

Pastor and People.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

"THE RELATION OF PRAYER TO THE MINISTER."

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Man of himself is wholly unable to do any thing acceptable to God. He has neither strength nor grace. He is destitute entirely of spiritual life, being "dead in trespasses and sins."

By faith in Jesus Christ, God imparts spiritual life to the soul of man. And by "continuing in the love of Jesus" the spiritual life is nourished and developed. Continuing in the love of Jesus implies the constant exercise of faith in Jesus and the diligent use of all the means of grace. Of all the means of grace at the command and within reach of the believer, the most important is prayer which draws down from God blessings innumerable, and suited to every want and circumstance of our life on earth. Well may the Lord tell us to "watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation," and, again, "Pray without ceasing."

The duty of constant prayer is binding upon every individual believer. The position in which he is placed demands its constant exercise. He is surrounded by enemies. There is an enemy within, the evil and deceitful heart which gives constant trouble, trying to lead the soul back from the pursuit of heavenly realities to the weak and beggarly elements of this world. Then there is the devil, as a roaring lion, ever seeking the believer.

The believer cannot of himself resist the assaults of the devil, always on the alert. Jesus says, "Without Me, ye can do nothing." Hence, though the believer puts on the whole armour of God, yet he must pursue his journey through life "praying with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance."

While this is the duty of all believers, it is especially so in the case of every minister of the Gospel.

Responsibility is proportion to the station in life which men occupy. So also are duties and dangers. Now the minister of the Gospel holds the most honourable position that it is possible for man to fill, being, as he, a worker together with God, an ambassador of Christ.

As this position carries with it corresponding responsibilities, duties and dangers, we see the necessity of the minister being a man much given to prayer. Herein, largely, lies his strength for service.

The minister of the Gospel is like the shepherd who is (in the East) held accountable to the owner of the sheep of which he has the charge; responsible to God for the souls committed to his care. He must needs have a regular supply of strength and grace from God to enable him to lead his people to the rich pastures of God's Word and by the still waters of Gospel ordinances. Yes, he must be much given to prayer. As prayer is the appointed means of receiving blessings from God, he must be instant in season and out of season, in prayer to God for blessings agreeable to God's will for Jesus' sake.

"John Welch, son-in-law of John Knox, was a man much given to prayer. His first settlement was at Selkirk. His custom was, when he went to bed at night, to lay a Scots plaid above his bedclothes, that when he sat up to his night prayers he might cover himself therewith: for from the beginning of his ministry to his death, he reckoned the day ill-spent if he stayed not seven or eight hours in prayer."

Oh, for more of this spirit and habit of prayer in these days! What power the Church would exercise over men!

In addition to the responsibility incident to the minister from his position, there is much danger from the envy of men, from the love of applause, and from other matters too numerous to specify here. The minister is exposed to the gaze of the men of the world as well as to that of believers.

Ministers are watched, observed more carefully, to see if there is any flaw in their character. Hence they must, of all men, walk circumspectly, that the cause of Christ be not dishonoured by any thing on their part.

Now, that the minister of the Gospel may be consistent in his life, consistent with the profession that he makes, he needs a constant supply of grace from God—grace both strengthening and restraining.

He needs a spirit of discrimination to enable him to rightly divide the bread of life—God's word, so as to give to each one that waits upon the ministrations of the sanctuary his due portion in season.

He must be a man of prayer, else his preaching cannot be with power and demonstration of the Spirit, else he cannot explain the Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation.

Prayer is somewhat like Jacob's ladder, whose base was on earth and the top in heaven, on which angels descended and ascended. Prayer is that by which man's thoughts and aspirations ascend to God and by which God blesses man, the man of faith: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Let us make this experience ours, from day to day, and God will bless our ministry to the salvation of sinners and the edification of His own people.

CHRISTMAS HYMN.

O, Thou I who once on earth wast born,
When shepherds on the plain
Beheld the midnight turn to morn,
When wilt Thou come again?

Come to Thy world, astray and sad,
That groans with want and pain;
Come, make its desert places glad!
O, Christ, be born again!

Come to thy Church, whose weeds and woes
The sons of men disdain;
Thy face before thine altar show,
Our Master, come again!

Come to our darkness and our death,
Who hear Thy name in vain;
Breathe on these bones, thou heavenly breath!
Redeemer, come again!

Come to the few who seek their Lord,
Whose homesick hearts complain:
Renew their faith, Creative Word!
Immanuel, come again!

What gifts of good, what songs of cheer,
What wreaths to deck thy lane
Are worth Thy gracious presence here?
O, Saviour, come again!

Not to the manger and the cross,
To death and shame and pain,
To faithless friends, to grief and loss;
O, King, return to reign! —*Rose Terry Cooke.*

CHRISTIANITY AND THE COLLEGE.

All the older colleges were originally established in the interest of Christianity and the Church, the Church being conceived as providing for every interest and relation of human society. Within a few years, however, another theory has found many advocates and been embodied in a few colleges and universities.

This secular theory is briefly this: education of every grade, and pre-eminently of the highest, to be consummate, must be free from all alliances with religion. It must forswear any allegiance to the Christian creed and dispense with positive Christian influence. While it may accept the fruits of Christian civilization, so far as science and letters, art and culture, law and morality, have taken these into the general life, it will best do its appropriate work, and even best serve Christianity itself, if it leave all positive Christian teaching and training to the household and the Church.

