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Poetry.

ALL THINGS EARNEST.

Time is earnest,
Passing by;
Death is earnest,
Drawing nigh.
Sinners! wilt thou smiling let
Time and Death appeal to thee?

Life is earnest:
When its close,
Thou return'st
Never more
To meet Eternity,
Wilt thou never serious be?

Heaven is earnest:
Solemnly
Float its voices
Down to thee.
O thou mortal, art thou gay,
Sporting through time earthly day?

Hell is earnest:
Fiercely roll
Burning billows
Near thy soul.
Wilt thou then, if thou able
Unredeem'd, unsanctified!

God is earnest:
Kneel and pray
Ere thy season
Pass away—
Ere he set his judgment throne,
Vengeance ready, mercy gone.

Christ is earnest,
Bids thee "come!"
Forth thy spirit's
Piousness sum.
Wilt thou span thy Saviour's love,
Kneeling with thee from above?

Thou refusest!
Wretched one!
Thou despisest
God's dear Son!
Madness! dying sinner, turn!
Tast his wrath when thou burn.

When thy pleasures
All depart,
When wilt soothe thy
Fainting heart?
Frenzies, desolate, alone,
Kneeling a world not known?

O, be earnest!
Loitering
Thou wilt perish:
Loitering
Be no longer idle and feet:
For thy Saviour waits for thee!

—*Ind. poet.*

AUTUMN.

Autumn! thou'rt welcome as a dear old friend:
Thy presence many a joyless hour will cheer,
To lead with treasures of the plow and year,
That make thy Hercules should less be heed.
Hail! March of the Season! thou dost lend
To me a boon which I prize so dear,
I love, as a vessel, to be full of wine,
My cheer, while stars are beaming bright,
And hear thy voice amid the rustling trees,
Murmuring in wild, unmeasured cadence:
Then I'll thank thee, Fancy, when thou burst'st her chains,
Life seems relieved of half its weary load,
Hope, long estranged, her general throne regains,
And Gratitude pours fervent thanks to God.

Christian Miscellany.

We need a better acquaintance with the thoughts and reasonings of pure and lofty minds.—*Dr. Sayer.*

Common Faults at Prayer-Meetings.

The social prayer-meeting is a source of great spiritual profit to a church, without the influences of which, in ordinary cases, it can hardly be expected to grow in grace. Those Christians are generally the most eminent and distinguished for piety, whose habits and feelings lead them to embrace every opportunity of attending the prayer-meeting. Of such great value, it is of the last importance that these meetings should be made much

more attractive than in many cases they are. Very much depends on the Pastor, or the conductor of the meeting. But much also depends on the brethren who are called upon to participate in its service. Very frequently much of the interest is destroyed by injudicious prayers. Perhaps a notice of some of the ways in which mistakes are made by those who take part in the prayers of the social meeting, may not be without benefit.

A very common complaint is, That the prayers are too long. Some brethren, whatever other gifts they may lack, have a remarkable gift of fluency, and can pray by the hour. They are at no loss for topics, and know how to enlarge upon every one of them. If these are exhausted, they can fall back upon themes already introduced, and present continued varieties of the same thought.—Some seem to think that they must pray for everything that comes to mind, whether appropriate to the occasion or not; and that it is time enough to stop when nothing else remains to be prayed for. If two persons are to pray in succession, the first will sometimes leave nothing for the second to do but to utter the same petitions. At times a brother will appear to be drawing his exercise to a close, and be almost ready to say "Amen," when a new thought will seem to strike his mind, and he will branch out again into a second prayer, longer than the first, and each of them too long for profit. We have known a request to be made for prayer in relation to a particular person, or class, or benevolent object; and scarcely any notice taken of it until everything else almost had been remembered, and no time left for a remembrance of the particular object, until every one had become weary of the service. Some have a favourite topic, and can never engage in social prayer without introducing it, however irrelevant to the occasion.

Prayers are very apt to partake more of the nature of preaching than of praying.—There may be didactic prayers, doctrinal prayers, argumentative prayers, controversial or polemic prayers, and even hortatory prayers. But these distinctions are unprofitable and wearisome. Every one who engages in social prayer should understand that there is no need of going through a system of theology in a single prayer, nor of praying for everything that comes to mind, nor of enlarging upon every particular, nor of going over the same ground again and again, nor of praying as long as he can. That is ordinarily the most acceptable and profitable prayer, which is mainly the breathing of intense desire for some one thing. Such is nature's language. Attention to this matter would greatly reduce the quantity, and vastly improve the quality, of each prayer offered in the social meeting.

The interest of the people in some prayers is greatly marred by the frequent recurrence of a favourite form of expression. Sometimes a particular name of the Deity is so often introduced as to become even painful to a devout mind. If not taken in vain, or irreverently, it is used as a mere expletive, and should be omitted.

There are some who seem to forget altogether the capacity of the room in which they are assembled. Large or small, they always pray with the same quantity of voice. Some pray low enough in family worship for a cathedral; others, again, especially in the commencement of the prayer, speak so very low that not one in ten can hear what they say. Every one who leads in prayer should speak, ordinarily, just loud enough to be heard by all who are in the room. A low tone of voice is very suitable for the closet, but not for the social meeting; and a loud vociferation may answer in the open air, but it is very much out of place in a room or parlour. It is a fault of other good brethren, whose voice and manner are very acceptable in personal conversation, that they put on an entirely different tone, or fall into some disagreeable habit or other, by which the comfort of those who

unite with them is sadly impaired.

