

## Pastor and People.

### DO YOU THINK TO PRAY?

Ere you left your room this morning,  
Did you think to pray?  
In the name of Christ, our Saviour,  
Did you sue for loving favour  
As a shield to-day?

When you meet with great temptations,  
Did you think to pray?  
By His dying love and merit  
Did you claim the Holy Spirit  
As your guide and stay?

When your heart was filled with anger,  
Did you think to pray?  
Did you plead for grace, my brother,  
That you might forgive another  
Who had crossed your way?

When sore trials came upon you,  
Did you think to pray?  
When your soul was bowed with sorrow,  
Balm of Gilead did you borrow  
At the gates of day?

### DAVID MACLAGAN, THE MODEL ELDER.

BY REV. JAMES A. R. DICKSON, B.D.

One of the choicest volumes of biography that has lately issued from the Edinburgh press, and which it has been our good fortune to read, is the life of David MacLagan, F.R.S.E., by the Rev. Norman L. Walker, of Dysart. It is in every way a gem. Thomas Carlyle says that a well written life is as rare as a well-spent one. In this book we have both. Mr. Walker has a fine subject, and he has not spoiled it. He has with judicious care selected and ordered his material, and with a genuine literary skill wrought them up into a portrait that speaks. As we read it we feel the pulse of a loving and sympathetic spirit beating in every sentence. He has sought to preserve every feature of his character as he knew it, and that in such a way, that there might be no unseemly exaggeration of any part of it. Indeed, we often become conscious that much more might be written here and there, but the pen is under the restraint of a loving heart that says that will suffice.

The portrait is admirably executed, and must, we conceive, be a living likeness to friends and acquaintances alike. It presents us with the *Model Elder*; for Mr. MacLagan was an elder of that influential congregation of the Free Church of Scotland, Free St. George's, Edinburgh.

Mr. MacLagan's early environment is given in an exceedingly suggestive chapter, replete with notices of Robert Burns and Dr. Dalrymple of Ayr, John Goldie of Kilmarnock, the Auld Licht and the New Licht theology, and his father and mother. His father was an M.D. of Edinburgh, a man who stood high in the esteem of the most eminent men of his day. David received his education in the High School of Edinburgh, and when he entered upon the business of life he chose the work of accountant in an insurance office. He rose rapidly to positions of great responsibility. We see him in his business relations, giving himself wholly to the work entrusted to him. The interests of his employers were his interests. His was no hollow eye-service, but true heart-service throughout. He was in all his work a cautious, consistent, conscientious man. One instance finely illustrates this, and may serve to type the character of all his business life. He had been offered an important position in London as secretary of the Alliance—a fire company of which Sir Moses Montefiore was the chief director—and had accepted it, and with it all its wearing care. He was anxious for its prosperity, hence this feeling expressed to a friend of his: "I was so foolish last night before I went to bed," he said to me one day, "as to pull up my blind and look out; of course I saw a blaze in the distance, and lay awake all night, thinking of the claim that might come in to-day."

His father, Dr. MacLagan, was originally an Episcopalian, but when he settled in Edinburgh he attached himself first to St. Andrew's, and afterwards, because it was more convenient, to St. George's in Charlotte Square, of which Dr. Candlish was the minister. It was under him that David MacLagan was "brought up." It was with him as with many others who have been carefully trained by pious parents, he was always religiously disposed. He was a child of God from his birth. In the memorable year '43 when the Free Church went out of the Established Church, David, alone of his family, went with his loved pastor, the rest elected to remain in Old St. George's; but on this account there was no feeling in the family circle; each respected the conscientious convictions of the other. Having become a member of Free St. George's he wrought as earnestly for the rebuilding of that congregation as though it were all. And so ought every Christian to work. He helps the general cause best and most efficiently, who does most for the particular congregation to which he is attached. The congregation showed their appreciation of his charac-

