

reason thus, an arrest would at once be laid upon all progress. Nothing would advance in any line of action if the whole responsibility were thrown upon a few. The man who toils among the foundations, obscurely, with small remuneration, and no hope of anything beyond his day's wages, is as really doing his share in erecting the great edifice or constructing the stately cathedral as he who paints the magnificent fresco on which the eyes of thousands shall gaze. And if each does his best, God will reward each alike.

Sometimes the mother in her nursery becomes disheartened. The same things are to be done over and over. The same faults are to be corrected daily. The same little lessons are to be taught so many times. Then there is that never-finished basket of work, with the little dresses, aprons and petticoats; the stockings to be mended, and the ruffles to be hemmed. She snatches a moment to peep into the magazine which her husband has laid temptingly near her hand, and here is a spicy article by one woman, a record of breezy saunterings by another, and a graceful illustration by a third. She meant to do such things once, and perhaps she could still, if she ever had any leisure. But—Johnny has run a fish-hook into his knee, and she must essay domestic surgery. Fannie's doll has broken its head, and Fannie's heart is well-nigh broken, too. Mother must mend the one and comfort the other. And the baby wakes up, and cook wants to know if nutmeg or vanilla is to flavour the pudding, and John is going to drive and wants a rip sewed in his gloves; and so the day wears on. The poems unwritten, the songs unsung, that are lived in the sweet, tender, unselfish lives of gentle, motherly women, are doubtless sweeter in the ears of the listening angels than anything which finds expression in print.

*Doing our best*, not doing another's best, is what God requires of us. And He says, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

The present gratitude  
Inverts the future's good,  
And for the things I see  
I trust the things to be.  
That in the paths untrod,  
And the long days of God,  
My feet shall still be led,  
My heart be comforted.

#### "TROUBLESOME CHILDREN."

Almost all parents, who are blessed with a variety as well as mere numbers of children, have one or more that are, by their peculiar organization, calculated to try their patience and awaken their solicitude. Sometimes the troublesome child quarrels, but as the domestic editor of the New York "Tribune" says: "Children of force, vitality, sensitiveness, individuality, will quarrel more or less in spite of everything. Grown people possessing these qualities do so. The aggressive man was an aggressive boy, the enterprising, energetic man was an enterprising, restless boy, often a very uncomfortable boy to get along with. Selfishness properly regulated is a very necessary part of the successful individual. Sensitiveness and impatience are by no means inconsistent with a fine and noble character. There isn't a mother alive to the interests of her children and her own responsibilities that can help exclaiming: 'Who is sufficient for these things?' but when we have done our best the wisest thing we can do is to leave events with God, and not cripple our energies nor waste our time in the contemplation of our inefficiency and the weight of responsibility resting on us. When we have done all we can to form right habits in our children and correct their faults they leave us, and the world takes them in hand. The impatient man finds that he must control his temper and repress his hasty words or he loses by it: the careless man finds that to succeed he must learn to be careful; the arrogant man is taught by snubs to temper his arrogance with civility; the dishonest man finds that 'honesty is the best policy,' though he may not reduce the maxim to practice in his own life. When we have implanted an earnest desire in the hearts of our children to grow every day more and more noble and true, when we have kindled within them the fires of earnest and unquenchable aspiration toward whatever dignifies and exalts human character, when we have given the man habitual impulse upward and forward, we have done well by them. The heaven once hidden in their measures of meal will work till the whole lump is leavened. It takes God himself, not to speak irreverently, ages to make such a world as this, ages more to bring the human race to its present state of improvement. He

bears with criminals and human hyenas, and waits for the good to triumph over the evil. Cannot we wait for our children to mature into a ripened manhood and womanhood?"

#### THE TICK OF THE CLOCK AT MIDNIGHT.

'Tis the tick of the clock at midnight,  
Solemnly, startlingly clear,  
Like the throb of a fevered pulsation  
Made audible to the ear.

Through the house reigns a death-like silence,  
The death-like silence of sleep,  
While the fragments of time, like meteors,  
Pass flashing across the deep.

From the coming eternally rushing,  
They illumine for a moment our sky.  
But no power can stay their departure;  
They touch us and hover by.

They touched on the heart of the watcher.  
And utter these words in his ear:  
"Can ye not watch for one hour,  
And our soul-stirring message hear?"

"We are God's messengers, speeding  
With swift and invisible flight,  
And we speak to you best in the silence  
Of the quite dead-hush of the night.

"Remember we carry our message  
Of what we are doing on earth  
To the Bountiful Father in heaven,  
Who endowed you with souls at your birth.

"What are you doing, oh, mortals!  
With that glorious gift of a soul?  
For what are your strongest yearnings,  
And what is the longed-for goal?"

"Pleasure, and power, and riches,  
Leisure, and freedom from care—  
Is it for these ye are striving?  
Such strivings must end in despair.

"Like a butterfly crushed in the grasping,  
So pleasure is crushed when caught,  
And power must end in weakness,  
And riches must end in naught;

"While indolent leisure lies basking,  
Sleepily, selfishly glad,  
Till the adder of conscience stings it  
And the terror driveth it mad.

