefly describe them, every one. The practically wise in all lands and under all religions or none, frequently compare themselves with others less fortunate; for but a minority have so small a portion of good as to be unable to find others worse off than themselves.

A change of scene will often drive away the mists of sorrow or the clouds of care by diverting attention. Nor must one necessarily go far from home to find such a change. There are those languishing in flat lands who might leave their burdens behind them by the simple expedient of climbing a tree, or on the treeless prairie by spending an hour each evening in gazing from the upper windows upon the changeable and changeless stars, and wondering about them and what is beyond. To the sedentary the open air does good like a medicine, and so also does conversation with the cheerful; but never with the trifling, if the sickness of the spirit be severe; for "as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth [frivolous] songs to a heavy heart."

But there are troubles incurable by such means as these, which may mitigate, but cannot sound the depths of an anguished spirit. To mention them would increase grief; nor is it necessary, for "each heart knoweth its own bitterness" and full well the cause. The promise to relieve these is a fundamental specification of the everlasting covenant which God has made with His people. This is what He means by promising to carry them as lambs in His bosom. Every suffering is a part of His regenerating plan, even those that follow mistakes, foibles, and faults, should the disciple be overtaken in them; and sins also, for then appears the promise of "the Advocate with the Father."

The suffering Christian should consider the sufferings of Christ, so much greater, unmerited, voluntary. Those who dwell upon them till the heart cries, "He did it all for me," will rise to find something to do for Him; and by a beautiful relationship of love and sorrow will instinctively go forth to help those in as dark and cold a cave as that in which their own spirits languished but a little while before.

Specters of doubt and fear must be faced with. "For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God," and this whether a natural remedy be found or not. The working together may be with searching and finding. What if the chastisement seems to be "grievous," and not "joyous?" (How could it be if it seemed joyous?) "Nevertheless afterward" expect the "peaceable fruits of righteousness." These how-

ever, can never arrive if the Christian is impatient or gives himself up to worrying.

The culmination of God's remedies for trouble is to be in heaven—those who come up through greatest tribulation must rise to the highest place, both for reward and for the benefits of greatest chastening. When all things else seem to fail the troubled Christian should listen to the voice: "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" "These are they which 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 His 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 waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."—Ch. Advocate.

The Duty of Resistance.

That it is right to pray "Lead us not into temptation," was taught by Christ himself. Not that the Father would lead us into temptation; but that he may so lead us that we shall avoid temptation such as we may not be able to hear. It cannot be God's design to tempt us. We are told that he tempts no man and is tempted of no one. Nevertheless, we are all in a world in which evil exists, and we cannot escape contact with it. Even if a man shut himself up in a cave, there are causes of temptation within himself. Christ did not escape temptation by going solitary into the wilderness. We cannot flee from it entirely, but we can avoid much of it, and particularly such as may have a strong influence upon us.

A wise man measures his powers and weaknesses, and learns what he can do and what he cannot do. If he has little power to acquire and none to impart he will not try to be a teacher; if he has no imagination he will not attempt to be a painter. He will recognize his limitations and choose his vocation accordingly. Some are conscious of a tendency to observe certain virtues and to contract certain vices. They do not need to fortify the virtues, but to defend themselves against the vices. There are various besetting sins; but they do not appeal to all. Nothing is more certain than that the natural weakness of one man differs from that of another. The plan of defense must, therefore, vary. A man may keep himself unspotted from the world without going out of the world. That is the office of religion. There is no ground for the fatalistic argument that a man must sin in one direction or another. This is a base appeal to cowardice. No man is born with an overwhelming passion for evil. He may, by constant surrender to temptation, reduce the power of resistance; Guiteau had original power of resistance, but he allowed it to be broken down. The commander of a beleaguered fortress will bring all his resources to bear in strengthening and defending the weak places in the walls. It is only the coward and traitor who stands by the impregnable positions and allows the weak ones to be forced.

If the weak points in character are stormed by the enemy of what avail are the strong points? If one point is captured the soul is a prisoner. That one point is the strategic point, the key to the situation. When Milana was stormed and Tynnavo taken, Larissa was untenable and all Thessaly was at the mercy of the enemy. The taste for alcoholics may be one man's weakness, a predisposition to dishonesty another's; a tendency to doubt may be strong in one case, a love for the superstitious in another. At these points the defenses need to be strengthened in every possible way. Avoidance of persons, places and things which stimulate these desires is the first duty of defense. If you pray "Lead us not into temptation," be watchful lest you be led of your own lusts. Lusts are bad leaders; they must be held in captivity. So held, the man is free not so held, the man is bound.