ter and service by calling him to the eldership in 1861. Up to this time he had been zealous of good works. He was one of the founders of "the Apperlyce School Association," he was a director of the Religious Tract and Book Society of Scotland, and when it entered on the work of colportage in 1856 he took a living interest in the matter, being present at no less than "thirty meetings of the board, not to speak of numerous sub-committees." He was alive to the value of Dr. Guthrie's Ragged School movement. He was treasurer of the Indian Relief Fund. And he was along with Robert Paul, the founder, in 1859, of the Society for the Benefit of the Sons and Daughters of Ministers and Missionaries of the Free Church of Scotland. He did much toward the organization of a Society for educating Ministers' Sons, of which he became secretary-treasurer. This society since its organization has contributed \$200,000 toward the education of children of the manse, and is possessed of a fund of \$110,000 arising from donations and legacies not intended for immediate distribution.

When he went to London he was chosen an elder of St. John's Wood congregation. While here he taught an advanced class in the Sabbath school, was member of the Hymn Book Committee, of which Dr. James Hamilton was Convener, and attended faithfully the meetings of Presbytery, entering heartily into everything that touched the life of the Church. He loved his Church intensely, because, as he told the young men of Free St. George's, in an address delivered to them, that "Presbyterianism was best suited, by its testimony and its history, to preserve alive in our land the blessings which the true Church of Scotland has hitherto bestowed on our country."

This book is full of interest because of the glimpses we get of the inner life of the Church, and of the great men of the time, such as Dr. Chalmers, Candlish, Hamilton, Roberts, Hood, Wilson, Duff, Begg, Ramsy, Moody Stuart, and many others. It contributes something toward the history of the efforts toward Scottish Church reconstruction. And through all this, the glimpses we get of the beautiful life in his home, which for their true devotion and holy zeal are simply charming. Think of such a scene as these words picture. After a meeting, which was full of threatening danger to the church, had been guided to a favourable deliverance, he went home and he writes in his diary: "When I got home I ran down from her room to learn how I was home so soon. I was so much overcome I could hardly tell her. *We knelt in adoring gratitude to the Father of mercies.*" Note, if you will, how much this means! It refers to his visiting the afflicted. Mrs. Cleghorn writes: "You know how his visits were valued, what a wonderful power of loving sympathy he had. The Sabbath visits were so looked for." "From the year 1870, says Miss Borthwick, when my younger sister was laid aside by illness, until his own health completely broke down, he came *every Sabbath*, when in Edinburgh, at four o'clock and after giving us the benefit of his written notes of Dr. Whyte's discourses, he read and prayed with the invalid. That half-hour was a spiritual cordial, ever joyfully anticipated and gratefully remembered." Here is the record of another home scene. "December 13, 1874. A day made memorable by dear G.'s departure for Calcutta. He was sorely overcome, dear boy. Yesterday morning we bade each other farewell. My heart was like to break and we both wept bitterly. He laid his head on my shoulder, and sobbing said, 'Let us pray for one another!' Precious words to me! He is reticent in religious matters and I wish I saw more decision, but God I earnestly pray will prove that which concerneth Him."

How much these glimpses reveal of the consecrated man.

He was a man of culture. He read appreciatingly, and therefore removed the wheat from the chaff. We meet such notes as these: "Reading the 'Life of Mrs. Henry Denning.' Her power of public speaking very remarkable and her self-consecration to God most humbling to me. How ready we are to shelter ourselves and others under conventional rules of decorum from a manly confession of the Saviour we profess to love! 'Open thou my lips!' "Stanley's 'History of the Jewish Church.' It is a fascinating book with many most suggestive remarks, but leaving no doubt, I think, that he denies anything like an atonement, substitution or expiation on the cross of Christ." This is followed by a proof passage. Goulburn's 'Thoughts on Personal Religion,' I am also reading. It is marvelous and deplorable how full of the narrowest *Churchism* even the evangelicals in the Church of England are. His sneers at dissent, a matter surely foreign to 'Personal Religion' are miserable." Of Renan's, 'Vie de Jesus,' he says: "I think every honest mind will see that his admissions are fatal to his argument." He also wrote much. His friend, Hugh Matheson, of London, says: "We do not remember anyone so gifted, unless it were James Hamilton, in writing a memorial notice of a departed worthy, and for many such the community were indebted to his fertile pen. It was a good proof of his ability in the use of the pen, that the family of Dr. Candlish had fixed on him to write a memoir of the Doctor."

