

Pastor and People.

PEACE, BE STILL.

'He said unto the sea, Peace, be still.'—Mark iv. 39.

How sweet and holy was the calm
That fell on nature's bleeding rents,
When Christ applied the healing balm
And soothed the sobbing elements.
Long had the mighty tempest roared,
And thick ning mists begloomed the sky.
When lo! majestic words were heard
Resounding thro' the vaults on high,
"Peace, be still!"

As with the pure hoar frost at day
Beneath the sun's consuming rays,
The raging tempest sped away
And vanished far in misty haze.
And then an heavenly peace abode
Where was tumultuous discord,
While on the wafting breezes rode
The holy mandate of the Lord
"Peace, be still!"

When mighty storms beset the soul,
And harrowing doubts and fears arise,
How little earthly things console,
How little soothe the bitter sighs!
But when the crystal throne is sought,
Ah! then the doubts and fears are flown,
For words with gracious import fraught
Upon swift wings of love come down,
"Peace, be still!"

W. A. N. Dorland, M.P.

SOME MEN WE HAVE NO FAITH IN.

We have no faith in the man who calls the God inspired reprovcr of sin a crank, and who goes on loving his sin and his present evil life. "Servant of sin, free from righteousness." "He that loveth his life shall lose it."

We have no faith in the man who belabours his horse and kicks his cows and runs a pitch-fork into a stray hog. "The merciful man is merciful to his beast."

We have no faith in the man who says "he is too poor to give." But whose life aim seems to be to add farm to farm, dollar to dollar, or one who on the other hand allows the vanities of life to consume all. Pound up in self, the better, the higher nature, yearly becoming weaker, the soul shrivelling because its powers are not exercised. They plead poor for policy, but we must say that is a poor policy. Who has eyes to see let him see! "Who hath this world's goods and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

We have no faith in the man who says. "Don't drink, my son, don't drink the cup of custom is the cup of devils." but who in private says "A glass of whiskey does me good." "Be sure thy sins and also sons, will find thee out."

We have no faith in the man who has faith in himself. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

We have no faith in the professing Christian who does not progress, grow, bear fruit. Growth is one of the never-failing signs of life and fruit. Much fruit is a sign that the life is healthful, pure, vigorous. The law of the kingdom is that the branch that does not grow and bring forth fruit is cast forth and burned. But those who know their Maker and Master trust in Him, abide in Him, receiving His life, they flourish and bring forth much fruit to the glory of God. If we do these things we shall branch out, adding to our stem of faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, etc., add, add, add. "For if these things be in us and abound, they make us that we shall be neither barren nor unfruitful." "If we do these things we shall never fall, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." "He that lacketh these things is blind." "Open Thou our eyes, that we may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." "The entrance of Thy Word giveth light."

Blyth.

GLUM RELIGION.

The religion of Jesus has in it no elements to render its possessor morose, sullen, unattractive, glum. It is essentially cheery, pleasant, joyous. It removes all that terrifies and darkens, and substitutes whatever tends to lighten, beautify, sweeten and make the heart leap for joy. The curse of sin is removed because it has been borne by Christ, the wrath of God toward the sinner has been quenched in the blood that cleanses from all sin, the sin that separated the soul from God has been removed, the peace of God that passeth all understanding keeps the mind and heart, the spirit of love takes possession of the whole man, "the mountains and the hills break forth before Him into singing and all the trees of the field clap their hands." "There is now no condemnation to him," "Christ dwells in His heart by faith," "is formed in him the hope of glory," and "all things are his because he is Christ's," he has the promise of God for everything that he needs on earth, safe conduct through the vale of death and an eternal home with God and all blessed ones beyond. What a falsifier of the Saviour, what a caricaturist of his Master, what a stumbling-block to others in the way to heaven, and what an offence to "the little ones" in Christ fold is the professor who has nothing to exhibit but a glum religion.—*The Treasury.*

THE RELIGION OF RECREATION.

