

THOUGHTS BY THE WAY.

God Loveth a Cheerful Giver.

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The story is told of a little boy who when coming home with his mother from church, heard her saying that the sermon was not worth much, and replied immediately: "O, mother, what could you expect for a cent?" He had noticed only too plainly that she had contributed just a penny to the collection. The collection was taken up before the sermon, too. I cannot conceive what the mother would have contributed had the sermon preceded the collection. If I am to judge of the value some of you set upon my pulpit oratory, beloved, by what you contribute to the cause, I shall have to decide that you do not care even a button for my discourses, although now and then you do contribute that much via the collection basket towards my wardrobe. The sight of one of these articles of religious commerce has set me musing. I touched the button and something within me did the rest. It has proved an electric button with a current of thought somewhere about it, and you shall have the benefit. Many of you touch lightly when you come in contact with that means of grace, the collection basket.

If what you give to the Lord is all the capital that you will have with which to start life in the heavenly home, there are some among you who will have not enough to start a peanut stand in the city of golden streets. The value of a button in the new world I cannot pretend to guess, but I have been thinking that it may be your crest in the life to come, and be so stamped upon your person and all your belongings in the heavenly world that all will know you as the man who contributed a button as the expression of his wish for a world's redemption.

A button in the collection plate is undoubtedly a test of character. It speaks volumes of the meanness of the donor. Be it bone or metal or composition, it suggests a heart as dry as bone, artificial and brassy. But he who ought to give dollars, yet contributes only cents, is next of kin to the donor of buttons, and I say, let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord, while the button giver will be let off easy if he be simply sentenced to wear a diadem of buttons throughout eternal days. Brethren, it is time to "quit your meanness" and to teach yourselves your duty in the direction intimated. We will conclude with a bit of Watts and a bit thrown in till it may be difficult to tell what's Watts and what's not.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
The Lord's elect are singing,
So grateful they for love divine
Their offerings now are bringing.

That were a present far too small,
What's this, what's this they're saying?
The baskets, sure, won't hold it all,
Such gratitude displaying.

Love so amazing, so divine,
O theme so blest, so thrilling,
Tis thus they sing, their faces shine,
God's treasury they're filling.

Demand's my soul, my life, my all,
O see the baskets breaking!
But when we count, their gifts so small,
Tis hardly worth the taking.

Some day He will tell you why He has tried you and let you look back upon your life story, and see the golden thread of His fatherly love and care shining over and around it all.—*Frances R. Havergal.*

Young people often fret over the limitations of their life, the narrowness of their opportunity. If only they had the home and the opportunities of some envied neighbor, they would get on a great deal better: making very much more of their life. They have to work constantly on their farms or in the shop. They have no time for reading. Their home is without cheerfulness, perhaps uncongenial. They love it, of course, but it lacks the privileges which they crave. It does not inspire them to do their best. They grow discontented and allow the hardness and uncongenialities of their lot to dishearten and depress them. But what good can ever come from worrying over such things? The nobler way, the wiser way, is to accept the conditions that are discouraging, and to live cheerfully in them. Hard work is made easier when we can sing at it. Blunders are made light when one's heart is filled with joy. When we acquiesce in any unpleasant experience we have conquered the unpleasantness. A thoughtful writer says: "The soul loses command of itself when it is impatient, whereas

when it submits without a murmur, it possesses itself in peace and possesses God." Peace does not dwell in outward things, but within the soul.

It is said that large quantities of musk were mixed with the mortar, when the Church of St. Sophia, in Constantinople, was being built. The sweet perfume clings to the stones after a thousand years. So the sweetness of love makes fragrant the deeds of the past.

In a recent sermon from Dr. Marquess we heard a most beautiful illustration of saving faith—beautiful for its simplicity. It hinged upon the simple, heartfelt belief of a recent convert in Missouri. Some one asked him how he had attained so speedily to such a good comprehension of the plan of salvation by faith. He replied, "I do not understand the plan of salvation by faith. But in my business I have learned how to trust another. When I entered the furniture business I found myself ignorant of a great many of its details. But I had a foreman who was fully conversant with it. Many a job did I accept, not because I knew how to do it, but because I could trust that foreman to do it. In like manner I try to trust my Saviour to attend to that which I do not understand." And this is a happy exercise of faith.

The vacation season is upon us and offers special opportunity for tract distribution. A Philadelphia boy took some of these silent preachers to the country, and gave one to a lad whose acquaintance he made. The lad said: "I can't read, but I will take it home; they can read it there." A few days after the country boy met his city friend. "Well," said he, "that tract you gave me made a great stir at home." "What do you mean?" "Why," he replied, "they read the tract, and then they got out the Bible and read that, and when Sunday came they made me get out the old carriage and clean it up, and then we all got in that could, and the rest got on before and behind, and rode off to church. That tract's done great things, I can tell you." Subsequently it was ascertained that this tract was the means of converting several souls. There is a large room for usefulness in this direction.

"I will bring him that he may appear before the Lord, and there abide forever. . . . And Hannah prayed and said, my heart rejoiceth in the Lord."—1 Sam. i, 22, ii. 1.

O Lonely mother, rest of thy sweet child,
What means that song of lofty eucharist
Within thy desolate home? Surely thy arms
Crave the loved burden they have borne so long:
No little feet are pattering by thy side
The crib is empty by thy couch at night.
Hast thou not left thy treasure far away
In the dread house of Shiloh? Other hands
Will feed thy nursing; other lips than thine
Pour into his fond ear the things of God.
"My heart rejoiceth in the Lord: my horn
Is lifted in my God: no rock is like
The Rock of our Salvation!" Surely sighs,
Not songs, best thy lot. Why singest thou?

The mother probed her heart and inwardly
As in a muse made answer to herself,
"Had I not given my first born ere his birth
And pledged him as a life long loan to God?
And if He now has tak'en me at my word
Why should I moan because my child is His
Forever? Ramah is not Shiloh: yet
The love of Ramah passes Shiloh's gates,
Yes, passes and repasses to and fro,
And wraps my darling round by day and night.
He ministers to God an infant pray:
I serve Him in the costliest offering
A mother's heart can render, and perforce
Must sing His praise, He has done all things well.
From His rich stores of immortality
He gave me this great gift, a deathless soul:
And now He deigns accept it from my hand;
Until the house of God above the heavens
Draw all, my husband and my child and me,
Within its mansions of eternal rest."

It is better to go at once to Jesus with our difficulties. We are worried and perplexed. Why not tell Jesus first instead of running with our griefs to our friends? However willing they may be, they are often unable to help us. The Christian who has learned to lean on Jesus for counsel and comfort has learned the secret of the Lord, "the peace that passeth understanding."