

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

PRAYER.

Prayer, it has commonly been taught, has four elements—adoration, confession, thanksgiving, petition. I hold that we must always add a fifth part, namely, total surrender. All the four parts without the fifth are what the Scriptures call vain repetition and not prayer. If a man offers prayer in the full sense, he may be assured in the name of natural law that he will obtain religious aid of a kind that he can receive from no other source. Men who revere the scientific method will admit that experiment is the crucial test of truth. Who dares try the experiment of prayer in the sense of total and affectionate self-surrender to God? A Boston scholar has lately told the public that a somewhat rough man of affairs in this city, in the presence of the American evangelist, thought he would be manly enough to try the experiment of offering prayer. "But," said the evangelist, "you must be sincere." "I know very little of this thing," the man replied, "but I am willing to be sincere in one prayer at least." "Very well," said the evangelist, "let us kneel down here now, together, and do you say from the depths of your heart, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'" The merchant did that; and I suppose from what followed that he did it in a genuine way. Certain it is that there struck across that man's countenance a beam of light from the sun behind the sun; a peace and an illumination unknown to him before. He rose up saying: "This is a singular experience. My partner, do you do as I have done, and perhaps there will be similar results." The partner was a sceptic, but he knelt and offered the prayer: "God be merciful to me a sinner," and he, too, rose up, smitten across the forehead with the light that falls out of those ancestral spaces, from which all souls come and into which all men haste.

Facts like these are the chief news of this serious day. Boston loves clear ideas. You say, "All this is a mystery." It is fact, however, as age after age can witness. But analyze this greatly suggestive scene a little; what is implied in the words: "God be merciful to me a sinner?"

1. That there is a God.
2. That there is a moral law.
3. That the moral law represents the will of a Person.
4. That the law and the Person have unconditional authority.
5. That I ought to obey that authority.
6. That I could have done what I ought.
7. That my will is free.
8. That I freely refused to do what I ought.
9. That the ill-desert of that refusal is wholly mine.
10. That I cannot remove that ill-desert from myself.
11. That there is obligation existing on my part to satisfy the violated majesty of the law.
12. That my own future good works cannot meet this obligation.
13. That God's mercy must meet it for me, if it is to be met at all.
14. That I implore God's mercy so to meet it.
15. That I trust myself implicitly to his mercy.
16. That I do so with entire freedom from the spirit of self-righteousness.
17. That I do so in the spirit of rejoicing personal loyalty to a personal Father, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; one God, who was, and is, and is to come.
18. That in all these beliefs I hold propositions which, in my business and my family, in public and in secret, I mean to transmute into action.

This prayer: "God be merciful to me, a sinner," is the articulate voice of an organic instinct. But it contains these eighteen and more propositions, which are thus not slightly emphasized by the structure of human nature! Transmute these beliefs into deeds, saturate society with these propositions, and have they any force? Is it any mystery that men who offer this prayer sincerely are smitten through and through by a solar self-culture? These rays are javelins out of the light of the Great White Throne. Let them permeate business, politics, education, the newspaper press, literature, and private life. The mystery of conversion! If there were not conversion when a man takes upon himself to make a practical application of all these propositions, that would be a mystery? I am not denying at all that there is supernatural action in every case of conversion, but I defy any form of clear

thought to show that these propositions are not all in the prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." I defy any man to justify in the name of science the Finns of Flanders or of Boston for not offering that prayer.—*Rev. Joseph Cook, in Boston Advertiser.*

REASONS FOR GIVING LIBERALLY.

We may not know all the causes of the divine conduct. It is often inscrutable. But we may sufficiently know why we are called to do thus and so. If we are called to submit to God's will, we know His will is always holy, just, and good. If we are called to repent, it is because we are sinners, and so need a thorough change of mind and heart. So the Lord, knowing our closeness and covetousness, our selfishness and lack of tenderness, often calls on us to be liberal in giving our worldly substance where it is needed. The reasons are often assigned.

1. The divine example is often urged upon us: "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect;" "Be ye followers [imitators] of God, as dear children." As Creator, how God has lavished his gifts upon us! It is clear as day that in making man God has done wonders for him. He has made him a little lower than the angels. As Preserver and Benefactor, he has done the same. "He hath given us all things richly to enjoy." As Redeemer, his bounty is transcendent. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that through His poverty ye might be rich." "Freely ye have received, freely give." Be like God.

2. It is very foolish in us to set our hearts on earthly riches, for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. They will soon leave us, taking to themselves wings and flying away; or we must soon leave them, and then whose shall they be? No man knows whether a fool or a wise man will hold them.

3. There is a great blessing enjoyed in time by those who plentifully deal out to the needy. "The liberal soul shall be made fat." "By liberal things shall he stand." "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord and that which he giveth will He repay him again."

4. When it is the noblest use we can make of our possessions. "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

"Would'st thou from sorrow find a sweet relief?
Or is thy heart oppressed, with woes untold?
Balm would'st thou gather from corroding grief?
Pour blessings round thee like a shower of gold."

