

THE DISCIPLINE OF SORROW.

BY REV. J. H. M'CARTY, M.A.

SUFFERING brings us into sympathy, not only with Christ, but with each other. We are members of a suffering family. However dissimilar our tastes, our habits, our education, or the sphere of society in which we may chance to move, we come together at this point. Let a great sorrow fall on us, and how soon we learn that there are hearts that beat with sympathy for us! We then see the better side of life, the spontaneous outburst of genuine affection, even from those whom we scarcely knew before; and this makes us love our race a little better than we did. So that human sorrow binds the world into a great brotherhood.

It is God's pity—God waking up the hearts of those around us, to go and represent Him; humanity showing its true self. For however cold the world around us may seem to be, there is, after all, a great world-heart that, under the cloak of fashion or business, still throbs in the breasts of men and women, and only needs an occasion, when, lo! the mantle is cast off, the office is closed, the gay laugh is hushed, and there it is, a great throbbing heart of sympathy and love, coming to us with kindest offices.

"There is One

To whom sad hearts have often gone.
Though rich the gifts for which they pray,
None ever came unblest away.
Then, though all earthly ties be riven,
Smile, for thou hast a Friend in heaven."

Faith, not sight, is our anchor in the storm. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

All these sufferings point to the future. All our griefs, sorrows, bereavements, trials, and temptations are indices of heaven. They will not go with us to heaven; no pain or grief shall enter there; but, like the guide-board by the roadside, they only tell us which way to take. To murmur at them, to receive them in any other spirit than that in which they are given, is only to leave God's path, and wander off into the mazes of sin—into the wilderness of confusion, doubt, and despair.

Heaven is the explanation of earth, it is the key which unlocks the mystery of all our sorrows, it is the recompense of all our griefs; and its eternal bliss shall pay for all God's children suffer here. "Now we see through a glass darkly; but then, face to face. Now we know in part; but then shall we know, even as also we are known."

Heaven will solve many a dark problem that has troubled our minds here. It will show us what we can never learn here, and satisfy all our demands when we reach it. We must have faith in God, and live and endure till he says, "Come up higher." Do your work well; and when the frail bark of your life goes down, go with it to the bottom as God shall will, with the heart anchored to the Throne by the strong faith of the Gospel, and it shall be well with you. Go to your life-work with zeal, prosecute it with energy, and meet death when it comes—or griefs and sorrows when they come—with courage, with faith.

Life is not always to be measured by years, but by deeds. And it is often true that in death we only give emphasis to life. Death brings out its meaning. Death rounds our lives to a close, and is but the fragrance of cemented and compacted virtues. In death we may do a thousand times more for God, and for his cause, than we can do in a long life. And so of all the ills that afflict us, there are times of sorrow, when true Christian grace can best be exhibited to the gaze of man. We must go on trusting in God, and life will be at least, in the consciousness of right. The cloud will be fringed with gold, and in the deep voice of the tempest that may toss your bark, will come the voice of Jesus, saying, "It is I; be not afraid." Let us believe that

"Sin can give no wound
Beyond love's power to heal."

Believers are never more beautiful in Christ's eyes than when their own spots are most discernible to themselves; and oftentimes when they are sharpest in censuring themselves, He is most ready to absolve and commend them.

THE BALANCE OF POWER.

BY ARTHUR MURSELL.

"THE balance of power"—what does it mean? It means, not the balance, but the overbalancing of the drunken heads of plotting statesmen and of wicked kings. It means the greed of despots, the smacking of the lustful lips of an accursed ambition. It has been the pat excuse for princes to trot out their armies, and governments to levy blood-tax upon industry for centuries; the plea by which the colossal price of military pageantry is wrung from drudging millions year by year. Labour must be taxed, homes must be poor, and children must be hungry from generation to generation, to keep up the balance of power. It is a phrase scribbled by some demon sybil on the fluttering leaf, and blown out of some dark cave in hell to be picked up by kings and emperors upon earth, and copied upon the code of bloodthirsty diplomacy. If the balance of power means anything at all, it surely means the helping of the weak by the strong, the laying of the weary head upon the arm of might, and the soothing of the brow of sorrow on the breast of sympathy. If I have more strength than I need to serve myself, how can I better keep up the equilibrium than by looking for a weaker one than I, and lending him the muscle that is superfluous to me but deficient in himself? If my table groans under such dainty repletion that I am puzzled at the rich redundancy, surely I can think of some lighter table than my own, where the scanty viands only mock the appetite, and fling in some weight out of my surfeit to keep up the equipoise. This seems, at least to me, to be the golden rule for regulating the balance of power, alike among men and nations. Not for the rich to crush the poor, not for the strong to scourge the weak, not for the fat to feed upon the lean, but for sympathy and love to hold the beam, and keep an equal scale of brotherhood through all the world.

SLEEP THE BEST STIMULANT.

THE best possible thing for a man to do when he feels too weak to carry his work through, is to go to bed and sleep for a week if he can. This is the only true recuperation of power, the only actual recuperation of the brain force, because during sleep the brain is in a state of rest, and in a condition to receive and appropriate particles of nutriment from the blood which takes the place of those which have been consumed in previous labour, since the very act of thinking consumes, burns up solid particles, as every turn of the wheel or screw of the splendid steamer is the result of consumption by fire of the fuel in the furnace. The supply of consumed brain substance can only be had from the nutritive particles in the blood, which were obtained from the food previously eaten, and the brain is so constituted that it can best receive and appropriate to itself those nutritive particles during a state of rest, of quiet, and stillness in sleep. Mere stimulants supply nothing in themselves; they only goad the brain, force it to a greater consumption of its substance, until that substance has been so exhausted that there is not power enough left to receive a supply, just as men are so near death by thirst and starvation that there is not power enough to swallow anything, and all is over.

One reason why we don't have more answers to our prayers is because we are not thankful enough. The Divine injunction is, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." Some one has well said there are three things in this verse: careful for nothing—prayerful for everything—thankful for anything.—D. L. Moody.

Some people tell us it does not make any difference what a man believes if he is only sincere. One Church is just as good as another if you are only sincere. I do not believe any greater delusion ever came out of the pit of hell than that. It is ruining more souls at the present than anything else. I never read of any men more sincere or more earnest than those men at Mount Carmel—those false prophets. They were terribly in earnest. You do not read of men getting so in earnest now that they take knives and cut themselves. Look at them leaping upon their altars; hear their cry—"Oh Baal! oh Baal!" We never heard that kind of prayer on this platform. They acted like madmen. They were terribly in earnest: yet did not God hear their cry? They were all slain.—D. L. Moody.