

Family Department.

TRIAL.

By G. A. HAMMOND.

In sorrow, Lord, to Thee I look, Remembrance searches o'er Thy Book, With hasty sweep and anxious heed, For promise suited to my need.

The hour of trial finds me weak, A bruised reed about to break, And smoking flax that scarcely shows The living spark that hidden glows.

Lord, but 'tis written for my need, Thou wilt not break the bruised reed, Thou wilt not quench the smoking flax: So kind the covenant Mercy makes.

O that I prized this grace aright! O that each thought, with chief delight, Crossed to Thy kind, inviting arms, Attracted, Jesus! by Thy charms.

GIVING LIKE A LITTLE CHILD.

Not long since a poor widow came into my study. She is over sixty years of age. Her home is one little room, about ten by twelve, and she supports herself by her needle, which in these days of sewing machines, means the most miserable support.

"There is my contribution to the Church fund."

"But are you able to give so much?"

"O yes," she replied "I have learned how to give now."

"How is that?" I asked.

"Do you remember," she answered, "that sermon of three months since, when you told us that you did not believe that one of your people was so poor that, if he loved Christ, he could not find some way of showing that love by his gifts?"

"I do."

"Well, I went home and cried all night over that sermon. I said to myself 'My minister don't know how poor I am or how never would have said that.' But from crying, I at last got to praying, and when I had told Jesus all about it, I seemed to get an answer in my heart, that dried up all tears."

"What was the answer?" I asked deeply moved by her recital.

"Just this: 'If you cannot give like other people do, give like a child,' and I have been doing it ever since. When I have a penny over from my sugar or loaf of bread, I lay it aside for Jesus, and so I have gathered the money all in pennies."

"But it has not embarrassed you to lay aside so much?"

"Oh no!" she responded eagerly with beaming face.

"Since I began to give to the Lord, I have always had money in the house for myself, and it is wonderful how the work comes pouring in. So many are coming to see me that I never knew before."

"But didn't you always have money in the house?" I asked.

"Oh no! often when my rent came due, I had to go and borrow it, not knowing how I should ever find means to pay it again. But I don't have to do so any more, the dear Lord is so kind."

"Of course, I could not refuse such money."

Three months later she came with three dollars and eighty-five cents, saved in the same way. Then came the effort of our church in connection with the Memorial Fund, and, in some five months, she brought fifteen dollars, all saved in a little white box I had given her. This makes twenty-one dollars and eighty-five cents, from one poor widow, in a single twelve-month. I need hardly add that she apparently grew more in Christian character in that one year, than in all the previous years of her connection with the Church.

Who can doubt, that if, in giving, as well as in other graces, we could all thus become as little children, there would result such an increase in our gifts, that there would not be room enough to contain them?

Two words of mercy are there which the Lord himself hath laid down—for give and give. As to what He saith of pardoning, thou both wishest thy sin to be pardoned thee and thou hast another whom thou mayest pardon. Again, as to doing kindnesses, a beggar asks of thee, and thou art God's beggar. For we are all, when we pray, God's beggars; we stand, yea, we fall prostrate before the door of the great house-holder; we groan in supplication wishing to receive some thing, and this something is God Himself.—St. Augustine.

"IT NEVER DRIES UP."

"I was once stopping," says a lady, "at a village on the Welsh coast, where the people had to bring all their water from a well."

"Is this well ever dry?" I inquired of a young girl who came to draw water.

"Dry! Yes, ma'am; very often in hot weather!"

"And where do you go for water then?"

"To the spring, a little way out of town."

"And if the spring dries up?"

"Why, then, we go to the stream higher up, the best water of all."

"But if the stream higher up fails?"

"Why ma'am, that stream never dries up—never. It is always the same, winter and summer."

I went to see this precious brook which "never dries up." It was a clear, sparkling rivulet, coming down the high hill—not with torrent leap and roar, but soft murmur of fulness and freedom. It flowed down to the highway side. It was within reach of every child's pitcher. It was enough for every empty vessel. The small birds came down thither to drink. The sheep and lambs had trodden down a little path to its brink. The thirsty beast of burden, along the dusty road, knew the way to the stream that "never dries up."

