

enterprise. Even the sober-minded piety of the brothers in Britain was at fault, and urgent appeal was made to Hugh to desist from the effort, as it was evidently not the will of the Almighty that the line should succeed. Here it was that Hugh Allan showed the stuff of which he was made. He maintained that there was no special reason why the Almighty should have a special grudge against their enterprise, or show it in a way that brought so much peril and loss to innocent people. If vessels were lost, there must be a reason for it which could be discovered, and the defect remedied. *Themselves* must be in fault: violating somewhere the fixed laws of nature. He thought he saw the fault in the attempt to navigate a dangerous gulf and estuary which were imperfectly known and very imperfectly lighted, under a contract imposing a heavy fine for every hour's delay, no matter how needful delay might be. Captains were naturally anxious to prevent loss by these fines, and so pushed on when prudence would have advised a slack rate for a time. Having induced the Government to alter the contract, and to improve the lighting of the river and gulf of the St. Lawrence, Mr. Allan showed his confidence in the result by at once ceasing to insure his vessels, forming a private fund and account for that purpose. The result fully justified his sagacity, courage and indomitable perseverance. He *would not* be beaten, and he was not; and to-day a magnificent fleet of twenty steamers are making their voyages with an order, speed and regularity which have made the "Allan Line" a favorite with more than the Canadian public.

Naturally, this vast carrying trade has brought Sir Hugh Allan into connection with most of the enterprises which have been undertaken for the development of Canada. Knighted about ten years ago, as one of the most representative men of the colony which the Queen delighted to honour, he still occupies that foremost position, being President of a score or more of corporations in banking, railways, mining and insurance. Probably three-fourths of the great coal interests of Nova Scotia are controlled by Sir Hugh Allan, as is even the Eastern Extension Railway, now in course of construction in the same Province. Yet he is not a man who bulks largely before the public. He is little seen upon platforms; writes few letters to the newspapers; and troubles himself but little as to what people say of him. His great concern is still his business. Early and late he gives it close personal supervision; and probably far more of his waking hours are spent in his office by the wharf than in the beautiful mansion of Ravenscrag on the sides of Mount Royal.

A sketch of Sir Hugh Allan without a reference to the 'Pacific Railway Scandal' would be conspicuously incomplete. Everybody knows that the 'Scandal' was the gift of money by Sir Hugh to the election expenses of the party of a government from which the Company of which he was president was expecting to receive a charter for the construction of a road from Ocean to Ocean. The fact is simply historical; but it may be allowed that in the heat and passion of the time many explanatory circumstances were disregarded or disbelieved. Sir Hugh still contends (and many will agree with him) that his scheme would have built the road, and built it more cheaply than it can be done by the substituted plan of Mr. Mackenzie. And he declared at the time—and still declares—that his subscription to the election fund was a matter altogether apart from the expectation of the road-charter, being simply the act of a wealthy man when the political party to which he had always been attached was in danger. The charter he regarded as a settled thing in no way contingent upon any subscription he might give or withhold. It is very probable that the whole matter will come up for review, now that time has cooled the political fever of that day. A greater 'scandal' is that loose morality in our Canadian politics which has issued in the purchase and sale of a constituency being regarded by both sides of the house as a thing of course and the fit subject of a jest.

To sum up all, Sir Hugh Allan has been, and is, a man of great power and influence, which he has turned almost entirely into the channels of commercial enterprise. The strong points of his character have been brought out prominently. They are the lights of the picture: perhaps the shadows may be indicated by them. He who runs may read the broad lessons written in the life of an earnest, courageous, persevering man. Perhaps some subordinate lessons may be read between the lines: and it may be asked whether an all-absorbing devotion to one pursuit is justified even by the magnificent material results which have accrued to Sir Hugh Allan.

GRAPHITE.

## ON PRAYING.

A Sermon Preached at Zion Church by Rev. Alfred J. Bray.

ST. MATT. vii., 7, 8.

The religious life of man has its beginning in communion with God. But conversion and completeness are far apart. The one is the negative condition; the other positive. The one is the purity of early childhood; the other the virtues, the graces, the strength of manhood. The one is the green shoot that has heaved up through the soil; the other is the tree, full of life, with many branches, strong, and bearing fruit. But the intermediate steps, the growth, is that assured? There is only a little life, and it is delicate; are there any forces which can be laid under contribution to help it grow? Is the soil good? Will there be plenty of warm sunshine, and not too much to burn it up? Will there be rain, yet no great destructive floods to beat it down? I am told that when I am conscious of this new life—when the warm blood begins to throb in my veins, I must press on until I have reached the goal of life—the term of all being—God. But how am I to run? how am I to walk? how am I to crawl, even? I am a child. At first, perhaps, a flood of joy breaks upon me; I am in a tumult of delight. I am in a new world; the great blue vault above shines bright with God; from the glancing stars He looks straight into my eyes, and I do not shun the gaze: the fields, the hills, the rivers, the seas, all have new meaning for me—I am in a new world. And I also am new: I have new thoughts, new feelings, new desires—I am a new creature. But the tumult soon subsides, and then I am face to face with a most mysterious and most matter-of-fact life. I have to pace the daily round of dull routine. I want to be humble; I admire humility, but pride is in me a

masterful spirit of evil. I want to be generous to men; but I am possessed of a mocking, scornful spirit, a very devil that makes me madly bitter and bitterly mad. Passions live—and while they live they burn. And the question I ask is this: Have I any power in me that is not self-destructive—any force at my command that, if put in motion, will lift me up and not drag me down?

