

their souls; and the sons who through drink have slain their fathers; and the mothers who, for drink, have sacrificed the lives of their little ones upon the breast—what will ever make you see it? Men of England, if these things do not wring your heart, and fire your zeal, what do you expect? Can the letters glare more plainly on the palace wall of your power? Are you waiting till there fall on England the same fate which, for their sins, has fallen in turn on Assyria, and Greece, and Rome, and Egypt, and Carthage, and Jerusalem, and Tyre? They perished; sooner or later all guilty nations perish, by sudden catastrophe or by slow decay.

Ah, if the voice of all these tempted, suffering, perishing miserable souls be nothing to you—if the voice of your country be nothing to you—yet, if you be Christians, listen to the voice of Christ, pleading with you in the pathetic accents of myriads of the little ones that it is not His will, that it is utterly against His will, that His Cross and Passion should be thus rendered of none effect to multitudes for the very least of whom Christ died. "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, behold, we knew it not" (when, now, at any rate, you have no excuse for not knowing it), "doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it? and He that keepeth thy soul doth not He know it? And shall He not render to every man according to his works?"

THE ORIGIN OF EVIL.

In my younger years I tried once and again to solve the problem of the origin of evil. In my later life I have given up the attempt. I have become convinced that no one has cleared up the mystery, which remains as the one dark cloud in our sky.

The great German philosopher, Leibnitz, propounded a grand doctrine of optimism, which asserts that this is the best possible world; and this doctrine was expounded with glowing eloquence by Bolingbroke, and in terse verse by Pope. This style of sentiment prevailed in our literature for more than a century, and people did little to remove the evils of our world or to elevate the great mass of the people many of whom sank in our great cities to the lowest depths of degradation. But in latter times thinkers have been obliged to view the other aspects. Astronomy teaches the generation of worlds out of star-dust. Geology tells us that death has reigned over all animated beings from the beginning. In all past ages there has been a struggle for existence.

We have now pessimism, which declares that the world is the worst possible, proclaimed and defended by a few moodish men of genius, and youths are wondering at it, and finding a confirmation of it in the circumstance that they are not meeting with an encouragement suited to their merits and their opinion of themselves.

On two points I have reached assurance; one is, that God is not, and cannot be, the author of evil; and, on the other hand, that those intelligent creatures who commit sin are themselves to blame for it. Carrying these two convictions with me, I leave speculative questions with God, of whose existence and goodness I have such abundant proof.

On one other point I have reached assurance—the existence of pain is not inconsistent with the existence of love. Suffering is one of the most potent means of calling forth love. The shepherd left the ninety-and-nine sheep in the wilderness to go after that which was lost. There was a tenderness in the interest which the father took in his returning prodigal son beyond what he felt in the one always with him, and which led him to run out to meet him and embrace him in his arms. "There is joy in heaven among the holy angels over one sinner that repenteth."

"Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Man may feel at times as if he were kept at an infinite distance from God; yet if he would but think of it, there is an endearing element in the love of God toward sinful men not found in His love to the holy angels. There is pity: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." The apparent frown which we see at times on the face of God is assumed only because God has to mark His disapprobation of our conduct, His love all the while being ready to burst out. Thus it was that God was

led to give up His only begotten Son to suffer and to die for us. It was this affection which led the Son to leave the bosom of the Father, and suffer and die on earth. The highest exercise of love which the universe discloses is the love of God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—toward fallen and suffering men. "Herein indeed is love."

The mystery of darkness is swallowed up in the mystery of light, as we "comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height; to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."—*President McCosh.*

THANKFULNESS.

My God, I thank Thee who has made
The earth so bright:
So full of splendour and of joy,
Beauty and light.
So many glorious things are here,
Noble and right!

I thank Thee, too, that Thou hast made
Joy to abound;
So many gentle thoughts and deeds
Circling us round,
That in the darkest spot of earth
Some love is found.

I thank Thee more that all our joy
Is touched with pain;
That the shadows fall on brightest hours;
That thorns remain;
So that earth's bliss may be our guide,
And not our chain.

For thou who knowest, Lord, how soon
Our weak heart clings,
Hast given us joys, tender and true,
Yet all with wings,
So that we see, gleaming on high,
Diviner things!

I thank Thee, Lord, that Thou has kept
The best in store;
We have enough, yet not to much
To long for more;
A yearning for a deeper peace,
Not known before.

I thank Thee, Lord, that here our souls,
Though amply blest,
Can never find, although they seek,
A perfect rest—
Nor ever shall, until they lean
On Jesus' breast.

By Adelaide Anne Procter.

"FAINT NOT."

