

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

"FEAR NOT, ONLY BELIEVE."

Oh, faint and weary does thy spirit languish,
And long to leave the turmoil and the strife,
The fever-heat, the chill, the pain and anguish
Of body and of spirit in this life.

Cheer up, sad heart! The footsteps of the Master
Are thine to travel in from day to day,
Cheer up! and strive to follow Him the faster
And closer in thy warfare all the way.

Soon shall thy day be over, its shadows lengthen,
The morning comes—sure harbinger of night
The sun shall break; thy faith in Jesus strengthen,
And trust that He, through all will guide thee right.

Then, in the effulgence of the Heavenly glory,
With harp and song, thy praise to Him shall be;
Rehearsing still, with joy, the wondrous story
Of Him who died on Calvary for thee

There with the ransomed throng in bliss unending,
In higher strains than ever angels sing—
Before the throne in adoration bending,
Eternal praise we'll give to Heaven's great king.
Toronto, Ont. —Rev. J. M. Cameron.

THE INFLUENCE OF COMPANY.

The effect of company upon our souls is less considered at this time than it ought to be. Probably the most of men are ten times more careful in selecting a horse than in choosing a friend. They do not thoughtlessly surround themselves with servants, and yet they leave the gathering of their intimates to chance. Because we are compelled in some degree to mix with the ungodly world in the course of daily business, therefore many imagine there can be no harm in making unconverted persons our intimate associates. Such a mistaken idea must be mischievous, and the sooner we are delivered from it the better.

We must be coloured and tainted by our friendships; it is unavoidable. The wisest of men assures us that "He that walks with wise men shall be wise;" and it is equally true that he who walks with fools will soon be foolish. Some men have great influence, and to be near them is to be assuredly affected by them. Even those who have least power over others, have a measure of it, and, unconsciously to ourselves, we may fall in some degree under their spell. The Jews have a proverb that "two dry sticks put to a green one will kindle it," and it is doubtless true that, should one evil associate be unable to deprave us, there is a cumulative force in the example and persuasion of numbers. It is to be feared that where two or three are met together under the power of sin, there the devil is in the midst of them to aid their base endeavours. Now, it is a hard thing to go in and out among the children of darkness without learning some of their ways, and harder still to meet them in companies, which make up synagogues of Satan, without feeling the baneful force of the god of this world. If the company of the wicked does not leave a smear, it will leave a smell; if it be not deadly, it will be dangerous. Some of us are more plastic or malleable than others, and we are the first to be impressed by our surroundings; it is to us, therefore, of the first importance to place ourselves in holy society, and shun all needless association with the godless as we would avoid the plague.

When dubious associates cannot altogether prevail with us to do evil, they are sure to hinder us as to our growth in holiness. The higher forms of grace are extremely delicate, and the processes of their progress are intensely sensitive; it happens that even the presence of the graceless may injure them. We do not wonder that the heathen, in their more solemn worship, were accustomed to lift up a warning voice—"Far hence, ye profane!" Instinctively one feels that in holy approaches to God the absence of the wicked is greatly to be desired. A word, or even a look, or a gesture from an influential worldlying has soured the milk of devotion in many a pious heart. A note or two from graceless lips has reminded a holy man of a profane song which he would give his eyes to forget, for its recurrence has chased communion from his mind. These servants of iniquity are powerless to help us, but terribly potent to hinder us in our advances to our God. Who can make headway in faith while intimate with unbelievers? Who can dwell in hallowed peace when rough and headstrong spirits have unrestrained access to him? Who can be pure, and yet lay his head in the bosom of impurity?

Who can keep his garments unstained, and yet toy with the unclean? The ascent to the heights of holiness is steep in itself, and we have enough burdens of our own to carry; there can be no need to link ourselves with those whose nature and disposition lead them to drag us down.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

GATHER UP THE FRAGMENTS.

Do not smile when I tell you that the fragments of your time may be utilized for intellectual improvement. Select your author and keep him in some convenient place. Read a page or two at a time, in the morning, when you are in advance of the family at the breakfast table; later as you wait for the butcher or grocer who comes for orders or brings supplies, and now and then, as you drop your sewing for a moment, or wait for the little one to finish her nap. I speak the words of truth and soberness, and from personal experience, when I affirm that a great deal of valuable reading may be done in the fragments of a day.

If you would grow spiritually, however, take, if possible, a stated time daily for Bible reading and study. Do not be content to leave religious and devotional reading, as a matter of habit, to the pauses and intervals of your time. While the Christian should live in an atmosphere of prayer, so that to pray without ceasing should be neither puzzle nor enigma, but a fact, it is due to God and to ourselves that we employ some routine in our approach to Him.

A mother who has young people growing up in her household gains a great deal by frequent dips into their school books. For example, your boy Ralph is studying Roman history. The long names are difficult, and he stumbles over them. Suppose you go over his lessons with him for a few evenings. You will find, for one thing, your own youth coming back. Your own reviving interest will stimulate your child, and he will learn much faster on account of mother's sympathy. Then, too, you will, through the charm of a common pursuit, bind him to you in closer confidence and more real union.