"It reminded me of the waters of life and salvation flowing from the Rock of Ages, and brought within the reach of all men by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Every other brook may grow dry in the days of drought and adversity, but this heavenly spring never ceases to flow. Thirsting soul, you may come and drink. Wearied and fainting, lingering around the broken cisterns of hopes and consolation, Jesus calls you to himself. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." The water from Jacob's well was refreshing, but it was hard to obtain; but to the sinful woman there Christ offered living water. Jesus said to her, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Christians Guardian.

BITTER-SWEET.

No joy is lasting: there's no grief, That doth not quickly fleet. Each has, in turn, existence brief— Sweet Bitter; Bitter Sweet.

SORROW.

Do you say, what are we to do with sorrow when it comes? We know we must conquer circumstances, and that they do not touch our life, only the externals of it. Still, weeping is bitter, pain is humbling, reproach is sharp, disappointment stings, and the death of friends no medicine can heal. Sooner or later the days of darkness will come. Where is joy then? I reply, you must remember that word of Christ, "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy." It was the Resurrection that did that for them. It is the resurrection that shall do that for us. To accept sorrow as a part of our predestined obedience, to endure sorrow as the testimony of our faith made perfect, to interpret sorrow as a blessed share in the Lord's Passion, to welcome sorrow as a claim for the power of the Resurrection—here is the secret which it does not bring back friends, feeds in us the hope of meeting them; if it does not assuage pain, dignifies us with the fellowship of Christ. In manhood and age, reasonable and exemplary; in youth, so strange to sorrow, and so new to it, it has a pathos and a beauty of its own quite irresistible. My young brethren, you especially who firmly believe in Christ, and who secretly desire to imitate and glorify Him, the joy of action is noble, but the joy of suffering is divine. Welcome the life He gives you, drink the gladness He offers you. He is wiser than us all, and will choose the best for us. Still, if He should call you to drink of His cup—the cup of His sorrow, and to be baptised with His baptism, the baptism of His death, do not think Him hard with you. Even in its undimmed brightness and vigor, Christian youth is ever a great force in the world, which cannot dispute its sincerity nor evade its appeal. But when strength is made perfect in weakness, and by the sick-bed or death-bed of a young Christian man, the passing world with all its fresh delights

and opening prospects is calmly and steadily postponed—to the life to come—the victory that overcomes the world is then seen to be faith, the silent judgment that passes in the heart is this, "Jesus Christ is here."—Selected.

A BOY'S WORD.

When I was a lad, something happened—I don't remember what it was—but something in which my word was not fully credited by one of my aunts. It was, however, by my other aunt, who spoke up for me, and said she thought my word was good. I tell you, I felt as tall as a drum major; and from that day on, it always was good to that aunt, and I hope, to every one else.

It does boys, and I suppose girls, too, a great deal of good to encourage them. I "leave it" to any boy or girl who reads this, if it doesn't; there now. It seems to touch just the right spot in a boy's make up. In Sunday school, as well as elsewhere, more can be got out of the average boy by encouragement than in any other way. Some boys spoil under it; but not the boy that is worth anything. (I think those boys would have spoiled anyhow.) If there is anything at all in a boy, encouragement is like the mother bird setting on her eggs. By and by the good that is in him will come to the pip, and out it will burst. Discouragement is like oiling eggs—they will not hatch after that.—An Old Boy.

A TEXT IN RHYME.

S. JAMES II. 13.

He that lacks mercy Of mercy shall miss; But he shall have mercy That merciful is.

The above is on an old bedstead in Maple Hall, Cheshire, the birthplace of Judge Bradshaw, who condemned King Charles, the Martyr.

"I CAN READ MY BIBLE AT HOME."

