

Special Edition

MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!



THROUGH THE STORM

You can find peace in
the midst of storm

Not Yet!

The trials of a teacup

The Hand on My Shoulder

Was it real?

Comfort in Sorrow

Be a comforter

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from the editor

A story is told about a woman who was grief-stricken at the loss of her only son. Her sorrow overwhelmed her, and she could find no comfort. Finally she went to a wise old philosopher for advice. "I will give you back your son if you will bring me some mustard seed," he told her. "However, the seed must come from a home where there has never been any sorrow." Eagerly the woman started her search from house to house. In every case, she learned that there had been some sorrow—a loved one had died or some other great misfortune had taken place. "How selfish I have been in my grief," she said. "Sorrow is common to all."

These days, we can hardly view the news or read a newspaper without being confronted with tremendous suffering and hardship throughout the world—earthquakes, fires, floods, wars, rampant disease, airplane and train crashes, and much more. The need for consolation has never been greater.

Everyone needs comfort at some time or another. Everyone needs to be assured that no matter how bleak the future may appear, there is hope for a brighter tomorrow. There is peace to be found, if we will only hold on and believe that there is Someone who cares.

We hope that this issue of Motivated will be a comfort to you personally, and will help you reach out to others around you who may be in need. Most of all, we hope it reassures you that God cares for you.

Christina Lane For Motivated

I haven't always been a teacup. There was a time in my life when I was just a lump of clay. Then my master took me and began to pat and mold and shape me. It was very painful and I begged him to stop, but he only smiled and said, "Not yet!"

Then he placed me on a spinning wheel and I went 'round and 'round. I got so sick I thought I wasn't going to make it, but then he finally let me off. Just as I thought I was going to be alright, my master put me in an oven. I've never understood why he wanted to burn me; I yelled and begged for him

Not Yet!

to stop, to let me out. I could see dimly through the glass in the oven door, but he only smiled, shook his head and said, "Not yet!"

Finally he came and took me out. "Oh, that sure feels better," I said to myself. Then all of a sudden, my master picked me up and started sanding and brushing me. Then he took a paintbrush and started painting colors all over me. The fumes were so strong I thought I was going to pass out. I pleaded with him to stop, but he continued to smile and said, "Not yet!"

Then he placed me in another oven. This one was twice as hot as the first. I knew that I would suffocate. I begged, I pleaded, I cried, but he still only smiled and said, "Not yet!"

I began to feel there was no hope. I would never make it. I couldn't take it any more. It was all over for me. I decided to give up. Then the door swung open and the master said, "Now!"

He lifted me up and placed me on a shelf to rest. Later he came to me with a mirror and told me to look. As I looked at myself, I could not believe my eyes. I said, "Oh my, what a beautiful teacup."

Then the master explained: "I want you to understand that I knew it hurt when I patted and molded you. I knew the spinning wheel made you sick. But if I had left you alone, you would have dried up and always been just a lump of clay. You would not have had any personality.

"I knew it was hot when I put you in the first oven, but if I hadn't, you would just have crumbled.

"I knew it really bothered you to be brushed and painted, but if I hadn't, you would not have had any color.

"Oh, how I knew the second oven was hard for you! But you see, if I had not put you there, you would not have been able to stand any pressure. Your strength would not have lasted, so you would not have survived for very long.

"So you see, when you thought it was all so very hard, I still had you in my care. I knew all along what you would be today. I had the finished product in mind from the day I first touched you!"

—Author Unknown

The Trials of a Teacup

The Hand on My Shoulder

By Jerry Bond, adapted

And then, I felt on my shoulder the sure, firm grasp of a hand pulling me back toward the window.

Late one March evening in 1974, I was wakened by the sound of distant cries and shouts. At first I thought it was a domestic quarrel, but urgency in the voices caused me to think it might be something more serious. I got up and opened the window. The smell of smoke, heavy and pungent, drifted into the room. One of the voices, shrill with panic, cut clearly through the cool night air. “Help me! Help me! My little girl is in there!”