Jesus Christ has anticipated that question. He built up before men perfectness—showed them the incarnated conception of highest, grandest, truest manhood. But he was not an artist come to exhibit his masterpiece for the people's admiration. He did not say, "See the beauty of that"; but he said, "Be as beautiful as that—copy it—reproduce it in yourselves." And it was not imposing an impossible task upon them; it was not the old demand that men make bricks without straw. But it says, "There are forces in yourselves which if put into action will command the blessings of heaven. There they are. Ask for them—seek them, and you shall have them. That force is prayer."

Religion, as I understand it, is the bond of union between the soul and God: the great and sacred covenant. Prayer is religion in motion—the exertive faculty of the renewed nature; it circles the man praying and the God addressed; it is the rainbow—its arch in heaven, its two ends on the earth.

An honest reader of the Bible would come to the conclusion quite naturally, and without the aid of note or comment, that prayer to God in petition, and as converse, is a thing of paramount importance. He would be struck with the startling emphasis that is everywhere laid upon the exercise. He would see that earnest, persistent prayer was commended by it, and rewarded—the prayer of the blind for sight—the prayer of the sick for healing—the prayer of the mother for her child,—and that the sum of Apostolic teaching was pray without ceasing—continue instant in prayer, in season and out of season.

But things have happened which can hardly be accounted for. The sons have outgrown the superstitions, the weaknesses of their fathers. We claim to be practical—to be self-sufficient. Not that we deny God, but we fall back upon ourselves for all we want. "God helps those who help themselves" is the old motto we quote and live by—a motto worthy of its heathen origin—a proverb black with the danger of self-sufficiency; charged to bursting with the fires of human conceit. *Work! work!*—that is the cry of the age: prayer is too much a thing of the imagination and the sentiment to have a place in the programme of a practical man. Now, I do hate the old sentiment that man is a mere creature of circumstance, that he is locked in the iron clasp of fate, is being dragged down he knows not whither. I hate that—and say, I will not be the sport of blind unguided forces—I wouldn't be dragged, even to heaven itself. But that other teaching that threatens to influence men in this boastful, practical age, is equally, if not more destructive: that man is dependent on himself alone, that he is fully and entirely free. As usual, the truth lies between the two extremes. Man is dependent in his freedom, and free in his dependence. Life is a subtle admixture of liberty and restraint—of perfect freedom, and entire dependence. If I am self-sufficient—if I stand forth unsustained by other power than my own, then prayer is a waste of time, and work is my truest wisdom. And if I be a creature of circumstances, plastic, unresisting clay—being moulded by sightless, unfeeling fate—then prayer is in vain. I will chant my litanies to the wind—I will go down to the sea-shore and tell my wants and woes to the heedless waves. But when I know that neither one nor the other is true; that I am a living, moving, breathing paradox, free in my dependence, and dependent in my freedom, then my prayer is the outcome of my freedom, and the cry of my conscious dependence upon the living God. It is only when I am given over neither to conceit nor despair that I can shape my language into petition, and thrust my hands out in passionate pleading to God.

But there is another objection to prayer, and perhaps a more subtle one, which is urged by men of science, and in the name of general law. Men used to pray against famine and against drought—against disease and pestilence and floods. That was all very well they say—for these men did not know the universal law as we do. The rain, or the drought, is the result of atmospheric laws—prayer must be, can be of no avail against disease and death. As well expect to quench a fierce fire by prayer instead of water—as well expect to get a harvest by praying over the granary—as well think to build a ship by praying in a forest. It is law against sentiment. Men in the olden times prayed for rain and bread and health because they knew no better, thinking that all things depended upon the mere caprice of a Supreme will; but we know that there is an inexorable and inviolable law, and prayer is futile. But what is meant by law? Surely not a brutal, unintelligent, and unconquerable force that sweeps on resistless? We call it law, because by long experience we have learnt that it is the order of things. But God is the mover of all that moves. He is the Infinite force, above all forces—and we may cry up through the law to Him who made it. The law is, that sin having entered into human life, the tendency of life shall be downward; but men cry against that tendency, and strive against it, and they find a higher law in operation—the law of faith, and cleansing by faith—which supersedes the law of sin and death.

Brethren, Science has taught us many things, and taken many foolish notions away from us; but it has not taken our notion of God away, because it has not taken God away. Law, an established order of things, has not risen up an impenetrable blackness between the living God and our souls. We can pray—not as serfs, but as sons. Prayer is the experience of our freedom, and the experience of our dependence. There is law—there are divine and eternal decrees—there are individual rights, and individual wrongs—there is Divine Sovereignty, and there is man's royalty—and above them all is the ever-living and ever-loving God—and the Abrahams of the earth pray for the doomed cities—and the ladder is yet planted firmly on the earth, reaching into heaven, and the angels of God and of men ascend and descend upon it—the Jacobs wrestle by night under the watching stars—the Davids, steeped to the lips in crime, cry out for a new heart and a right spirit—and the Elijahs pray until the cloud uprises from the sea, and through the hot air comes the sound of an abundance of rain—and the Hezekiahs pray for health and a lengthened life—and the weeping, songless Exiles cry, "turn us again, O Lord, turn us again"—and the royal Daniels pray in wicked Babylon seven times a day with the