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Poetry

PRAISE FOR AFFLICTION.

BY CAROLINE FRY.

For what shall I praise thee, my God and my King?
For what blessings the tribute of gratitude bring?
Shall I praise thee for pleasure, for health, and for ease?
For the spring of delight, and the sunshine of peace?

Shall I praise thee for flowers that bloom'd in my breast?
For joys in perspective and pleasures possess'd?
For the spirits that brighten'd my days of delight?
And the slumbers that sat on my pillow by night?

For this would I praise thee: but if only for this,
I should leave half untold the duration of bliss:
I thank thee for sickness, for sorrow, for care,
For the thorns I have gather'd, the anguish I bear;

For nights of anxieties, watchings, and tears;
A present of pain, a perspective of fears;
I praise thee, I bless thee, my King and my God,
For the good and the evil thy hand hath bestow'd.

The flowers were sweet, but their fragrance is flown;
They yielded no fruits, they are wither'd and gone.
The thorn it was poignant, but precious to me;
'Twas the message of mercy, it led me to Thee.

Christian Miscellany.

We need a better acquaintance with the thoughts
of the sages of pure and lofty minds.—Dr. Saurin.

Ladders and Wings.

It was in the visions of the night that I saw a goodly and a mighty tower, on which shone a light and a glory that were unspeakable. The tower was so high that none could climb into it, and it was so strong that no storm could shake it. There it stood as a mighty bulwark against every enemy, and a place of safety and delight to all who gained entrance therein.

And I saw in my dream a great number of people of different ages, dressed in all kinds of apparel, and speaking different languages. Some of these were widely scattered, some were collected together, some were busy, and others were idle; but whether alone or in company, idle or occupied, a trial was made by all of them, at one time or another, to get into the tower.

Every one seemed to understand that the tower was a glorious place to dwell in. For pain and sickness had never been known there, and there was no poverty and discontent; all the sounds heard in it were those of joy and gladness; no clouds and darkness rested upon it, and the burning heat of summer and the freezing blasts of winter, were there equally unknown.

What surprised me most was, that although the tower was so goodly a building and so desirable a place to dwell in, the people, for the most part, hardly appeared to care to get in. They appeared more like children at play than real candidates for the tower. A proclamation had been made that the only entrance to the tower was by the narrow gate, but this proclamation was generally unheeded. Some who had money wanted to get in by bribery, but the attempt was useless, and others tried to get in by a private way, but being regarded as thieves and robbers, they were beaten back. There was much anger and bitterness indulged in amid the crowd, for most of them would have it that all around them were wrong, and that they only were right in the course they were taking; thus they hindered rather than helped, one another in their enterprise.

But though some tried to get into the tower the back way, and others attempted to procure admission by bribery, by far the greater number brought ladders of their own making to scale the place; their labour, however, was lost. The ladders of some were so light that they would not bear their own weight, others were so heavy and unavidly made, they could not be properly reared, and many were so short, that they would not reach anything like half the way up to the top of the tower. Notwithstanding their

were continued, and multitudes of fresh comers took the example by them and adopted the same course.

On drawing nearer to the ladders I saw that they had names upon them: some of them were marked "Self-righteousness," some "Alms-giving," some "Ave Marias," and "Pater Nosters," and such like names. Useless as these ladders were, they were all very carefully preserved, as though they gave an importance to those who possessed them.

Pride, self-will, and worldly passions, were visible among the assembled throng; but there were some who appeared to separate themselves from those that were around them, and judging by their faces and frames, they had gone through affliction and sorrow. Such of these as had been trying in vain to get into the tower, had cast aside their ladders, bewailing their past folly. Their self-confidence was gone, and they walked to and fro humbly, oftentimes weeping, and ever looking upwards wishfully for help.

And I now saw in my dream that a shining one was sent down from a high tower, in raiment exceeding white, bearing a cross in her hand, and she passed by the self-willed, and the proud, and the worldly-minded, and spoke only to the lowly in heart. She dried the tears of those that wept, and comforted their hearts, after which she gave them wings broad and light-some, by which means they were enabled to fly; and they did fly, and made right for the high tower, and entered in through the narrow gate.

