

but after all, in the innermost meaning of your life, you must live it yourself. No one can make your decisions for you. No one can have faith in God for you. No one can obey the commandments for you. No one can get your sins forgiven for you. No one can do your duties or meet your responsibilities for you. No one can take your place in any of the great experiences of life. A friend might be willing to do it, but it is simply impossible. David would have died for Absalom—he loved his son well enough to do this—but he could not do it. Many a mother would take her child's burden of pain, as she sees its anguish, and bear it for the child, but she can only sit beside it and watch it suffer; she cannot take its place. Every one must live his own life.

There is another Bible word which tells us that we should "bear one another's burdens." So there are burdens in the carrying of which others can help us. No one can do our duty for us, or take our load of suffering, but human friendship can put strength into our heart to make us better able to do or to endure. It is a great thing to have brotherly help in life. We all need each other. Not one of us could get on without others to share his burdens. And we begin to be like Christ only when we begin to help others, to be of use to them, to make life a little easier for them, to give them some of our strength in their weakness, some of our joy in their sorrow. When we have learned this lesson we have begun to live worthily. Miss Emily Dickinson writes:

If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain;
If I can ease one life the aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin
Unto his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.

There is another inspired word

which tells us to "cast our burden upon the Lord." The word "burden" in this passage, in the margin of our Common Version, is rendered "gift"—"Cast thy gift upon the Lord." In the Revised Version the marginal reading is "Cast that he hath given thee upon the Lord." This is very suggestive. Our burden is that which God has given us. It may be duty, it may be struggle and conflict; it may be sorrow; it may be our environment. But whatever it is, it is that which he hath given us, and we may cast it upon the Lord.

The form of the promise is also suggestive. We are not told that the Lord will carry our burden for us, or that he will remove it from us. Many people infer that this is the meaning, but it is not. Since it is that which God hath given to us it is in some way needful for us. It is something under which we will best grow into strength and beauty. Our burden has a blessing in it for us. This is true of duty, of struggle, of the things which to us seem hindrances, of our disappointments and sorrows; these are all ordained of God as the best means for the development of our life. Hence it would not be true kindness to us for God to take away our burden, even at our most earnest pleading. It is part of our life. There is a blessing in the bearing of it.

The promise is, therefore, not that the Lord will remove the load we cast upon him, nor that he will carry it for us, but that he will sustain us so that we may carry it. He does not free us from duty, but he strengthens us for it. He does not deliver us from conflict, but he enables us to overcome. He does not withhold or withdraw trial from us, but he helps us in trial to be submissive and victorious, and makes it a blessing to us. He does not mitigate the hardness or severity of our circumstances, taking away the uncongenial elements, re-