

## PRAYING AND WORKING.

TOO many praying people content themselves with the mere act of praying. They seem to think they discharge their whole duty by praying regularly for themselves and others, with out doing anything to secure the results they seek. To suit their preference and practice, a certain well-known text should read, "Pray out your own salvation with fear and trembling, while God and others do all the work." They pray for personal, spiritual blessings, but do not labour to cultivate the graces they seek. Their prayers for the conversion of others are accompanied by no word of exhortation to seek the Lord, and by no gifts for the dissemination of that Gospel which is the only means for the conversion of the world. Their prayers for "the poor and needy" are inversely proportioned to their efforts to relieve them, reminding one of the old coloured women, who always sang most vociferously "Fly abroad, thou mighty Gospel," with her eyes shut, when the missionary box was being passed.

It is astonishing with what small investments in practical benevolence some people manage to maintain very large pretensions to piety and sympathy for the poor. True, their prayers are somewhat stereotyped, and are neither effectual nor fervent; but they continue to repeat them in public and private, and "lay the flattering unction to their souls," that in doing this and nothing more, they are pious and acceptable to God: forgetting that it is written, "Work out your own salvation," and "in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him."

Except, perhaps, upon a dying bed, there is no such thing as righteousness separate from good works. There certainly can be no availing prayer—no prayer of faith, unless it is accompanied with the utmost activity in every good word and work.

"Faith without works is dead, being alone. Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."

Christ is our example in praying and working. He prayed without ceasing, and he worked as constantly. He "went about doing good." His whole life was one of constant intercession and activity, for the good of others. Wherefore, praying is essential. We can hardly pray too much. But the religion of Christ is something more than prayers. An apostle of this religion was accustomed to say, "My Bible reads 'pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, with a market basket of provisions for them, and keep myself unspeckled from the world.'"

Accordingly, whenever he went to pray with and comfort certain families in his parish, he always carried them a basket well filled with "the meat that perisheth," by way of introduc-

tion to his spiritual ministrations. It is currently reported in that parish, that the good minister had "great liberty in prayer," on these occasions.—*The Methodist*.

## PAST EXPERIENCES.

ALL stages of life have their peculiar hazards. The young have their dangers, the middle-aged theirs, and the old theirs. We speak often of the hazards of the young—of young disciples—not often, enough, perhaps, of the hazards of the old—of disciples who have walked long in Christian paths.

There is the danger among advanced Christians of relying too much on past experiences as evidences of discipleship. These have their value as evidences of our union with Christ. It may be fitting and desirable at times to recur to past joys, the sweet fellowships of other years, and to derive consolation

from their remembrance. Such a recurrence to past experiences for comfort, while the soul is travelling on in temporary gloom, may be legitimate; but when we begin to make our past experiences our dependence, it becomes a snare to us and a stone of stumbling. It is not to be used as a couch on which to recline, but as a cordial to cheer us, and to stimulate us to fresh endeavours.

When we go back to what we have felt of the Divine love, and rest upon that, instead of going forward to sound the fathomless depths of Divine love yet unknown to us, we are in great danger. Instead of gathering manna every day afresh, we avoid labour by attempting to store up what we gathered in past years. This danger of relying on past experiences attaches peculiarly to older Christians. It is not till we have journeyed on in the Divine life that we gain any experience, and it is not till then that experience ever comes between us

and Christ, and eclipses His light. It is not experience, it is Christ that saves us.

CHURCH DEBTS.—The Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler writes as follows, in the *New York Evangelist*, concerning Church debts: "In these days of detected insolvencies and of lax ideas of financial obligations, how can Christ's Church preach Bible honesty, while its own sanctuaries are mortgaged and so many ministers and missionaries are unpaid? If these are hard times to pay debts, they are still harder times to be in debt. A pinching self denial of worldly luxuries in order to fill the aching void in Christ's treasuries, would do as solid good to the Church as any revival effort that could be inaugurated. We learn that Barnabas sold his real estate, and laid the proceeds 'at the apostles' feet' for the Lord's treasury; pretty soon after he preached with prodigious power and success at Antioch."