

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

FERVENT PRAYERS.

Fervent literally means "boiling hot." One who offers a fervent prayer is in a state of spiritual ferment, and profoundly agitated. A fervent prayer is not a mere vocal utterance, but a heart-cry. No other prayer "availeth much." It may, like the celebrated supplication of Edward Everett, be "the most eloquent prayer ever offered to a Boston audience," but, lacking fervency, is as destitute of power with God as a wax flower is of fragrance. Those offering such prayers are like callers to whom the door does not open, and who, on investigation, find that though they have pulled the door-knob, and rattled its wire, they have not rung the bell. Multitudes thus fumble with prayer's door-bell, and the door remains shut.

But while God is indifferent to prayers which are "words, words, words," He becomes interested the moment a real call for help is uttered. He is like the loving mother who, while able to sleep through a Babel of meaningless noises, wakens the instant her baby moans.

Prayers resemble telegrams. The operator pays no attention to most of them. His instrument clicks and rattles, but he seems unconcerned. Suddenly his aspect changes. He listens as if fascinated. The other messages were simply passing through the instrument, and were for somebody else; but now his office is called and a telegram for him to care for is being flashed over the wires. So most prayers are for "somebody else."

But Martin Luther's prayers, which broke the spell of ages and rocked the Papal throne, were for God, and He listened. So were those of the fiery John Knox, whom Mary, Queen of Scots, feared more than she did any army of 10,000 men. So was that of Elijah when, climbing to the top of Mount Carmel, he cast himself upon the ground, and put his face between his knees and prayed for rain. He did not ask for the restoration of the Jews, and the conversion of the Gentiles, and the overthrow of idolatry, and the coming of Christ. He desired one thing, and desired so fervently that he could think of nothing else.

Petitions which are loaded down with requests for everything in general and nothing in particular, are lukewarm and meaningless.

The boy who, as Christmas approaches, asks for a top, and tent, and tambourine; a kite, and cart, and kitten; a ball, and boat, and bicycle; a rocking-horse, and bracket-saw, and printing press, is not fervent in his desire for either. But he who thinks knife, and talks knife, and dreams knife, and whenever asked what he would like, invariably replies, "something to whittle with," is fervent, and, whatever else is withheld or given, he is sure to find in the toe of his stocking on Christmas morning an answer to his prayer. If our prayers are fervent they will be specific, and such prayers are sure to be heard in heaven.—*J. S. Breckinridge.*

EFFORT AND FAITH.

A Tuscan coastguard reported to his government that there had been a lamentable shipwreck on the coast, and he said: "Notwithstanding that I lent to the crew on board the ship every assistance possible by means of my speaking trumpet, I regret to say that a number of bodies were washed upon the shore next morning, dead."

Very wonderful, was it not? And yet this is the kind of assistance which many who profess the faith lend to the people. They have yielded them the assistance of rhetoric, flowers of speech, and the poetical quotations, and yet men have persisted in impenitence. There has been no real care for souls. The sermon was preached, but the people were not prayed for in secret. The people were not hunted for as men search for precious things. They were not wept over; they were not a very deed cared about. After all it was the speaking trumpet's help and nothing else.

But our faith makes us abundant in good works. If you are doing all you possibly can for Christ, endeavour to do yet more. I believe a Christian man is generally right when he's trying to do more than he can; and when he goes still further beyond that point, he will be even more nearly right. There are scarcely any bounds to the possibility of service. Many a man who is now doing little, might, with the

same exertion, do twice as much by wiser arrangement and courageous enterprise. For instance, in our country town a sermon delivered on the village green, would, in all probability, be worth twenty sermons preached in the chapel; and in London a sermon delivered to a crowd in a public hall or theatre may accomplish ten times as much good as if it had fallen on the accomplished ears of our regular auditors.

We need, like the apostle, to launch out into the deep, or our nets will never enclose a great multitude of fishes. If we had but the pluck to come out of our hiding place and face the foe, we should soon achieve immense success. We need far more faith in the Holy Ghost. He will bless us if we cast ourselves entirely upon him.—*Spurgeon*

THAT DAY.

"They abode with him that day."—John 1: 39.

The young disciples stood and heard
The wondrous prophet's wondrous word,
And strangely were their spirits stirred.

With outstretched finger raised to guide
Where He of Nazareth walked aside,
"Behold the Lamb of God!" he cried.

And John made answer: "Can it be
That Christ shall come from Galilee?
Nay, Andrew, let us go, and see."

And soon abreast, with eager mien,
And salutation shy, yet keen,
They walked, and Jesus walked between.

Their rapid questions forth they pour;
But they have other—more and more—
To ask Him ere they reach the door.

Of His abode: He craves their stay,
With words so full of grace, that they
Enter, and there abide that day.

Within the court-yard, cool and dim,
Beside a fountain's mossy rim,
Withdrawn, they sit and talk with Him.

"Rabbi, the Baptist voucheth so,
Till all our souls within us glow;
But say—art Thou the Christ or no?"

