

"Thanks For The Thorn" By George Matheson

~Other Speakers S-Z: Classic Christian Writings:

"There was given to me a thorn in the flesh" (2 Corinthians 12:7).

"There was given to me..." Can, then, the thorn be a gift from God? I am in the habit of seeing God's gifts in the abundance of the things which my life possesses, and I call those things the dangers of life which diminish the sum of its abundance. But here there is a complete reversal of my thought; the abundance is the danger, and that which diminishes it is the gift.

Paul has been exalted above measure; he has been standing on the heights of prosperity, and summering in the sunshine of a cloudless day. The cloudlessness of the day is his greatest danger, and there is sent a mist over the sun. His spiritual life has been fragrant with the breath of flowers. The thorn is, for the time, God's best gift to his soul; there is something protective in it. It has no fragrance, it has no beauty, but it yields one of the sweetest uses of adversity—it reminds a human spirit that it is, after all, only human.

My God, I have never thanked Thee for my thorn. I have thanked Thee a thousand times for my roses, but not once for my thorn. I have been looking forward to a world where I shall get compensation for my cross, but I have never thought of my cross as itself a present glory.

Thou, Divine Love, whose human path has been perfected through sufferings, teach me the glory of my cross, teach me the value of my thorn. Show me that I have climbed to Thee by the path of pain. Show me that my tears have made my rainbow. Reveal to me that my strength was the product of that hour when I wrestled until the breaking of the day. Then shall I know that my thorn was blessed by Thee, then shall I know that my cross was a gift from Thee, and I shall raise a monument to the hour of my sorrows, and the words which I shall write upon it will be these: "It was good for me to have been afflicted" (Psalm 119:71).

This meditation is taken from the author's book, Moments on the Mount, now out of print. Reprinted from The Prairie Overcomer 10/76