

Pastor and People.

MY FEEBLE LIFE.

I have no wit, no words, no tears;
My heart within me like a stone
Is numbed too much for hopes or fears;
Look right, look left, I dwell alone;
I lift mine eyes, but dimmed with grief
No everlasting hills I see;
My life is in the falling leaf:
O Jesus, quicken me.

My life is like a faded leaf,
My harvest dwindled to a husk;
Truly, my life is void and brief,
And tedious in the barren dusk;
My life is like a frozen thing,
No bud nor greenness can I see;
Yet rise it shall—the sap of spring:
O Jesus, rise in me.

My life is like a broken bowl,
A broken bowl that cannot hold
One drop of water for my soul,
Or cordial in the searching cold
Cast in the fire the perished thing,
Melt and remould it, till it be
A royal cup for Him, my King;
O let us, drink of me
—Christina C. Rosetti

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

THE UNREALIZED HOPES OF LIFE.

BY REV. JAMES MILLAR.

The best that there is in us is the result, not of success but of self-conquest, and of the effort to suit ourselves to the state of things that we did not desire, but which we could not escape. That might not be pain, nor poverty—nor even failure—if only it were what we did not desire, or the absence of the thing that we did desire. The efforts we make to bring ourselves into harmony with God's will, and to act along His lines as cheerfully and as vigorously as we would have done had He allowed us to travel along our own lines; these are the things that develop Christian character. A great deal that goes by the name of Christian submission is little better than un-Christian sulks, that says "If it is not to be as I have planned it, then God may do it as He best can without my co-operation." It takes a great deal more grace to say honestly, "Thy will be done," than it does to say, "Not my will." It is a later stage in Christian resignation, and in Christian character making, when the person who has buried his hopes and has seen his plans shattered, brings himself to do cheerfully what was not in his desires, or what is contrary to the spirit of these desires. But after all, the grandest thing about us is not what we have, but what we are. What we make or gather about us will perish, but what we are will endure while we endure. What helps to develop in us the good, the honest, the pure, to foster faith in God and the right, patience under trials, and cheerful co-operation with God in His work, in us as well as by us, is infinitely better for us—both for this world and for the other—than would be the realization of any hopes that could only be ours at the cost of faith or obedience, of purity or charity. The tomb in which we bury our hopes may be the gate-way to a resurrection unto a higher life than we ever dreamt of while our desires were the chief thoughts in our minds.

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

FULL OF POWER.

BY C. H. WHEATHERS.

The prophet exclaims, "Truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord." (Micah iii: 8). When a man asserts that he is full of power, it is well to ask him the nature of the power. It is not enough that one be full of power. The question is, What kind of power have you got? Men have been full of bad power, evil power, satanic power. Such men are always dangerous. Society is fearfully cursed by them; for when men are full of bad power they are sure to use it against law, against sobriety, against social order, against all human well-being. But far otherwise is it with him who

is full of the power of the "Spirit of the Lord." Such a one employs his power in the interests of good government, in maintaining an example worthy of imitation, in actively endeavoring to make others better than they are. He could not be persuaded to use his power for evil purposes. The moment that he should yield to the temptation to employ his power for any object, known to him to be wrong, that moment he would begin to rapidly lose his power, for the Spirit of the Lord will not allow his power to be used in the interests of wrong. To keep full of this power, one must use it in harmony with the holy mind of the Holy Spirit. The condition of both the reception and the continued possession of the fulness of such power is a righteous, unselfish, beneficent use of it. It is not given for the mere sake of making one feel happy, nor for the name of being unusually mighty. It is given to the humble-minded. It comes to him who has an ambition to serve God with it. For what purpose was Micah made "full of power by the Spirit of the Lord?" It was this: "To declare unto Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin." It was fulness of power for fulness in the service of God. Are you anxious to serve God? Then pray for and expect the fulness of His power for that purpose.

ON GIVING.

