

Pastor and People.

HE AND SHE.

I once knew a wife and a husband,
An orthodox preacher was he;
He faithfully stuck to the doctrine;
In little things faithful was she.

He had a well-known reputation
Of piety—from his own kind;
Wherever she went she spread round her
The bliss of a true, loving mind.

He knew every word of the Scriptures;
She knew God her Father to be.
Theology was his chief science;
God's child and God's image was she.

He criticised sermons and preachers,
'Gainst heresy sharply he fought,
No weakness escaped his attention,
She silently did what she ought.

His face had a rigid expression;
She always content looked, and gay;
Religion his countenance darkened,
And brightened hers all the long day.

He opened or shut out of heaven,
As if heaven's key he possessed;
She inwardly carried a heaven
Of love and of peace in her breast.

In meetings for schools, or for missions,
He spoke with great unction and verve;
She quietly, at her own fireside,
Tried God and her neighbours to serve.

In speaking and thinking and preaching
He had the cold doctrine alone;
In working and living and loving,
A light in the darkness she shone.

I knew them, and thought it a pity
That husband and wife were not "one";
His strength and her rich love united,
What prodigies they could have done!
—Translated from *De Genestet*.

PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERING.

When the great violin-makers of the Middle Ages wished to form a perfect instrument, they caused the tree to be felled at a particular period of its growth. The wood was then planed and cut into small pieces. These were exposed to the heat of the sun and to the winter's storms; were bent, rubbed, polished and finally fastened together with incomparable skill. If the wood could have found a tongue, doubtless it would have begged to grow in the forest, to rustle its branches and bear its fruits as its companions were left to do, becoming at last a part of the sodden earth. But it was this harsh treatment that made out of its common boards the Stradivari violin, whose music still charms the world. So by countless touches of pain and loss, God fits us to bear our part in the great harmony with which true and earnest souls shall ultimately fill the world.—*Youth's Companion*.

BENEFITS OF PRAYER.

There is a vast difference between praying morning and evening in a stereotyped form of words, or praying, as our needs suggest, "with all supplication in the Spirit," Eph. v. 18. When we actually fly to prayer as our only help in trouble, our only guide in perplexity, or are urged to the throne of grace by some peculiar or unexpected blessing, to pour out our hearts in thanksgiving—then we know what is true prayer, and feel the force of Cowper's words in speaking of the mercy-seat—

But who that knows the worth of prayer
But wishes to be often there?

And one who has had this experience will have probably noted many blessed effects from his frequent communion with the Highest and Holiest one. Let us recall a few that are most apparent.

We become better acquainted with our own state and needs, by frequently bringing them to the throne of grace. If one going a journey puts off preparation to the last hour, he is overwhelmed with his manifold necessities, and so will it be with us if we do not take time for meditation and prayer, the nearness of eternity will show us that we are poor and miserable, when we ought to be rich in faith and love.

Again as we pray for forgiveness of sin, we are reminded of the divine law, which we have either neglected or transgressed. How little studied is that law, as it runs through both the Old and New Testament! And can we pray sincerely for forgiveness without making effort to forsake sin? No, frequently going into the presence of a holy God inspires reverence and hatred of sin—for even the companionship of the good on earth has this effect to some extent. We will either leave their company or leave off what they hate. How much more will communion with a holy God through the quickening spirit affect us. One special injunction regarding prayer is mentioned in the Scriptures, to remember others, to pray for all mankind. Intercessory prayer has its peculiar benefits. It draws out our affections to others, it naturally leads them to efforts to do them good. Ways and means of benefiting others are wonderfully opened up when preceded and followed by prayer for them. If we have any enemies, let us not forget to pray for them. It disposes us to be more lenient towards them, and as we pray for their infirmities we are reminded of our own, which we are too apt to

forget or excuse. Then as to the promises, how precious they become, as we plead them in prayer. We then receive the full value of those "cheques on the bank of faith," as Spurgeon names them.

However frequent may be our occasional prayers, stated seasons of devotion should never be omitted. But we should use every means to make these true heart-worship, not formal services. To conclude, the benefits of prayer cannot be summed up more concisely or more beautifully than in the words of Trench.

