

EMINENT PIETY NOT AN ACCIDENT.

*Gifts in prayer, gifts in the Christian graces, are greatly coveted by many who do not have them—coveted as *gifts*. They are gifts, indeed, whenever possessed; but gifts that have been asked for and striven after. Though gifts, they have cost much—much in prayerful vigilance and eager assiduity. There is indeed great variety in constitutional endowments of speech, quickness and depth of emotion. But the essentials of true piety, the piety which the world feels and covets, are not constitutional endowments, like the poetic genius. All piety is a graft set into a wild stock, and set there for the asking. The eminently devout spirit is a fruit of cultivation. What we call Christian "breeding" has much to do with it; the "second birth" still more; but no matter how well-bred Christianly, or how thoroughly born again, deep, daily piety—piety that modifies life, giving it an efficient and consistent earnestness which commands the world's confidence, does not come by chance, nor come of neglect after the beginning. The spirit and power of that prayer which everybody in prayer-meeting loves to hear, even though in poor English, did not come into that soul on an accidently breeze. It was born of soul burnings alone with God. The Payson and Page and Moody spirit does not develop out of an uncultivated soil. William E. Dodge and Christopher Robert were as assiduous in cultivating the Christian spirit as they were liberal of time, toil, and money in the interests of Christ's Kingdom. The one came as the result of the other. Christopher Robert is said to have had his times, in the days of his highest business activity, when, shut away alone with God, all business demanding his personal attention must stand still, awaiting his coming down from the mount—sometimes for whole days. Eminent piety never comes by chance. It is a result only of painstaking endeavour after just that. The reason why we have not a larger proportion of eminent Christians is, there are so few who are willing to pay the price of attainment. Somebody has said "The highest genius is the genius to sit"—which means the ability, the patient perseverance to hold to a purpose.

A strong body does not come without good food. No more does spiritual vig-

our and growth without spiritual food. The best bred and most thoroughly converted soul can be starved, until it will seem as if struck with the blight of death. Fed only, or chiefly, upon business, pleasure, light reading, skeptical reading, worldly reading, on the Sabbath, will kill off the best born soul. The older we grow, the more deeply we feel that there is no food for the soul that can compare, in nutritive power, with the Word of God. It is like daily oxygen to the lungs. All other books are likely to be like air with more or less miasma in it. There are starveling Christians to-day moody and hopeless, simply for want of feeding upon God's truth. And the best cooking for it, is that which comes of a soul heated by solitary communion with God.

Pastors look sadly upon so many and whisper in themselves, "Ye *did* run well, who did hinder you." Nobody hindered you, my brother. No environment prevented you. Painstaking endeavour would have kept you running well. God foreordains no man to failure or to poor success. He calls all to the height in Christ Jesus. But "I must fight if I would win."—Rev. Dr. J. H. Taylor, in *N. Y. Evangelist*.

EXPECT LITTLE.

The less we expect from this world the better for us. The less we expect from our fellow-men whether of spiritual help or of inspiring example, the smaller will be our disappointment. He that leans on his own strength leans on a broken reed. We are always *going* to be something stronger, purer, and holier. Somewhere in the future there always hangs in the air a golden *ideal* of a higher life that we are going to reach; but as we move on the dream of better things moves on before us also. It is like the child's running over behind the hill to catch the rainbow. When he gets on the hill-top the rainbow is as far off as ever. Thus does our day dream of a higher Christian life keep floating away from us; and we are left to realize, what frail, unreliable creatures we are when we rest our expectations of growth and victory over evil in ourselves. "My soul, wait thou only upon God! My expectation is only from Him."—Dr. T. L. Cuyler.

God will be with those who live in love and peace.