

would not give them the same strophic form. But anyone who studies the remainder of the psalm will see that its thought is very closely related to that of the strophes already studied, even though it does not fall into the same poetic mould. It is more probable, then, that the original poet himself wrote these verses, but, feeling that a longer continuance of the strophic structure above described would render his poem somewhat stilted, he deliberately dropped it at this point. At any rate, the two remaining strophes are completely different from the former ones in form, and they are bound together in a very unique and interesting way. Prof. R. G. Moulton has given to the form they follow the title of the "Pendulum Movement"; this form has very little to do with the mere mechanical ordering of the verses, but it has everything to do with the thought, i.e., it does not reveal itself to the eye, but only to the mind. Indeed the term "Pendulum Movement" refers to the fact that the thought "falls" and "rises" at intervals somewhat after the fashion of the "diminuendo" and the "crescendo" in music. It describes, in other words, a rhythmic pulsation in the thought within the strophes akin to the strophic and antistrophic arrangement which we have already become familiar with in our literary studies this year.

The strophes now under examination rhythmically present the Redeemer God as first bringing low and then building up (in a way that parallels His action in the strophes already studied, only the cry of need is not interjected between the distress and the relief).

Take the first of these stanzas, verses 33-38. The pendulum of thought first swings to one side—the side of gloomy experience.

"He turneth rivers into a wilderness
And water springs into a thirsty ground,
A fruitful land into a salt desert.
For the wickedness of them that dwell therein."

But immediately the pendulum swings back again to the other side as the poet pictures the opposite redeeming agency of God:

"He turneth a wilderness into a pool of water,
And a dry land into water springs,
etc."

Similarly in the second of these two closing strophes (verses 33-42), the pendulum of thought swings first to those whom Jehovah has "minished and bowed down through oppression, trouble and sorrow," and then it swings gladly back to these "needy" whom He has set on high from affliction and for whom He "maketh families like a flock."

NOTE.—Prof. Moulton suggests that the full beauty of the psalm might be brought out best if it could be chanted—men's voices in melancholy monotone giving the various descriptions of the distresses, while children's voices rendered the cries for help with their sequel verses, and a full chorus caught up the call to thanksgiving with which each strophe closes. Chanting may be beyond our leaguers but the same results might be obtained by having the early part of the psalm read in some such way. Once so heard neither it nor its beauty would be easily forgotten. Similar responsive reading would bring out the peculiar arrangement of thought in the closing stanzas.

The author is particularly indebted to some of the other psalms, to the Book of Job, and to the prophet Isaiah. Let the leader set someone to work hunting up his quotations and reminiscences of other Old Testament sayings with the aid of a Reference Bible.

Thoughts on Prayer

REV. W. S. PASCOE, D.D., HAMILTON, ONT.

THE conditions of human life require that we cultivate the spirit of prayer. We must always keep our hold upon God if we would live the Christian life. Luther says: "Just as a shoemaker makes a shoe and the tailor a coat, so also ought the Christian to pray. The Christian's trade is praying." Some other wise man has said: "If we make religion our business, God will make it our blessing."

There must be habitual prayer. Like the Psalmist's, this should be our resolve and constant habit—"Evening, morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud." Then what? "He shall hear my voice," St. Paul exhorts us thus: "In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God."

Even such prayerfulness will not prevent trials, difficulties, or sorrows; but Paul assures us that "the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Yet that peace is conditioned upon something else; for the apostle continues, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

With such thoughts filling the mind we shall, like Enoch, be privileged to "walk with God" in quiet places or in the public ways, and converse with Him shall be restful and sweet. We may, if we will speak into the ear of God, when and where mind and heart and hand are active in our daily business, or in the midst of busy multitudes, and He shall hear us, and round about us shall be "the everlasting arms."

"Probably," says one, "no human being ever lived without prayer. If a man believes in a personal God he will pray unto Him. No number of scientific difficulties, no amount of speculation as to the uselessness of prayer, will prevent the finite from calling upon the Infinite, especially in seasons of difficulty and danger. That may be, but we must deal with God more intimately and constantly than that. What when the danger is past and the difficulty solved? Is there not another danger to be feared? Mark what Jeremy Taylor has to say: 'There is no greater argument in the world of our spiritual weakness and the falseness of our hearts in matters of religion, than the backwardness most men have always, and all men sometimes, to say their prayers; so weary of their length, or glad when they are done, so ready to find an excuse, so apt to lose an opportunity.' Is not the Bishop correct in that statement? He suggests a remedy for this which while helpful may prove a little inadequate. Here it is: 'Let every man study his prayers, and read his duty in his petitions. For the body of our prayer is the sum of our duty, and as we must ask of God whatsoever we need, so must we labor for all that we ask.' He probably refers to some form of printed prayers; but it is necessary, firm or no, to meditate and to study the petitions we offer, or else we shall be of those of whom Lavater speaks. 'He who goes round about in his requests, wants commonly more than he appears to want.' He lacks earnestness, concentration of desire and thought, directness and force."

On this very point Andrew Fuller answers: "We should act with as much energy as if we expected everything of ourselves, and we should pray with as

much earnestness as if we expected everything from God."

Take counsel of St. Paul, and you will find a remedy for what Bishop Taylor mourned. In his letter to the Romans the Apostle says: "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we shall pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." That is the effective remedy, but how must it be applied? Thus—"praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

"If we live in the Spirit," says St. Paul, "let us walk in the Spirit." Being led by that Spirit, we shall walk in no forbidden path, but into ways of pleasantness and paths of peace shall our watchful guide bring us. "Praying in the spirit," shall cause that the place of prayer shall become the "mount of vision."



4. THE END OF THE LOG.

ion"—the Pisgah high above the fogs of earth, and the mists of doubt, the place where

"The unseen unknown to feeling sense,
Unseen by reason's glimmering ray,
With strong commanding evidence
Their heavenly origin display.

"Faith lends its realizing light,
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly;
The invisible appears in sight,
And God is seen by mortal eye."

Elements of Power

In recalling elements of power in early Methodism it should not be forgotten that it was the saintly John Fletcher of Madeley, who asked Mrs. Hill who the Methodists were. "The Methodists," she said, "do nothing but pray. They are praying all day and all night." "Are they?" said he. "Then with the help of God I will find them out if they be above the ground."—*Sci.*