

## O Father, is it You?

(Frank Ellis, in 'Friendly Greetings'.)

I walked along the darkened street  
Nor knew I one I loved was by.  
I heard the sound of little feet  
That every moment grew more nigh;  
And as the little one came near,  
She thought the form was one she knew.  
Into my face I saw her peer  
She said 'O Father, is it you?'

It was my child—quick to my side  
With childish confidence she came.  
The street was dark, the world was wide,  
And yet no tremor shook her frame.  
She had no doubt, she had no fear,  
Since to her father's side she drew.  
She knew that one she loved was near;  
Could say, 'O Father, is it you?'

Oh, when the way is dark for me,  
And when in doubt and gloom I tread,  
Not knowing that I walk by Thee,  
And darkness gathers round my head;  
Oh, when thou drawest to me near,  
Dear Lord, Thyself then may I view  
And know Thy form, Thy face most dear,  
And say, 'O Father, is it you?'

## Ye Did it Not.

'Master, I have this day broken no law of the Ten—have hurt no one. Is it enough?'  
'Child, there stood one by thy side burdened with heavy tasks of lowly, earthly labor. For a little help, a little easing of the burden, he looked to thee. Thou hadst time and strength.

'Master, I did not see.'

'Thine eyes were turned within. There was an ignorant one crying from out his darkness, "Will none teach me?" I have given thee knowledge.'

'Master, I did not hear.'

'Thine ear was dull. There came a guest to seek thy converse, a human friend in quest of fellowship. I marked thy sign, thy frown. Why was thy heart not glad?'

'I was reading. I hate to be disturbed, to be called from great thoughts for trifling talk.'

'The children would have had thee some few moments in their play. Without thee they went wrong—how far wrong thou wilt not know. It is too late.'

'Child's play? But I was searching for a hidden truth of spiritual import.'

'Thou didst not turn aside to lift that lame one who had fallen by the way.'

'I was in haste to what I had planned. I meant to help him when I should return.'

'Another lifted him. And shall I question further?'—Selected.

## The Springs of Thanksgiving.

For what shall we be thankful? For material blessing? Yes; but that cause is not sufficient for the Christian. It puts gratitude on too low a level. We have no permanent promise of prosperity in worldly goods. Suppose we meet adversity. That would silence our hymn of praise unless it were pitched on a higher key than that of thankfulness for things. Other people have lost their property. Are they now exempt from thanksgiving? Those who are most thankful for 'things' are likely to stick to the muck-rake all their lives. Things are not always a blessing. Sometimes their withholding is a mark of God's mercy.

Let us be thankful for the gifts which we may be sure come from God, and which

make us every way rich toward God and man.

Let us be thankful for the fact that we are heirs of God and that no contestant can nullify his will.

Let us be thankful if God has given us work in hard places. It is a great thing to ignore physical conditions; it is a greater thing to conquer them.

Let us be thankful without reference to granary or bank account. 'Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.'

Salvation and life are the two great personal blessings which should call forth our truest thanksgiving. Whatever gifts God withholds, he has given us these two. And when these are given, and appreciated, how easy it is to see that the withholding of the rest may be God's wisest and tenderest care for our larger life!

Let us be thankful for usefulness. It is better than riches. What a spur is poverty! How many would work as they do, if they could quit work next Saturday and be sure of a life income? Some would stay on, of course, but the majority of folks would develop some ailment or desire that would keep them away from the work they are doing in the world.

How shall we be thankful? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. 'I will pay my vows.' Obedience is the great thanksgiving. It is better than sacrifice—more acceptable to God than any other gift.

There is one special day appointed for thanksgiving, but the obedient Christian has a festival of praise the year round. His life is a parable of gratitude. And it wins other lives unto loving allegiance to the great teacher and Saviour, and Lord.—'Epworth Herald.'

## Against Obstacles.

The great men are the men who have had some limitations or hindrances to overcome, and whose strength and power have grown through this very struggle. Demosthenes and his vocal impediment is the classic illustration. Mr. Gladstone was all the greater man in the wealth of his judgments and sympathies in his later years because he struggled up to them from narrower mind and spirit. And Disraeli's power, though it was not always used for good, was increased and solidified by the battle he had to fight for supremacy. 'Gentlemen,' he said, when he sat down after the failure of his first speech in the House of Commons, amid the jeers of the House, 'I have begun, several times, many things, and I have often succeeded at last; aye, sirs, and, though I sit down now, the time will come when you will hear me.'—'Sunday School Times.'

## Autumnal Tints.

Now there is something more in all this autumnal art exhibition of the Great Master than the marvellous creation in color. A great picture is not simply paint. He says it is fine because the colors are bright and the objects in the painting look like the things they represent. Such a man does not truly see the painting at all. To see that, he must apprehend its spiritual meaning; he must catch the thought of the painter. So it is with the masterpieces which Nature's Artist has painted for us this delicious season. It is not enough for us to say the display is beautiful. If we can say no more than that, we apprehend but little of its real value and splendor. Why, every tree is a sermon and every leaf is a parable, and every color is a metaphor. To him whose eyes and heart are open to this teaching office of this beautiful autumn scene God is saying: 'The mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.'—The 'Baltimore Methodist.'

## Glorying in God.

How pleasant a thing it is to be able to say, 'God, even my God, shall bless me! I need no other.' How high matter of triumph was this to the psalmist! 'Let it be told to the generations following—this God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our guide even unto death' (Psa. xlviii. 13, 14). As if he had said, 'We are willing that this should be known in the present and succeeding ages. Let it be transmitted to posterity. Let there be a perpetual, everlasting monument of this, that we have had the Lord for our God. Thus a certain noble person would have an inscription put upon his tomb, without any further enlargement, to this effect—that he had been a servant to Queen Elizabeth, counsellor to King James, and friend to Sir Philip Sydney. By this it appears that he would have all ages know whose servant, counsellor, and friend he had been. In like manner should every good and pious soul declare to the present and all future ages that the Lord is his God.—John Howe.

## Give up Now!

The late Dr. Andrew Bonar, said D. L. Moody, once told me how, in the Highlands of Scotland, the sheep would often wander off amongst the rocks, and get into places that they couldn't get out of. The grass on these mountains is very sweet, and the sheep like it; and they will jump down ten or twelve feet, and they can't jump back again, and the shepherd hears them bleating in distress. They may be there for days until they have eaten all the grass. The shepherd will wait until they are so faint they cannot stand, and then he will put a rope round them, and he will pull them up out of the jaws of death.

'Why don't they go down there when the sheep first get there?' I asked.

'Ah!' he said, 'they are so very foolish they would dash right over the precipice and be killed if they did!'

And that is the way with men; they won't go back to God till they have no friends, and have lost everything. If you are a wanderer, I tell you that the Good Shepherd will bring you back the moment you have given up trying to save yourself.

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