

Pastor and People.

ALWAY THY FACE.

Thy dear disciple lean'd once long ago
Upon Thy breast,
And mine the hope that one day I shall know
As perfect rest.

Yet not such joy I ask—for me too high
Repose so sweet—
I only crave the grace, dear Lord, to lie
Low at Thy feet

His still, the place upon Thy bosom be;
Yet mine the place
Whence, looking up, my ravished eyes shall see
Alway Thy Face.

—Christian Leader.

THE SWEET OLD STORY.

Tell me about the Master!
I am weary and worn to-night,
The day lies behind me in shadow,
And only the evening is light!
Light with a radiant glory
That lingers about the west.
My poor heart is weary, weary,
And longs, like a child, for rest

Tell me about the Master!
Of the hill He in loneliness trod,
When the tears and blood of His anguish
Dropped down on Judea's sod.
For to me life's seventy mile-stones
But a sorrowful journey mark;
Rough lies the hill country before me,
The mountains behind me are dark.

Tell me about the Master!
Of the wrongs He freely forgave,
Of His love and tender compassion,
Of His love that was mighty to save;
For my heart is weary, weary,
Of the woes and temptations of life,
Of the error that stalks in the noonday,
Of falsehood and malice and strife.

Yet I know that whatever of sorrow
Or pain or temptation befall,
The infinite Master had suffered,
And knoweth and pitieth all.
So tell me the sweet old story,
That falls on each wound like a balm,
And my heart that was bruised and broken
Shall grow patient and strong and calm

HINTS TO CHURCH MEMBERS.

Much is said and being written to-day on the duties, the obligations and the failures of ministers. We do not chafe under this; we need all the warnings and counsels we can obtain, along with grace from above, to make us good ministers of Jesus Christ.

The spiritual welfare of a church, however, is not altogether dependent on the pastor. The members have much to do with it, and there are few developments that so deeply grieve and discourage godly men, and worse still, "grieve the Spirit of God," as "bitterness, wrath, clamour and evil speaking" among the members of congregations. A few hints from the inspired Word may be respectfully presented to our fellow worshippers and brethren, whose places are not in the pulpit, but in the pews.

The Epistle to the Philippians is not a lengthened, nor a tedious treatise. It has but four chapters and can be read carefully in a very little time. The church at Philippi had an interesting history, and its tone and spirit gave pleasure to the apostle as he thought of and prayed for its members. It had its appropriate officers, as we see in the first sentence of the letter, bishops and overseers and deacons. The overseers were the men responsible for the ruling and teaching, and the deacons for the Christian benevolence of the church. Now the points emphasized in the letter, as we shall rapidly indicate them, may be studied with profit by church members who desire the true growth of the church.

Foremost among these is "fellowship," not merely in society, or in social gatherings, but "in the gospel" (chap. i. 3), one feature of it is "love" abounding (v. 9), and that not in mere sentiment, but "in knowledge and all judgment." That would rule out envy, party spirit and criticism, and it would draw in the desire for mutual edification. It would lead to hearty appreciation of all graces in one another, approval "of things that are excellent" (v. 30) and to sincere avoidance of anything that would be a stumbling block in the way of their brethren. There would be no occasion for one to say, "I'll not worship with men of that sort. If that is religion I don't desire it."

The apostle, in the next place, emphasizes their intercessory prayer for himself. That implies prayer for ministers. Here is something for church members to do. Let the petition go up for divine teaching, spiritual help and true success for their pastor, and sincere suppliants will move in the direction of their prayers. They will be regular hearers and hearty fellow workers. They will not be heard to say, "He is paid to preach to us; that is all we have to think of." If the pastor only knows that his work is on the hearts of his people at God's throne, he will be able to say, like Paul, "I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith" (v. 25). A third important characteristic desired is like-mindedness (ch. ii. 2), "being of one accord, of one mind." That would rule out "strife and vain glory" (v. 2) and bring in mutual esteem, considerateness, and, in fact, "the mind that was in Christ" (v. 5), who forgot self for the good of those whom he counted brethren. Let this spirit prevail and there will be no opposition to a measure by one set simply because it is proposed by another. There will be demonstration of mutual regard and affection, salutation of one another, if not with the kiss of Oriental life (1 Cor. xv. 20), with the hearty handshaking, and which would be extended to "every saint" (ch. iv. 21). There are two kinds of coldness in a church. One is in the worship, when fervor and reverence are conspicuous by their absence, and the other which many will notice, when one is treated as if thought to have come from a hospital for contagious diseases.

