

A prayer should be the presentation of God's promise, endorsed by your personal faith. I hear of people praying for an hour together. I am very pleased that they can; but it is seldom that I can do so, and I see no need for it. It is like a person going into the bank with a cheque and stopping an hour. The clerks would wonder. The common-sense way is to go to the counter and show your cheque, and take your money, and go about your business. There is a style of prayer which is of this fine practical character. You so believe in God that you present the promise, obtain the blessing, and go about your Master's business.—*Spurgeon.*

A SWEET THOUGHT FOR EVERY DAY.

ANOTHER page of life
Is opened unto me;
O blessed Spirit, write thereon
What seemeth best to Thee.

Write lovely acts of love!
Write holy thoughts of praise;
Yea, write a copy, Spirit dear,
Of one of Jesus' days.

And every mark of mine,
Oh! wash it, wash it white;
Let nothing on the page appear
But words that Thou dost write.

And then, lest some should miss
Whence all the sweetness came,
When Thou has written all the rest,
Write underneath Thy name.

—*Selected.*

LOOK AT THINGS IN THEIR RIGHT LIGHT.

THE great German etcher, Retsch, produced a singular etching, called "Cloud-land." At first sight it seemed simply a mass of floating clouds; but after a little careful observation it was perceived that in each cloud were an angel's face, angel's wings; and what at first appeared a mass of gloom, by and by revealed a number of angelic watchful eyes.

How often is it the case that many things that seem gloomy and against us turn out for our advantage and blessing! It is not for us to judge by appearances, but let us weigh matters in the balances of the sanctuary. It seemed to be against the three Hebrew young men when they were cast into the fiery furnace, but it proved to be to their gain, for they *lost* the bonds with which they were bound, and *gained* the company of Christ.

Look not at the tangled side of the carpet for the pattern.

WORDS FROM CANON TRISTRAM.

THE learned Canon Tristram, of Durham, gives the following account of his first open-air sermon at a large colliery: "I felt it my duty," he says, "to do something for my neighbors, and, accordingly, announced my intention of preaching on the pit heap after 'pay.' It happened to be when the wonderful comet of 1859 was just overhead. With inward tremor, for the church was in no good odor there, I mounted the 'heap' opposite the colliery office, and took the comet for my text. There was a goodly crowd around me, who gave me an attentive hearing until, on my reminding them that 'we have to do with a God who hears and answers prayer,' a well-known leader among the men cried out, 'Aye, there's one good prayer in the Bible, "Avenge me of mine adversary." Down with the capitalists!' I do not know how, but the inspiration seemed to seize me, and at once I replied, 'That prayer is not for him. My friend should have read a few verses further on, and he would have found the prayer for him, "God be merciful to me a sinner."' A woman in the crowd called out, 'Ah, Jock, the priest has given thee one in the mouth now.' Jock slunk away, and from that day I had those men."—*Family Churchman.*

BE PROMPT.

DON'T live a single hour of your life without doing exactly what is to be done in it, and going straight through it, from beginning to end. Work, play, study, whatever it is, take hold at once, and finish it up squarely; then to the next thing, without letting any moments drop between.

It is wonderful to see how many hours these prompt people contrive to make of a day; it is as if they picked up the moments the dawdlers lost. And if ever you find yourself where you have so many things pressing upon you that you hardly know how to begin, let me tell you a secret. Take hold of the very one that comes to hand, and you will find the rest will all fall into file, and follow after like a company of well-drilled soldiers; and though work may be hard to meet when it charges in a squad, it is easily vanquished if you can bring it into line.

You may have often seen the anecdote of the man who was asked how he had accomplished so much in life. "My father taught me," was the reply, "when I had anything to do, to go and do it." There is the secret—the magic word, now!

AMEN.

I CANNOT say,
Beneath the pressure of life's cares to-day,
I joy in these;
But I can say
That I had rather walk this rugged way,
If Him it please.

I cannot feel
That all is well, when dark'ning clouds conceal
The shining sun;
But then I know
God lives and loves, and say, since it is so,
"Thy will be done."

I cannot speak
In happy tones; the tear-drop on my cheek
Shows I am sad;
But I can speak
Of grace to suffer with submission meek,
Until made glad.

I do not see
Why God should e'en permit some things to be,
When He is Love;
But I can see,
Though often dimly, through the mystery,
His hand above.

I do not know
Where falls the seed that I have tried to sow
With greatest care,
But I shall know
The meaning of each waiting hour below,
Some time, somewhere!

I do not look
Upon the present, nor in Nature's book,
To read my fate;
But I do look
For promised blessings in God's Holy Book;
And I can wait.

I may not try
To keep the hot tears back—but hush that sigh,
"It might have been";
And try to still
Each rising murmur, and to God's sweet will
Respond, "Amen."

—*F. C. Browning.*

ONE POOR STONE.

TWO masons were working together on the rear wall of a church, when one stopped the other just as he was putting a stone in its place.

"Don't put in that stone," he said, "it is flaky, and will soon fall to pieces."

"I know it isn't a very good one, but it is so handy, and just fits here. Nobody will see it up here, and it is too much trouble to get another."

"Don't put it in. Take time to send for another. That stone won't stand the weather, and when it falls the whole building will be damaged."

"I guess not. It won't hurt us; so here goes."

So he lifted the stone into its place, poor, and loose-grained, and flaky as it was, covered it over with mortar, and went on with his work. Nobody could