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## American Presbyterian.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1868.

### THE MEDICINE OF PRAYER.

A celebrated surgeon of this city, of the generation just past, not a professor of religion, nor much like one, has been known to beg the earnest prayers of a minister of the gospel visiting one of his patients, who had just submitted to one of those heroic performances with the knife for which the surgeon was famous. "Give us," said the worldly, but anxious surgeon, "one of those effectual prayers of faith for the recovery of the sick, which have such promises of reward." The prayer was offered, but the patient died. Singular stories were told, some seven years ago, of Dorothea Trudel's Refuge, in Germany, for the sick, who were cured by her persevering prayers, and a book was published, detailing the circumstances, some of which were certainly remarkable.

Thus there is an uncertainty about the direct remedial efficacy of prayer, while, nevertheless, the promise, James v. 15, does encourage us to use it as a means of recovery in connection with other and more ordinary means. Believing prayer for the sick has just as good a warrant for expecting an answer, as prayer for any other temporal good. It must be offered in humble submission to the divine will, and with unshaken faith, although the answer may not be in the very line of our desires. "It cannot be taken," says Mr. Barnes, in commenting on the passage "in the absolute and unconditional sense, for then, if these means were used, the sick person would always recover, no matter how often he might be sick, and he need never die. The design is to encourage . . . to the use of these means, with a strong hope that it would be effectual."

We may not be clear, therefore, on this point; but in the general position, that prayer deserves a place as a remedial agent, as truly as any famous herb or mineral, in the *materia medica*, there ought to be the most unwavering confidence. The physician himself needs it to guide and clear his mind, and steady his nerves in critical cases; to guide him through the often profoundly obscure region of experiments which the uncertainty of his profession compels him to make; to give him that elevation and courage which his work, as a foe of the arch-enemy death, requires. At that scene of languishing and pain, of uncertainty and peril, that border-land of the grave, that vestibule of the house of mourning, that spectacle of human weakness and of the creature made subject to vanity,—the sick-bed,—what exercise so appropriate as that of humbly acknowledging dependence on God, and of pleading for His favor in restoration to health, in forgiveness of sins, in the sanctification of trials, in calming the mind, in preparation for death if it is to come? The right sort of medical practice will always encourage the right sort of prayer at the sick-bed, as part of its own instrumentality.

For the secondary, reflex effects of believing prayer are incontestably of a character to relieve, comfort, refresh and restore the sick. Prayer calms the disturbed mind by rolling its burdens upon God; prayer gives rise to a sense of the Divine presence and sympathy; prayer is felt somehow to bring the Divine omnipotence and wisdom upon the field where the powers of man are so soon exhausted and baffled. If there be any value, in the judgment of the physician, in a calm, composed, hopeful frame of mind and elasticity of feelings, and in the absence of vexation and restlessness from the patient, then believing prayer, as the great instrument in producing these results, must be reckoned as holding a high place among real remedial agents.

In these periods of intense exertion of the nervous energies, perhaps the type of disease most widely prevalent, is Nervous Disorders, attacks that part of the bodily system which lies, as it were, on the very borders of the mind. Disease, in fact, very often almost a direct result of the want of a praying, i. e. trustful, spirit. It is because men forget God, forget their dependence upon him for wealth and worldly comfort, forget that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, that they so often "break down." The punishment of prayerlessness, the natural consequence of prayerlessness, runs in a dark line through a large part of the sickness of our day. Return to prayers must, therefore, be of the nature of a specific for just the prevalent type of sickness. It is by returning to God that the nervous ague and fever will, most likely, be subdued, the unwholesome ardor of the brain cooled, and the whole brood of anxieties that are springing on the nervous system be put to flight. We are no advocates of an anti-worldly, un-

terprising style of piety, in or out of the Church. We ask not for any abatement of business energy. To pray well is to work well. But we verily believe that the quietism of the Quakers has not a little to do with the general superiority which they have hitherto enjoyed in health, in good development of body, and in longevity. We shall fare better, every way, for living in that daily, hourly trust in, and submission, to God's will and wisdom, which is called "prayer without ceasing." We ask only for the abandonment of the godless eagerness with which men pursue worldly ends; we protest, in the interests of bodily health, against enterprise or pleasure which has not time to give one day in seven to prayer, which excuses itself from family worship from want of time, and which recklessly drives on the machinery of body and soul, without waiting to drop upon it that oil of prayer which is to save it from grinding, and jarring and crushing upon itself until it becomes a hopeless ruin.

### THE CHURCH RE-ENTERING ON HER WORK.

The heats of the summer are passing away, and returning autumn reminds us, laborers in Christ's kingdom, that the season of our more special concentrated efforts for the salvation of men has returned. Business men lay their plans early. At the headquarters of the fashions, styles are decided upon and the manufacturers begin to prepare their goods for the season, months before they will be in the hands of consumers. Publishers of magazines and periodical literature have much of the matter for several issues on hand, before the first appears. Every one increases his efficiency by wise forethought. The work of the church is a conflict; we must study the ground, lay our plans and make our dispositions betimes, and not go at it "as the horse rusheth into the battle."

The workers in the pulpit and out of it must consider their present capacities, their past failures, their increased experience. They must regard the vast and varied capabilities of the truth which is their instrument and while ever loyal to the grand and faithful saying, which is the core of the Gospel, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, they must, like well-instructed scribes, bring forth things new and old from their treasures.

