

luxury allowed him, and also with which he is to be taught generosity, unselfishness, as well as thoughtfulness for the pleasure of others.

What would be some of the advantages of thus giving a stated allowance? It will teach children to be systematic; it will teach accuracy and the keeping of accounts; and the principle of tithing one's income might be thus early put into practice. Receiving the money at regular and stated times, and knowing just how much he is to expect, the child soon learns how much the money will buy, and he finds he must gauge his little wants accordingly, and thus he learns systematic economy. He also learns to keep accounts and to be accurate. There is a small lady of seven summers whom I know, who spent three weeks away from home last summer with her grandmother. When leaving, her father gave her a sum of money for her own use, also a small note-book and pencil, remarking that he wished her to put down in the book how she spent the money. Under her wise grandmother's instructions a regular bookkeeping account on a small scale was started, all expenditures being carefully and neatly noted. When at the end of the trip the sheet was properly balanced, great was the child's delight and the father's pride and satisfaction. At some future day some fortunate man will be the richer on the "profit" sheet of his household expenses, if I mistake not.

Lastly, the opportunity will be yours with the giving of an allowance to impress and strongly advocate in the years of early childhood the giving of a tenth of one's income, be it great or small. In explaining the Jewish law, and the practical beauty of it, as well as the blessings attending its fulfillment, how simply can be shown that one of the ten pennies means a tenth, and, while all are His, this tenth is to be especially laid aside and used in doing good in the name of the Giver of all. Try it.

AMID THE ENCIRCLING GLOOM.

From Sunday School Times.

If we study it in the light of its origin, everything in the hymn "Lead, Kindly Light" conspires to turn our minds away from what is merely plaintive or softly emotional. Such a phrase as "the encircling gloom" might too easily lead us to imagine an exaggeration of sorrow such as had no existence in the life of its writer, if we did not remember that it was the hymn of a young man entering upon a full half-century of activity and conflict, rather than the sigh of one around whom the griefs and bereavements of age had begun to fall. Let us remember, also, that at the moment of its composition the writer was probably in the midst of encircling sunlight so far as his immediate circumstances were concerned. Under the perpetual sunshine which bathed everything during that week of calm in the Italian sea, the lighter sort of nature would have wondered how any one could speak of the encircling gloom. But when a life's problem is weighing upon one's heart, the outward brightness only serves to intensify the inward distress.

The encircling gloom, then, of which the hymn complains is that which falls upon any serious life when it begins to feel an uncertainty about life's mission, or when it feels that some conversion is drawing nigh. In the very midst of their ministry, prophets have often felt that their commission was canceled, or that their message was exhausted, and then the soul is plunged into despondency. In other experiences, the soul has felt that God was about to make it the agent of some new and untried purpose, from which it shrank, as did nearly every prophet at the beginning of his call. It is this experience that lingers and saddens the countenance of some whose outward circumstance is so for-

tunate that we do not see what they can be troubled about. These glooms are the almost unending costs of leadership as one questions his own fitness and secretly beats himself into shape for the work that is laid upon him. Of this character was the gloom that is expressed in the hymn.

But the majority of men know no aspiration for leadership, and this will not be their gloom. Their aims in life are quiet and modest. They feel no call to head any movement or lead any revolt. But around even such as have no further purpose than the faithful care of their own little circle there will often enough fall the experience which cannot be better described than as an encircling gloom. The blow that destroys the business, or that with all hope of doing what had seemed their sacred duty toward their own, or the loss of a position, may bring around lives the full darkness which the phrase expresses. Upon others the crisis falls not in some relocation of their affair, but in some inward experience by reason of which life never seems the same again. God is never done with repeating that struggle with Jacob at Peniel, in which the patriarch was faced with the badness of his whole past life, its mixture of purposes, and the certain evil of the future if he were to go into it with the same disordered spirit which prevailed in him up to that very night. Out of that gloom which closed around the traveller that night there came a new element into human life, for which Israel was ever thankful. The Psalter was written mainly out of heaviness which made its writers for the time being seem of all men the least likely to have remaining to them any large or satisfying part in the influencing of the world; and the very warmth of the Psalter, which brings it nearer to human life than any other book, ought to teach us much about the mysteries of good that are hidden in the heart of life's darker passages for those who accept them as a divine discipline. The most relentless critic that Newman ever had has said of him that "the very severity of the conflict in his own spirit has given him the profoundest sense of any thinker of our day of the perplexities of living men—the bewilderments of thought, motive and conscience that come of limited and passionate being, bound by law, yet in revolt against the law that binds it."

