

place around and within me. Only a few months ago I was a happy child, who had seen no face but that of my dear father and the servants. I knew nothing of the world without, and thought not of it; my life was like one long bright summer day. And then Anthony came; he said he was my friend, and I liked his presence very much, but his constant going and coming troubled me, and he often said words which seemed to mean more than I could understand. And then you came, Rex, and when I had known you two or three days I felt I should be more glad to have you for a friend than I had been to have Anthony when I first knew your brother, and that seemed unkind to him; and now he has had this dreadful accident, and there will be pain for him, and suffering for all of us, and you are going to bring another stranger to our quiet home, and all the future looks to me to-day so troubled and so dark, changed from my serene and beautiful past as much as this gloomy evening ride, with all its sadness, is changed from the bright morning when we left Refugium. Can you not understand, then, that every new event makes me tremble with vague fears."

"Oh, I can indeed, dear Innocentia!" exclaimed Rex, enthusiastically; "but no harm, no pain, no grief, should ever come to you if I might be allowed to watch over your happiness, and care for you. I would give my very life to guard you from evil if there was any need for it." She looked at him for a moment with a glance of surprise, then drooped her head in silence.

(To be continued.)

ON TRANQUILITY IN DAILY LIFE.

"Unquietness," says a writer whom I shall have frequent occasion to quote in this paper, "is the greatest evil that can come into a soul except sin"—nay, when we think how near to us is rest (as near, namely, as God is), must we not say unquietness is sin? And it certainly is the occasion of it. It hinders prayer. True, it sometimes drives us to a petulant petition; but often it is like the storm-wave, which, the more it leads the sailor to wish to find the harbour, the harder it renders it for him to make it. It stops usefulness. For usefulness requires at once "a mind at leisure from itself," and a soul that reflects the Saviour; but unquietness disturbs the leisure, and destroys the surface on which the reflection is cast. And besides all, it defeats itself. The more the bewildered bird beats about the cage, the less chance has it of getting away. The first requisite for escaping our perplexity is a spirit of calm. "There is one that laboreth, and taketh pains, and maketh haste, and is so much the more behind."

Most important, then, is the subject before us—the subject of *tranquility*, and not the less, but the more important, I think, because it is *not* tranquility in great dangers, tranquility in desperate emergencies, tranquility in special temptations, but the smaller yet the larger (because more frequent) matter of *tranquility in daily life*. Tranquility for the merchant in his counting-house, with the average bills to meet, and bad debts to face; tranquility for the minister in his study, with a sermon to prepare one hour, a lecture to deliver the next, with prayer-meeting and Bible-class to attend to; tranquility for the member of Parliament, with committees and clients to meet, and "showers of letters thick as snow-flakes" to answer; tranquility for the mother, with her children to dress, and perhaps to teach, housekeeping to superintend, visits to pay, poor neighbours to look after, meetings to be present at, and, above all, with a home and a husband to make as bright as burnished silver, when all within in the one case, and without in the other, is as black as bankruptcy; tranquility for the maid or matron, with all the tempers in the house, from that of the mistress to that of the scullery-maid, to study—with all the rooms in the house, from garret to basement, to keep clean,—with a hundred agreeable things going on in which she has no share, and a hundred disagreeable things from which she has no escape. How tranquility may be maintained in the midst of such a medley as this, is what we want to discover. It is a difficult problem, but "it is the problem of life; to solve it is to live."

The first thing towards its solution is to believe it solvable. And is not that only to believe in God? For surely our God would never put us in any position in which peace is impossible; and the Christian well knows where to find the explanation of all mysteries, and of all miseries, too—viz., with Him upon whose shoulders is the key of the house of David. There are positions of business so perplexing, of worldliness so engrossing, that peace is out of the question; but these are not the positions in which the great Captain has posted His sentinels.

Let us make sure of two things—that our occupation is a calling, a something to which God can call, and that it is our calling, the very work to which God has called us. I can conceive nothing more carnalizing than for a man to remain a merchant when conscience tells him he ought to be a minister; except, indeed, for a man to continue a minister when conscience says he has neither gift nor grace for such ministry. But this being settled, the "hall mark" being on our life that proves it to be genuine silver, whatever the pattern, and whatever the vessel, God's hand is willing to use it, and God's spirit to fill it; and what He can use and fill, He can make—you may be quite sure of this—patient and peaceful, and fitted for every good work. Be a man statesman or soldier, merchant or mariner, be his vocation never so secular, never so agitating, God is able to make all grace abound. Yes, if my occupation be a *lawful* calling, and be my appointed calling, tranquillity in it is a possibility.

But where shall it be found?

Many a burden, many a labour, many a fretting care; busy footsteps coming, going, little time for prayer. Duties waiting on my threshold will not be denied. Others coming round the corner crowding to their side. How shall I their importunate master?—how shall I get through? How ke p calm amid the tumult? Lord, what shall I do?

