

Peace of a Doubting Soul.

One evening after a hard day's study of theology, at which I seemingly accomplished nothing, and the truth of which I was doubting because I could not understand it, I prayed for light and understanding; and as I prayed, struggling with the power of darkness and unbelief, I looked out of my open window upon the starry heavens, clothed with infinite beauty, I was forced to exclaim, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmaments showeth his handy work." My window was dusty and one pane of glass had been removed. As I contrasted the beauties as seen through the open space with the view through the dusty glass, these words came more forcibly than ever before, "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as I also am known." These words said to me, look out upon the workmanship of his hands and doubt no more; be content with knowing what you can find out by persistent study, and by his blessed revelations, and trust him for all else, and wait with patience till he reveals his fullness.—*A Student.*

Henry Clay's Idea of Religion.

To Miss Martineau he once said: "I do not know practically about what the churches call religion. I wish I did. But I do know of its effects. In the neighborhood of my home were two very estimable families who, in years past, fell into what is known as a 'Kentucky Feud,' which means that as often as any of the embittered party met at a fair or public meeting, there was a probability that the fray would begin, and it was as likely to kill the innocent as those in the strife. The neighbors did everything in their power for conciliation. I did everything in my power with the rest; but all was in vain. The killing went on until one of the denominations, known here as the Baptist, held what they call a 'basket meeting,' and had what they call a 'revival,' and these belligerent families were converted, as they say, and they have lived on the best terms ever since, a blessing to the whole community. I tell you, Miss Martineau, that whatever will change a Kentucky feud into loving fellowship so soon and effectively is of God. No power short of him could do it.—*Ex.*

Good Courage.

Courage is a great virtue. We need it every where and at all times. Nobody ever did or ever will accomplish much without it. We pity a discouraged despondent man or woman. Such cases are the hardest and most difficult we have to deal with. This element of character is absolutely essential to all success in the common, everyday business of life. But it belongs eminently to a true Christian. "Be strong and of a good courage," is a Divine injunction. In our spiritual conflicts we should utterly fail without courage, and the strength which courage gives to the soul. "If God be for us who can be against us?" The courage which springs from and rests in God's is invincible. With it we are more than conquerors. When the Lord is on our side we will not fear what man can do unto us. It is amazing to see what a few courageous men and women can accomplish in a parish or neighborhood. They will make headway against fearful odds. Their example will inspire others, and ere long they will accomplish more than a hundred faint hearted and irresolute persons. Sidney Smith says: "A great deal of talent is lost to the world for the want of a little courage." Says another writer: "We fear men so much because we fear God so little"—*Ex.*

In Longfellow's beautiful "folk song" on "The Sifting of Peter," there is this suggestive stanza:—

"Wounds of the soul, though healed, will ache;
The reddening scars remain, and makes confession;
Lost innocence returns no more;
We are not what we were before transgression."

This is a truth too little thought of. The sin may be forgiven, blessed be the Christ! but the ache of shame remains. Pardon revokes the penalty, restores peace to the conscience, but it does not, cannot, bring back lost innocence. Hence the soul restored to divine favor, even when filled with the rapture of heavenly love, is, and always will be, ashamed of its unrighteousness. This shame would be painful even in the heavenly life, but for the fact that the swelling tide of joyful, grateful love will swiftly swallow it up. Nevertheless, innocence is preferable to the scars of pardoned sins; and when one is sorely tempted, one does well to think that, once guilty,

"We are not what we were before transgression."
—*Zion's Herald.*

Becoming a Christian.

Next to the joy felt among the angels in heaven over a sinner that repenteth is perhaps that which thrills the heart of a Christian parent when one of his children turns from sin and begins a pious life. An affecting instance of this was revealed at one of our camp-meetings. A young man, the son of one of our deceased bishops, was preaching an effective sermon from the stand on the theme of repentance. In the course of his remarks he said that when at the camp-meeting, he had made up his mind to give his heart and his life to the Savior, he drew from his pocket a slip of paper, and on it wrote as follows: "Dear Father, I have decided to become a Christian." This he signed and forwarded to his father at some distant point where he then was. "Often before his death," said he, "did my father speak of the great joy which that slip of paper gave him; and only a little while previous to his departure from earth, I saw in his wallet that same slip which, for some years, he had carried about his person." Truly the pious parent can desire nothing for his children so much as this, and the thought of the joy it will give him may well be an inducement to the child to make the great decision that he, too, will become a Christian.—*Selected.*

The Palm Tree.

The Scripture says: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree." Let us see what this comparison means: "The palm grows not in the depths of the forest or in a fertile loam, but in the desert. Its verdure often springs apparently from the scorching dust. 'It is a friendly light-house, guiding the traveler to the spot where water is found.' The tree is remarkable for its beauty, its erect aspiring growth, its leafy canopy, its waving plumes, the emblem of praise in all ages. Its very foliage is the symbol of joy and exultation. It never fades, and the dust never settles upon it. It was therefore, twisted into the booths of the feast of tabernacles, was borne aloft by the multitude that accompanied the Messiah to Jerusalem, and it is represented as in the hands of the redeemed in heaven. For usefulness the tree is unrivaled. Gibbon says that the natives of Syria speak of 360 uses to which the palm is applied. Its shade refreshes the traveler. Its

fruit restores his strength. When his soul fails for thirst, it announces water. Its stones are ground for his camels, its leaves are made into couches, its boughs into fences and walls, and its fibers into ropes or rigging. Its best fruit, moreover, is borne in old age; the finest dates being often gathered when the tree has reached a hundred years. It sends too from the same root a large number of suckers, which, in time, form a forest by their growth. What an emblem of the righteous in the desert of a guilty world! It is not un instructive to add that this tree, once the symbol of Palestine, is now rarely seen in that country.—*Joseph Angus.*

Fear of Poverty.

How many seem to spend much of their lives in the fear of poverty! They are constantly striving to lay up something "against the time of need," are full of anxiety lest losses and misfortune should deprive them of their hoarded treasures. But alas, how many seem to have no sort of fear of spiritual poverty, but are willing to spend their lives in a state of religious weakness, leanness and starvation. The Lord has made provision that his people might have divine wealth, and that, though poor themselves, they may make many rich with the durable riches of righteousness. And as to the Christian who wears himself with seeking earthly gain; and whose heart is hungry, thirsty, burdened, and oppressed. Christ says, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich." Happy are they who heed the gracious invitation, and gain the wealth and blessing which the Lord alone can give.—*Ex.*

It would be well for those who are inclined to murmur and repine when clouds and darkness come, to remember the old Arab proverb: "All sunshine makes the desert." This would be an exceedingly stupid world were there no clouds, difficulties and trials. Not only do these give us greater zest of and enjoyment in the pleasure and sunshine of life by contrast, but what we call adversity, difficulty and trials, really develop powers that would otherwise lie dormant, and strengthen the character. Men are better and stronger for the darkness and difficulties in their way. Let us meet them, then, like men, receive them as a part of the needed discipline of life, and make them available for good.—