It was a pleasant thing to hear the sound that burst from the high tower every time one of the winged mourners entered its goodly portal, for it was a sound of rejoicing such as that which is raised when a great danger has been escaped, or a goodly victory has been obtained.

While listening to the sounds that were ringing in my ears, and marvelling in my mind at the things I had seen, I heard in my dream a voice as of one whispering to me: "Instruction is sometimes imparted in 'Visions of the night when deep sleep falleth on men.' Profit by what thou hast witnessed." I listened attentively, while the voice continued thus:—

"The goodly tower, on which shone a light and a glory that were unspeakable, is the heavenly Jerusalem, that city that hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, for the glory of God and the Lamb are the light thereof. The assembled crowd are all those who profess to be pilgrims to the promised land, seekers of the kingdom of heaven. The proclamation that was made is the gospel, and the narrow gate is the way of salvation through the Redeemer, who hath said 'I am the way.' Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.' Acts iv. 12. The useless ladders employed by the throng, are the self-confidence, the worldly delusion, and mistaken dependency wherewith many deceive themselves in holy things. The mourners who looked upward for help, are those who have been convinced of their transgressions, made sensible of their own weakness, and look to Him who died the just for the unjust, to bring them to God. These, for the most part, pass through much tribulation, in their earthly pilgrimage. The wings given to the mourners are the gift of faith, without which we cannot mount upward to the skies. 'By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.' Eph. ii. 8. And the sound that burst from the high tower is the joy that is heard in heaven over the sinner that repenteth.' Cast aside the ladders of human dependency, and seek to obtain the wings of faith: then shalt thou rise above the sorrows of earth, and mount up as an eagle towards heaven.—*Old Alton Gr.*

FAITH AND HOPE.—Faith looks to the end of the thing; hope to the thing of the world.—*John 17.*

Power in Prayer.

On a certain occasion Mr. Patrick was requested to visit a sick person, the landlady of a public house, who was lying ill of a dropsy; this gave rise to some fears in his mind lest, in the case of compliance, scandal should arise from a revivalist and a temperance advocate entering such a place; and remembering "there sold on was room for Christ at an inn," he had little hopes of effecting any good with the mistress of a spirit shop. He, however, after much hesitation, reluctantly went, but commended himself and his labour to the care of God. He found the woman dangerously ill, and somewhat concerned about her soul. After suitable advice and prayer he took his departure, but although he was pressingly invited to return, he could not bring himself to believe that his visit would be either useful to others or safe for his own reputation; he therefore refused to give a positive promise, and left with an obscure intention of never coming back. But, strange to say, on reaching his home he discovered he had brought away the bonnet belonging to the landlady of the public-house, by mistake, and was obliged to return to exchange it for his own. He again entered the room of the sick woman, and found himself now in the midst of a number of her relatives and friends, who had justly assembled there to listen to his instructions and prayers. It surprised him to find himself standing at the white-key table in the very room where the drunkard's song had so lately resounded, preaching the Gospel, and entreating sinners to submit to Christ, and more so still, when he observed the emotion of one of the company, who cried out with a full heart; "I believe what you say! Let us pray." They went to prayer, and continued in pious exercises for some time, so that before Mr. P. left the house, that person professed to have found peace through faith in Christ Jesus. A special influence seemed to rest on all present, and all felt it good to be there. He now had no hesitation to repeat his visits to the house, and was made instrumental in the conversion of several members of the family. The sick woman herself was led to trust in the Saviour, and enabled to testify, from her own experience, that God hath power on earth to forgive sin. She died rejoicing in the Lord, leaving a cheering testimony that she was going to be with Jesus. The signal was taken down, for the intoxicating liquor ceased to be sold there; most of the heavily laden beams renewed in heart as well as in life, and there is reason to believe this circumstance greatly conduced to the wider extension of the work of God in that neighbourhood.