* Eccles. xi. 12.

Do! It is the old story. It is the old question about *doing*; the question that the sinner asks in reference to getting rid of the guilt of sin, instead of remembering that the work is *done*; the question that the tempted asks in reference to pressing temptation, instead of remembering that there is One who "worketh in" us "to will and to do." And so, again, in reference to this matter of tranquillity, we are continually pressing the question, "What shall I *do*?" when we have need to remember it is not so much in *doing* as in *ceasing to do*, that we shall find the secret of peace. "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength; do not let God have to add, 'but ye would not.'"

Another name for tranquillity is self-possession. David speaks of his soul "being in his hand;" and if such is not the reference there, the Son of David says, "In your *patience* possess ye your souls." "Examine often," says St. Francis de Sales, "whether your soul be really in your hand, or stolen from you by some passion or disturbance." It is not an enviable moment when, just mounted, you discover that your horse and not yourself is master. But it is worse to feel that, instead of your mastering details and drudgeries, the business, the accumulations, the vexations of work; that drudgeries, business accumulations, vexations, are *mastering you*. Somehow or other we must retain presence of mind, we must keep self-possessed.

The secret of tranquillity is *trust*. "Trusting Jesus, that is all."

Take the *promises* of God, and see if they do not warrant your trust. There is the promise by David, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain thee." There is the promise by Solomon, "When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh." For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken. There is the promise by Isaiah, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." There is the promise by Paul, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." There is the promise by Peter, "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." And there is the promise of the Lord Jesus Himself, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The promises of God are large enough, and liberal enough, one would think; and let us remember that the *Promiser* is ever greater than the *promise*, and that no words, even of God, can express the ground of calm confidence we have in Him who is the Rock of Ages. Oh, trust Him! trust Him, trust Him right through! Believe that He is going to undertake all for you; believe that He is going to guide you; believe that He "will hold your right hand and help you;" believe that He has purposes of grace which He will surely perform and carry out, not in your way, or in your time, but in His own. "so that He shall bring forth judgment unto victory." Look into God's face—look into God's heart, and then doubt Him if you dare, and be disquieted if you can.

Let us have confidence in the *past* promises of God. The thought occurs in the writings of Goulbourn, Adolphe Monod, and others, that the Lord Jesus owed that wonderful calmness which marks His life—a calmness that never forsok Him, whether teaching or travelling, however engaged, however tried—that He owed *this*, I say, very much to the fact that He felt that His Father had a plan for Him, not a plan for a lifetime merely, but a plan for each day; and that He had but to discover what the plan was, and then to carry it out; and so, however puzzling and perplexing the maze of duties through which He had to thread His way, nothing ever perplexed or puzzled Him, because, putting His hand in His Father's hand, He just walked in paths prepared for Him.

Well, now, what if God should have a plan for every one? What if God should have a plan for you? In such case—and surely it is the true case—everything we have to do, everything we have to bear, comes to us as part of a pre-arranged plan. Things that disturb our work, things that upset our purposes, things that thwart our wishes, interruptions, annoyances, are all part of the plan—God's plan—and should be met accordingly. There are so many holes and so many pegs before you, and your business is to put the pegs one after another into their separate holes. But then, remember, if the pegs be purposes, and the holes be hours, you must take care not to spend two hours over what only ought to occupy one, for, if you do, you must of course expect your arrangements to be upset. But what if you have done this? What if you have blundered and got bewildered?—have lost time and lost temper, too, perhaps? Is the whole pattern of your work inevitably tangled? No. God never requires of you more than one thing at a time, and though your neglect, or delay, or disordered senses have brought you into difficulties, He does not desert you, or even demand of you to make good your error. But He requires you to do *this* moment's duty—a duty which that discomposure has occasioned—the duty, namely, of confessing your sin, and of seeking afresh the blood of sprinkling. You should do this at once, in the midst of the market, in the midst of the *melée*, and then go on as a forgiven soul, asking, as you take up again the somewhat tangled threads, "What, under these altered circumstances, would God wish me to do?" and then going and doing it as quietly and composedly as though no disturbance had happened.

This leads me to say that if *faith* be the secret of tranquillity, *patience* is the support of it. Scripture often combines the two. In the Revelation we read of "the patience and the faith of the saints;" and in Isaiah we are told, "He that believeth shall not make haste"—i.e., he that has faith will not be impatient. Let me entreat you *not* to be impa-

tient with God. Alas that we should have to say it!—how many are? Perhaps we must ask for something deeper than patience: we must ask for submission. God may have different views of life from yours. Your view may be, making a thousand a year; God's view may perhaps be, that you should make only a hundred. "Yes," you say, "this is just one of the hard, narrow ways He brings me through." No! Is it narrow for God to wish to lead you into a place in which the soul and not the body shall live; in which you shall not have a house adorned with every article of luxury, but a spirit adorned with every characteristic of beauty—so that you shall not merely have passing pleasures through the day, but that you shall have pleasures to all eternity?

