

stab us to the quick. Sooner or later, for most people, life becomes very hard. It consists of one long series of exacting and sometimes bitter tests. And the art of living lies mainly in the ability so to face these tests that we can come through them triumphantly victorious.

It is a question that has received various answers. There are those who assume a defiant attitude towards the dark things of life. They imagine that they have received more than their fair share of them, and, as a result, they are always ready to pick a quarrel with the Almighty. This is the attitude of unbelief, of those who will not trust God, save when they can trace Him. A young man, a church member and a Sabbath School teacher, had his store burned to the ground. He felt aggrieved at Providence. He soon ceased to teach his class, gradually gave up church attendance, and is now a hard, bitter, sneering railer against the Providential Order. Whether his view of things is right or wrong, it has certainly spoiled his soul.

Again there is the attitude of the stoic. If the defiant man does not know how to suffer, the stoic refuses to suffer. His purpose is to conquer life's hardships by ignoring them. Whatever happens he is not going to allow his soul to be disturbed. When a messenger informed Anaxagoras that his son was dead, the old man looked up and, in a tone of enforced calmness, said, "I never supposed that I had begotten an immortal." W. E. Henley, after a lifetime of pain and weakness, could raise his voice and sing,

"In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud :
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody but unbowed."

Such a passionless superiority to life's testings no doubt demands a certain high heroism of character that calls forth our admiration; but it is too much of a strain on ordinary human nature. Most of us are unequal to it. We have souls that can and must feel.

The real secret lies with the Christian. If the defiant man does not know how to suffer, or the stoic refuses to suffer, the Christian tries, as best he can, to suffer

well. He faces life in a spirit, not of rebellion nor of indifference, but of triumphant joy. The Christians of the early church were marked by a victorious buoyancy that transformed the ills of life into blessings. Poor they were rich, persecuted they were exultant, martyred they were triumphant.

The Christian spirit faces the worst that life has in store for us with exultant and expectant buoyancy. Whether or not we are able to face life in this spirit, will all depend, fundamentally, on what is our theory of life. If we imagine that God placed us here for the sake of the pleasurable sensations we can get, then there will be hours, hours of loss and grief and pain, when the exultant spirit must be denied us. But if we hold to the Christian view that the end of existence is the development of character by the conflict of the soul with circumstance, a view in which difficulties, sorrows, pains, are regarded as factors in the process, then in this world, and in all worlds, we can

"Welcome each rebuff that makes earth's
smoothness rough ;
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand, but
go."
Ottawa

God's Garments

By Rev. John A. Cormie, B.A.

The kingdom of Israel had fallen on evil days. Many of the people had turned from the God of their fathers, and, without the unifying influence of a common faith, divisions had crept in, leaving the nation an easy prey to its marauding neighbors, who appear to have moved, bag and baggage, across the lines and to have helped themselves to anything in view. The plight of Israel was, indeed, desperate, and God alone could restore the nation to a position of security. But God could not do it without a man through whom He could work and by whom His hand would be made visible.

" 'Tis God gives skill,
But not without men's hands : He could not
make
Antonio Stradivari's violins without An-
tonio."