

A PRAYER FOR LIGHT.

[These lines were written by Mrs. Commodore Inman, of Philadelphia, whose husband gave the name to the popular line of trans-Atlantic steamers. They are only recently from her pen, though she is upwards of eighty years of age.]

Life! great mystery! Who shall say
What need hath God of this poor clay?
Formed by his hand with potent skill –
Mind, matter, soul and stubborn will;
Born but to die; sure destiny – death.
Then where, Oh, where this fleeting breath?
Not one of all the countless throng,
Who have lived and died and suffered long,
Returns to tell the great design –
That future – which is yours and mine.
We plead, Oh God! for some new ray
Of light for guidance on our way;
Based not on faith, but clearer sight,
Dispelling these dark clouds of night;
This doubt, this dread, this trembling fear;
This thought that mars our blessings here;
This restless mind, whose bolder sway
Rejects the dogmas of the day
Taught by jarring sects and schools,
To fetter reason with their rules.
We seek to know Thee as Thou art –
Our place with Thee – and then the part
We play in this stupendous plan,
Creator Infinite, and man.

Lift up this veil obscuring sight,
Command again: "Let there be Light!"
Reveal this secret of Thy throne;
We search in darkness the unknown.

The above we clip from one of the daily papers, because it so clearly shows the longings and groanings of creation. The "whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," "for the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. 8:19-22.) From how many hearts this wail and groan for truth ascends to God we may never know in this life, but certain it is that freedom of thought (unsectarian – not creed-bound) is largely on the increase.

Even the natural man is so fashioned (mentally) in the image of his creator, that with intelligence, (notwithstanding the depravity and degradation under which he now is) he cannot but look upward and realize that there must be a great Creator: and reasoning further, he knows that he must have been created with reference to some great plan; and reasoning that so great and powerful a being must be great in Love and benevolence as well as in power, he longs to know something of that plan and his part in it. He looks about him for a solution of the mystery of his being and future, as though expecting that the great loving One would have anticipated his wants and have made preparation for their answer.

Before him stands the Christian world with its hundreds of sects and isms and creeds of men; each contradicting more or less the others – each claiming the Bible as its text book and guide – each supporting its claims by some (often very few) passages from that book. He is confused, yet listens. They all declare man's sin and need of heavenly help; that commends itself to him as truth; they each point to God as the only helper, and most of them to Jesus as the ransom from sin and

death. This is not unreasonable. He listens, still they offer no solution to the mystery, whence came sin and why? But they begin to describe God as either a being so weak and helpless that he could neither prevent sin nor abolish it, or else as a loveless one who possessed the power to overthrow sin and evil, and could elect all the race to glory and happiness, as well as the few whom they claim will be so blessed, but did not want to – wanted to illustrate His great power at the expense of the endless torment of his weak and helpless creatures. He hears, but neither of these views give him rest. No, he "groans" show me a God not only possessed of more power than myself but one also possessed of wisdom to frame a plan in harmony with a love and mercy greater than my own, and I will worship Him.

Thus not only does the reflective natural man find no rest, but those in the church who are possessed of the best and most loving minds (and therefore most God-like and Christ-like) groan and agonize and pray for light, by which they can see God's love; for all who know him at all, know that "God is love." The condition of this last mentioned class is described by the prophet (Isa. 28:20.) "For the bed (theological resting place), is shorter than a man can stretch himself on it." The creeds may serve as a resting place for those who are curled up in selfishness and fast asleep, but when they awaken and attempt to stretch themselves, they will find it no longer a resting place.

And now dear brethren and sisters what have we to offer these distressed ones? Thank God (to Him be all the glory) we are living in the morning of the Millennial Day when the "mystery of God" is being finished – completed, and the fragments of truth, held by the various denominations of Christendom, are taking their places in one great, grand, harmonious PLAN, based not on isolated passages of Scripture, but comprehending and including every passage in harmony – Showing the selection by FAITH of "a little flock" in order that in

God's due time the masses of mankind should be blessed through these – showing the necessity of Evil in the proper education of man in order to prevent his ever choosing it or thinking it good in the future.

The numbers of those who weep and mourn in Zion are on the increase daily, and it is your privilege and mine to comfort them and point them to the glorious plan, which illustrates our Father's glorious character to be, Wisdom, Power, Justice and Love combined.

Are we using every effort to make known the riches of God's grace, which so many are ignorant of, yet all are longing to hear? Are we sparing ourselves either physical or mental exertion or pain? Are we selfishly satisfied to rest in God ourselves, and permit others to grope in darkness – groaning until by and by the Sons of God will be manifested with power? (Rom. 8:19.) If so, we are cherishing an un-Christ-like spirit and may never be exalted with those who walk in His footsteps as He hath set us an example – counting not their lives dear unto them.

It is a glorious privilege to spread the truth and open blind eyes now, and if we do not love it enough to undergo some sacrifice for the privilege, we are not sufficiently interested to be among the few engaged in that glorious work in the ages to come. It is he that is faithful in the least that shall in due time be given greater opportunities.