Alarmed, I quickly pulled on my clothes, grabbed a flashlight, and followed the cries to Medlin Street, a block and a half away. There the house of a family named Green was ablaze. Black smoke poured out of the windows of the one-story brick home. A small crowd of neighbors and policemen had gathered. The fire department hadn’t arrived yet.

In the flickering orange-black gloom, I watched in horror as several men worked to pull Mr. Green through a small window near the back of the house. Then I saw Mrs. Green and three of her children huddled together on the front lawn. Mrs. Green was hysterical.

“Theresa!” she screamed. “My Theresa is still in there!”

I’ve got to do something, I thought. I’ve got to help! I tried to move, but was unable to, frozen in fear by the confusion and panic that surrounded me. A great shower of sparks lit the night sky as part of the house caved in. I heard Mrs. Green scream again.

“Oh, God,” I prayed, please help me!”

I rushed to the house and pushed my way through the nearest window. Once inside, I could hardly see. My heart was beating like a drum. Everything was black and smoking.

I groped my way forward until I got halfway across the room. Then, abruptly, I stopped. Something—some strong and strange sensation—told me that I was in the wrong room. “This isn’t right,” it seemed to say. “This isn’t where you’ll find her.” The feeling was so powerful that I couldn’t shake it. And then, I felt on my shoulder the sure, firm grasp of a hand pulling me back toward the window.

“Get out of here!” I yelled, fearing for the other person’s safety. I turned to follow, but there was no one there. There was only myself, alone and trembling.

Gasping, I headed for the window, pulled myself through, and lowered myself to the ground. I looked up to see Mrs. Green’s frantic eyes desperately searching my own for encouragement. Finding none, she gestured wildly toward another window.

“There,” she whispered hoarsely. “Go in there.”

The window was a few feet off the ground. Someone gave me a boost. I pushed myself inside, and dropped to the floor with a thud. This room, too, was dark and smoldering. My eyes were smarting. I could barely see an arm’s length ahead.

“Oh, God,” I prayed again, “please help me!”

What happened next left me momentarily stunned. First, as if in answer to my prayer, I felt a surge of confidence that I was, indeed, in the right place, that I would find Theresa. And then, to my amazement, I felt the return of the same firm force on my shoulder that had pulled me from the other room. This time, however, it was even stronger and seemed to push me to the floor. Though I didn’t

understand what was happening, I didn't fight it. Instinctively, I let it take over. Its presence was both calming and reassuring. I knew it was good.

I relaxed, and let myself be pushed to the floor. I began to crawl, following the wall, arms outstretched, reaching, and grabbing. I came to a bed and raised myself to search its rumpled surface.

"No!" a voice seemed to warn. "Stay low!" I returned to my crawling position. I had found nothing on the bed. "Don't worry," the voice whispered. "You're almost there. Don't worry."

At the foot of the bed lay a great pile of charred chairs, quilts, and blankets that seemed to have been thrown to the floor by someone in a panic. Reaching deep into the tangled maze, I found what I had been looking for—an arm, a leg, it was impossible to tell—but I knew I had found Theresa. I pulled and pulled until she finally emerged, a limp little brown-haired bundle.

"Theresa?" I whispered.

A shuddering gasp, barely audible, confirmed that she was alive. I threw her over my shoulder and ran for the window.

The crowd outside stared in silence as I gently laid Theresa on the ground and began to administer mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Her small face, black with soot, was expressionless. Blue lights from police cars pulsated in the darkness. As I breathed into her tiny frame, I prayed for her survival. Wailing sirens and flashing red lights announced the arrival of fire trucks. I kept on breathing and praying. I listened to the fire chief bellowing orders on his bullhorn, and then I heard the front door being kicked in. The fire, re-ignited by the fresh supply of oxygen, exploded with a scorching blast.

Theresa's eyelids fluttered. She was breathing on her own. I held her until the ambulance arrived.

"Looks like you got her out just in time," said the medic, as he took her from my arms. "She's burned, but she'll be all right."