See that which is spiritual or eternal in God's design, and then ask is it not you that have narrow thoughts of life; and God's thoughts, are they not large and lofty?

Let us live, then, within the will of God—not merely crossing it here and there, but walking in it; for, the moment we get outside the will of God, we are sure to get out of our peace. Do not be impatient with God, then. He will avenge you. He will feed you. He will clothe you—*even* for you. In the right time He will do all the right things for you, and you shall have everything that can bless, everything that can bring you near to Him.

Do not be impatient with your fellow-men. Quickness of spirit and quietness of spirit do not go well together. If you are quick-tempered, swift to speak to those about you, you are almost sure to disturb this tranquillity which you are seeking. Very often the best thing to say is—forgive the solecism—to say nothing. "Turbid waters often clear simply by standing." If your children worry you, remember what a worrying child you are to your Father in heaven. If your servants try you, remember what a trying servant you are to your Master in heaven. If your neighbours or friends, or the people with whom you are engaged in business, are a perpetual thorn in your side, remember that you are perhaps little better than one of the thorns growing on the tree of life. God has long patience with you—well may you exercise long patience with others.

Do not be impatient with yourself. Did you ever think of it? I never did till I saw it the other day in the writings of St. Francis. He says, "Let the very *chidings of yourself* be calm and gentle, so that even they shall not disquiet you. When some trifle disturbs your mind, you are vexed because of it, and afraid. This fear weakens your mind, and makes it sad and unsteady; it displeases you, and so begets another fear lest the first be wrong; and thus you get more and more confused. You fear being afraid, and then you are afraid of fearing; you are vexed at the vexation, and then you are vexed at being vexed." I have seen people, in the same way, get into a passion, and then be angry because they had lost their temper! Just like the circles on water when one throws in a stone, one spreading beyond the other without end. "When we discover that we have been wrong, we should so gently bring ourselves to the foot of the Cross that we should go right for the future, rather than increase the wrong by over-*apitulation*."

To faith and patience add *recollection*. And here take an old illustration. A little girl, gathering straw berries upon a high bank, with one hand carefully holds her father's, and with the other gathers the fruit. But, seeing a great cluster of rosy berries, and being very impatient to reach them, she loses the hand that she may get the fruit, and instantly falls from the top to the bottom of the bank. Is it not so with you, child of God? You go forth in the morning with your Father's hand in yours, but in the middle of the day you see such a rush of work that you think you must allow no other thought to intervene; so you let go that hand, and of course fall right down and lose the peace. Whatever we are doing, and wherever we are going, we must always keep hold of the hand of God. There is no other secret of rest, there is no other source of quietness, than His perpetual nearness. Remember what He said to Moses: "My presence shall go with thee"—and then it follows, as the light the day—"and I will give thee rest." We could not have His presence without having the rest; and I am sure we cannot have the rest without His presence. So let us live and remain in the presence of God. "Every morning compose your soul for a tranquil day, and all through it often recall your resolution, and bring yourself back to it. If something discomposes you, do not be upset or troubled, but, on discovering it, humble yourself gently before God, and try to bring your mind into a quiet attitude. Say, 'I have made a false step; now I must go more carefully.' Do this as often as you fall. Above all, do not be discouraged. God will uphold you with His hand; and if He should let you stumble, it will only be to show you that without Him you would fall altogether, and to teach you to hold His hand the tighter. And with this advice of a recluse of old agrees the experience of a man of business of the present day: "It needs a great deal of grace to live for God in business, but I found God could enable me, by committing myself to Him in the morning at home, and even afterwards, when the rush was too great, shutting myself up in my office, and falling on my knees." So a young shopwoman lately said, "Such teaching was new to me; but, since I have learnt it, when a customer comes in, I lift up my heart, and ask Jesus to help me so to serve him as to please God and my master. And when worried, and there is no time for formal prayer, I just call upon Jesus, and that is enough. He comes and calms me." Go on working, not dreaming—watching, not sleeping; praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks; and then "thou shalt not be afraid because of evil tidings;" "peace shall be upon Israel."

There are some of my readers, it may be, who have no possible right to possess a quiet spirit. How can that spirit be quiet which is in danger? How can that spirit be quiet which is condemned? You must come to Christ; you must come to the Cross; you must get a new heart and a right spirit, before you can have tranquillity. "The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." God is the Fountain for each. "All my springs are in Thee."

* Prov. iii. 24-26.
† Isa. xlv. 3, 4.

‡ Phil. iv. 6, 7.
§ 1 Pet. v. 7.

* Rev. xiii. 10.