

THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN

FERVENT PRAYERS.

Fervent literally means "boiling hot." One who offers a fervent prayer is in a state of spiritual ferment, and profoundly agitated. A fervent prayer is not a mere vocal utterance, but a heart-cry. No other prayer "availeth much." It may, like the celebrated supplication of Edward Everett, be "the most eloquent prayer ever offered to a Boston audience," but, lacking fervency, is as destitute of power with God as a wax flower is of fragrance. Those offering such prayers are like callers to whom the door does not open, and who, on investigation, find that though they have pulled the door-knob, and rattled its wire, they have not rung the bell. Multitudes thus fumble with prayer's door-bell, and the door remains shut.

But while God is indifferent to prayers which are "words, words, words," He becomes interested the moment a real call for help is uttered. He is like the loving mother who, while able to sleep through a Babel of meaningless noises, wakens the instant her baby moans.

Prayers resemble telegrams. The operator pays no attention to most of them. His instrument clicks and rattles, but he seems unconcerned. Suddenly his aspect changes. He listens as if fascinated. The other messages were simply passing through the instrument, and were for somebody else; but now his office is called and a telegram for him to care for is being flashed over the wires. So most prayers are for "somebody else."

But Martin Luther's prayers, which broke the spell of ages and rocked the Papal throne, were for God, and He listened. So were those of the fiery John Knox, whom Mary, Queen of Scots, feared more than she did any army of 10,000 men. So was that of Elijah when, climbing to the top of Mount Carmel, he cast himself upon the ground, and put his face between his knees and prayed for rain. He did not ask for the restoration of the Jews, and the conversion of the Gentiles, and the overthrow of idolatry, and the coming of Christ. He desired one thing, and desired so fervently that he could think of nothing else.

Petitions which are loaded down with requests for everything in general and nothing in particular, are lukewarm and meaningless.

The boy who, as Christmas approaches, asks for a top, and tent, and tambourine; a kite, and cart, and kitten; a ball, and boat, and bicycle; a rocking-horse and bracket-saw, and printing press, is not fervent in his desire for either. But he who thinks knife, and talks knife, and dreams knife, and whenever asked what he would like, invariably replies, "something to whittle with," is fervent, and, whatever else is withheld or given, he is sure to find in the toe of his stocking on Christmas morning an answer to his prayer. If our prayers are fervent they will be specific, and such prayers are sure to be heard in heaven.

THE-CHILDREN'S PRAYER.

To say my prayers is not to pray,
Unless I mean the words I say;
Unless I think to Whom I speak,
And with my heart His favor seek.

In prayer we speak to God above,
We seek the blessed Saviour's love;
We ask for pardon for our sin,
And grace to keep us pure within.

But O! If I am found to smile,
Or play, or look about; awhile
Or think vain thoughts, the Lord will see,
And how can He be pleased with me!

Then let me, when I try to pray,
Not only mind the words I say,
But let me strive with earnest care,
To have my heart go with my prayer.

"SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

(By R. Walter Wright.)

"The just shall live by faith." Divinely bright
These words shone like a searchlight
On the deeps
Of Roman lust and sin, on glittering steep
Of Jewish pride, from the transcendent height
Where stands forever in the world's full sight
The Cross of Christ whose gracious power o'er sweeps
The whole round earth with mercy,
And which keeps
The trustful soul from sin's accursed blight.
Amid the gilded sins and villainies,
Religious scenic stages, hollow plays,
And pompous ethics of these latter days,
O God, are we still Pagans, Pharisees?
With Paul's great watchword blazoned, let us raise
The ancient banner of our liberties.

ALL ONE ARMY WE.

Dr. Kery Boyce Tupper, writing in the New York Observer on "Unity of Heart, Sentiment and Sympathy," mentions the fact that Christians, while differing in doctrinal statement, unite very generally in adopting the sentiments of the favorite hymns of the Church. He says, "We may preach unlike, but we always sing alike. We delight to sing with the Methodist Wesley:

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly";
and with the Episcopal Toplady:
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee";
and with the Congregational Palmer:
"My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour divine";
and with the Presbyterian Bonar:
"Glory be to God the Father;
Glory be to God the Son;
Glory be to God the Spirit;
Great Jehovah, three in One";;
and with the Reformed Luther:
"A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing";
and with the Catholic Newman (but it was before he became a Catholic):
"Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on";
and with the Moravian Zinzendorf:
"Jesus still lead on
Until our victory's won";;
and with the Quaker Barton:
"He dwells in cloudless light enshrined";
and with the Unitarian Bowring—would to God all Unitarians would sing as he sang:
"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wreck of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gather round its Head sublime";
and with the Baptist Fawcett:
"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above."

And, then, forgetting all of our denominational names and all of our denominational songs, as did the allies on the battlefield of Blenheim, we march together, singing, as we move to a victory, glorious and eternal:
"Like a mighty army move the Church of God;
Brothers, we are treading where our fathers trod;
We are not divided, all one army we,
One in hope and doctrine, one in charity."

Gold may be marred, but it is still gold. But a nugget thrust into a headful of mud does not change the character of the mud.

BOOKS THAT HELP.*

Some Bible Hints.

"Get" (v. 5) is the word of to-day; and the word is a good word if we get the right things, the enduring things. Getting wisdom is only half; it is quite as important (v. 5) not to forget it.

The value of a gain is the use we can make of it. Some men are "land poor," but no man is ever wisdom poor (v. 6).

Wisdom is not only useful but beautiful. There is no beauty—of house or face or clothes or pictures—that is lovely without it (v. 9).

Suggestive Thoughts.

Books must delight if they are to strengthen; says Shakespeare: "No profit goes where there's no pleasure taken."

Books must strengthen if they are to delight. Reading only for amusement soon ceases to amuse.

Few have wide enough range in their reading. Use different books for different purposes.

Never read a book that has not something to give your life, nor cease to read till you have received it.

A few Illustrations.

The love of a library is the best insurance. It ensures against loneliness, despair, gloom.

Our partners make half the success of our worldly business. Books give us for spiritual partners the world's best and greatest men.

A library is a bank, containing the treasures of all ages, and any one may draw all he can carry away.

As you cannot know intimately all men, but must choose your friends, so you cannot know all books, but must choose your friends among them.

To Think About.

Do I read with a purpose?
Has my reading any definite results?

Does my reading leave me happier and better?

A Cluster of Quotations.

We are as liable to be corrupted by books as by companions.—Fielding.

Next to acquiring good friends, the best acquisition is that of good books.—Colton.

No man should think so highly of himself as to think he can receive but little light from books; no one so meanly, as to believe he can discover nothing but what is to be learned from them.—Johnson.

Every great book is an action, and every great action is a book.—Luther.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

M., Dec. 7—Luke's books. Acts 1: 1-5.
T., Dec. 8—Paul's books. 2 Tim. 4: 9-13.
W., Dec. 9—Peter's books. 1 Pet. 1: 1-5.
T., Dec. 10—Missing books. Num. 21: 14-16.
F., Dec. 11—Writings in stone. Ex. 24: 12-18.
S., Dec. 12—Parchment rolls. Jer. 36: 2-4.
Sun., Dec. 13—Topic: Books that delight and strengthen. Prov. 4: 1-9.

As flowers always wear their own colors and give forth their own fragrance every day alike, so should Christians maintain their character at all times and under all circumstances.—Beecher.

If you would lead, you must be willing to be lonesome at times.

*Y.P. Topic, Sun., Dec. 13—Books that delight and strengthen, Prov. 4: 1-9.