I propose to defend the old theory on which the college stands as contrasting with the new theory. I must assume that Christianity is, as a history, supernatural in its import, of supreme importance to every individual man and the human race, and that Christ's life and death and advancing kingdom are to become more a manifested necessity and conspicuous power, till what seem the brilliant romances of prophecy shall become the sober facts of history. On the other hand, the man who half believes, or even surmises, that positive Christianity cannot stand before modern science and modern criticism must conclude that it ought to have very little prominence in that education which will very soon permit it to have no place in scientific belief. All who hold these views are thoroughly consistent in excluding Christianity from every college, and providing for its decorous retreat with appropriate honours.

Christian faith is the perfection of human reason, and therefore essential to the highest forms of human culture. No institution of higher education can obtain the highest ideal excellence in which the Christian faith is not exalted as supreme, its truth not asserted and defended and enforced with a fervent and devoted zeal, in which Christ is not honoured as the inspirer of man's best affections, the model of man's highest excellence, and the master of all human duties.—*Associate Reformed Presbyterian.*

A TONIC FOR THE TIRED.

Watch the faces that go by you on the crowded street, and just notice what a tired look many of them wear. If we could read all the hearts around us, we would find multitudes who are weary in spirit, and sometimes sigh for a pillow in the grave. Some are tired out with life's hard struggles, with bearing the heat and burden of the day. Others persist in piling up anxieties as high as an old-fashioned peddler's pack. They carry a huge load of care as to how they shall make both ends meet, and how they shall foot the bills that accumulate, and how they shall provide for all the hungry mouths and scanty wardrobes. One is tired from trying to do too much, and another of waiting for something to do. A grievous burden of spiritual despondency makes Brother Smallfaith's heart ache and puts an extra wrinkle in Sister Weak-

back's countenance. Here is a disciple who is tired of waiting for success, and there is another tired of waiting for answers to prayer.

Do you suppose that the dear Master does not see all these tired bodies and exhausted nerves and weary hearts? To those who are honestly run down with honest toil He says: "Come ye apart into a quiet place, and rest awhile." God puts a night of sleep after every day of work for this very purpose of recruiting lost force. To Christians with small purses he kindly says: "Your life consisteth not in the abundance of things ye possess. I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich. My grace is sufficient for thee; at My right hand are treasures for evermore." There is not really money enough in this land to give every body a fortune; but there are promises enough in the Bible and grace enough in Christ Jesus to make every body rich to all eternity. Just think what a millionaire a man is who has a clean conscience here and a clear hope of heaven hereafter. To poor Brother Smallfaith and sorrowful Mrs. Weakback He gives a wonderful lift in these words: "Lo! I am with you alway. No man shall pluck you out of my hands. It is my Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."—*Dr. T. L. Cuyler.*

THIN ICE.

At this time of year our rivers and ponds are becoming coated with a thin covering which is very tempting to the adventurous small boy. He feels like an explorer when he sees how far out he can venture without getting in. The small boy has many brethren of a larger growth, who are continually making the same experiment. They do not mean actually to run into sin, but they like to see how far they can possibly go without breaking through into heinous sin. The young man playing with the wine cup, or, to be less figurative, sipping the beer mug, is one of this class. The young woman, going just as far as possible in a meaningless flirtation, is another. They feel like adventurous explorers, finding out the ways of the world, but, in reality, they are only venturing on very thin ice. In a subtler form this danger frequently attacks the intellect. There is a fascination for many a young man about sceptical inquiry and speculation. Such a one finds it pleasant to believe that he is beyond his conservative neighbours, and he lays the flattering unction to his soul that he is "in advance of his times," and that he is unappreciated because those around him cannot understand his position. It is worth while for this adventurous thinker to seriously inquire whether he really is an explorer of new domains of truth, or whether he is only rashly treading upon thin ice, which may give way at any time and plunge him into a muddy pool, whose shallowness has been measured a thousand times in the past.—*Golden Rule.*

TAKE THE CHILDREN TO CHURCH.

But "do they not have the Sunday school?" Yes; and a well-equipped and Christ-presenting Sunday school is the right arm of a Church. But a right arm is not the main body, and an arm severed from the body is a bloodless and impotent thing. All honour to the zealous, devoted Sunday school teacher! He or she is often an actual pastor or shepherd to guide to Jesus those who have no spiritual guidance at home. But the Sunday school never was ordained to be, and never can be, a substitute for the regular services of the sanctuary.

Bring your children with you to church, dear friends. It is their nestling place as well as yours. Are you quite certain as to what your young swallows and sparrows may be about, while you are sitting in your pews?

How do they spend the Lord's day at home? If you commit the sin of beginning the day with your Sunday newspaper, you may be quite sure that the boys and girls will be deep in the police reports and fashion gossip and wretched scandals of those Sabbath breakers, while you are listening to the sermon.

Then keep the secular desecrators of holy time out of your doors, and take all your "bairns" with you to the place where their young hearts may be led heavenward. Expect their early conversion to Christ.—*Rev. Dr. T. L. Cuyler.*

THE Marquis Tseng, late Chinese Ambassador, in a letter to the Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade, says that it is due to the labours of the society that he was enabled to conclude between the British and his own Government the present negotiations, whereby the first important step is taken toward checking the use and abuse of opium.

It was on Christmas Day, 1786, the *Christian Leader* reminds us, that Dr. Coke and his three companions landed at Antigua to start missionary work in the West Indies; and by a remarkable coincidence it was in the same year—that is, exactly a hundred years ago—that Charles Grant, one of the founders of the Church Missionary Society, and William Carey first formally propounded their views on missions.