5. Very few things have a worse effect on character or on happiness than the spirit and habit of hoarding. Mankind have agreed to denominate such a miser, and miser means miserable. The Scriptures in many places warn us against hoarding. Matt. vi. 19-34; James v. 1-6.

6. The Scriptures urge another reason. It is of great weight, too: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." It is impossible to cultivate as we should heavenly mindedness, if we spend our time and energies in heaping up riches here. But some urge

REASONS FOR NOT GIVING LIBERALLY.

1. I have myself and my family to support. The answer is, that the success of your lawful endeavors to support yourself and your family depends on the divine blessing. You may rise early, sit up late, and eat the bread of sorrow; but if God blows upon it, it will all be chaff and be driven away. Look to God. Trust him.

2. Some say, others do not give as they ought. Perhaps if you would set them a good example they would follow it. Perhaps you do not know how much they do give. Perhaps you do not know in what straits they are. You had better not judge another man's servant.

3. Business is not satisfactory; I am making little or nothing. Perhaps business would be more satisfactory and your gains increased if you would give God his due. Read Mal. iii. 10.

4. But the calls are so many. Yes, and are not your calls on God's bounty many? If the calls on you are many, it is that you may often see what manner of spirit you are of; and if the calls are not as many as they ought to be, find out where you may do some good, and do it.

5. But, one says, my property is my own, and I will give it or not, as I please. There is a sense in which your money is your own. That is, you are in law the

legal owner. No one can innocently rob you or defraud you out of it. But in another and very important sense, it belongs to God. You are merely a steward. You do not even own yourself. "Ye are not your own." Beware how you waste, or hoard, or pervert your Master's goods.

6. But, one says, my life may be long, and I may have an old age that will require all my means to support me. Yes, and if your old age is happy and comfortable, it is God that will make it so. Look to him. Rely on him, and not on your accumulations.

Then provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. Lay up your treasure above, and when you die you will enjoy it forever.—*Weekly Review.*

FAMILY GOVERNMENT.

Essays and sermons innumerable have been written on family government. Excellent rules and rules not so excellent have been framed. But the true secret of family government is in the governor; the parents, not their rules, make the child.

For children are in the first place natural imitators. Going into the library, the other day, we found the youngest member of the household busy with pencil and paper at the desk. "Don't disturb me," said he, solemnly, "I am busy editing my paper." A few weeks later we happened in at the shop of a neighbor. He was building a shell. His boy of eight was at work with a knife and a bit of shingle, also boat-building. Principles, sentiments, habits of thought, no less than methods of action, descend from parent to child. The boy is an ardent partisan as soon as he can speak, and hurrahs for Hayes or Tilden, as the case may be, before he can pronounce the names. "I'm a 'publican." And what's a 'publican?" "I don't know; but father's one." How often you may hear that.

It is generally safe to assume that the child reproduces the faults of his parents; or, to speak more generally, those of his older companions. Sometimes it is a nurse, an aunt or a grandmother that the little child mimics. Mirror some one he almost always does; if she be well and strong and capable of doing her maternal duty, it is his mother whom he is most likely to mirror. If, then, in the glass you see faults you do not like, first attend to yourself. If there are blemishes visible in the mirror, attend to the skin, not to the glass. It is worse than idle for the father to deliver temperance lectures and have wine on his table, or admonish his boy against smoking with a cigar in his own mouth. It is worse than useless for the mother to allow herself the conventional deceptions of society and condemn lying in her boy, or to feed her own vanity in dress and to rebuke flaunting in her daughter. If the child is a little liar, be very sure that there is somewhere a big liar under the same roof. If he is self-willed, watch for obstinacy in your own life.

In the long run, character produces character. Purity, truth, fidelity, courage, love, in the mother's heart, will beget a brood of like virtues in the children. This was the secret of the Puritan's training. It is a marvel that it is still a secret to so many. The Puritan did not spare the rod; and, therefore, it is thought, he did not spoil the child. But it was not the rod that drove foolishness out of the Puritan children. Whatever may have been the faults of the Puritans want of earnestness was not one of them. They were good lovers; they were admirable haters. One text of Scripture they thoroughly believed in: "Abhor that which is evil." They did. They hated a mean, a cowardly, a despicable action with all the strength of stalwart and noble natures. It was this generous hatred of all the vermicular vices that belong to a luxurious age which was the potent influence in driving these vices from the hearts and lives of their children. It would have been just as efficacious without the rod as with it; was just as efficacious in hundreds of families where the rod was unknown as in the thousands where it was kept in constant and vigorous exercise.

We answer your inquiry, then, generally, by saying, Be full of the Spirit of Christ; and then pour out of your fullness into your child. Be worthy of his reverence; be worthy of his imitation; keep him sympathetically bound to you; have patience; and be sure that in time he will imbibe your spirit and imitate your ways.—*Christian Union.*