Give as you would, if angels waited at your door;
Give as you would, if the morrow found you where giving all is o'er;
Give as you would to the Master, if you met his searching look;
Give as you would of your substance if His hand your offering took.
—Mid-Continent.

THE PASTOR'S BURDEN.

We hear a great deal at the present time about the duties of pastors to their people, and what is expected of preachers in order to draw congregations; but we hear very little of the other side of the question—viz., the duty of congregations towards their pastors. This subject was brought forcibly before my mind when I recently heard a minister, in offering a prayer for one who was entering on a new charge, ask that he might not be left to "bear his burden alone." One had not realized before now how great a burden and responsibility the care of souls may be. It is difficult for us to understand the many trials and difficulties which are associated with the pastor's life. How many people, of various tastes and opinions, from the office-bearers to the bluntest member of his congregation, he has to work with and try to please! One of the greatest difficulties in these critical times is for him to satisfy them as regards his preaching. Some of his audience want intellectual sermons, some gospel sermons, and some merely want to be interested and amused.

In "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush" is an account of a meeting between the pastor of Drumtochty and a man who had severely criticised his sermons. They both acknowledge that they have been wrong and stubborn. The critic says, "It is this man that asks your forgiveness, for I was full of pride." . . . You will say every word God gives you, and I will take as much as God gives me, and there will be a covenant between us as long as I live." Would that, instead of criticising their pastor, they would say these words to him!

The greater the man the fiercer the light which beats upon him, and the severer the criticisms—sometimes personal, sometimes by anonymous letters. Canon Wilberforce, preaching the other day on forgiveness, said that among those that have to be forgiven are the "detractors, the anonymous post-card writers, those critics who wound our pride, those loathsome cowards who stab us in the dark." For those who wantonly cause pain to others no language of condemnation can be too strong.

In estimating the "burden" of a pastor's life, we must not forget the constant

demand on his sympathy. I once heard a well-known preacher say that no one can tell what a London minister's life is. Addressing his congregation he said, "If I could show you the contents of the letters I receive, you would shed tears of thankfulness every night of your lives to think of the suffering you have been spared." Most of us know what a drain it is even on our physical health to be always giving forth sympathy. And sometimes the pastor finds that after all he has been deceived, and this is apt to make him sceptical, and harden himself against appeals for help.

Then there is the great trial of interruptions. We all, who use our pens, know what it is, when we have got into a train of thought, to have to lay it down and apply our minds to another subject. All this is wear and tear of brain, in addition to the necessary amount of brain-work involved in the composition of two sermons a week, in these days when preachers are required to be well "up-to-date" by the cultured portion of their hearers. Dr. Monro Gibson says, "Sermons are not at a premium in England, at least; nor do they as a rule rank high in literature. Their innumerable multitude accounts for this to a large extent. If a painter had to produce at least two pictures a week, or a poet two considerable poems, neither the one nor the other would be likely to rank high as works of art. And if even our first-rank politicians had to address the same audience twice or three times a week for twenty years in succession, it is doubtful if all their speeches would be classics." When we take all these things into consideration, I think we shall see that a pastor's life is not a bed of roses. There is, perhaps, no man who requires more help, encouragement, sympathy, and even counsel.

One out of many ways in which people may help and encourage their pastor is to let him know when his ministry had been a blessing to them. It is said that to win a soul to Christ is, after his own conversion, the greatest joy a preacher has.

Dr. Stalker, in his admirable series of articles on the "Art of Hearing," which have recently appeared in the *Boston Congregationalist*, has pointed out how great a help to a preacher it is to have intelligent and attentive listeners. He says, "As in a game, if it is to be exhilarating, you require not only the strong, skillful delivery of the bowler, but also the vigorous return from the batsman, so in preaching the thought and earnestness of the preacher must be met by the earnest attention of the hearers; and it is only by the co-operation of both forms of activity that the object can be achieved."

