

CLEAR SHINING AFTER RAIN.

By Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D.

One of the numberless touches of exquisite poetry in the Old Testament is that which describes the "tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining rain." The verdant grass plot which gladdens the eye is the result of a double process—shower and sunshine. Both are indispensable. We find in this beautiful expression a type of our deepest and richest spiritual experiences. It is a type of the most thorough work of conversion by the Holy Spirit.

Over every impatient soul hangs the dark cloud of God's righteous displeasure; His holy word thunders against sin and His threatenings beat like a storm of hail. Repentance and faith in Christ sweep away this cloud; the thunders cease; the face of the atoning, pardoning Saviour looks forth like a clear blue sky after a storm; for there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. No two cases of conversion are exactly similar; yet in every thorough work of grace the darkness and dread which belong to a state of guilt give place to the smile and peace of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

What is true in the beginnings of the most thorough Christian life is often realized in the subsequent experiences of the believer. Rain and sunshine both play their part in developing godly character. It ought to be a comfort to such of my readers as are under the heavy downpour of trials to open their Bibles and read how it fared with some of God's most faithful children.

Abraham toiled on his sorrowful way to Mount Moriah under a dark cloud of apprehension, but the clear shining came when God approved his faith and spared the beloved son Isaac to the father's heart. The successive strokes of trial that burst on the head of Joseph only made his exaltation the more signal when he became prime minister of Egypt. There are forty-one chapters of the book of Job through which passes the tempest which smote the four corners of this house, but in the forty-second chapter comes the clear shining after the rain, and the blaze of restored prosperity. The biographies of Elijah and of Daniel prove that light is sown for the righteous; and the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews is a meteorological record to show how faith paints rainbows on thunder clouds.

In our day God often employs stormy providences for the discipline and perfecting of His own people. He knows when we need the drenchings. Every raindrop has its mission to perform. It goes right down to the roots of the heart, and creeps into every crevice. Not one drop of sorrow, not one tear, but may have some beneficent purpose. The process is not joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness and purity and strength. Christ's countenance never beams with such brightness and beauty as when it breaks forth after a deluge of sorrow; and many a Christian has become a braver, stronger and holier man or woman for terrible afflictions; there has been a clear shining after rain.

This principle has manifold applications. Sometimes a cloud of unjust calumny gathers over a good man's name; lies darken the air, and it pours falsehoods forty days and forty nights. But when the shower of slander has spent itself the truth creeps out slowly but surely from behind the clouds of defamation, and the slandered character shines with more lustre than ever. The same storm that wrecks a rotten tree only roots the more firmly the sound tree, whose leaves glisten in the subsequent sunshine.

All ye children of God who are under the peltings of poverty, or the downpour of disappointments, or the blizzards of adversity, "think it not strange as

though some strange thing had happened unto you." Millions have had the same experiences before you. No storm ever drowned a true believer, or washed out the foundation of hope. The trial of your faith will be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Two things ought to give you courage. One is that our Lord loves to honor and reward unwavering faith. He permits the storm to test you, and then sends the smile of his sunshine to reward you. Another thought is that the skies are never so brilliantly blue as when they have been washed by a storm. The countenance of Jesus is never so welcome and lovable as when He breaks forth upon us—a sun of consolation and joy after trials.

Long years ago, on a day of thick fog and pouring rain, I ascended a mountain by an old bridle path over the slippery rocks. A weary, disappointed company we were when we reached the cabin on the summit. But toward evening a mighty wind swept away the banks of mist, the body of the blue heavens stood out in the clearness, and before us was revealed the magnificent landscape stretching away to the sea. That scene was at the time, and has often been since, a sermon to my soul. It taught me that faith's stairways are over steep rocks; often through blinding storms; but God never loses His hold on us, and if we endure to the end He will yet bring us out into the clear shining after rain.

So it's better to hope though the clouds run low,
And to keep the eye still lifted;
For the clear, blue sky, will soon peer through,
When the thunder cloud is rifted.
Brooklyn, N.Y.

