

Folded Hands.

Dear, patient hands, that toiled so hard for me,
At rest before me now I see them lying;
They toiled so hard, and yet we could not see
That she was dying.

Poor, rough, red hands, that drudged the
livelong day,
Still busy when the midnight oil was
burning,
Off toiling on until she saw the gray
Of day returning!

If I could sit and hold those tired hands,
And feel the warm life-blood within
them beating,
And gaze with her among the twilight
lands,
Some whispered words repeating!

Dear patient heart, that deemed the heavy
care
Of drudging household toil its highest
duty,
That laid aside its precious yearning there,
Along with duty.

Dear heart and hands, so pulseless, still,
and cold!
(How peacefully and dreamlessly she's
sleeping!)
The spotless shroud about them silent fold,
And leave me weeping.
—Albert Bigelow Paine.

The Signals of the Spirit

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

It is well for our Churches to realize their entire dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Without His presence and His power all efforts for the salvation of souls will be fruitless; all the best-constructed Church machinery will accomplish nothing unless it have "the living Spirit within the wheels." To watch for the Holy Spirit and to work with the Holy Spirit is the supreme duty of the hour. An incident in Old Testament history illustrates this vital point.

When the Philistines were about to attack the armies of Israel God commanded David to "fetch a compass behind the Philistines, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going [or a rustling] in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the Lord go out before thee." That peculiar sound was to be the signal for an advance. It was the token of the divine Presence. David obeyed the signal. When God moved he moved, and the result was a glorious victory. This unique incident is full of practical suggestion. Faith must always watch providential leadings, and when God moves is our time to "bestir ourselves;" if we move with Him, success is quite sure to come; if we move without Him, then the failure is our own fault. How clearly was the divine signal manifested to that little company in the upper room at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost! The Holy Spirit came upon them, and the apostles fell into line with the Spirit's leadings; they co-operated with the Spirit, and thousands of souls were converted in a single day.

If the history of the most powerful revivals is studied, this same truth appears—the signals of the divine Spirit were recognized, and they were obeyed. God opened the way, and His servants bestirred themselves to special efforts and redoubled prayers. Not more plainly does God indicate good time and harvest-time to the farmer than He often indicates to pastors and churches that the time has come for them to thrust in the sickle and reap. The biographies of such master-workmen as Dr. Lyman Beecher, Dr. Spencer, of Brooklyn, Dr. Edward N. Kirk, Mr. Finney, and Mr. Moody contain repeated illustrations. Dr. Lyman Beecher watched for tokens of the Holy Spirit as a sea captain watches for a favorable wind, and when he feels the first rustling of the breeze through the rigging he hastens to spread his canvas. I have no doubt that God has often given gracious indications of His presence when human indolence or unbelief has failed to observe them. Our loving God was ready; His servants were not obedient to duty, and the cloud passed away without rain.

Seasons of spiritual awakening often come suddenly in a congregation or in a community; sometimes they come as a blessed surprise, but the measure of success is always the measure of the readiness of Christians to co-operate with the Holy Spirit. When the Master works we must work; every hour then is golden. My own experience as a pastor tallied with his truth, almost without any exception. There were times when my people talked, looked, and hoped for a revival but no special out-pouring of the Spirit came; at least there was no especial awakening of the impenitent or frequent conversions to Christ. Revivals have come when no one confidently predicted them. One rule, however, I have followed, and always found it safe and successful. Whenever I discovered unmistakable evidences of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the

awakening of several souls, I have felt sure that special effort and special prayer should be made immediately, to reach and move others. The "sound of the rustling in the treetops" was the Spirit's signal to bestir ourselves. During my earliest ministry in a small congregation, the call of a godly woman at my house to inform me that one of her family was under deep conviction led me to appoint a special prayer service at her house on that very evening; and a hurried summons from house to house filled her dwelling with a most wonderful meeting. A more powerful outpouring of the Fountain of life. Let anyone who is sick of life and ready to cast it away in despair come to Jesus, and his life shall become glorious and everlasting. He shall say with Paul, "For to me to live is Christ."