The solemn silence which pervades a church when the attention of the congregation is riveted by the preacher, is sometimes more eloquent than speech.

Perhaps the greatest trial of all to a preacher who has respect for truth, is that to which Dr. Horton refers, when he says; "This is the preacher's humiliation. The greatest premium that the world can offer is placed on his stifling his own thought and suppressing the truth that he knows." Of all the cruelties this might surely be the greatest—the temptation offered a man to be false to his higher nature.

Let us try and remember to help our pastor in every way in our power, and to remember that the injunction, "Bear ye one another's burdens," is as applicable to a congregation towards their pastor as to a pastor towards his flock, and let us "Loose him and let him go," by freeing him from all unnecessary care and worry and unfriendly criticism, and giving him sympathy in his aspirations, encouragement in his work, and constant prayer that God's blessing may rest upon him.—*London (England) Presbyterian.*

There was formerly a rumour that Lord Rosebery would marry a daughter of the Prince of Wales. It is now rumoured that the Premier would marry the Duchess of Albany. The Queen's sanction would, however, be necessary, and she is known to be opposed to the remarriage of either widows or widowers.

THE STEPPING STONES OF DEATH.

John Bunyan has told us that that there is no Bridge across the River of Death, so we must prepare to ford it as best we may. But though there is no Bridge, God has provided stepping-stones on which we may plant our feet; and as each one of us will be called to cross the dark river some time it might be well that we marked these stepping-stones now, and accustomed ourselves to them.

And one of the first stepping-stones is this: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Now, there are three things to be noted about this stone. First, it tells us that salvation comes entirely from God, and not from ourselves. Then it tells us that salvation comes to us through His Son Jesus Christ. And, lastly, it tells us that it comes to us through believing in His Son. Let us fix our eyes, then, on this great fact, that the way of salvation is not through our works but through Jesus Christ, and that all that we are asked to do in order to obtain it is to believe in Him.

Second stepping-stone: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." For sin is the great troubler of deathbeds. We are afraid of the consequences of our sin, and we have good reason for it. But here is the comfort: Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree. Can you believe that with respect to yourself? For in it the only peace of a deathbed is to be found.

Third stepping-stone: "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Jesus Christ here invites all sinners without distinction; for God is too great to make distinctions. No penitent suppliant will be rejected even at a dying hour. This verse is memorable as having proved a stepping-stone to the great Bishop Butler when he was dying. He was in darkness, and asked his chaplain to give him a word from Scripture on which he might rest his soul. The chaplain quoted this verse, and the Bishop at once said: "True, and I am surprised I never felt the virtue of that saying till this moment. Now I die in peace."

Fourth stepping-stone: "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." These words were spoken by our Saviour to a dying thief, and show that salvation is entirely of grace. For here, within an hour of his death, a bad man was pardoned, and an entrance into heaven assured. Such a way of acting might be accounted foolish by man, but God can afford to be magnanimous. And He is so.

These verses are specimens of the stones on which we may plant our feet in fording the river of Death. But the great thing to be remembered in them all is that we are justified through what Christ has done for us. A good life is not the foundation of our hope. It is Christ's work for us; and a good life is merely the sign or proof that we are justified. Dying sinner, fix your eyes on the cross of Calvary, and see there the true hope of a sinful soul. No one can be saved by his innocence, for he has none; but anyone, even the chief of sinners, may be saved through the holy life and atoning death of the Son of God. Can you believe this? And do you now cast yourself on Him for salvation, trusting in Him and in Him alone?—*Rev. R. Lawson, in Christian Leader.*

Lutheran Observer: When a minister marries, give him and his young wife no furniture, or carpets, or dishes, or even a washtub; but load them down with plated silver-ware of every sort—things that can never be of any possible service, except to burden and hinder them in their work among the humble people in the midst of whom they must likely labor for the first fifteen or twenty years of their ministerial life.