Lord, what a change within us, one short hour,
Spent in Thy presence, will avail to make;
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take;
What parched grounds refreshed as with a shower.
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower,
We rise, and all—the distant and the near,
Stand out, in sunny outline, brave and clear.
We kneel, how weak! we rise, how full of power!
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong?
Or others, that we are not always strong;
That we are ever overborne with care,
That we should ever weak and heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,
And joy, and strength, and courage, all with Thee.

—*Illustrated Christian Weekly*.

A DIVINE INTUITION.

The sense of personal responsibility, well educated, makes a man or woman a more than ordinary useful member of society. An individual with the sense well developed fills his various relations in home, church, and state, to the extent for which he is responsible for their welfare. It saves him from assuming more duties than he can execute; it compels him to understand and fulfill every duty which he assumes. The greatest friction we endure in life comes from unfulfilled obligations and appointments. We stay at home a bright, sunny day, to receive a promised call that is not made. We wait to complete our plans for a certain work, for some persons to complete their part, only to find that the matter has been forgotten or neglected, and weeks are lost in reorganizing, or picking up broken links. No man or woman should undertake an office which he or she has not the fitness or the interest to fill to its widest circumference; if lack of talent or of time prevents filling the office, good judgment and grace demand that it should be surrendered. It is a social crime to waste the time of busy people through indifference or neglect. It is but a shade less criminal for intelligent people to submit to the neglect or indifference of those who pretend to work with them. If the work for which an organization is formed is important enough to demand organization, it is important enough to demand the best its workers can give to or command for it. Less than that is an insult.

Every one who has ever been connected with boards or committees knows the annoying waste of time and nerve-force to which one must, or rather does, submit because of the negligence, tardiness, or indifference of some members. Is it not the part of righteousness and wisdom to save this waste by organizing with working members, cutting off drift and deadwood? The mails are already delivering the postal cards giving the notices of meetings. We pick one up, read the name of the organization, and taking out note-book, write day and time, adding fifteen minutes to half an hour to the stated time, knowing full well that we will have a margin to spare then before the meeting really begins. Another comes. This means half of the officers ready to report intelligently and completely, and about a third of the members active in interest, while all are ready to criticise. So we go through the list, each differing slightly in its defects. We blame the society or organization, when the fault is the preponderance of one certain temperament in the individual members. If all possessed the sense of personal responsibility in the same degree, meetings would begin and close on time; every committee and officer would have attended to their several duties, and no one would have assumed duties for which he had neither talent, fitness, nor time.—*Christian Union*.

WASTE.

When Mary anointed the Lord with the precious ointment Judas and others also looked upon what she did as a waste. It might have been sold for a large sum, which, given to the poor, would have accomplished great good. So thought the disciples; but Jesus Himself did not sympathize with this view. They would have other opportunities for showing kindness to the poor, but they would not have Jesus with them always. Mary, perhaps, wrought better than she knew. She meant to manifest her love to Jesus, and not only did that, but at the same time performed a needful service that would be spoken of to her honour throughout the whole world.

If Mary had expended the precious ointment upon her Lord to attract attention to herself, or to gratify a feeling of pride, the Master would not have commended her. She made the costly sacrifice to honour her Lord. Love for Jesus moved her to the act. The manner in which she approaches Him at the time and all the circumstances show her humility and affection for her Lord.

It was the spirit with which her act was performed that lifted it to the highest plane of noble doing. Many a one has seemed to make a costly sacrifice in the interests of religion, but not acting from a right impulse, not having supreme regard to the honour of Jesus, what was done, though highly esteemed by men, was an abomination in the sight of our God.

Money may be now expended in ways which to some seem to be waste, which are not waste, no more than was Mary's

expenditure of the costly ointment on the person of Jesus. Money given to build churches, to send the Bibles over the world, to evangelize the ignorant masses, and lead souls to Christ, if laid upon the altar with Mary's spirit, will always be esteemed a good work by Him who never errs in judgment and never applauds a wrong act.