I waited for the ambulance to pull away, and then returned home.

Shaken by the experience, plagued by the echoes of terrified screams, I couldn't sleep. More than anything else, I was completely unnerved by the mysterious presence that had led me to the little girl. I had always had faith in God and in the power of prayer, but this kind of intervention seemed uncanny. The idea was too much to comprehend, but I couldn't dismiss it. It kept me up all night.

At 7:00 a.m., I put on a jacket and shoes and returned to the scene of the fire. The house, a charred hull of blackened brick, was still smoldering. Skeletal shells of smoking furniture were strewn around the front yard. The fire inspector was there with a few policemen. He asked me what I was doing there, and I told him. He said a cigarette left burning on the living room sofa had probably caused the blaze.

I went around to the room where I had found Theresa. Like the rest of the house, it was badly charred and blackened from smoke. The walls were blistered from the intense heat. In one corner rested the remains of a melted tennis racket.

Slowly I turned to gaze around the gutted room. Then something on the wall caught my attention. Directly above the spot where I had found Theresa, was a picture of artistically lettered words, neatly hung and, strangely, the only thing in the room undamaged by the fire. The frame was black with soot, but the words, the calm, steady, reassuring words—*God will never leave nor forsake you*—were clear and untouched.

To this day, I don't know how long I stood there, incredulously gazing on those words. But when I left, it was with newfound understanding and faith that I whispered to Him my profound thanks. ●

Through the Storm

“He’s with Me!”

When war, disaster and confusion surround us, when destruction is on every side, the suffering can seem unbearable. The fear of the future can be overwhelming, and the feeling of despair can threaten to overcome us. But even when the world seems to be crashing in on us, even when all seems lost and the future bleak, it is possible to have peace, even in the midst of storm. Phyllis Martin wrote:

Storm clouds and strong gusts of wind had come up suddenly over the Elementary School. The radio blared tornado warnings. It was too dangerous to send the children home. Instead, they were taken to the basement, where they huddled together in fear.

We teachers were worried too. To help ease tensions, the principal suggested a sing-along. But the voices were weak and unenthusiastic. Child after child began to cry. We could not calm them.

Then a teacher, whose faith seemed equal to any emergency, whispered to the child closest to her, “Aren’t you forgetting something, Lara? There is a power greater than the storm that will protect us. Just say to yourself, ‘God is with me now.’ Then pass the words on to the child next to you.”

As the thought was whispered from child to child, a sense of peace settled over the group. I could hear the wind outside still blowing with the same ferocity as the moment before, but it didn’t seem to matter now. Inside, fear subsided and tears faded away.

When the all-clear signal came over the radio sometime later, students and staff returned to their classrooms without their usual jostling and talking.

Through the years I have remembered those calming words. In times of stress and trouble, I have again been able to find release from fear and tension by repeating, “He’s with me now.”

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Another story is told of an art contest in which the artists were asked to illustrate peace. Most of the contestants handed in paintings of quiet, calm scenes of the countryside—absolute tranquility.

Well, that’s a form of peace. But the hardest kind of peace to have was illustrated in the picture that won the award. It depicted the roaring, raging, foaming rapids of a storm-swollen waterfall, and on a little tree branch overhanging the torrent was a nest where a tiny bird sat peacefully singing in spite of the raging river.

Some years back, when sea travel was much more common than air travel, a trans-Atlantic liner was caught in a storm. For two days the wind raged. Passengers were frightened. At last an anxious passenger climbed to where he could see the pilot. Returning to his fellow-passengers, he spread the good news. “We are alright!” he said. “The ship will make port. I have seen the pilot, and he is smiling.”

God directs our life and cares for us through every storm. He not only cares for us, but He also sends His angels to help us just when we need them.

The Irish explorer Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton (1874-1922) tells how he and two other men, Worsley and Crean, battled against terrible odds in a temperature many degrees below zero, as they made their way over the almost impassable mountains and glaciers of South Georgia Island to seek aid for the rest of their marooned trans-Antarctic expedition.