But it is that word "amid" which shows us the depth and the patience and the spiritual honesty of the desires that are breathed out in this hymn. Most of us do not pray to be led amid these dark varieties of our inward life. What we pray for is that we be led out of them and away from them as soon as possible. We want to have them over. The lighter nature does not ask that he may learn the lesson of the gloom before it departs. But there is none of that in the hymn. The gloom might be of long continuance, as indeed it was; it might deepen, as it did; but the virility and the heroism of prayer were shown in the willingness to do everything except do without the one great fact of guidance amid whatever came. And the prayer was granted. With variations of intensity the uncertainty lasted for twelve long years, but work went on just the same. Amid the gloom, and in spite of the gloom, which would have brought a weaker soul to absolute inaction, this man held on his way, and proved that "many a good piece of work may be done by a heavy heart," and that

"Tasks in hours of insight willed

May be in hours of gloom fulfilled."

We are not to stop working or advancing just because the shadows fall. A young business man, after years of patient labor, came for counsel to a friend, to whom he confided that in spite of all his efforts everything seemed to have come to a standstill, and that for months he had been in great discouragement about his affairs. The

friend asked him if even in his discouragement he had kept working all the time. He replied that he had, and the friend brightened (for he had been through it and learned his lesson), and said that he thought probably something would happen before long. Very shortly the thing happened which justified the working amid the gloom.

"I hate the world for its mystery," said one who could not endure that any gloom should encircle him. It does seem something like a disgrace to a fine mind to discover that it cannot think out its path with precision, but must be led if it is to find its way. And in this mood men form those semi-religious which for a little while seem to be more positive simply because they leave out the most troublesome and persistent facts. If we could only realize that darkness is not a disgrace we should accept many of these passages in life with a different spirit. The hymn accepts the experience, and asks to learn its lesson. As the phrase "moor and fen" recognizes that there is a "discipline of dullness," the encircling gloom attests that there is a discipline of darkness in which there are not only conceived, but protected and ripened, many of the choicest fruits of the Spirit. It is quite likely to be a humiliation, but it is not a disgrace. The great spirit accepts it patiently, and does not rudely clamor that it be brought to a close, but asks rather what its teaching is. "I will not let thee go except thou bless me."

Today there are a great many attempts made to banish the gloom that encircles the soul. We are told that all gloom is morbid, and that it should be taken as a sign that we are out of health. But while there is much in our moods that is morbid, there is a gloom which is not. It is real and it is rational, and it is well for us, and we ought not to brush it away too soon. There could have been no kindness in letting Jacob go before the issue of his soul was thoroughly wrestled out with him. Let us find out if it is the darkness of sin, of a lifelong mistake in our purpose, and not be willing to go out of it until that is settled. Let us pray, as the hymn does, that the darkness may not go until it has done its work.

A CONSCIENCE FOR THE PAPER.

One of the things which must transpire if our denominational papers are to fill to the full, their mission is for the pastors more generally to have a conscience as to the mission and significance of the denominational weekly, such as they have for other agencies used for the advance of the kingdom of our Lord. The denominational paper stands just for the progress of the kingdom. It is often handicapped in its service by limitations which seem beyond its power to control, but it stands faithfully for the pure and the good, for information about principles and work and workers that are unselfish and have for their ends the salvation of souls, the uplifting of social conditions and the stimulation and growth of Christian men and women in intelligent service. If there is any question as to whether the denominational paper stands for these things it ought to be looked into. If it does not, the denomination owes it to itself to see that it does. If it does stand as a faithful agent in instructing and stimulating the people in Christian endeavor, and interpreting for them the truth, the brotherhood does an injury both to itself and the paper by not giving the genuine, wholehearted support which the progressive ones give to the other recognized agencies for the advance of the cause.—Religious Herald.

The blessing of a man is not the blessing he receives, but the blessing he becomes the channel of.