

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

{ NEW SERIES. }
{ Vol. XVIII., No. 50. }

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, December 10, 1873.

{ WHOLE SERIES. }
{ Vol. XXXVII., No. 50. }

Poetry.

WAYSIDE SERVICE.

BY ANSON D. P. RANDOLPH.

When shall I learn the Master to obey?—
That service lies along the daily road
Wherein the soul may hold its upward way
Through all the hours on wonted cares be-
stowed.
Forget not now, my heart,
Those many days when as the Son of man,
His blameless life on common tasks was
spent,
Nor from the world apart,
And held within the all-embracing plan,
While He about His father's business went.
By Joseph's side He uncomplaining wrought,
As other laborer might for laborer's wage.
He, Son of God, no loftier service sought
Than such as man the lowliest one engage.

Break out in song!—there is no menial task,
No work but promise has of large reward,
With peace and hope divine
Nor once forget, in all ye do or ask;
That servants are not greater than their
Lord!

—N. Y. Observer.

Religious.

"THE RELATION OF PRAYER TO PASTOR EFFICIENCY."

In our last weeks issue we invited the attention of our readers to an excellent article in the October Baptist Quarterly and gave a resume of the first part. The following is the substance of the closing portion of the article:

But prayer affects the pastor and promotes his efficiency—

(2) *Spiritually*, by purifying his motives and methods, and revealing God in his Word and works.

(a) *Purifying his motives and methods*.—It is a beautiful sight when a young man consecrates to the work of the ministry the dew of his youth, and enters with unselfish love upon what is truly the holiest of all employment. But actual experience in it soon reveals to him that a thousand influences are at work to dim the lustre of his consecration and defile the purity of his motives. I need not mention the grosser forms of temptation, nor the snares of idleness or pecuniary speculation, but only those evils which attack the heart, and eat silently into the soul as doth a canker. There is danger of professional formality. Dealing with the tremendous truths, which at every presentation affect the soul of speaker and hearers for ever, in a sense holding in our hands the eternal destiny of those to whom we minister, there is danger that our very familiarity with these subjects may blunt our sensibilities and harden our hearts.

Professional jealousy. There is danger that there should crawl into the soul that canker-worm of unfavorable comparison among the pastors in the same city, association, or state. There is danger too of—

Professional ambition. Of using the wonderful elements of power in the ministry to serve personal ends—the acquirement of reputation or salary or eminent position. As our motives must be pure, so also must our methods.

The influence of modern society may easily become corrupting to methods of pastoral labor, chiefly in making them hasty and superficial.

How is it possible that the pastor can be honest and true to God, and keep both motives and methods pure? Only in one way—by keeping himself in the presence of God. "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is on my right hand I shall not be moved." "My soul wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him." Our advance will be neither too fast nor too slow, when we thus keep step with him. But in so doing we shall have to encounter worldly influences, and disappoint the expectations of worldly-minded professors; for God, in man's sight, appears a slow

worker. But when we are brought into sympathy with him, to work with him, and as he is working, we shall be willing to take all the time which is necessary to do everything well; and so at last shall we actually accomplish the most; for as there shall be no haste, there shall be no waste, and he truly makes the most of life who walks with God and does his will.

In thus securing purity of motive and method by prayer, we shall also enjoy another spiritual advantage—

(b) *Revelation of God in his Word and works*. I need not attempt either to prove or describe how the spirit of prayer brings with it the revelation of God, both in his Word and works; how the golden gates of truth's temple are thrown wide open, and we are made

are hid from the merely intellectual investigator; and how, in a single moment of search under the light which communion with God brings, we discover more hid treasures than in whole days of exploration under human lights.

It is worthy of remark, that only in spiritual illumination which prayer gives can we find adequate help to meet the distracting demands now made upon the active ministry. It is claimed that the minister of our times must be a good preacher, both expounding the Word of God and solving the problems of life. He must be a good pastor, faithfully visiting and caring for the wants of his flock. He must be a good organizer, developing and consolidating the resources of his people. Besides, he must take an interest in reformatory movements, and must find time to watch the progress of science, and allow not the great movements of the age to pass from under Christian influence. But how shall one man, in one short life, be able to meet such numerous and diverse claims? how shall he find time that while he neglects no practical duty, he may yet keep up an intelligent acquaintance with the world's progress, now when knowledge is so broad, and life so short? How shall he discern between false progress and true; between that which is abiding: between that which ought to have his attention and that which is worthless? This aid he is to find in spiritual illumination through prayer. For, as a magnet thrust into the sand draws to itself the particles of metal, so does the soul filled with the Spirit of God discern the signs of the times, and learn to separate between the evil and the good, between the transient and permanent around him.