Shackleton writes:

“When I look back on those days I have no doubt that God guided us. ... I know that during

that long and racking march of thirty-six hours over the unnamed mountains and glaciers of South Georgia, it seemed to me often that we were four, and not three. I said nothing to my companions about it, but afterward Worsley said to me, ‘Boss, I had a curious feeling on that march that there was another person with us.’ Crean confessed to the same idea. One feels ‘the lack of human words, the roughness of human speech’ in trying to describe things intangible, but a record of our journeys would not be complete without a reference to a subject so very near to our hearts.”

As things get worse in the world around us, we’ll need the help of these angelic beings more and more—and God will send them more and more. God wants you to know that He loves you, that He cares. Guiding us with His angels is just one of the ways He shows it. He is always with you and wants to give you peace, even in the midst of storm. ●



Keys to a Happier Life

T *True success in life is possible only if you make life a spiritually rich experience. Over the past 84 years, I have identified and embraced the following simple spiritual principles that have helped me live more fully, deeply, and joyfully:*

Failure is bitter only if you swallow it.

There is a big difference between acknowledging that you failed at something you attempted and seeing yourself as a failure. Use defeat as a stepping stone on the path to success.

Mistakes are inevitable in life. In the process of inventing the light bulb in 1879, Thomas Edison tried and failed more than 1,000 times. Someone once asked him if he had ever become discouraged and considered giving up. Edison answered, "Those were steps on the way. In each attempt, I was successful in finding a way *not* to create a light bulb. I was always eager to learn, even from my mistakes."

The educator, Booker T. Washington (1856-1915), was an emancipated slave who started out living in poverty and had to work from the age of nine to help support his family. But instead of becoming resentful about the hardship he faced and viewing himself as a victim, Washington worked hard to improve his situation. He first became a janitor in a school to obtain his education. Then he went on to teach at Hampton Institute, one of the first African-American colleges in the U.S., and later organized and became president of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Washington's lifelong motto: "I

shall allow no man to belittle my soul by making me hate him."