Fragments of time may often be spent to advantage in doing those little kindnesses which make so small a show, yet which so beautifully adorn social life. Making calls, for instance, is to many a woman a dreaded duty, rather than a pleasant privilege. If it be undertaken heartlessly, only because one owes calls to a certain number of people who must be visited or lost from one's list of acquaintances, the obligation may well be far from agreeable. It is not an unheard-of thing, that a lady feels rather relieved than otherwise when she finds that her friend is not at home, and that her card can do duty for her presence. But "the gift without the giver is bare." Put your heart into even your occasional intercourse with your friends. Love is the fulfilling of even this law.

Never let a week pass when in health that you do not call on somebody whom you can comfort, help, amuse or rest with your words, looks and friendly hand-clasp. The fragments of your time will suffice for this. On the way home from market, you can stop for a single moment and leave a flower or leaflet or a pretty illuminated card with some dear aged or invalid friend. Late in the afternoon, when you have stayed in the house as long as you ought to, alight on your out-door things and call on some neighbour who needs to feel that she is not forgotten, that somebody loves and thinks of her.—*Mrs. Sangster, in Christian Intelligencer.*

DANGER FROM EVIL THOUGHTS.

There is a well-defined distinction between many of the precepts of revealed law and those of the laws dependant upon custom or enacted by the legislatures. For example, these laws do not undertake to deal with the intentions or plans formed by any person, no matter how wicked, malicious, or criminal such intentions or plans may be, so long as they are not put into practice or communicated to others. They are not punishable, except when put into actual exercise, or made the subject of conspiracy, and the like; and in such a case they serve merely to aggravate the guilt of the offender. But revealed law on the contrary, concerns itself with the thoughts and purposes of men, as well as with their acts, whether secret or overt. It forbids us wilfully to entertain any thought or intention that might be deemed criminal, unlawful or improper if reduced to practice. Its prohibition is as pronounced against malicious, mean, and degrading thoughts, as against acts of corresponding nature

And this is eminently just and proper. Every time we willingly entertain any thought or form any purpose, good or bad, its recurrence becomes more natural and certain. Furthermore, frequent repetition in that direction leads almost inevitably to putting the thought or purpose into effect. Besides, many persons who have closely observed the workings of the human mind, claim that a malignant or degrading thought, repeatedly entertained, may do so much to corrupt the heart, sear the conscience, and lower the moral standard, as though it were actually carried into exercise. Under such circumstances, religion is manifestly right in making this distinction, and placing its veto upon degrading thoughts and criminal purposes. In this and many other particulars the service rendered by religion in the economy of human life is of the utmost importance.

JOIN THE RANKS.

It is far easier to do Christ's work, and to do it well if one allies himself with Christ's followers. Not one Christian in twenty can maintain the desired standard of personal piety and spiritual efficiency outside of the Church. If he could, it would not justify his remaining without. Every such Christian may do much good, but he also is certain to do grave harm. Inevitably his example is quoted—and misrepresented—by others, and often is even made an excuse for not beginning the Christian life at all. Guerrilla warfare is neither very respectable nor very effectual, and the unattached Christian, so to speak, is neither as safe, nor as consistent in his independence as he needs to be, nor does his work for God prove as fruitful. He always is at a disadvantage, because he refuses to put himself into harmony with the nature of things, and the plan of Christ, which bids him become an earnest and active church member, as well as a Christian.—*Congregationalist.*

ASK ALL YOU NEED.

I would therefore urge on the children of God that they make it a point in all things, and under all circumstances, to make known their wants and wishes unto God; also remembering that Jesus, their Head, has told them to do so. "Ask, and it shall be given unto you." The Lord knows that we are weak in faith, and He often withholds that for which we ask, to strengthen our faith by waiting on Him. He will bring it to pass, because He never faileth of all the promises he has made to His children. The Lord never wearies of giving as men do, but He giveth liberally and upbraideth not. He never says, What! are you back again asking for more? Nay we cannot ask too often nor too much. He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.—*W. W. Campbell.*

REJOICE IN THE LORD.

Freedon from anxiety has its root in our rejoicing in the Lord. Unless your anchor is fixed in heaven you will be tossed to and fro in this changeful and stormy voyage of life. Unless you have found your treasure in God's love, the trying disappointments of time will enter into your very soul. Rejoice in the Lord, and then you will meet difficulties and sorrows with calmness and strength. As joy in God is the root, the manifestation and method of this joy is in constant prayer. We must bring all our circumstances, we must bring our whole selves continually before God. Only we must watch unto prayer, and after prayer remember and live our prayer.

PRAYING AND GIVING.

A youth in Rome had suffered from a dangerous illness. On recovering his health his heart was filled with gratitude, and he exclaimed, "O thou all sufficient Creator! could man recompense thee, how willingly would I give all my possessions!" Hermes, the headman, heard this, and said to the rich youth "All good gifts come from above; richer thou canst send nothing. Come, follow me." He took him to a hut, where there was nothing but wretchedness and misery. The father lay on a bed of sickness, the mother wept, the children were destitute of clothing and crying for bread. Hermes said, "See here an altar for the sacrifice; see here the Lord's representatives." The youth assisted them bountifully, and the poor people called him an angel of God. Hermes smiled, and said, "Thus turn always thy grateful countenance first to heaven, and then to earth."