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Commit Thy Way Unto the Lord.

"Delight thyself also on the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass."—Ps. xxxvii., 4, 5.

"Let those who have failed take courage, Though the enemy seem to have won; Though his ranks be strong—if he's in the wrong
The battle is not yet done;
For, sure as the morning follows
The darkest hour of the night,
No question is ever settled
Until it is settled right."

I think it is Tolstoi who says that the chief aim of everyone is happiness. Whether he is right in that assertion or not, at least it would be a great satisfaction to anyone to know that he would certainly obtain his heart's desire. Even Christ was nerved to endure, because He knew He should obtain His heart's desire—even the salvation of the human race. The promise could not be broken: "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Because of the "joy that was set before Him," He was strong to endure the cross, despising the shame. We too have a sure promise that God will give us our heart's desire, on condition that we delight in the Lord and commit our way unto Him, trusting in Him and waiting patiently His time for giving it to us. If our hearts are set on wickedness, or if our desires are only for earthly blessings, then we can hardly be said to "delight in the Lord," and so have no right to claim the promise. But if we do delight in Him, then, no matter how tangled life appears to be, we may safely trust Him to settle our affairs in a way which will be perfectly satisfactory to us. It is a fatal mistake to try to gain what we want by wrong means. Pilate found that out, when he condemned the innocent in order to secure himself against the danger of being accused to Cæsar. He did not dare to do the right thing, leaving the consequences in God's hands, and, just because he chose his own path instead of committing it unto the Lord, the very danger he was trying to escape came upon him. Judas also, because he set his heart on riches, lost his heart's desire by the very means he took to win it. The 30 pieces of silver he obtained by such awful wickedness were of no use to him, for he at once flung away the money which burned his soul with agonizing remorse; and he died by his own act, even before the Master he had betrayed. Satan gave him his heart's desire—the money he wanted—and, if we don't want the granting of our wishes to bring us misery and make us loathe, as he did, the very things we coveted, we must take care to delight in the Lord and commit out way to Him. I once read a very fanciful sketch, by Edward Everett Hale, which is intended to show the harm men can do by trying to interfere with God's plans. The writer imagines himself to be taking an outside view of the world; and is standing, accompanied by a mysterious companion, watching the drama of Joseph sold by his brethren. He sees the captive steal away from the camp that night, and is distressed because two dogs bark at him. Joseph takes a stone and kills one dog, but failed to hit the other. The looker-on is eager to help, and reaches out his hand to kill the dog, but is forbidden by his companion to touch it. He is told that God will allow no one to interfere with His management of the world, but that he may try any experiments he likes on a shadow world to which his attention is directed, and which looks exactly like the real one. So he kills the dog in the shadow world, and, in consequence, Joseph's escape is not detected, so he

finds his way home, and goes into the tent where his father is weeping over his bloodstained coat. Jacob's tears are changed to smiles; and the brothers, who have already repented, are greatly relieved to see that the consequences of their sin are averted. The looker-on congratulates himself on the good he has done, and everything seems happy and comfortable.

Time rolls on, and the seven years of plenty come, but there is no Joseph in Egypt to store up the grain. The people waste it, even burning some to make room for the next harvest.

Then follow the seven years of famine, and there is no corn in Egypt, so Jacob and his family die of starvation, and the knowledge of the true God dies with them. The few men who survive the long-continued famine are fierce and lawless, so they soon destroy one another. Then the man who had interfered with the management of the world understands how much mischief he has done with his meddling, and is filled with grief, because he sees that he is responsible for the destruction of the whole human race. With the best intentions, he has made a muddle of everything, because he could not see ahead. Then his companion reminds him that the people he thinks he has destroyed are only shadows, and that the real world is all right: God has allowed no one to interfere with His wise management of it. Of course, the story is an absurd one, but no one can fail to see the point of it. If Joseph had been allowed to choose his own lot, he would certainly not have chosen to be sold as a slave. He may have thought that he could have ordered his own life much more satisfactorily, if he had been given his own way. But in God's stern school, he grew noble, both in character and in social position; while, if he had chosen for himself, he would probably have been spoiled by his indulgent father, and would have lost the opportunity of becoming a saviour of men and a type of the Great Saviour, who also went down to the lowest depths that He might save His brethren.