This charming life, full of interesting facts and reliable anecdotes, the worthy career of a noble man, is a

book for all men, but above all a book for young men to set before them a grand example. It will give them right ideas of the entire compatibility of religion and business; it will show them how a man may be a man of God through and through and be all the better fitted for life's worries and duties and it will reveal too, the respect that a cultured, thoughtful Christian man commands, and the high position he takes in the community. Let such a book be read and considered, and it will do much to secure for the Church elders of the very best type, consistent Christian men who set the work of God first and do not fall short in any other service. We are surprised that this book has not found its way to Canada yet. Up to the present we have seen it in no list of recent publications. We trust this shall be no longer the case. Canada will welcome it gladly.

### FAMILY PRAYER.

Much has been written and said of family prayer. The testimony borne to its happy effects by those who have enjoyed the privilege of morning and evening worship by the family circle is of the most convincing character. This service is one of the great means of drawing out the affections of parents and children to God and to one another. The light shining from it has been the means of bringing many a wanderer back to the right path after he had been for years straying away. And its blessed influences have been mighty in rearing men and women for Christ and the world.

Truly does Canon Liddon say: There is one mark of a household, in which God is known and loved, which is too often wanting in our day—I mean the practice of family prayer. Depend upon it, the worth of a practice of that kind can only be measured by its effects during a long period of time, and family prayers, though occupying only a few minutes, do make a great difference to any household at the end of a year. How, indeed, can it be otherwise, when each morning, and perhaps, each evening, too, all the members of a family, the old and the young, the parents and the children, the master and the servants, meet on a footing of perfect equality before the Eternal, in whose presence each is as nothing, or less than nothing; yet to whom each is so infinitely dear that He has redeemed by His blood each and all of them? How must not the bad spirits that are the enemies of pure and bright family life flee away—the spirits of envy and pride and untruthfulness and sloth, and the whole tribe of evil thoughts, and make way for His gracious presence in the hearts of old and young alike, who, as He brings us one by one nearer to the true end of our existence, so does He, and He alone, make us to be "of one mind in a house" here within the narrow presence of each home circle, and hereafter in that countless family of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, which shall dwell with Him, the universal Parent, for all eternity!

It is intimated that in the hurry and frequent interruptions of modern life, family work is liable to be neglected. No such omission should be permitted. It would be to lay aside one of the great means of grace, one of the mighty restraints from evil, and of the powerful agencies for good. —*Presbyterian*.

### THE GREAT NEED.

It is faith. Have no fear that your faith will root itself too deeply in the Scriptures. To successfully withstand the assaults of infidelity it is essential that the tap root of the tree of righteousness strike deep down into the rich soil of divine truth. Let the Bible be kept always in sight and at hand. There is ground for suspicion and fear that many are not mighty in the Scriptures, as it is their privilege to be; that to a large number the inside of the Word of God has not a familiar look, that too many Bibles are relegated to the parlour table or library shelf, and left there, unused, until some great bereavement makes the people take them down. How shall we otherwise account for the faith of some being so limp, and the grip of others so slack upon that word of promise and peace, of hope and salvation? Otherwise, why so much religious indifference and spiritual lukewarmness? Else, whence the army of blacksliders that perplex church officials, who find frequent occasion for the revision of the church rolls? And how does it come to pass that we hear the cry: "Give us the Gospel of good cheer and good works—the Gospel of duty rather than of doctrine?" as if it were possible to divorce Mount Sinai and Mount Olivet—the Law and the Gospel. At this time when there is so much loose thinking and irresponsible preaching, when with the old things that have passed away, so many would have the Bible and the Sabbath go too, that all things might be new, there is need for both the counsel and the caution: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." The place for every believer is beside the Cross of Jesus, holding on with the grip of an unyielding, invincible faith, true to the dear old Book—old, yet ever new, slaying the old man but creating the new, wrecking old hopes yet imparting hopes new.—*Christian Advocate*.