True religion consists in something besides reading the Bible, praying, and other acts of direct, spiritual devotion. It is as much the duty of a Christian, who is naturally a great worker, to give himself to some form of healthful recreation, as it is to read his Bible, attend church and contribute to the support of the Gospel. Especially is this true of laborous brain-workers. They do vastly better service for God by indulging in some suitable and salutary recreation, when, for continuous hours, they have bent their mental powers over some piece of literary work, either composing or studying it, than they do by keeping on till there has been an undue drain upon the sensitive and sacred forces of the mind and soul. To utter a paradox, I might say that such ones may serve God by not serving Him. In other words, to seem to not be doing anything, for a while, may be doing a most valuable service for God, as well as self. There is as much true religion in resting at the proper time and for the right length of time as there is, at other times, in working directly and solely for God. Indeed, there is more true religion in resting when enough work has been done, than there is in working when labour is too expensively exhausting the vital powers. Men have committed self-murder, by recklessly working beyond their ability to maintain the high pressure which they were under; and then, at their funeral, the minister has gravely charged their folly to the "providence of God!"

God is never really honoured when He is said to have "taken away" that person who, by an utter disregard to the necessity of supplying himself with the benefits which accrue from proper and timely recreation, continues to run his physical and mental machinery at so rapid and consuming a rate that it collapses and lies prone. Let ministrants, when officiating at the funerals of those furious workers who would not practice the religion of recreation, be careful to not charge God with what He is not responsible for, but which He fain would have avoided, and against which He warns men. And let Christian workers—men throbbing with great energy, learn a lesson from some who were infidels, so far their infidelity related to the rejection of Christ, and a disbelief of the Bible, but were believers in the religion of recreation. Take the example of the infidel, Thomas Hobbes. He was a regular and earnest walker all through life. It is said that he devoted his mornings to exercise and his afternoons to study. "In fine weather he arose early, went out and climbed any hill within reach; or, when the weather was wet he would exercise himself in some way or other within doors, so as to excite perspiration." He lived to be ninety-two years old, and we may believe that he attained that age very largely on account of his systematic adherence to proper recreation.

Let churches know that if their pastors take considerable recreation, they are not necessarily lazy, but are believers in the Gospel of recreation.—*C. H. Wetherbe, in Mid-Continent.*

LOVE PRODUCES REPENTANCE.

If you were going out into the open air on a frosty day, and were taking a lump of ice, you might pound it with a pestle, but it would still continue ice. You might break it into ten thousand atoms, but so long as you continue in that wintry atmosphere every fragment, however small, will still be frozen. But come within. Bring in the ice beside your bright fire, and soon in that genial glow "the waters fall." A man may try to make himself contrite; he may search out his sins and set them before him, and dwell on their enormity, and still feel no true repentance. Though pounded with penances in the mortar of fasts and macerations, his heart continues hard and icy still. And as long as you keep in that legal atmosphere it cannot thaw. There may be elaborate confession, a got-up sort of penitence, a voluntary humility, but there is no godly sorrow. But come to Jesus with His words of grace and truth. From the cold winter night of the ascetic, come into the summer of the Great Evangelist. Let that flinty frozen spirit bask a little in the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and then, finding that you have been forgiven much, you will love much.—*Dr. J. Hamilton.*

THE VALUE OF POSITIVE OPINION.

It was Sidney Smith (who was a keen observer of human affairs), we believe, who said that a great deal of talent is lost to the world from a want of courage. A man who has the courage of his convictions, and is not afraid to avow them, is always a useful man so long as he stands inside the lines of sound morals and of legitimate human rights. Indeed, when he gets somewhat outside those lines, he may still be useful by provoking thought and discussion that will drive him inside if he is an honest man, and that will at any rate prevent others from standing in a false position. The truth often suffers from stagnation, and needs to be stirred up; it suffers less by discussion than from being let alone. Rubbing it makes it brighter, just as it does with gold and silver and precious stone. Positive opinions beget opposition, of course; but the world and the church need them all the same. Those who are afraid to express them in behalf of truth can take the awful responsibility of silence; but truth will march forward without them. But where will they be when they see it marching on? *New York Evangelist.*

A PREVALENT OFFENCE.