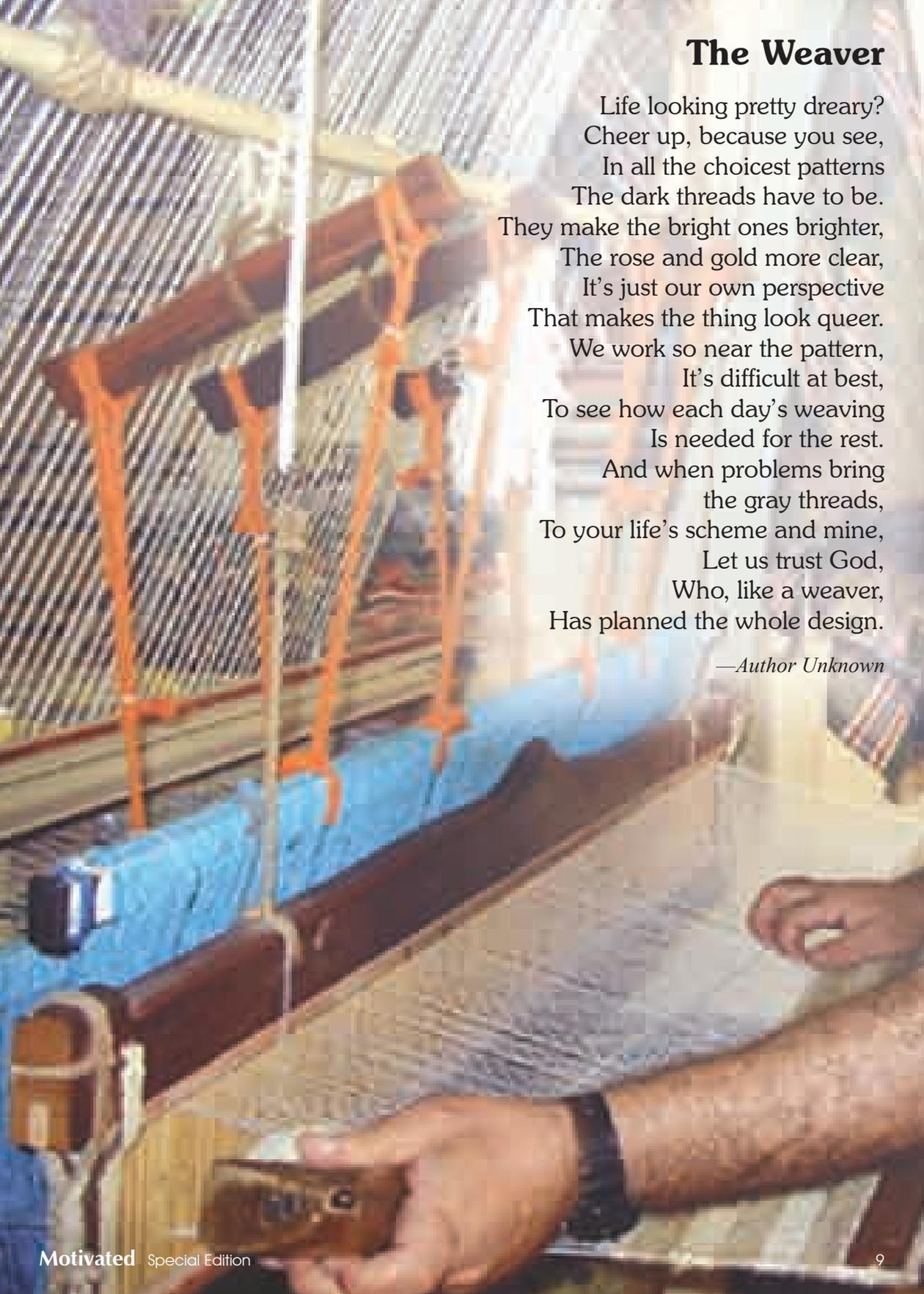
Perseverance is the difference between success and failure. The great people in history each had the strength and courage to be persistent. To persevere is to remain faithful to an idea in the face of obstacles or discouragement. Tenacity is the best way to achieve your goals and dreams, and there is no substitute for it.

Nothing heals emotional wounds better or faster than laughter. There are physiological benefits to laughter: muscles relax, breathing deepens, and the blood stream becomes more fully oxygenated. Of course while there are times so serious that it's hard to laugh, often laughter can release tension and bring welcome relief. Laughter is good for the body and the soul. Editor and essayist Norman Cousins even used laughter to help defeat cancer by watching video taped comedies in his hospital room.

Whatever you have, you must use it or lose it. We've often heard this maxim applied to physical strength and flexibility, but it applies equally well to the intellect and spirit. No matter how old you are, you must continue to think and create.

All sunshine makes a desert. If it weren't for the variety in our lives and contrasting emotions, we would never improve our lives or ourselves. Problems will always exist. The key is to recognize that every problem has a solution.

—Sir John Templeton, philanthropist and founder of the John Templeton Foundation



The Weaver

Life looking pretty dreary?
Cheer up, because you see,
In all the choicest patterns
The dark threads have to be.
They make the bright ones brighter,
The rose and gold more clear,
It's just our own perspective
That makes the thing look queer.
We work so near the pattern,
It's difficult at best,
To see how each day's weaving
Is needed for the rest.
And when problems bring
the gray threads,
To your life's scheme and mine,
Let us trust God,
Who, like a weaver,
Has planned the whole design.

—*Author Unknown*

Comfort in Sorrow



We must not forget that one of the best things about troubles is that, through them, as we receive comfort from God in trying times, we can learn to be comforters of others. In fact, it is not unusual that our reaching out to help and comfort others is the very path God chooses to comfort us in especially dark times, as the following stories attest:

There was an orphan girl, who was about to be married. She was attractive, and one of the most capable girls in the institution. One day, sores began to appear on her hands, and by and by it was

determined that she had leprosy. She was removed from the orphanage and sent to the leper asylum. She was dressed in beautiful white flowing garments as she walked into that awful place, accompanied by her brother. The women there

were filthy and their faces looked sad and hopeless. When the girl saw them, she buried her head on her brother's shoulder and wept, "My God, am I going to become as they are?" She was so distressed that those around her were afraid she might harm herself.