2. *The pastor's work*; It may be safely said that when he is rightly affected by it in his person, his work cannot but be correspondingly efficient. Here are some of the directions in which this efficiency will appear:

(1) *It will give effect to both his preaching and pastoral labors*.—It will impart to his efforts that indescribable power which we call *unction*, a power we cannot afford to be without. He will not be formal, nor worldly, nor hasty, nor dull. His whole manner will be affected by it, and his very voice will receive a tone which nothing else can impart; and whether he prays or preaches, or leads the prayer-meeting, or stands by the bed of the sick or the dying, or solves in any mode of service the mysterious problems of life, he will always and everywhere make himself felt as a "man of God."

(2) *It will enlarge the sphere of the pastorate*. Many pastors find their spheres of labor much contracted. When the field is narrow, and the room for outward growth is curtailed, we must seek a deeper and more heavenly consecration. And this can come only in prayer. By it we may overleap all barriers, and cast down all obstructions, and a pastor and his church, though confined to a narrow territory, can yet make themselves felt to the ends of the earth by reason of their power with God.

Prayer will enable the pastor—

(3) *To grapple with the difficulties of*

the pastoral work. Two are mentioned as specimens of the rest.

(a) *Difficulty of developing the character and the resources of the church*.

This is the great need of our times. There is no possible way to meet the present and prospective calls of divine Providence except by a more thorough development of the character and resources of our membership; for, just as for ages there have been untold treasures of gold and silver hid in our mountains and valleys, waiting for the eye of man to discover; and the hand of man to bring them forth, so are there hid in our churches untold treasures, both of character and resources, waiting the skilled hand to bring them forth. This is the pastor's work. Others may give occasional help, but

while in some cases men are naturally and easily moulded, like the gold first gathered by the miner near the surface by far the greatest part of what must be reached lies deeply imbedded in false ideas, in worldliness and selfishness; and by some means the rocks must be crushed before the precious ore can be liberated. The faithful pastor's heart often sinks as he finds his most earnest efforts fail, and his best laid plans defeated. But through prayer he can conquer. Prayer sets in motion the ponderous wheel of Divine discipline, which are able to break up old habits and prejudices, crush out worldliness, and release the soul for holy growth and activity. It is a cheering experience when he can see the course of Christian development in his people, following in the line of his prayers. Or take another; the—

(b) *Difficulty of dealing with chronic and crystallized evils in a church*.

At the formation of a church the membership are generally united and self-sacrificing. But by-and-by, as wealth and members increase, and as burdens have to be borne which give occasion for exhibitions of selfishness, strifes and alienations arise, which affect the whole church. The particular acts in which they originate may be trifling, but that whereunto they lead is mournful. Change of pastors does not remove, but often aggravates the evil, and much of pastoral discouragement arises from this source. Half the strength of many pastors is absorbed in preventing chronic evils from fatally injuring the church. These are the "mountains" whose removal is only "possible" to him that believeth. These are the devils who "go not out but by prayer and fasting." Oh, that instead of the mountains so often moving the pastor, we knew how so to use the power placed within our reach that the pastor might move the mountains.

But, finally, prayer promotes the efficiency of the pastor, because it—

(4) *Affords him needed rest and comfort*. The pastor is engaged in a great work, a work with which it is an exalted privilege to be connected. He has great resources. He has "exceeding great and precious promises," and all the certainty of the Divine purposes to make his success sure. Yet he has great obstacles. The enemy of souls fights him with special malignity. The world is opposed to God and his truth. Even the hearts of professed Christians are often hard; and the word preached falls on stony ground and among thorns. Plans and purposes at variance with the best interests of the cause thwart his wisest movements; his motives are misconstrued; his labors unappreciated; his efforts futile. So that there are times when all that is great in his work, and cheering in its spirit, and glorious in its prospects, is lost to view, shut out behind the clouds and darkness of present trouble.

Then to whom shall he go? Whither shall he flee, but to that "strong habitation" whereunto he may continually resort? There all his motives and his purposes are known; his conflicts are comprehended, his efforts appreciated, and his very failings and errors looked upon with tender pity;

and to bathe in the calm sea of that loving Presence, to lean on that Bosom, and feel the throbbings of that loving Heart, is rest indeed.

THE SMALL WORRIES.

The Christian world has long been guessing what Paul's thorn in the flesh was. We have a book that in ten pages tries to show what Paul's thorn was not and in another ten pages tries to show what it was.

Many of the theological Doctors have felt Paul's pulse to see what was the matter with him. We suppose the reason he did not tell us what it was may have been because he did not want us to know. He knew that if he stated what it was, there would have been a great many people from Corinth both-ering him with prescriptions as to how

Some say it was diseased eyes, some that it was a humped back. It may have been neuralgia. Perhaps it was gout, although his active habits and a sparse diet throw doubt on the supposition. Suffice it to say it was a thorn—that is, it stuck him. It was sharp.

It was probably of not much account in the eyes of the world. It was not a trouble that could be compared to a lion or a boisterous sea. It was like a thorn that you may have in your hand or foot, and no one knew it. Thus we see that it becomes a type of those little nettlesome worries of life that exasperate the spirit.