A man who knew his own weaknesses was asked by a friend to read a certain pamphlet. "What is it?" he asked. "Oh," said the other, "something which [a notorious infidel] has written. I want you to read it." "I would rather not." "Why not?" "Are you afraid to? I believe you are. You don't dare to." "No, sir, I don't dare to. I have enough doubts of my own, I don't want anybody to suggest more. There are several things I don't dare to do. That is one; to taste wine is another. I am afraid of these things but I'm not afraid of you. I am only afraid of wrong-doing."

That man is strong because he knows his weaknesses thoroughly, will not indulge them, and will not suffer himself to be tempted by others. He will be stronger, too; for the practice of resistance increases the power of resistance, just as concession weakens it. As a teacher said to a scholar who was breaking an important rule, "It is a temptation, I know; but you don't have to yield."—Independent.

The Comfort of God's Pardon.

REV. GEORGE MATHESON, D. D.

"Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and say unto her, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."—Isaiah 40:2

What a strange ground of comfort! Is there not something grotesque about it? To be told that I am pardoned is doubtless consolatory; but to be told that I am pardoned because I have got double punishment is surely fitted to irritate rather than to please. Nay, but it is not punishment God speaks of; it is the reparation. Is there any pure soul that would like to be pardoned without atonement—without paying back even more than he took away? If I have done my brother a wrong, and there comes to me a voice through the silent air, "Be of good cheer, it will be all forgiven," would that really give me cheer? Not if mine were a pure soul. I would ask something more than my pardon—the reparation of my wrong. I would ask to pay up—to pay more. I would ask, not only to be allowed to restore but to be allowed to enrich; not simply to fill the coffers I have emptied, but to place a larger treasure in their room. There is no sweetness in my pardon until I am told that my deed has been washed away.

From Thy hands alone, O Lord, can I receive a pardon that shall comfort, because from Thy hands alone can they whom I have injured be recompensed. Men speak of Thy forgiving love in redeeming from the fires of hell; but there is no fire so hot to me as the remorse for yesterday. I have injured my brothers a hundred times. Some of them are beyond the reach of my remedy. Who shall make it up to them when they have passed out of my hands? If it cannot be made up to them, it will not be made up to me. Pity will not do it; pardon will not do it; love will not do it; heaven itself will not do it. If I have caused eternal pain, I think I would rather have pain than joy. How could I sit beside Lazarus if I knew that I had helped Dives to his seat below? Thou alone canst satisfy me, O Lord! Only from Thy hands can I receive the reparation of my sin. Many of my victims have passed beyond me; but they have not passed beyond Thee. Thou holdest all things in the hollow of Thy hands. Make it up to them, my God! Pay them what I owe. Recompense their loss. Compensate their tears. Mitigate the pain which I have wrought them. Nay, better, turn the pain into a glory. If I have sent Jacob to lie on a pillow of stones, make it to him a place for angels. If I have driven Joseph into a dungeon, lead him through it to a throne. If I have cast Moses on the rude waters, bear him on their bosom to a happy shore. If I have helped to wound the Son of Man, make His cross the world's crown. My pardon shall be perfect comfort when Thou hast redeemed my sin.—Christian World (London).

The Best of Life.

To make the best of life is a universal motive. But how different are men's conceptions of this highest good, this supreme utilization of time and opportunity! To one, life's best means unlimited pleasure, unhindered self-gratification. To another the best of life is wealth. Still another finds in culture the highest attainment and the most genuine satisfaction.

The Christian believes that life's best is the unselfish service of God. He sees the votary of pleasure growing satiated and weary with his continual round of amusement. He finds that the man of wealth and the man of culture are both narrowing their lives into mere ruts of mental habit, with no zenith above and no horizon beyond them. In fact, the inevitable tendency of the self-centered motive is to pinch, confine, and devitalize. Instead of broadening toward the sea, like the life of a true Christian the life of a selfish and worldly man continually narrows and dwindles, until it finally sinks out of sight, like a stream absorbed by the sand.

The best of life is not what we can get out of it but what we can put into it. Best in every sense is the life given up to this ideal of service; best in happiness, best in vital and enduring result, best in outlook, and in look and uplook, best in present and in future reward, best in spirit, best in deed.

Happy is he who takes the Christian view of the meaning and the possibilities of life. For him there is no regret and no remorse. He never looks back upon misappropriated and misapplied days and weeks and years. The development of his whole life is so natural, so progressive, so eternally straightforward, that when he is called upon to pass from the service of earth to the service of heaven, there is no gap, no chasm, to be crossed. He simply steps from one world to another and takes up his unfinished work on the other side—the same work, the same purpose, the same eternal, joyful progress. The best of this life—when it is the real best—is the best of any life; and he who begins by choosing as his portion here loving service of God and man, will not need to change his working clothes when he joins the host of bright ones whose continual joy it is to do the will of our Father in heaven.—Zion's Herald.

The Holy Ghost.