Those who were in charge of the leper asylum sympathized with her and asked her if she wouldn't like to help those poor women. A ray of hope came to her and she began to see the possibilities that lay ahead. She started a school and taught the women

God does not comfort us to make us comfortable, but to make us comforters.

to sing, read, and write. She could play the organ, so one was bought for her. Gradually a change took place. The houses were made clean, neat and tidy, the women washed their clothes and combed their hair, and that once horrible place was transformed.

After being there for some time, she said, "When I first came to the asylum I doubted the love of God. Now I know that God had a work for me to do and if I had not become a leper, I never would have discovered that work. Every day I live, I thank Him for how He sent me here and for teaching me to care for others."

Forget yourself.
Console the
sadness near you.
Your own shall
then depart,
and songs of joy like
heavenly birds
shall cheer you
and dwell within
your heart.

A man was traveling in the mountains with a companion on a bitterly cold day. Snow was falling heavily, and both men were almost too frozen to go on. When they reached a steep precipice, they saw that a man had slipped over the edge and was lying, almost dead, on a rock ledge below. The man suggested that they try to carry the poor fellow to safety. His companion refused to help, saying their first concern should be to save themselves. He went on alone, leaving the man behind with the dying man.

With great difficulty, he managed to get the man up the slope and onto his back. Then he struggled on with his heavy burden. Before long he came upon the body of his former companion. He was dead—frozen to death. He struggled on. Gradually the dying man began to revive. He had received warmth from the friction of his own body against his rescuer, while the man himself grew warm through his labor. At last the two men reached a village and were safe.



“My burden is too heavy, God,” I tremblingly said.

“I can no further carry it,” and tears I shed.

Then came a sudden cry for help from one sore pressed.

I ran to seek him, gladly gave him of my best.

Then thought I of my heavy burden, but it was gone!

The gloom and doubt had vanished quite, and love’s light shone!

The story is told of a little girl who came from her neighbor’s house where her little friend had died.

“Why did you go?” questioned the father.

“To comfort her mother,” replied the child.

“What could you do to comfort her?” the father continued.

“I climbed into her lap and cried with her,” answered the child. ●

This Moment

He’s helping me now—this moment,
Though I may not see it or hear.
Perhaps by a friend far distant,
Perhaps by a stranger near,
Perhaps by a spoken message,
Perhaps by the printed word;
In ways that I know and know not,
I have the help of God.

He’s keeping me now—this moment,
However I need it most.
Perhaps by a single angel,
Perhaps by a mighty host,
Perhaps by the things that fret me,
Or sickness that shuts me in;
In ways that I know and know not,
He keeps me from harm or pain.

When the sun is setting,
And we watch its dying ray,
We never doubt it will appear
To light another day.
So let us face our future,
Secure in faith that He
Who rules sunrise and sunset,
Keeps watch o’er you and me.

—Annie Johnson Flint, adapted

Choose to be Comforted

Earth has no sorrow that Heaven
cannot heal.



The darkest hour is just before dawn.



When you walk through the storm

Hold your head up high

And don't be afraid of the dark.

At the end of the storm is a golden sky

And the sweet silver song of a lark.



The light is always shining at the end of
the tunnel—always!



We can never stumble in the darkness if
God leads us.



There are no great souls without great
sorrows.



Your troubles are meant to be a strength-
giver to you, and to equip you for giving
strength to others.



Strength to bear is found in duty done;
and he is best indeed who learns to
make the joy of others cure his own
heartache.



Before me lies a new
and untried way midst shadows dim;
Beside me is my Guide,
and day-by-day I walk with Him.



When things look darkest, don't look
down, look up!—Be not fearful, but
believing.



God never gives us burdens greater than
we are able to bear.