Faith Experiment.—This exciting scene was made instrumental by the good Spirit in awakening another person, then present, who had, till this period, remained a stranger to the renewing grace of God. Unable to conceal the distress she felt, from a deep conviction of his unsafe state, he arose, and earnestly invited the company to meet at his house on the following evening. This was readily agreed on, in hope that God would answer prayer in this case also. At the hour fixed, the friends assembled, and found that Mr. P. had not waited the appointed time, but had spent the whole afternoon labouring with him for his deliverance. God had already shed on the seeking sinner the light of his countenance, and made him glad in the enjoyment of salvation. This person had long rested in mere dogmas and theory, which had left his heart unchanged, and now the net of personal faith was to him intelligible. To point out this duty, and encourage him to perform it, was the task of our friend P. Putting his hand into his pocket, and drawing out a shilling, he said, "Weel, now, brother C., were I to say 'I'll give you this shilling, wad you believe me?' " "Yes, I would, for yere no triber, Sandy." "And wad you then wad ye da' if ye thoct me in earnest?" "Why, I'd reach out my hand and tak it."

"Very well, God has in like manner gied his Son Jesus Christ for you and to you, and if ye would believe, ye maun just tak him and trust in him."

"O! but I have been such a sinner." "Ah, weel, but God does na reject sinners because they ha' sinned, but because they winna believe on, and lippen to his Son."

"Well," said C. with animation, "d'ye say so, Sandy? If God will not send me to hell for my sin only, he shall not for unbelief. I will believe, I do believe, I believe just now; O Jesus, thou art my Lord, my God!"

At this moment he was accepting and trusting in the Saviour, the token of divine acceptance was instantly afforded:

"His chains fell off, his heart was free."

Success Belongs to the Active.

Christians are often sorely troubled because infidelity, superstition, wickedness and error, prevail so extensively around them. It is certainly a sad sight. But it is both absurd and wicked to sit down to sigh and complain over this state of things. The world is a battle field. Truth and error, sin and holiness, here join in mortal conflict. It is a war of extermination. The object, the destruction of truth and holiness, or of error and sin. The Christian hosts, collectively and individually, are to strive to the end. They are never at liberty to cease from the strife, or to relax their vigilance. They cannot do it conscientiously, for the Captain of their salvation forbids it; they cannot do it safely, for very soon the slumberers would be aroused by the dread cry, "The Philistines be upon thee!" What would be thought of the courage of a General, or of the good sense of an army, which would see from their camp one after another of their outposts driven in, and sit down despairingly to wring their hands and weep over the enemy's success, instead of rushing boldly from their tents to drive them back? General, army, camp and all, would soon be the prey of the active assailant.

Are the enemies of the truth gaining ground? It is because they are active while we are indolent. Would we turn the tide of victory, and make successful encroachments on the domains of an enemy of God and man; we must brace every nerve, grasp every man his weapon, and with stout heart and steady front, move forward. To drop all metaphor, if the friends of error are active, we must be active too. If the wickedness of the wicked increases in kind and degree, we must increase our efforts in a like or in a greater proportion. Is personal effort needed?—we must use personal effort. Is pecuniary aid needed?—we must give pecuniary aid. Is the weight of our influence needed?—we must be prepared to do, to give, to sacrifice as much for the cause of truth and holiness as they do for the cause of error and vice. As much?—yes, more, far more than they. If the love of Christ constrains us, it will lead us to surpass them far in our zeal. If the love of Christ constrains us not, then we are none of his. The apostles were constrained by that supreme love, and it made them far more zealous than the votaries of the Gods of Greece and Rome. They were active; they were prayerful; they were successful; the cause of Christ spread and triumphed. Let us be inspired by that same love, and we shall be active, and prayerful, and successful. Then, in our day, shall the cause of Christ rise, spread and triumph.—*Christian Chronicle.*

Too Late to Read.

A person in Birmingham, who lived in the neglect of the worship of God, and of reading the Bible, was on a Lord's day, sitting at the fire with his family. He said he thought he would read a chapter in the Bible, not having read one for a long time. But, alas! he was disappointed; he was too late; for, in the very act of reaching it from the shelf, he sunk down and immediately expired.