There is nothing that beclouds the divine that is in us as quickly as a storm of anger. The whole horizon is darkened and the silver lining has disappeared.

Down in the valleys low the shadows lie,
And vapors cool obstruct the eager eye;
But on the heights the vision roams at will
Till sapphire thoughts its highest hopes fulfil.

GOING HOME.

For the loving child of God, death is the going home to the Eternal Father, the ending of warfare, the removing of temptation, the ceasing of failure. No more unfaithfulness no more miserable weakness, no more grieving God. The solemnity and awfulness of death make the loving servants of God very careful in their preparation for it; but they do not destroy the desire of being with God which can only be attained through death.

Therefore, death must be regarded as the God of Life. It is the opening of the door into Judgment, therefore it must be prepared for with all earnestness. But the thought of death ought not to over-sadden us, for it has a very bright side. A true servant of God has looked forward to the meeting with God, and has prepared; he has realized his own need for repentance, and has repented, does repent—with a growing, deepening sorrow; he has searched out his sins, he has taken them to the foot of the cross and has left them there. The thought of God's love in Christ brightens all to him; he waits humbly and trustingly the call home.—Canon Williams.

Faith is the pencil of the soul
That pictures heavenly things.

—Burbidge.

It is not wealth that gives the true zest to life, but reflection, appreciation, taste, culture.—Samuel Smiles.

THE SLEEPLESS WATCHER.*

Some Bible Hints.

It is a question: "Whence shall my help come?" Not from the hills, not from anything made, but from the Maker (v. 1).

We nod in judgment, our conscience sleeps; what a comfort to know that God never fails! (v. 4.)

Those that do not live in a hot country cannot appreciate the calling of God or shade; but God is all that is delightful, everywhere (v. 5).

The promise of God's protection is for scenes of life (out and in), and for all time; no promise could be more inclusive (v. 8).

Suggestive Thoughts.

The thought of God's sleepless eye is a terrible one to all that hate Him, and a very dear one to all that love Him.

God sees thoughts as we see deeds; that thought should keep us pure.

God watches—but so must we. How often Christ urged this!

God is sleepless that we may sleep.

A Few Illustrations.

Men that keep watchers sometimes need watchers for the watchers; but God, our Watcher, cares more for us than we for ourselves.

The gods of Greece and Rome slept sometimes or were busied with their own affairs; not so ours.

The most fearful part of a criminal's punishment is the eye of his guard always upon him.

A watchman is not only for guarding, but also for an outlook, and to announce the coming of blessing or harm. This also God is to us.

To Think About.

Is my trust in God perfect?

What return am I giving for God's care?

Am I also watching over others?

A Cluster of Quotations.

"No word He hath spoken

Was ever yet broken."

He sees, He knows my every need;

Then why should I take careful heed? —Maria A. West.

My child, though thy foes are strong and tried,

He loveth the weak and small;

The angels of heaven are on thy side,
And God is over all.

—Adelaide A. Procter.

Low at His feet lay thy burden of carefulness;

High on His heart He will bear it for thee. —J. S. B. Monsell.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

M., Oct. 26—God sees all. Ex. 3: 6-9.

T., Oct. 27—"Not as man seeth." 1 Sam. 16: 1-7.

W., Oct. 28—In behalf of His own. 2 Chron. 16: 1-9.

T., Oct. 29—He considers our works. Ps. 33: 13-15.

F., Oct. 30—No escape from Him. Amos 9: 2-4.

S., Oct. 31—Even the sparrow. Matt. 10: 26-29.

Sun., Nov. 1—Topic: Songs of the Heart.

XI. The sleepless watcher. Ps. 121. (Consecration meeting.)

There are sharp stones on the trail that leads up the Mount of Sacrifice, and the way is steep; but think of the vision from the top!

Why should we burden ourselves with superfluous cares, and fatigue cares, and fatigue and worry ourselves in the multiplicity of our ways? Let us rest in peace. God invites us to cast our anxieties on him.—Madame Guyon.

*Y.P. Topic: Sun., Nov. 1—Songs of the Heart. XI. The sleepless Watcher. Ps. 121. (Consecration meeting.)