Church Loyalty.

MRS. OLDHAM'S DIARY.

"We had rather a small congregation yesterday, and again last night," said I to Winifred this morning as we sat sewing together.

"That was owing to attractive musical programmes at some of the other churches," she answered. "A certain class of church members will follow the multitude, to be entertained."

"And they miss a great deal by doing so," I continued. "I wish all our churches could hear two sermons once preached by our pastor in Roseville. One was on the text, 'Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way?' and, as I remember, the points were, the gadding from one religious fad to another, being blown about by every wind of doctrine; the gadding from one church to another, wherever the attraction was strongest; and then the literal gadding about on the Lord's day. It was a strong sermon."

"The other text was, 'And Thomas was not with them,' and the sermon itself was a vivid setting forth of all the blessings Thomas missed by not being where he should have been on that 'first day of the week' so long ago."

"You believe in church loyalty," laughed Winifred.

"Indeed I do. I like the old phrase, 'belongs to the church.' I not only belong to the church, but to my own particular church, and to the local organization of that church. We can be in only one place at a time, and my place at the hour for worship is in the church to which I belong. My church has a right to all I can render of fealty and service. She has, moreover, the right to say what amusements are harmful to me, or, at least, are not for my edification. I mean what I say when I speak of belonging to the church. I have been thinking of this matter a good deal lately, and I should feel heartily ashamed of myself if I were one of those women who seem to put the claim of other organizations before the claims of the church. The church is divinely ordained, and it is through the church the Lord means to work. I am afraid I haven't much patience with societies for Christian work outside of the church."

"But, mother, you don't like narrowness, do you?"

"No, I do not like narrowness, but the tree which branches out too widely without being well rooted is likely to topple over. It is just the same with a Christian."

"What do you mean in this particular case by being well-rooted?"

"I mean this,—first love your church, as that special fold to which the Good Shepherd has assigned you. Be faithful in your attendance on her stated times of worship. Don't stay away from prayer-meeting with the idea that you will have the loss made up to you in some other meeting,—union, or non-denominational, later in the week. The Lord has said, 'In the place where I have put my name, there will I meet with thee and bless thee,' and we must be in the path of duty if we want that promise fulfilled to us. Then learn to know your Church, her history, past and present, her activities and her doctrine. Intelligence is the nursing mother of interest, and an intelligent Presbyterian has a warm love for and interest in the Presbyterian church. And lastly, work for your church. I very much dislike an intense denominationalism and a pale Christianity, but the love of Christ should constrain us to work faithfully just where he has put us. Those are the best soldiers who have the strongest 'esprit de corps.' It is definite, concentrated effort that tells; it is the work which grows out of settled, intelligent principle which counts for most in the world."

"Another reason for church loyalty," I went on, after some moments of busy stitching, "is the good we get out of it ourselves."

"The good we get from our own 'loyalty, mother?' asked my daughter, looking up, half surprised, half laughing.

"Surely; loyalty to any right cause which has a claim on us, is helpful to character, and loyalty to the best cause, the cause of Christ, is necessarily most helpful and strengthening. Take a woman (I have been thinking most of the woman side of this question) who has grown up in a family which has held its church relations loosely, and that woman is apt to be rather slipshod in the performance of all duty, at home and abroad. On the other hand, take the woman who has been brought up on the catechism, and who has been trained from childhood to be faithful in attendance on the ordinances of her church, and that woman's faithfulness is a part of her character. Her husband, her children and her home are all cared for more faithfully and intelligently because of the church loyalty of the wife and mother."—Chris. Observer.

The Ministry of the Word.