Beloved brethren in the ministry, I read this expression: "The first duty of a clergyman is, humbly to beg of God, that all that he wants done in his hearers should first be truly and fully done in himself." What a solemn application that has to the clergy!

What are we to expect that the Holy Spirit will do for us? I ask this question because I have noticed with anxiety men earnestly praying for the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a spirit of power for their work. I see brethren asking, how can I get souls converted? Must I not have the baptism of power? True, you must have it; but there is something to precede the baptism of power, and that is the baptism of holiness. In the church of the Corinthians the Spirit came as power in the gift of tongues, and in working of miracles, but they were very unsanctified, for Paul said, "Ye are carnal, for there is strife among you." They had the gifts of tongues and of knowledge and of wisdom, but pride and division and unlovingness marked many of them. It teaches us that a man may have a great gift of the Spirit for work, but little indwelling of the Spirit. God's Word warns us we will be as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals if we have not love, and the very spirit of humility and self-sacrifice of Jesus. Don't let us seek in the first place for power; we might get it and very little blessing for our souls; but seek the Holy Spirit to come to you as a revealer of the presence and power of God's holiness and the indwelling Jesus.

Oh let us bow very low before God, in waiting for the Holy Ghost to fill and sanctify us! The first thing in waiting for the fullness of the Holy Ghost is this, to say, I don't want the power which God will allow me to use, while my own sinful nature is still unsanctified, but I want God to take full possession of myself. If you seek the baptism of power, seek first the baptism of holiness—then the power will come to bless.—Rev. Andrew Murray.

Gone.

Every day things are forever passing out of our sight and slipping beyond our reach. Of how many things we are compelled to say, "They are gone." We start with life all before us; in a little while much that was once within our reach is gone. Time is gone, never to return; opportunity is gone, and cannot be recovered; youth is gone, and often wasted; influence sometimes is gone through our own follies and misdeeds; money is gone, spent in useless and in foolish ways; and by and by life itself will be gone, and time will be gone, and we must meet the Judge who gave His life for us, and who gave us our lives that we might devote them to His service and His praise.

Moments are slipping by, opportunities are fleeing, years are passing, life is short, and in a little while everything which we once could have grasped is beyond our reach; and then comes the time of reckoning, the solemn account, the edge of the quick and dead, before whom we must stand. Let us then improve the present hour, grasp each opportunity as it comes, redeem the time, because the days are evil, and so be ready that we at last may meet our Lord in peace, and enter into His presence with joy.

"My days are gliding swiftly by,
And I, a pilgrim stranger,
Would not detain them as they fly,
Those hours of toil and danger,
"For O! we stand on Jordan's strand,
And soon we'll pass over;
And, just before the shining shore
We may almost discover."
—Common People.

The Scripture presents you not only with an account of what God will do for a Christian, but also what a Christian will do for God.

How He Became a Missionary.

Dr. Cyrus Hamlin has told in a five-minute speech how it was he came to be a missionary. He said:

"In the vast majority of cases, missionaries are made by the influence of the family. My widowed mother made me a missionary. She had me read every Sunday out of the 'Panoplist,' and then later out of the 'Missionary Herald.' We had in those days in our town a missionary contribution box, a cent box, and we were encouraged to earn some special cents for that box. I remember well one occasion which was, I think, a turning point in my experience. When the fall muster came, every boy had a pocketful of cents to spend. My mother gave me seven cents, saying, as she gave them, 'Perhaps you will put a cent or two into the contribution box in Mrs. Farrar's porch on the common.' 'Shall I put in one, or shall it be two?' 'Thee I thought two cents was pretty small, and I came up to thee—three cents for heathen and four cents for gingerbread; but that did not sound right, did not satisfy me, so I turned it the other way, and said four cents shall go for the heathen. Then I thought, 'The boys will ask me how much I have to spend, and three cents is rather too small a sum to talk about. Hang it all!' I said, 'I'll put the whole in.' So in it all went. When I told my mother some years afterward that I was going to be a missionary she broke down and said, 'I have always expected it.'"

She Too Had Suffered.

A certain lady had often wondered what people felt like who were dangerously ill. At last she got into this condition herself, and was removed to a hospital. She had learned where to look for help, and the Saviour had given her such courage and peace that she longed to speak of Him to the other sufferers under the same roof. When our friend was about to leave, she asked the matron to arrange that she might have a little service, which the convalescent patients were invited to attend. They nearly all began to make excuses. Services did no good, and they did not like them, they said. "Easy to talk, but no one can quite understand what we have gone through." "The lady who is going to speak is herself a patient, and has suffered as much as anyone," the matron replied. This quite altered the case, and almost everyone came to hear the fellow-sufferer. For the same reason Jesus can sympathize with us. He, too, was a patient, a sufferer.—The Quiver.

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