There is no patronizing air implied in the mutual courtesy urged on members. On the contrary they are to be seen to be earnest in seeking spiritual growth, "with fear and trembling" (ch. ii. 12) and so doing "all things without murmurings and disputings." Yet that fear is not the fear of terror, for the members are bidden to "rejoice in the Lord." Nor is their regard for others to be a mere sentimental humanitarianism. A certain discrimination is to be expected in all the life of church members. They are to "beware of dogs, of evil workers," and of misleading teachers, like those who tried to have all Gentile Christians circumcised (ch. iii. 3). He would have them "stand fast in the Lord" (ch. iv. 1), make the divine word their "rule" of life, and imitate in their "walk" the exemplary Christians known to them. If the members of our churches kept on these lines, how much the power of the church would be increased, and how much misery would be escaped—misery that comes through bondage to fashion, leading down to dissipation, domestic tragedies, and disgrace.

The apostle makes much of Christian co-operation by church members. Euodias and Syntyche he desired to be of the same mind. These ladies had been Paul's helpers (women's work is not an invention of our times), and he desired "help" for them and for other fellow laborers (ch. iv. 3). They were not to be fanatics, or cranks, or enthusiasts over separate hobbies, but to let their "moderation be known unto all men" (ch. iv. 5).

There is not time to delineate all the features of an ideal church, such as the inspiring Spirit here suggests, but the reader cannot fail to notice the care the members had taken of Paul, their minister for the time, and even after he had left them. Church members ought to keep this in mind, and never more than to-day, and nowhere more than in these United States, in which the church stands out before the world as free, unendowed, parted from the state and dependent on the voluntary contributions of the people. There are too many pastors who could not truly tell their people: "Your care of me hath flourished." If all could say it more men would seek the office as they do the profession of law or medicine. Let these—and other like traits of character indicated in the letter to the Philippians—be carefully reproduced in church members, to whom these thoughts are respectfully recalled, and they will shine as lights in the world; the church will grow in spiritual power; ministers will be strengthened, and God will be glorified.—Rev. John Hill, D.D., in N. Y. Observer.

PROFESSOR GARDEN BLAIKIE

He was crossing the steep, wide street in Edinburgh New Town as I came near the church gate, and it seemed to me that I caught in his look and build something of the experienced sea captain. The moderate but comfortable figure swayed just a little, the head threw itself the least bit against a breeze, the face was composed and shrewd, with abundance of whitening hair. He had gone a good many voyages, and was fit to go again. One need have no suspicion in starting with him. He would know what it was he went out of port for, and where he should arrive. A little boy went beside him; the child seemed a natural companion.

The church was wide and high, like the street; there was no organ, and we had sweet, musical singing. The silk robe of the minister did not make an official of him; he was still the shrewd, unaffected, ready man of a homely and practical world. His voice came deep and steady, and a little slow. The prayers were full of that thankfulness, that grateful look back upon the past, that ripe and firm perception of providence which characterize the old evangelicals, and will soon, I think, be their exclusive possession. We were drawn in with the leading voice to offer thanks while we remembered the endurance of our forefathers and the battle of faith in other lands. We joined in acknowledging the large and just benignity of Heaven, the divine purpose that rules from age to age. Everybody was prayed for, in the old democratic Whig manner—supporting great institutions and glancing all round the world. The press was remembered, and the teaching faculty, "our scientific men, our painters, our philosophers, who can exercise an influence which the ministry, set apart and specially engaged, cannot hope to maintain." Then philanthropy, with the same fulness; then those engaged in theological controversy. "Give to them all needful courage, and give them also all needful caution." Then the missionary work—"Initiate China into the truth of Christ."

