

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

PRAY FOR YOUR PASTOR.

Take two ministers; both are alike earnest, and preach the gospel in all faithfulness and love. They work and pray for souls. One meets with much success; the other with apparently none. Why?

Take just one minister; he preaches, say, at two places statedly. At both he preaches the very same truths, in precisely the same way, and prays as much and as really for one place as another. In one place there is visible good as the result; in the other, none. Why?

Look at Moody's success. But many men preach just as earnestly, and lucidly, and forcibly as he, and all apparently in vain. And then Moody, and men engaged in work like his, are blessed more in some places than others.

The secret is prayer—the prayer of the Church. The Church prayed and the Pentecostal blessing came. This is the whole secret. This explains why the minister, just as good and faithful in every way as the much favoured brother, fails. This explains why a man is blessed at one place, while the very same sermons at another bear no fruit. This is the great secret of Moody's success. Think of the multitudes praying for the success of his labours.

Ministers need the prayers of God's people. Especially do they need the prayers of Christians in the congregations where they preach. The greatest Apostle felt the necessity of such prayer in his own behalf, that the Word preached by him might do good.

Oh, churches that have faithful men of God as your ministers, but are just where you stood ten years ago, don't you know it's time for you to fall upon your knees! The fault is yours. God will not give you what you never ask Him for, though your minister were the Apostle Paul. Jesus himself performed very few "mighty works" in a certain place, "because of their unbelief."

Where a minister knows there are members of his congregation praying for him, how it helps him to preach! Not only does such prayer bring down real and rich blessing from above, but the very thought of it is inspiring.

My old pastor in Bradford, Canada, had two appointments, at both of which he preached every Sabbath. Driving to the afternoon service, he used to carry with him an old man who lived two miles from the church and had no conveyance of his own. One day the old man was not out as usual for his ride, though by and by he was in his place in church. After service the minister asked him why he was not out to meet him as usual. In Christian earnestness and simplicity the good old man answered: "I was praying for you, and forgot all about it till it was too late."

The old man was in earnest. This is the kind of prayer we need. A great many say prayers for the minister; not so many pray for him. I fear that many of those prayers are like what is told of a "daft" man who used to pray behind a dyke. Some scamps hid themselves behind it one time to listen and have fun. The old man confessed how very bad he was, and acknowledged that God would be doing just right to push the dyke over on him and kill him, whereupon the mischievous fellows gave the dyke a shove and it fell over on top of him. He picked himself up, saying, "Hech, sirs, it's a strange thing that a boddy canna sav a thing in a joke but it's tae'n in earnest."—*Rev. Roderick Henderson, in Christian Observer.*

SOMETHING FROM THE FATHERS.

Barnabas says, "The way of darkness is crooked, and full of cursing, for it is the way of eternal death with punishment."

Clement of Rome, a fellow-labourer with Paul, says of Christ, "If we disobey His commands, nothing shall deliver us from eternal punishment."

Ignatius says of some, "They shall depart into unquenchable fire."

Polycarp warned the proconsul "of the eternal fire of God's judgment, reserved for the wicked in the other world."

Justin Martyr declares "that every one is stepping forward into everlasting misery or happiness, according to his works."

Hermas speaks of an irreparable apostacy, and of departing from God forever.

Tatian states that some "will undergo a death in immortality."

Theophilus advises one to "study the Scriptures in order to shun eternal torments."

Irenaeus asserts a general resurrection and judgment, "when the wicked shall go into everlasting fire and the righteous into life and glory forever."

No wonder Universalists dread an appeal to the early fathers.—*Methodist Recorder*

THE DEATH OF THE YEAR.

Hark! the midnight bell!
Its muffled echoes swell,
And ghostly whispers tell
Of lost, lost days.

Bright days of blissful song,
Luring our feet along,
With the unthinking throng,
Who live for time.

Dark record Heaven kept.
Of indolence which slept,
While sad eyes wept and wept,
O'er vigils lone.

Hash! Death is at the door,
He claims one victim more,
The Old Year shivers sore,
And fainting lies.

The poor, old fallen Year!
Above his frozen bier,
Let drop a kindly tear,
For very grief.

Here, in this open grave,
May Sorrow lead to save
The broken hearts who crave
The Crucified.

Hark! how the winds sweep by,
Below the storm-clad sky,
I like some lost spirit cry,
In throes of pain,—

Or weird unearthly strain,
As if some hap, long lain
In silence, woke again
At Sorrow's touch.

Oh! soul, adrift to-night,
With death's dark gulf in sight,
And not a gleam of light,
To pierce the gloom—

How bitter is thy moan,
As, to the great unknown,
Thou goest forth alone,
Alone! Alone!

Another year!—who knows
Whose eyes shall droop and close?
Whose form first seek repose
In dreamless sleep?