"We count the years' prophetic sum—
We kneel before our altars, dumb—
We watch until the Shiloh come!"

Then Jesus answers low and calm,
In words that drop like Gilead's balm,
And holier than the holiest psalm.

He lifts aloft their faith so weak;
He solves the doubts they dare not speak;
He grants the quest they come to seek.

The twilight falls; the fountain's shine
Grows dull beneath the day's decline;
They only hear that voice divine.

O'erawed, at length they rise and go.
Each to the other whispering low,
"Tis He!" "Himself hath proved it so!"

That day with Christ! In after years,
Did not its memory stanch the tears
Of Andrew 'mid his martyr fears?

When John in Patmos' exile lay
And wore the grinding hours away,
Waiting—did he forget That Day?

Margaret J. Preston.

"HIRING" A PREACHER.

Would that this phrase were unheard in the Christian Church! Alas, it is not unknown but is repeated often, in one and another part of the land. It is ridiculous, it belittles the ministry. Could the United States Government "hire" an ambassador to represent England at Washington City? Such a proposition would be accounted an insult to the English people. Is it any more reverent or right to speak of an accredited ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ as a hiring?

We protest against the phrase. But there is something worse than the phrase. It is the offering to a minister the treatment due to a hireling. Not many months ago, we heard of a congregation which had a pastor who loved and cherished them. He was doing his best for their welfare, knew of nothing unpleasant, until one day he was served with a notice that his services were no longer wanted. Discharged with scarcely the courtesy that would be extended by a (Christian employer) to a servant! Left in his advancing years with an inadequate support, what could he

do? Bound by affection to his other church, he was unwilling to remove; nor could he find another location at a week's notice. Such a case is happily a rare one.

But another form of this is not so rare. An upright employer feels bound to provide regularly for the wages of his employes, and to see that their money is ready for them at the close of the week. Much more, the steward or paymaster who holds in trust the funds that are laid aside for this purpose, is bound punctually to hand over to the employes their regular dues. But how many Christian Churches and Christian men treat the ambassador of Christ in the matter of his support, worse than a servant? As God's stewards they hold in trust the property designed for the maintenance of these ambassadors, and yet often they put them off, unprovided for, and defer the payment of their salaries, until a hundred other and unnecessary matters are arranged.

Christ's ministers are not hireling; they are His ambassadors, and we are His stewards holding His money or His lands or His cattle. Let us think of this, and act accordingly.—*Christian Observer.*

BREAKING DOWN.

Working for God is often painful as well as it is humbling. It entails suffering and we are fitted for it by suffering. Why is this? Because suffering brings us into closer fellowship with our Lord, who was the Man of Sorrows; because it brings us into closer sympathy with our brethren suffering all around us; because it humbles us. Do you know what is God's chief difficulty with us? It is not the filling us; it is the emptying us. It is not the edifying us; it is the pulling us down. And therefore it is that God's chief instrument of edification is the pick-axe. He must break us down, down, down, and whatever He gives us to do for His service, He will first of all show us that we are not able to do it.

In our armies, when a man is wounded, they take him at once out of the ranks, and put him in the rear to take care of him. He is not fit for the fighting till his wounds are healed.

Not so in the Lord's army. There the faint (are in the heat of battle, and the wounded lead the vanguard. Look at the history of the Church, and you will see that most, if not all, of those whom God had employed in a signal manner for His glory, have been in one way or another, among the most afflicted of men, either in heart or in body—sometimes in both. Therefore, do not be afraid, of suffering. Do not think that suffering interferes with service. On the contrary, it helps it on. When, therefore, we offer our prayers to God, and ask Him to take us and make us, don't let us forget to put up another petition between these two, and ask Him to break us. That is a short and comprehensive prayer, "Take me! break me! make me!" God answering that prayer can do something with us.—*Theodore Monod.*

CALMNESS OF SPIRIT.

Calmness and equanimity ought to be a part of every one's religion. "I dare no more fret," said John Wesley, "than to curse and swear." One who knew him well said that he never saw him low-spirited or fretful in his life. He could not endure the society of people who were of this habit. He says of them: "To have persons at my ears murmuring and fretting at everything, is like tearing the flesh from my bones. By the grace of God, I am discontented at nothing. I see God sitting on the throne and ruling all things."

If every one was of this spirit, it would wonderfully improve the world. Christians lose their wayside comforts, and dishonour the Master, by their fretfulness over little troubles. Some who can bear the great sorrows of life with a martyr's faith and patience, will even show anger over the loss of a button, the mislaying of a cane or fifteen minutes delay of dinner, though they have stood calmly by the graves of dear ones gone, and comforted others whose hearts were breaking with grief.

Doubtless physical infirmity is a cause of much of the agitation and fretfulness which many good people exhibit; but they must guard against this. Not only must they watch against yielding to such things, but they must watch against the overwork, the stimulation, the excess, the gluttony and the dyspepsia, which rob men of peace, and which leave them nervous, fretful and impatient. God would have us well. It is small credit to a watchmaker to have his watches