It is probably no exaggeration to say that two-thirds of all the talk floating about through society regarding persons and families is absolutely without foundation. Over every community one may observe at times this mist of misrepresentation and misunderstanding, sufficiently tangible to blur the outline and harmony of things, but never tangible enough to be traced back to its origin so that responsibility can be fastened. Not long ago, in a church in another section of the country, it was suddenly reported from mouth to mouth that there was serious dissatisfaction with the minister in charge; a man of the greatest sincerity, integrity and fidelity, respected and beloved. There was instantly great anguish of mind on the part of many worthy people, who resented the injustice, and who detested the sort of spirit which manifests itself in church divisions. Presently it occurred to a few sceptical spirits to ascertain the dimensions of the dissatisfaction. They went to all the persons whose names were mentioned in connection with the movement, and from each they received not only a positive disclaimer, but a protestation of absolute ignorance; and both the protestation and the disclaimer were true. The whole dissatisfaction existed in the mind of one well-meaning but exceedingly irresponsible woman, who had excited herself to such a degree and talked with such volubility that she had persuaded herself and almost convinced a congregation that there was a serious disturbance at hand. This woman meant no evil, but she caused a great deal of suffering, and she might have been the occasion of a great piece of injustice. There is no way or punishing such an offence as this, although it is an offence which society ought to be able in some way to bring home to the offender. The absolute lack of responsibility which a good many well-meaning people show in the matter of talking would be incredible if one were not constantly coming upon illustrations of its extent. Men and women give forth impressions and repeat, without qualification or condemnation, statements regarding others which have absolutely no foundation in fact, and to ascertain the truth or falsity of which not the slightest effort has been made. These same people would shrink from the idea of burning down a man's house or taking a ten-dollar bill out of his pocket; but they do not hesitate to smirch his character or destroy his peace of mind, calamities much more difficult to bear than the results of arson or theft. Society stands in great need of sound education regarding personal responsibility for talk which affects the character or standing of others.—*Christian Union.*

THE PRESBYTERIAN POLITY.

We sometimes hear complaints of the defects in the Presbyterian polity. I have always listened to the complaints with respect, because they often come from men in conspicuous position. And yet, in the last analysis, I find a conviction remaining that the defects are not so much in the system or machinery as in the engineers or officials. It is marvellous how much vigour and efficiency can be put into a very ordinary machine if you set a man of brains and enthusiasm to run it. When Professor Stephen Alexander—*venerabile et clarum nomen*— essayed to teach us in his class-room at Princeton College, he had very inferior apparatus to deal with; apparatus that at the critical moment would not work or illustrate his principle in mechanics or philosophy; apparatus which, because of its crudity, would be ridiculed in this day of perfect mechanism; and yet the enthusiasm of the beloved professor compelled it to illustrate, and we quite forgot the imperfection of the instruments in our admiration for the solar light which shone forth wondrously from the face of the patient and grand old philosopher. Let us put our hearts into the work committed to us, and we will not have time or disposition to murmur much at the form of church government. A good man will be a good citizen under any form of government, whether it be a pure democracy or an absolute monarchy. Likewise if we "be filled with the Spirit" we can work for Christ and the Church under any ecclesiastical system, and under none with more true liberty and efficiency than the one known as the Presbyterian. *N. B. R., in Philadelphia Presbyterian.*

FAMILY PRAYERS.

There is one mark of a household in which God is known and loved which is too often wanting in our day; I mean the practice of family prayer. Depend upon it, the worth of a practice of that kind can only be measured by its effect during a long period of time; and family prayers, though occupying only a few minutes, do make a great difference in any household at the end of the year.

How, indeed, can it be otherwise when each morning, and perhaps each evening too, all the members of the family—the old and the young, the parents and the children, the master and servants—meet on a footing of perfect equality before the Eternal, in whose presence each is as nothing, yet to whom each is so infinitely dear that He has redeemed by His blood each and all of them? How must not the bad spirits that are the enemies of pure and bright family life flee away—the spirits of envy and pride and untruthfulness and sloth, and the whole tribe of evil thoughts, and make way for His presence in the hearts of old and young alike, who, as He brings us one by one nearer to the true end of our existence, so does He alone make us to be "of one mind in a house" here, within the narrow presence of each home circle, and hereafter in that countless family of all nations and tongues, which shall dwell with Him, the universal Parent of all eternity.—*Canon Liddon.*