In all this, and in the reading afterwards, there was a salty rhythm, which gave the original Hebrew flavor to a chapter from Job. I have seldom heard Job so well rendered. The sermon came with a real Protestant text: "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called," and now the face which had changed little in its strong lines began to have expression. The preacher smiled quietly now and then, as sensible of the humor of life and the need to be kind; he looked over his spectacles, was "lively" in a composed way, and talked to us with pleasant city homeliness and quaintness, aiming at simple homiletic, and leaving the "ethic" of the day severely alone. If it had been a Say, "botched up" and vended as a sort of necessity, it would have seemed trivial, though given with racy knack and woven with graphic touches. But Dr. Blaikie has a gift all his own, and, like every other good thing, it is rooted in sincerity, in that truth to self which is the only source of truth toward God and man. It is wonderful how this quality firms and flavors a man's work—any kind of man's work. The sermon that morning was in no respect a Say; it was a personal rendering of the old evangelical view which has formed Dr. Blaikie, and to which in all its best elements he thoroughly belongs. There is a fireside playfulness, even a naivete about his talk. The modern inquirer could easily upset some of what he says, but no honest fellow could resist the tone and bearing; they have an individual *fetchiness*. Dr. Blaikie likes his work—preaching, expounding, narrative—and his own relish gives interest to book and sermon. Indeed, one may say that this incommunicable and precious faculty of giving interest is Dr. Blaikie's distinction. He is careful to use it honorably—perhaps no power in literature or the pulpit is more abused—and is loyal, every way, to the best traditions. If there is a true church student—or anyone else—who does not much esteem Professor Blaikie, I should be sorry to hear from him.—Deas Cromarty, in the British Weekly.

A great poet is more powerful than Sesostris, and a wicked one more formidable than Phalaris.—Landor.

THE COST OF LIFE'S BEST.

There must be the death of self always before a life can be Christlike. In Japan they have a beautiful legend of the making of a wonderful bell. Long, long ago, the emperor wrote to the maker of bells, commanding him to cast a bell larger and more beautiful than ever made before. He bade them put in it gold and silver and brass, that the tones might be so sweet and clear, that, when hung in the palace tower, its sounds might be heard for a hundred miles. The maker of bells put gold and silver and brass in his great melting pot, but the metals would not mingle and the bell was a failure. Again and again he tried, but in vain. Then the emperor was angry, and sent saying that if the bell was not made at the next trial the bell-maker must die.

The bell-maker had a lovely daughter. She was greatly distressed for her father. Wrapping her mantle about her she went by night to the oracle and asked how she could save him. He told her that gold and brass would not mingle until the blood of a virgin was mixed with them in their fusion. Again the old maker of bells prepared to cast the bell. The daughter stood by, and at the moment of casting she threw herself into the midst of the molten metal. The bell was made, and was found to be more wonderful and perfect than any other ever made. Its hangs in the great palace tower, and its sweet tones are heard for a hundred miles. The blood of sacrifice, mingling with the gold and silver, gave to the bell its matchless sweetness.

It is only a legend from a heathen lands but its lesson is true. Our lives make no music until self dies, and our blood mingles with our offering in the altar fires of love. It is only when we lose our life for Christ that we get it back saved and glorious.—J. R. Miller.

THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL.

It may be questioned whether the boasted quickening and brightening effects of alcohol are not always, in a less degree, that same beguiling of sense and exciting of imagination which, in their extreme form, make a man such a pitiful and ridiculous sight. It is better to be dull, and see things as they are, than to be brilliant and see things larger, brighter, or any way other than they are, because we see them through a mist. Imagination set agoing by such stimulus will not work to as much purpose as if aroused by truth. God's world seen by sober eyes is better than rosy dreams of it. If we need to draw our inspiration from alcohol, we had better remain uninspired. If we desire to know the naked truth of things, the less we have to do with strong drink the better. Clear eye sight and self-command are in some degree impaired by it always. The earlier stages are supposed to be exhilaration, increased brilliancy of fancy and imagination, expanded fellowship, and so on. The latter stages are these in our lesson, when strange things dance before cheated eyes, and strange words speak themselves out of lips which their owner no longer controls. Is that a condition to be sought after? If not, do not get on the road that leads to it.

HOW THE KITCHEN CAN BE MADE BEAUTIFUL.

There is a picture painted by Murillo, which hangs in the Louvre. It is not the representation of a palace, or a garden, or a drawing-room. It is only a common kitchen, with a kettle, and a pail of water, and a plate rack. What makes it beautiful? Come with me and look at it. A white-winged angel, with a face of heavenly peace, is putting the kettle on the fire, and near her another angel is stooping gracefully over the pail to lift it up. Beyond, at the old deal dresser, with fair fluttering wings, an angel is reaching up to the rack for a plate; and dancing across the uneven floor is a laughing cherub, trying to help every one. Ah, you see now why the common kitchen is beautiful; it is made so by the grace and peace and joy that is in it. It does not matter whether an angel lifts a pail or tunes a harp—it is an angel still; and it does not matter what coarse or rough work you have to do—if you do it as well and gently and perfectly as you can, you are doing God's work on earth as the angels do it in heaven.