Every one has a thorn sticking him. The housekeeper finds it in unfaithful domestics; or an inmate who keeps things disordered; or a house too small for convenience, or too large to be kept cleanly. The professional man finds it in perpetual interruptions, or calls for "more copy." The Sabbath school teacher finds it in unattentive scholars, or neighboring teachers that talk loudly and make a great noise in giving a little instruction. One man has a rheumatic joint which, when the wind is northeast, lifts the storm-signal. Another, a business partner who takes full half the profits, but does not help earn them. These trials are the more nettlesome because, like Paul's thorn, they are not to be mentioned. Men get sympathy for broken bones and mangled feet, but not for the end of sharp thorns that have been broken off in the fingers.

Let us start out with the idea that we must have annoyances. It seems to take a certain number of them to keep us humble, wakeful and prayerful. To Paul the thorn was disciplinary as the shipwreck. If it is not one thing it is another. If the stove does not smoke, the boiler must leak. If the pen is good, the ink must be poor. If the thorn does not pierce the knee, it must take you in the back. Life must have sharp things in it. We cannot make up our robe of Christian character without pins and needles.

We want what Paul got—grace to bear these things. Without it we become cross, censorious and irascible. We get in the habit of sticking our thorns into other people's fingers. But, God helping us, we place these annoyances in the category of the "all things that work together for good." We see how much shorter thorns are than the spikes that stuck through the palms of Christ's hands—and remembering that he had on his head a whole crown of thorns, we take to ourselves the consolation that if we suffer with him on earth, we shall be glorified with him in heaven.

But how could Paul positively rejoice in these infirmities? The school of Christ has three classes of scholars: in the first class we learn how to be stuck with thorns without losing our patience; in the second class we learn how to make the sting positively advantageous; in the third class of this school we learn how even to rejoice in being pierced and wounded; but this is the senior class, and when we get to that we are near graduation, and glory.

CALVINISM AND CULTURE.

There is something in the evangelical view of a sinner's relation to God so overwhelming, that in comparison to it all interests that are merely human become quite trivial and insignificant. In this view every man is naturally lost; and until he is restored through a living faith in Jesus Christ, all is utterly wrong with him. He needs not merely a little help to bring him to the gate of heaven, or a mere brush of ecclesiastical paint to make him a Christian; he needs a new heart and a right spirit—a change of the most radical kind. Till this great business is accomplished, the Calvinist has little heart for any other. He is like a man trying to extinguish a consuming fire—the matter is too absorbing for him to be able to attend to lesser concerns. But when the great matter has been settled, he finds scope for the full development of his nature, and for the culture and exercise of every faculty. Having sought first the kingdom of heaven and his righteousness, the other things are added in due course. No finer example could be imagined than that which is furnished in the life of Chalmers. The science which he loved before his spiritual change, he loved most dearly afterwards; but it sunk to a secondary place it was overshadowed by the direct interests of the soul. This is the great lesson of Calvinism. Human culture is secondary—faith and regeneration are of primary importance. And for our part, it seems all the better entitled to our respect that this is what it teaches. If it drew the line very slightly between the church and the world, or obliterated it entirely, and encouraged men to regard culture as quite a good substitute for religion, it would take the most effectual way that has yet been devised for rubbing out religion itself. It is its glory that it requires of every man first to get into a right relation to God, while thereafter it leaves him free to occupy himself, as much as his circumstances will permit, with the development and gratification of every real and legitimate part of his nature.—*Sunday Magazine*.

I MUST HAVE A RELIGIOUS NEWSPAPER.

1. Because such a paper, rightly conducted, is a public institution of great value, exerting a happy influence upon all the varied important interests of society, and I am bound to do my part in sustaining such an institution.

2. Because my own religious growth as a Christian is materially promoted by such a paper. My religion waxes or wanes in life and power in proportion to the clear or dim views I have of the great things of the kingdom of God. Next to the Bible, my paper increases the clearness and extent of my spiritual vision, giving light and expelling darkness by its never ceasing supply of facts and appeals, which are sunshine and shower to the spiritual verdure of my soul.

3. Because I want a good commentary on the Bible. My religious paper furnishes it, often by direct expositions by items of religious biography, strikingly illustrative of Bible truth, by constantly-recurring events of divine providence equally illustrative, by narratives of revivals, conversions, progress of missions at home and abroad all showing the power of the Gospel and explanatory of God's word.

4. Because I want to be a strong man, armed for defending truth and destroying error. Political partisans about me are familiar with all the facts and arguments which sustain their distinctive views, and are ever ready and able to assault or defend. I want a similar kind of ability and facility in sustaining the cause of truth and in advancing the kingdom of my Master. My religious paper furnishes me with a power of offense and defense which is invaluable. It is as if a new arsenal of spiritual weapons was opened and

5. My family needs to have just