If we really commit our way unto the Lord, we can hardly know the meaning of disappointment or anxiety. The troubles which come—or which we think are coming—are in God's hands; so we know that whatever happens must be best for us. Then, if we delight in the Lord, and trust the desire of our heart to Him, we have the sure promise that "He shall bring it to pass."

"I cannot always see the way that leads
To heights above;
I sometimes quite forget He leads me on
With hand of love;
But yet I know the path must lead me to
Immanuel's land,
And when I reach life's summit I shall know
And understand."

A THOUGHT FOR THE COMING WEEK.

"All things work together for good to them that love God."—Rom. viii., 28.
Could anything be more satisfactory than that promise? Even though things may seem to be working together for evil—as they certainly appeared to be doing in Joseph's case—we may be quite sure that if God is our Guide, our road must lead straight on to the light. When our Leader walked steadily on towards the Cross, He knew that joy lay beyond it. Sorrow and death are not the end, and all must be well with the world, for God is its King.

Joseph told his brethren that they could not injure him, for when they thought evil against him, God meant it unto good, to save much people alive. In the same way, when wicked men conspired against Christ, they were only able to do "whatsoever God's hand and counsel determined before to be done." Let us then commit our way unto the

Lord willingly, for we have no power to alter His plans. As it has been beautifully said:

"Nothing done out of our daily path of love and duty, no fretting nor chafing, will turn over the next page in the story for us, because a larger, stronger Hand than ours holds the leaves together, and simply in clinging to that Hand must we walk straight on, and never mind our longings to see the end, however intense they may be. Some day we shall read the story from first to last, and see clearly the Divine meaning of the whole; see it with smiling, not streaming eyes, with folded, not struggling hands."

One of our readers has asked for a poem about "a solitary way," so I am publishing the following verses, hoping that they may be the ones desired; I don't know the author.

HOPE.

A Solitary Way.

Prov. xiv., 10; 1. Cor. ii., 2.

"There is a mystery in human hearts, And though we be encircled by a host Of those who love us well, and are beloved,

To every one of us, from time to time, There comes a sense of utter loneliness, Our dearest friend is "stranger" to our joy.

And cannot realize our bitterness. "There is not one who really understands,

Not one to enter into all I feel," Such is the cry of each of us in turn; We wander in a solitary way.

No matter what or where our lot may be, Each heart, mysterious even to itself, Must live its inner life in solitude.

Job vii., 17; St. Matthew x., 37.

And would you know the reason why this is?

It is because the Lord desires our love; In every heart He wishes to be first; He therefore keeps the secret key Himself.

To open all its chambers, and to bless With perfect sympathy and holy peace Each solitary soul which comes to Him. So when we feel His loneliness, it is The voice of Jesus, saying: "Come to Me."

And every time we are not understood, It is a call to us to come again; For Christ alone can satisfy the hungry soul.

And those who walk with Him from day to day Can never have a "Solitary Way."

Is. xlviii.; Ps. xxxiv., 22.

And when beneath some heavy cross you faint,

And say: "I cannot bear this load alone,"

You say the truth, Christ made it purposely

So heavy that you must return to Him. The bitter grief which "no one understands,"

Conveys a secret message from the King, Entreating us to come to Him again.

"The Man of Sorrows" understands it well;

In all points tempted, He can feel with you,

You cannot come too often or too near, The Son of God is infinite in grace.

The Folly of Being Comforted.

One that is ever kind said yesterday: "You're well-beloved's hair has threads of grey,

And little shadows come about her eyes; Time can but make it easier to be wise, Though now it's hard, till trouble is at an end;

And so be patient, be wise and patient, friend."

But heart, there is no comfort, not a grain,

Time can but make her beauty over again,

Because of that great nobleness of hers; The fire that stirs about her when she stirs

Burns but more clearly; O, she had not these ways

When all the wild summer was in her gaze.

O, heart, O, heart, if she'd but turn her head,

You'd know the folly of being comforted.

—W. B. Yeats.

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