But while this is all true, is there not much money expended in building costly churches and cathedrals which may be regarded as waste? We all love beautiful, comfortable churches, and we can have them too without an extravagant expenditure of money. We do not think it wrong for a congregation, which has the money and can give it in the spirit of true Christian beneficence, to build a costly and beautiful house in which to worship the great God. But when we hear of a congregation or an individual erecting a church costing half a million or more, we cannot but feel that it would be far better, more pleasing and honouring to Christ Himself, to expend the one-fourth of that amount, or less, on a single church, which would be enough to erect a large and beautiful house of worship in any part of our country, leaving three or four hundred thousand, which would build a hundred substantial and comfortable chapels and mission churches, in which to gather that vast multitude who never enter a church, because they will not go to one of those magnificent temples built by and for the rich, and where, if they did go, they would probably not find a welcome.

A sensible and conscientious farmer who has wealth, and is as liberal as he is wealthy, recently said to the writer that no farmer would house part of his flock in the most expensive manner possible, and leave the greater part unprovided for, and exposed to the winter's cold and storms. If it would be inexcusable folly to do so, what shall be said of the wisdom and piety of that people who build for themselves "ceiled houses" in which to worship, and do nothing to provide even a tent for the needy and destitute, whom we always have with us?—*United Presbyterian*.

THE MINISTRY.

It is estimated that there are about one hundred thousand Protestant ministers in the United States. They are for the most part educated, refined, and consecrated men, who are endeavouring to make full proof of their ministry. Now and then one falls, but, as a class, they stand as honest ambassadors of Christ. Now, many a minister feels alone, that is, he feels a lack of sympathy. Some of our churches treat their pastors too much as hirelings, and not as ministers of Christ. This is especially true where the minister is voted for every year, thereby opening the way for every disaffected member to make the pastor trouble. We are glad to say that only a few churches are so antiquated, but choose pastors who are to remain so long as there is mutual satisfaction. No minister should accept a call from a church who will not invite him regularly to the pastorate, unless there is special reason. A yearly election only breeds contention, as a rule. It is also a sad fact that few church members understand the peculiar hardships of the ministry. They cannot sympathize with him because they are blind to his needs and feelings. Many a faithful pastor spends days and nights of anxiety on account of the outrageous and unchristian conduct of some disagreeable member, who is doing all he can to make trouble. Or a pastor may be worried and hindered from his work by some dissatisfied person, whose chief mission in the church seems to be to make it unpleasant for every one who does not agree with him. Pastors themselves are often tempted to speak out and injure their influence by striking back at the unruly member. This is unwise. The minister must learn to endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ. If he would succeed, he must be able to endure the difficulties of his calling. He will have to put on the brakes many times, but it will be for his good to do it. It is a wise pastor who keeps his own counsels. Some ministers are unreasonably sensitive. In fact, they are more sensitive than sensible. This causes them to regard any reflections on their course with great anxiety. A man of fine feelings does not enjoy reflections upon his motives, but the Christian minister must overcome his sensitiveness. He must be wise and prudent, but above all he must remember that he is accountable to God for his ministry, and endeavour to make that ministry tell for the redemption of the world. This he cannot do if he is too sensitive. The ministers of our country are a noble class of men. Take it all in all, we don't believe the world has seen their like before.

REVERENCE.

There is no virtue, no grace in postures and attitudes. This truth we do not question. But if we refuse to express reverence we shall soon cease to feel reverence. This, also, is a truth. It is not enough to be interested, in a general sense, in the services of the sanctuary. "God is greatly to be feared (reverenced) in the assembly of the saints, and in the congregation." True reverence, real worship, will express itself somehow, as long as we are compounded of body and spirit. Stare expression, and how long will the feeling endure? We are persuaded that it has declined in many, if not in most, of our congregations. It is greatly to be wished that it might be revived. But in order that it may become a fixed habit of our souls, we need to adopt suitable methods of expression. We should feel more like praying if we adopted some proper attitude of prayer. By kneeling, bowing the head, covering the eyes—by some bodily action or attitude expressive of reverent adoration—we shall be far more likely to cultivate the true spirit of devotion.