Christian, in the hour of darkness,
Falter not, but hope in God:
In well doing be not weary.
Resting on His faithful word.
"I am with you!"
Strong "endure," and reap reward.

Labour in the whitening harvest
Where the Lord hath marked thy lot.
Lo, thy Saviour is beside thee,
Gladly gather, falter not;
Strong in Jesus,
Whose own blood thy pardon bought.

Bid the many that surround thee
All the weary, faint, unfed,
In the highways and the hedges,
To the Gospel banquet spread,
"Come to Jesus!"
Come and eat the "Living Bread"!

Faint not! keep thy Lord's love burning;
He bore weariness and pain,—
When to promised rest returning,
Many sheaves shall be thy gain.
Toil with Jesus
Never, never is in vain

Faint not, fear not! night's dark shadows.
Soon they'll haste to flee away.
Even now the daystar rising
Marks the dawning of the day;
Christ shall conquer,
Earth shall smile beneath His sway.

—Emily C. Pearson.

HOW A CHRISTMAS CARD SAVED A LIFE.

Merry Christmas time was drawing near, and I wanted some pretty illuminations to give away, so I went one morning to where I should find a beautiful variety.

While I was looking over a multitude of mottoes, and making my choice, I noticed a lady near me apparently bent on the same errand. After a few minutes, as she seemed unable to find what she was seeking, I asked her if there were any among those I had chosen which she particularly liked.

She thanked me pleasantly, and said she had selected all she wished except one, and she felt sure of finding it among the unsorted cards, for it had been published, she thought, by the Tract Society only the year before.

"It is one with purple pansies—heart's ease, you know—and the verse, 'Casting all care upon Him, for He careth for you.' I want it for a special use," she said; and then added impulsively, "Those words saved a life—a soul—last Christmas. You don't wonder they are precious!"

Then in a few words she gave the outline of the story of one who had, through terrible trials, lost faith in human love, truth, and honour, and worst of all, in his misery, had made shipwreck of his faith in God.

It was Christmas day. He started to leave the house with the full purpose of committing suicide. The children were just coming home from a Sunday school Christmas tree, eager and happy with their pretty presents. He stole out through a room from which they had passed, so that no one might see him leave the house. Lying on the floor, just where he must step to cross the threshold, was a card, with purple pansies and the words; "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." Startled, thrilled to his soul, he could not pass by that message from Heaven facing him as if to drive him back from his wicked, cowardly purpose. Faith in God and his love came back, and with it came courage and strength to take up the heavy burden of a bruised and shattered life. God did care for him, and was a very present help in trouble.

The story touched me deeply and has often recurred to me since, though I have never seen the lady again, and know nothing further of the circumstances. It always comes back with special force whenever I have to choose Scripture verses to give away. Since we have the promise, "My word shall not return unto Me void," may we not rightly ask God's peculiar blessing on these little messengers, which go to so many homes we may never enter?

NEGLECTED OPPORTUNITIES.

No words can be more solemn, and no thought strikes at the heart more forcibly—how often our lips have been mute and our hands idle when we might have been working for Christ. As days and months and years pass, and the childish dreams of early life vanish, we begin to feel anxious and restless, and desire to be something more than we are. We begin to realize that merely living is not the grand aim of life. There comes a time when the heart grows dissatisfied and although the "still small voice" keeps whispering to us, we try to throw off this feeling of restlessness, and, like Felix, we tremble and say: "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee;" but the "convenient season" never comes.

As soon as the call is heard is the time to heed the call. "Now is the accepted time," not to-morrow. "To-day the Saviour calls," not to-morrow. That call may be rejected once to often, for God has said: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man."

It is not enough to be like King Agrippa, almost a Christian, but an altogether Christian; a Christian bound up in Christ; and until we are such we are neglecting the grandest opportunity ever held out to man; but as soon as the hand of faith can grasp this opportunity the clouds begin to break away, light pours in on the soul, and our whole being is lifted up nearer to God, and opportunities never before dreamed of spring up all around us. We need not wander far from home to find opportunities, for if our eyes are only open wide enough, and if our hands are only willing enough, we can see them all around. A word, a prayer, even a clasp of the hand, may win a soul to Jesus. It seems sometimes as if we were ashamed to have our friends know that our hearts yearn for them. O if we could be more deeply in earnest, and show the unconverted how much in earnest we are, fewer opportunities would be neglected, and more souls would be brought to Jesus. What can you do? what can I do to warn the careless of their danger? how can we most effectively point them to the "Lamb of God?" Let us hold up the banner of our Master, and at every opportunity point them to the sin-cleansing fountain, by telling them that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but have everlasting life."—*Presbyterian Banner.*