

Yet among human friends this is all but impossible, for minds are so diverse that what is a trial and a care to one, is a matter of sport and amusement to another; and all the inner world breathed into a human ear, only excites a surprised or contemptuous pity. To whom, then, shall the soul turn?—who will feel *that* to be affliction which each spirit feels to be so? If the soul shut itself within itself it becomes morbid—the fine chords of the mind and nerves by constant wear become jarring and discordant; hence fretfulness, discontent, and habitual irritability, stealing over the sincere Christian.

But to the Christian who really believes in the agency of God in the smallest events of life, that confides in his love and makes his sympathy his refuge, the thousand minute cares and perplexities of life become each one a fine affiliating bond between the soul and its God. God and Christ is known, not by abstract definition, and by high-raised conceptions of the soul's aspiring hours, but known as a man knoweth his friend—he is known by the hourly wants he supplies—known by every care with which he momentarily sympathises, every apprehension which he relieves, every temptation which he enables us to surmount. We learn to know God as the infant child learns to know its mother and its father, by all the helplessness and all the dependence which are incident to this commencement of our moral existence—and as we go on thus year by year, and find in every changing situation, in every reverse, in every trouble, from the lightest sorrow to those which wring our soul from its depths, that he is equally present, and that his gracious aid is equally adequate, our faith seems gradually almost to change to sight; and God's existence, his love and care, seem to us more real than any other source of reliance, and multiplied cares and trials are only new avenues of acquaintance between us and heaven.

Suppose in some bright vision unfolding to our view, in tranquil evening or solemn midnight, the glorified form of some departed friend should appear to us with the announcement, "This year is to be to you one of especial probation and discipline, with reference to perfecting you for a heavenly state. Weigh well and consider every incident of your daily life, for not one shall fall out by accident, but each one is to be a finished and indispensable link in a bright chain that is to draw you upward to the skies."

With what new eyes should we now look on our daily lot, and if we found in it not a single change—the same old cares, the same perplexities, the same uninteresting drudgeries still—with what new meaning would every new incident be invested, and with what other and sublimer spirit could we meet them. Yet if announced by one rising from the dead with the visible glory of a spiritual world, this truth could be asserted no more clearly and distinctly than Jesus Christ has stated it already. Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Father—not one of them is forgotten by him—and we are of more value than many sparrows—yea, even the hairs of our head are all numbered. Not till belief in these declarations in their most literal sense, becomes the calm and settled habit of the soul, is life ever redeemed from drudgery and dreary emptiness, and made full of interest, meaning, and divine significance. Not till then do its grovelling wants, its wearing cares, its stinging vexations, become to us ministering spirits—each one, by a silent but certain agency, fitting us for a higher perfect sphere.

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The only way to find comfort in an earthly thing is to surrender it, in a faithful carelessness, into the hands of God.—*Bishop Hall.*