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"I can read my Bible at home." Then you have cause for gratitude that you can read and that you have the Bible, of both of which privileges thousands are deprived, and you should express your gratitude by keeping all God's ordinances. But by your excuse you mean that you purpose not to go to Church, because you can read the Bible at home. You can, but do you read it? No! for it would be strange to see one not taking pleasure in public worship, yet delighting to read the Bible that enjoins that worship. To stay at home when opportunity is afforded for public worship is in direct opposition to the Apostle's injunction "not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is;" and if they were not to neglect it, when persecution raged against the Christian assemblies, how can you omit it, who have none to molest you? To read the Bible at home instead of assembling for worship would destroy the Church, which can be known to the world only by the visible acts of its members. Then we could not know that Christ has any friends, or who they are. Let the members of any other society make the experiment of neglecting the times of meeting, on the plea that they can read the constitution and history at home and soon they will have no society to neglect. No! You can, indeed, read the Bible at home, but you do not, and will not, so long as, with such an excuse you break the Lord's Day.

"Going to Church will save no one."—But who said that by itself it would? You are fighting with your own shadow. Going to Church is an important duty, as many others; but the performance of one duty, as Church-going, will not compensate for the neglect of others. It is a means of grace: not grace itself. It places a person in the way of salvation, where he will learn what further is to be done, and the mode of doing it. Food will not of itself preserve life; therefore, according to your principles, you should not eat.

Public worship will not, indeed, save any one, as the lives of too many persons prove; but wifal absence from Church, unrepented of, will destroy you; because it violates a command of God, and closes a channel of that grace which is indispensable to salvation. The very abuse shows that there is a proper use.—Rev. George A. Leekin.

"Out of the Mouth of Babes." A good, and what is more, a true story is told of a candidate for Holy Orders at one of our Theological Colleges, who was addicted to the weakness of wearing a rather elaborate gold chain, with appendages, which dropped, more or less gracefully, over the front of his vest. It happened that on a certain Sunday being engaged in catechizing a Sunday School Class, he had occasion in due course, to enquire of the children what they understood by the expression "the pomps and vanity of this wicked world." For some time, the whole class seemed to be unequal to the emergency, preserving perfect silence. At last, however, one little mite of a boy held up a hand, and stepped forward out of the ranks. Then walking directly up to his teacher, he deliberately laid his hand on the gold chain with its brilliant belongings, and exclaimed with great emphasis: "Them!"

Thousands of people might be enjoying reasonable lives, with opportunities for self-culture, for social enjoyment, and for charitable effort, whose whole energy is absorbed in the desperate struggle to add superfluities to comforts.

MASTERS AND SERVANTS.—Sir, there is only one way to have good servants; that is, to be worthy of being well served. All nature and all humanity will serve a good master, and rebel against an ignoble one. And there is no surer test of the quality of a nation than the quality of its servants, for they are their master's shadows, and distort their faults in a flattened mimicry. A wise nation will have the philosophers in its servants' hall; a knavish nation will have knaves there, and a knavish nation will have friends there. Only let it be remembered that "kindness" means, as with your child, so with your servant, not indulgence, but care.—Ruskin.

God's agency does not exclude nor supersede our instrumentality. He gives the increase, but Paul must plant and Apollas water. He furnishes the wind, but we are to spread the sails. He gives, but we gather. Prayers and diligence, dependence and activity, harmonize in the Scripture, are only inconsistent in the crudeness of ignorant and foolish men.—Wm. Jay.

WORLDLINESS IN THE CHURCH.

The Spirit of Missions reveals the spirit of the Church. Evidently, she has a little strength. Very clearly, she has a form of godliness. A few true-hearted men and women are in mission fields, and every year the Church appropriates a few thousand dollars to missionary work. But, compared with the wealth of the Church, and the needs of the world, is the sum given an evidence of vigorous Christian life? We are told that "in the last days perilous times shall come." Those "perilous times" are upon us. Church members love pleasure more than they love God, as their expensive dress, expensive residences, expensive indulgences of all sorts, testify. The Church is not poor; she is rich. Instead of thousands, she ought to give millions.