Across Time's troubled sea
We would for refuge flee,
And find our life in Thee,
Father of all.

TEN THOUGHTS FOR THE TIMES.

I will venture to state, as briefly and clearly as I can, ten things which, as it seems to me, a preacher in his pulpit now may do to make the time in which we live less sceptical, and so to help forward the ages of faith which are sure some day to come, and are sure when they come to be ages of better faith than any which the ages past can show.

1. It is needful that our clergymen should be far more familiar than they are now with the character of the scepticism by which they are surrounded. The popular scepticism is one in source and really one in character with the scepticism of the school and of the scholars. The minister ought to be acquainted with the newest developments of thought, not in their details, not so that he can completely discuss them from the pulpit, for that is impossible, and the attempt to do it only hurts the Christian cause and makes the Christian minister often ridiculous. But he ought to be so familiar with what men are thinking and believing that he can know the currents of present thought, see where they cross and oppose, and where they may be made to harmonize with the thought of Christ. This familiarity is something which must be constantly kept up in the active ministry. But its foundations ought to be laid in the theological school. And here more than anywhere else one fears, I think, for the faithfulness with which our theological schools are doing their whole duty by their students and the times. I cannot doubt, as I look back, that many of our noblest and most faithful teachers have failed to realize how much their boys needed to be furnished with an understanding of the precise nature of the unbelief

of the nineteenth century, and of the character of thoughts in which that unbelief would show itself among the people to whom these boys, when they were ministers, would have to preach. They might have saved many of their scholars more than one anxious hour and more than one embarrassing surprise.

2. The second necessity is that every preacher should clear up his own faith; that each man should decide just what he believes himself. Let us trust truth. There is nothing so terrible as the glimpses we get occasionally into a minister's unbelief, and sometimes the confusion which exists below seems to be great, just in proportion to the hard positiveness of dogmatism which men see upon the surface. The most pitiable and powerless of all preachers is he who tries to preach doctrine which his own soul does not really believe and use.

3. And, thirdly, the minister in days like these ought to make it his duty as well as his right to claim and express the fullest fellowship of faith with all believers, whatever Christian name they bear. There is need of the solidity of faith being made manifest. Let not religion come to seem to men the affair of a party. Let us insist that when the host is against us we will have nothing to do with the miserable business of making hits and flinging captious criticism at one another. I think that hardly any man does more for popular scepticism than he who while the world is trembling on the brink of atheism spends his life in championing the shibboleths of his denomination.

4. We ought never to seem to have despaired of truth, and to have left the religion of thought, and to have retreated into organization and drill as safe refuges. This is just what ecclesiasticism and ritualism seem to the world to have done, and the world is largely right. This of all others is the time to keep Baptism and the Lord's Supper reasonable and spiritual and grandly simple, and to guard them from all suspicion of magic and mechanics.

5. Never forget to tell the young people frankly that they are to expect more light and larger developments of the truth which you give them. Oh, the souls that have been made sceptics by the mere clamouring of new truth to add itself to that which they have been taught to think finished and final!

6. These are no times for trimming. He is weak to-day who does not preach the highest spirituality to the materialist, and the highest morality to the profligate. The unbelievers of to-day despise compromise, and love to hear the fullest truth.

7. We need to remember how irreligion has invaded religion, and to imitate its methods. It has got hold of the passions and enthusiasms of men, and there has been its strength. We must claim those passions and enthusiasms for religion. No cold faith or preaching will reclaim the world.

8. The life of Jesus must be the centre of all believing and all preaching. Not abstract, but personal, is the saving power. "Behold the Lamb of God," "Behold the Man," those are the summons to which men will always listen.

9. The Church must put off her look of selfishness. She must first deeply feel, and then frankly say, that she exists only as the picture of what the earth ought to be. Not as the ark, where a choice few may take refuge from the flood, but as the promise and potency of the new heavens and the new earth she must offer herself to men.

10. And, tenth, about almost everything to-day, you and I must keep our means worthy of our end. Long enough have preachers asked men to believe in a pure and lofty truth which was administered in impure and sordid methods. Down to the least argument we use, down to the least bit of church machinery that clicks in some Dorcas society or guild-room, let the truth and dignity of God be felt.

These are the ten. I dare not say that the preacher who tries to do all these things will change all the scepticism around him into faith; but I am sure that he will live a very brave, healthy, happy, useful life while he is busy in his struggle.

For behind him he will always feel the power of the great God and dear Lord for whom he worked, and he will know that, whether by him or not, that God and Lord must certainly some day assert his truth.

And before him, however dark the great mass of unbelief may still remain, he will see single souls catching the truth and shining with a goodness and joy which must become new centres of faith.—*Phil lips Brooks, D.D., in Princeton Review.*