

censure, too petty, perhaps, to be even spoken of,—these daily recurring sources of disquietude and unhappiness are not referred to God's providence nor considered as a part of his probation and discipline. Those thousand vexations which come upon us through the unreasonableness, the carelessness, the various constitutional failings or ill adaptedness of others to our peculiarities of character, form a very large item of the disquietudes of life, and yet how very few look beyond the human agent and feel these are trials coming from God! Yet it is true, in many cases, that these so-called minor vexations form the greater part, and, in many cases, the only discipline of *life*; and to those that do not view them as ordered individually by God, and coming upon them by specified design, "their affliction really cometh of the dust, and their trouble springs out of the ground," it is sanctified and relieved by no divine presence and aid, but borne along, and in a mere human spirit, and by mere human reliances, it acts on the mind as a constant diversion and hindrance, instead of a moral discipline.

Hence, too, comes a coldness and generality and wandering of mind in prayer,—the things that are on the heart, that are distracting the mind, that have filled the heart so full that there is no room for anything else, are all too small and undignified to come within the pale of a prayer; and so, with a wandering mind and a distracted heart, the Christian offers up his prayer for things which he thinks he *ought* to want, and makes no mention of those which he *does want*. He prays that God would pour out his Spirit on the heathen, and convert the world, and build up his kingdom everywhere, when perhaps a whole set of little anxieties, and wants, and vexations are so distracting his thoughts, that he hardly knows what he has been saying. A faithless servant is wasting his property, a careless or blundering workman has spoiled a lot of goods, a child is vexatious or unruly, a friend has made promises and failed to keep them, an acquaintance has made unjust or satirical remarks, some new furniture has been damaged or ruined by carelessness in the household,—but all this trouble forms no subject-matter for prayer, though there it is, all the while lying like lead on the heart, and keeping it down so that it has no power to expand and take in anything else. But were God in Christ known and regarded as the soul's familiar friend,—were every trouble of the heart as it rises breathed into His bosom,—were it felt that there is not one of the smallest of life's troubles that has not been permitted by him, and permitted for specific good purpose to the soul, how much more heart-work would there be in prayer,—how constant, how daily might it become, how it might settle and clear the atmosphere of the soul, how it might so dispose and lay away many anxieties which now take up their place there, that there might be *room* for the higher themes and considerations of religion.

Many sensitive and fastidious natures are worn away by the constant friction of what are called *little troubles*. Without any great affliction, they feel that all the flower and sweetness of their life is faded; their eye grows dim, their cheek careworn, and their spirit loses hope and elasticity, and becomes bowed with premature age, and, in the midst of tangible and physical comfort, they are restless and unhappy. The constant under-current of little cares and vexations which is slowly wearing out the finer springs of life is seen by no one, seldom do they speak of these things to their nearest friends. Yet were there a friend of a spirit so discerning as to feel and sympathize in all these things, how much of this repressed electric restlessness would pass off through such a sympathizing mind.