The wardrobe of the Church needs overhauling. Silks, velvets, laces, feathers, flowers and jewelry ought, for the most part, to be discarded. Costly houses and large fortunes should be disposed of, and the proceeds devoted to missionary work. Money that is in banks should be taken out and "lent the Lord." How can Christian men and women dare to keep all these things, and know that because of their doing so millions live and die in heathen degradation? The wicked are dying in their iniquity, but their blood will be required at the hands of those who will not use their riches to warn them.

"Sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven," was not spoken to an individual alone. It is the voice of God to all who love His kingdom. Christ, "though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich."

"If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

The command to sell all and give to the poor, is not misunderstood because its meaning is not clear, but because the Church is blinded by her love of the world. He who loves his neighbor as himself needs no explanation. "One is your Father, which is in Heaven," and "all ye are brethren." When Christians

take into their souls the full spirit of these words, they will "carry neither purse nor scrip," but casting all their care upon God, will struggle for the salvation of the world.—Ex.

FLEE in your troubles to Jesus Christ. The experience of upwards of thirty years enables me to say: "No man ever had so kind a friend as He, or so good a master. View Him, not at a distance, but as a prop, a stay, and a comforter ever at hand, and He will requite your confidence by blessings illimitable.—Sir Henry Havelock.

INDECISION.

How often does a pastor in the course of his visitations come across those who "lean towards the Church," or as Tennyson says,

Sit apart holding no form of Creeds But contemplating all.

They like the Church's services, or perchance the minister who officiates at her Altar, but there the matter ends. Another class are those who, when asked to come forward to the Sacraments, or to renew their Baptismal vows, hang back through indecision. And so the chain of habit once commenced becomes stronger and stronger, till it is too firmly linked to be broken. Then, with no anchor for the soul, they drift away from the moorings of the haven where they would be but towards which they cannot resolve to direct their course, and no wonder is it that we hear of the shipwreck of their souls. Nearly nineteen hundred years have elapsed since the Ark has been afloat "on the waves of this troublesome world," across which it has borne myriads. Is it unsafe now to trust that vessel of which the Son of God was the builder? Is "the faith once delivered to the Saints" unsound? No. It is their own indifference, their own lack of decision. The Church is definite in form and faith, and diffuses and maintains doctrines agreeable to the Word of God. The undecided cannot perceive this; their tendency could they but see it, is towards the world from which they would first get the full benefit, and trust to the chance of being permitted to offer to God the mere refuse of their lives.

CHRISTIANITY lays us under new obligations to a good life, as by it the will of God is more clearly revealed, and as it affords additional motives to the practice of it, over and above those which arise out of the nature of virtue and vice. I might add, as our Saviour has set us a perfect example of goodness in our own nature. Now love and charity is plainly the thing in which He hath placed His religion; in which, therefore, as we have any pretence to the name of Christians, we must place ours. He hath at once enjoined it upon us by way of command with peculiar force, and by His example as having undertaken the work of our salvation out of pure love and good will to mankind. It was "for us men and for our salvation" that "He came down from Heaven, and was incarnate and was made man," that He might teach us our duty, and more especially that He might enforce the practice of it, reform mankind, and finally bring us to that "eternal salvation," of which He is the author, to all those that obey Him.—Bishop Butler.

OATHS are vulgar, senseless, offensive, impious; they leave a noisome trail upon the lips, and a stamp of odium upon the soul. They are inexcusable. They gratify no sense, while they outrage taste and dignity.

Love is the grand secret in domestic education. Give your children a genial loving atmosphere in which to grow. Love precludes not discipline or correction, but is prompt in the execution of both.

DEAL with your children as God deals with His. Do not meet their anger with your anger, their petulance with your own, or their obstinacy with willfulness still greater.

He who willingly drinks in tales and calumnies, will, from the delight he hath in evil-hearing, slide insensibly into the way of evil-speaking.

Who ever accomplished anything by reproaches, or violence, or harsh measures? Commend your little ones when they do well.