There is a thrilling significance in those simple words of mere statement which are found in the 2nd verse of the 5th chapter of Matthew: He opened His mouth and taught them. These words mark an epoch in the world's history. Incarnate Truth unfolds its message to the human mind and heart. These words declare that sublime ministry begun. Power, freshness, sincerity, simplicity characterize the utterances of those Divine lips, and from the time his mouth opened to speak as never-man spake until it closed with his ministry fulfilled, every word was consistent with his mission and direct in its bearing upon the object for which he came, which, as he declares before the great world power, was to bear witness to the truth.

His ministry was varied, as is that of those he sends forth in his name. He preached in different places before different audiences on different themes. He attracted large assemblages. He found sympathizers, and he encountered the bitterest opposition. It mattered not. Neither fear nor favor turned him aside from his holy quest to seek and save the lost. His eye was single and he was full of light. He was not embarrassed by the difficulties and perplexities which so often handicap his ministers in these latter days. He did not have to strain after popularity. He did not have to own a church or please sensitive parishioners. He was not intimidated by salary arrangements, and there were no formidable rivals for him to fear. All his zeal and power and purpose were concentrated on his mission, and thus clothed with his own essential qualifications and attestations, he went forth to do and teach. There was nothing he did or said that was not matchless, unquestionable, divine. His entire course was conviction compelling, and in life or in death the signs were unmistakable that he was the Son of God.

Nineteen centuries have passed since that day he took his place on that beautiful hill slope and opened his mouth and taught. There had been no advertisement of the service. Nothing had been done to draw a crowd. There were no famed singers to make those mountain echoes ring with solo and chorus. But there was a new song to be sung on earth that day, which had in it the power of an infinite crescendo. There was a power in those words so quietly spoken which was to expand its influence over all nations and all time. How little did any one in that assemblage who looked upon the speaker and listened to his words conceive the moral grandeur of that occasion? Who among that privileged audience apprehended the fact that those words were spoken by The Word who thus inaugurated the verbal transmission of the Divine Truth and entered upon his sublime mission as oral exponent of God's will to man?

It was the consecration of the vocalized Gospel. It was the ordination of the organs of speech to the redemption of humanity. It was the initial exercise of a new power which came with the opening of a new era. It was not the discovery of the gift of oratory, for this had been long found and abundantly exercised. Nor was it the first time that from opened mouths had come the messages of God. But it was the inauguration of the organized authoritative ministry of the Word ushered in by the testimony of him who is the spirit of prophecy.

The Word became flesh. Hear ye him, says the voice of the Father as he assumes the functions of His ministry. There is no other medium of approach to God. There is no other authorized revealer of truth. And, thus commissioned, he opened his mouth and taught. Thus he set that ministry of the Word in operation, and when he had fulfilled his ministry he gave it continuance and universality to those he commissioned in his stead. "Go ye into all the world," and "Lo, I am with you always."—Through them who abide in him his

mouth is open still, and still he teaches. Whoever, wherever, however human lips speak forth the truth of God they stand on a plane of exalted dignity and power which transcends the loftiest position earth can give. When he opened his mouth and taught it was the break of light upon the moral darkness, and every minister of Jesus Christ is an angel, a messenger of light, with mission identical with his Lord. Following down the long centuries from the inauguration of the word was seen the clouds of darkness breaking until under the long cumulative power of these instruments and agents of light, the shadows will flee away.—Chris. Intelligencer.

Difficult to Suit.

BY C. H. WETHERESE.

It seems to me that one evidence of a spiritually very weak church is that of being very difficult to suit in reference to deciding upon the new pastor that the church wants and needs. When a church has before it about twenty ministers in succession, from whom to make selection of a pastor, and rejects every one of them, it looks very much as though the church were not only very difficult to suit, but also very destitute of spiritual power and hence the habit of downright praying.