"Soon the dawn will streak the horizon  
And herald the fateful day;  
Prepare! Lo, the kingdom of heaven  
Approacheth! Watch and pray!"

—Good Words.

#### WHAT GOOD DOES IT DO YOU?

The question was put to a Christian man, well on in years, whose life, as it seemed to his questioner, had been a failure. The two men were relatives. They had been boys together, but, separated by distance as well as aims, had seen little of each other for years. The one, by studious devotion to business, had accumulated a competence, while the other, though industrious, had been able to do little more than sustain a family of children. These one after another had been taken from him, and he was left an invalid past middle life, with an invalid wife, and barely enough income to support them in the plainest style. He took great pleasure in the church, and in her prosperity. He rejoiced in a conscience void of offence toward God and man, and looked forward to an inheritance better than that of earth. Naturally his mouth spoke out of the abundance of his heart, until his relative became impatient.

"What good does it do you? I have made money and am comfortable, fixed; you have given your work to the church, what have you to shew for it? Will your religion bring bread and butter or clothes, or will it take your lame wife to church or out into the fresh country air?"

The Shorter Catechism, learned by both in youth, furnished an answer. The questions, from thirty-two to thirty-seven, were put and answered promptly. Years of active thought had not effaced them from the mind. Moreover, they had their effect. The assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end, a comfortable hope in death and hope of the resurrection, mean a great deal more than bread and butter, and clothes and a fashionable turnout.

A woman's wit, or rather wisdom, furnished another answer. She looked about their little parlour and at the kindly face of her husband and said: "We are as happy as two birds. We haven't much, but we have

all we want. You have just money—what good does it do you? You are a lonesome, unsatisfied man. I would you were altogether as I am, except the weak back."

Then there was silence for five minutes, but as the visitor rose to go, his voice was very tender as he said: "Cousin, if you think you can ride to church Sabbath, I'll bring a hack and go with you." She went to church the first time for months, and he went the first time for years; and the question, "What good does it do?" was answered a third time by the minister, whose text was, "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."

#### UNCLE JOHN'S SOLILOQUY.

"Why didn't I see this thing before? Ten dollars for mission work, and one year ago I only gave fifty cents. And that half dollar hurt me so much, and came so reluctantly! And the ten dollars—why it is a real pleasure to hand it over to the Lord! And this comes from keeping an account with the Lord. I am so glad Brother Smith preached that sermon. He said we should all find it 'a good thing to have a treasury in the house from which to draw whenever our contributions are solicited.' He asked us to try the experiment for one year—to 'set apart a certain portion of our income for the Lord's work.' I thought it over. I thought about those Jews, and the one-tenth they gave into the Lord's treasury. I thought what a mean and close-fisted Jew I should have made had I lived in those days. Then I counted up all I had given for the year, and it was just three dollars. Three dollars! and I had certainly raised from my farm clear of all expenses, \$1,200. Three dollars is one four-hundredth part of \$1,200.

"The more I thought, the wider I opened my eyes. Said I: 'I am not quite ready for the Jew's one-tenth, but I will try one-twentieth and see how it works.' I got a big envelope, and put it down in the corner of my trunk, and as soon as I could I put the \$60 into it. Said I 'Here goes for the Lord.' It cost me a little something to say it at first, but when it was done, how good I felt over it! When this appeal came for foreign missions, all I had to do was just to run to my treasury and get the money. And this all comes from keeping an account with the Lord. How He has blessed me this year! I never had better crops. Now I am going to try another plan. I am going to give the Lord the profits from one acre, one of my best yearlings, and one-tenth of the profits from my orchard. That will surely carry the Lord's fund up to \$75; and if it don't, I will make it up from something else."

SIN is not in the appetites, but in the absence of a controlling will. There were in Christ all the natural appetites of mind and body. Relaxation and friendship were dear to Him; so were sunlight and life. Hunger, pain, death, He could feel them all, and shrank from them. He suffered being tempted from the forces of desire. But there was obedience at the expense of tortured natural feeling. Remember this; for the way in which some speak of the sinlessness of Christ destroys the reality of temptation, and converts the whole of His history into a mere fictitious drama in which scenes of trial were represented, not felt.

THE apostolic canon of "laying by in store," of forecasting, that is, with a view of coming appeals, and of doing this in proportion "as God has prospered us"—this must be a canon no longer obsolete. "Since I began to obey the law," said a thriving merchant to me, "I have not only been greatly prospered but I have found my ability to give somewhat largely the greatest luxury of my life. The money is laid by, the call comes, and I am not tempted to the baseness of inventing excuses; I generally have something, not always enough, for every deserving appeal; I make short work of it, for time I cannot spare, and as soon as I get the facts, and I am sure as to the claimant, I give him cheerfully what I think I owe to his cause." I know another and a wealthier man who said he and his wife had an understanding; when his wife thought they were rich enough to set up their carriage, the answer was, "Yes, dear, it will cost just so much a year; we can afford it, and you deserve it, if you approve my increasing my charities by an equal sum." Is not this the law of Christian luxury? I can buy such a picture or give such an entertainment only when I can give an equivalent to Christ's poor and to the glory of His cross and crown.—Bishop Cox.