We might prolong this long list of faults and inadvertencies of good men in prayer; for it is always easy to find fault. But when the great importance of social prayer, and the sweet comfort which might be derived from it, if properly engaged in, are considered, the censure of habits which impair and destroy its effect will be fully justified. A kindly word of admonition may sometimes correct a grievous fault; and there are few if any sensible men who have not on detecting in themselves some unexpected foible or deformity, been thankful for the discovery, and taken pains, if possible, to correct it.

Telling Jesus.

"Things always go smoothly with you," said a complaining disciple to Mr. F. "I never hear you make any complaints."

"I have found out an effectual way of guarding against that fault," said Mr. F.

"I did not know that you ever had any reason to complain."

"I don't know that I ever had; but I used to find myself doing it, until one day, in reading the Bible, I came across this passage, 'The Apostles gathered themselves unto Jesus, and told Him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.' It occurred to me, that, when I had any trouble, before I told any one, I should first tell Jesus. And I found, on trial, that, if I told Him first, I seldom had any occasion to tell anybody else. I often find the burden entirely removed while I am in the act of telling Him about it, and trouble which has its burden removed is no longer trouble."

"We ought to pray for deliverance from our trials; but Jesus needs no information respecting them. He is omnipotent, and has no need that anything be told Him."

"That is true, and yet He listened with complacency and kindness when His disciples told Him all things. In His sympathizing condescension, He permits us to repeat to Him our troubles, cares, and joys, though He knows them all. He listens to them with interest; just as the tender father listens to the narrative of his child, though it conveys no information. And He has connected great blessings with this exercise of filial confidence. It lessens one's sorrows and doubles joys, and increases faith and love. The more assiduously we cultivate an intimate acquaintance with the Saviour, the greater will be our happiness, and the more rapid our progress towards heaven. If we should make it a rule to go to Jesus every night, and tell Him all the events of the day, all that we have purposed, and felt, and said, and done, and suffered, would it not have a good influence on our conduct during the day? It certainly would. The thought that we should have to tell Jesus about it, would restrain us from many an unwholesome act. We could not wilfully indulge in what caused the agonies of the garden and the cross, if we were to make it the subject of conversation with Him before committing ourselves to slumber."

"It seems to me, that for me to tell Him all my experience would be occupying His attention with trifles; I should have nothing but sin and folly to tell Him."

"Sin and folly are no trifles; and the way to get a right view of the evil of sin is, to speak it out before Him in our confidential intercourse with Him. You may depend upon it, my brother, that if you will go to Jesus every night, and tell Him things that have occurred during the day, it will speedily lift you up above the world. It will do much towards making the will of Christ your guiding, governing principle. It will enable you to bear your crosses without repining. It will make you in mind and temper like Him with whom you hold this most intimate communion. O, that all Christians were in the habit of closing the day by going to Jesus, and telling Him all the things that they have done, and omitted

to do, during the day!"—*Christian Miscellany.*

How to meet an Infidel.

In the year 1828, a devoted young man, then studying for the Ministry, was requested to officiate at an evening prayer-meeting held in a private house. Knowing that two or three Deists were present, some remarks were made upon the authenticity of God's Word. The president of an infidel club arose and interrupted the speaker, who mildly said to him, "Sit down, and after meeting I will talk with you." When the service closed, there was hardly time for conversation, and an appointment was made that the parties should meet at the house of a friend on the following morning. At the appointed hour, the president, with several infidel books under his arm, and a large handkerchief full of pamphlets and papers, made his appearance, in company with two members of his club. No sooner were the parties seated, and the large table covered with his religious dissecting knives, than the infidel began with much warmth to pour forth his contempt for the Bible.

"Stop, sir, stop," said the student. "Let us commence right, and then we shall end well. Do you believe there is a God who made all things; a God who has a mind?"

"I do."

"Do you believe he created you, feeds, clothes, and watches over you and yours without any reward?"

"Certainly, I do."

"Well, sir, that we commence right, please lead in prayer. Ask the God in whom you believe to direct us to the rejection of that Bible, if it is false, and if it is true, to receive it. We do not want to be deceived."

The man hesitated and said, "I never pray. I do not believe in prayer."

"Never pray, sir; do not believe in prayer when your God has done so much for you; never thank him for his goodness?—Have you had a father?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you never thank him? If you had a child, whom you had always blessed, would he not thank you when you bestowed upon him some little trinket?"

"I suppose he would."

"Well, sir, commence right. Just pray; pray, and thank God."

"I can't pray."

The student then turned to his infidel companions, asked them to pray, and they both declined. With indescribable feelings, he knelt, and with great freedom poured out his whole heart to God. As he finished, they all three arose from their seats. The president passed his fingers into his hair, and as he gathered up his books, said:

"I think we will not talk any more—it will do no good."

The student waited upon them to the door, and in a short time heard that the club had disbanded.

Conscience.

What pitiful things are power, rhetoric, or riches, when they would terrify, dissuade, or buy off conscience from pronouncing sentence according to the merit of a man's actions?

When conscience complains, cries out, or recoils, let a man descend into himself with a suspicion that all is not right within; for surely that hue and cry was not raised upon him for nothing.

It is most certain that no height of honour or affluence of fortune can keep a man from being miserable, or indeed contemptible, when an enraged conscience shall fly at him, and take him by the throat; so it is also certain that no temporal adversities can cut off from those inward, secret, invisible supplies of comfort which conscience shall pour in upon distressed innocence in spite and in defiance of all worldly calamities.—*South.*