Rev. Malcolm J. McLeod, a Presbyterian pastor, says: "I have in mind, as I write, a congregation that has been vacant for three years, and their story is a sad one. The last time I heard, they were 'hearing' the ninety-first candidate. That was six months ago. I presume the century mark has been left far rear since then, and still the cruel hecatomb is going on. Is it possible that not one of this honored company of five score names, many of whom could fill a college presidency, some of whom I know to be literary brilliant, and several of whom I verily believe could hold their own in an intellectual scrimmage against any chief justice in the country—is it possible, I repeat, that not one of this worthy body can meet the fastidious tastes of this fanatical people? Ah, but he must be so and so, and so and so! Young, of course! that is the sine qua non; then, too, great and gracious and good and good-looking—all which, being flexible terms, every fair lady has her pick."

What a terribly demoralized condition that church must be in! What great need they have of a revival of prayer, humility and submission to God's will! I do not say that the first man who comes before a church as a prospective pastor should be accepted by it, even though much prayer has been offered by the church in regard to the man, for it may be that he is not God's choice for them. Possibly it may be necessary for the church to hear several ministers before the right one appears. Samuel had to pass in review seven sons of Jesse before he came to David, the eighth and last one, as God's choice of a king.

So, sometimes a church needs to see and know something of several ministers before coming to the one whom God would have them settle as a pastor; but it is quite another matter when a church, governed merely by sight and fancy, continues to inspect ministers by the score, and then rejects the whole of them, just because they are superlatively exacting. Such a church ought to be without a pastor until they humbly repent of their fanciful folly. It is mighty hard work for any man to serve such a church as pastor. They would tire even Paul to death. Gabriel could not stand it six months.

To Be Useful.

Do the duty which lies next to you. Live in the sunlight, and help others out of the shadows.

Have a great deal of hope in the heart and wear a radiant face.

Reach out a hand of helpfulness to the stumbling ones, and speak a word of cheer to the discouraged.

Spend much time in secret fellowship with the Master; then time spent in trying to better the world will be better and more wisely spent.

Find out where the lame ones are, and help them over the rough places. Their gratitude will repay you, and the Master will say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these, ye have done it unto me."

"It is expedient for you that I go away," He said this knowing that their spiritual natures would develop and grow in His bodily absence. A young girl, whose mother left her for heaven, grew at once not only more spiritual in her own nature, but very desirous to carry out in every way her mother's will. She said, "My mother influences me more than ever before, and she is more truly my friend and companion than ever before."—Exchange.

The Old Man's Prayer.

In one of our city hospitals recently the physicians were getting ready to perform an operation. The patient, an old man, was stretched upon the operating table, and when at length all was in readiness one of the physicians approached with chloroform. The old man raised his hand and said: "Wait a moment." Then, folding his hands and closing his eyes, he began repeating the prayer which he used to say at night at his mother's knee:

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take;
And this I ask for Jesus' sake."

The doctors bowed their heads reverently and waited, and when he had finished he looked up and calmly said: "I am ready."

Skillful and tender fingers did their work, and after a time the eyes of the old man slowly unclosed again. As he took in the familiar surroundings a look of disappointment crossed his face, and then he said: "As thou wilt, Lord."—New York Observer.

Keep Still.

Keep still! When trouble is brewing, keep still; when slander is getting on its legs, keep still; when your feelings are hurt keep still till you recover from your excitement at any rate. Things look different through an unagitated eye. In a commotion once I wrote a letter and sent it, and wished I had not. In my later years, I had another commotion and wrote a long letter; but life rubbed a little sense into me, and I kept that letter in my pocket against the day when I could look over it without agitation and without tears. I was glad I did. Less and less it seemed necessary to send it. I was not sure it would do any hurt, but in my doubtfulness I learned to reticence and eventually it was destroyed.

Time works wonders. Wait till you can speak calmly and then you will not need to speak may be. Silence is the most massive thing conceivable sometimes. It is strength in very grandeur. It is like a regiment ordered to stand still in the mad fury of battle. To plunge in were twice as easy. The tongue has unsettled more ministers than small salaries ever did or lack of ability.

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