They must also study the ground they are to work upon, the peculiar result to be achieved, the difficulties in the way. There are hard fields to be cultivated demanding fresh supplies of courage, faith and prayer; there are old and decaying churches to be nursed into vitality; there are distracted congregations to be harmonized and shamed out of their antagonisms in the face of a common foe; there are new and struggling enterprises demanding toils and prayers and tears; there are individual cases of peculiar interest and requiring varied applications of truth and forms of effort; there are the masses of our thickly populated regions demanding the most thoroughly, ably conducted and powerful efforts for their evangelization. To work friends! for God and for the soul, in the Sabbath School, in the pulpit, by the roadside, in the dwelling, and with versatility of means and courage of spirit, by all means, save some.

1. Do not be discouraged by the excitements of the political campaign. We doubt whether any one who believes the Bible to be the friend of justice and of equal rights, is much disturbed at the sort of influence which an active canvass for and against these objects will have upon the spirituality of the people. Do not be timorous at the prevalence of any such excitement. We doubt not you will find that the men who are engaged and animated on such themes, will make better listeners to a stirring Gospel sermon than those who are droning along in the old, beaten channels of common life. Do you be awake for the great objects of your calling, and you will have less difficulty than usual in keeping your hearers awake. But if you love heart and show no excitement for their souls' sake and the Gospel, their apathy is likely enough to be uncommonly sad in such a period.

One of our most active and successful pastors, gives it as his experience, that a period of excitement about any thing worthy to employ men's minds, is more favorable to ministerial success; and the statistics of the results of his labors prove his position. At all events, do not let any failure at such a season, be attributable to yourself.

2. Consider your present encouragements to work. Our church growth in the past is most cheering. True, when compared with the needs of the world and the high mission of Christians, it is far from exhilarating. But compared with our own history, in the past, it shows decided progress. Our net gain, last year, was over seven thousand; that of the year before was eleven thousand, and

that of 1866, six thousand seven hundred. The gain for three years is far greater than for any three of our existence, and is over three times as great as for the three years immediately preceding. Compared with the other branch, our percentage of gain for last year has been as 4 to 3, and for the last two years has been almost as 2 to 1. In this city, our pulpits are manned with zealous, able, evangelical preachers, commanding the confidence and attracting the regards of the people, whose preaching has been and doubtless will again be in demonstration of the Spirit and with power. Let us do our part to evangelize this great city.

3. We cannot overlook the singular illustration of the power of the Gospel, in one of the worst neighborhoods of the city of New York. The keeper of a vile house of entertainment, on Water Street near Roosevelt, known as "the Water Street dance house king," some weeks ago, allowed the enterprising agents of a city mission, who fear not to go anywhere, to hold a prayer meeting in his saloon. Some of the abandoned inmates were deeply affected and expressed a desire to live a new life. Soon it was whispered abroad that the proprietor himself was so far influenced by the truth, as to purpose the abandonment of his vile business. On the last Saturday in August his house was closed as a place of business and opened as a place of public daily prayer. Great numbers of the lowest sort of the population have attended. The street has been blocked up by the crowd who could not get inside. The windows of neighboring houses of the same sort are thrown open and filled with faces of listeners. Long before the hour for opening, the rooms have been thronged. The prayer-meeting seems to have been conducted with as much judgment and propriety as the "sudden and unusual" exigency allows. Sailors have related God's dealings with their souls in their own quiet way. Wall St. Christian men have been there, to intimate their practical interest in any plans for the permanent renovation of the place. And a powerful impression has been made on the surrounding neighborhood. Whatever mixture of human weakness may be in all this, the finger of God seems to be in it also. May it prove the harbinger of a great movement among the hitherto lost masses of our city population. Let us take it as a hint in the shaping of our evangelizing efforts during the coming fall and winter.

### MORE CIRCULARS.

Our brethren of the other branch, including leading men in the majority at Albany last May, have been apparently uncomfortable about the adoption of the Reunion Committee's Report by the Assembly ever since it was done. Immediately after adopting the report by a heavy vote, that Assembly declared its dissatisfaction with its own act, and voted that it preferred something different in the first or principal article of the Basis. After attempting in vain to bring our Assembly to a similar expression of opinion; they allowed their action in adopting the Joint Committee's report to stand, and reaffirmed it, in important particulars, by the Answer to the Protest.

But they were still uneasy at the boldness and unwonted liberality of their action. They had scarcely got well at home before a Circular appeared, dated at Pittsburg, signed by Reunion men and others not believed so favorable, presenting the issue which had been defeated in the Assembly to the Presbyteries; and urging them in both bodies, to express a preference, if they felt it, to the Confession "pure and simple," as a doctrinal basis, above the doctrinal article of the Assemblies' Basis.

Naturally enough, this was viewed by many as an unwarrantable attempt to alter the actual issue of the Joint Committee's plan, which, by vote of both Assemblies, is alone properly before the Presbyteries. The Confession of Faith is already prominent in the Joint Committee's Basis, and the mode of subscription to it, not the Confession itself, is the real and needful matter of the Committee's clauses.

Pressed by objections on every side, the friends of this movement have found it needful to issue another supplementary circular, which we believe pates from Cincinnati, where the sir is popularly supposed to be clearer than in Pittsburg. In this last circular, further directions are given, as to how the Presbyteries of the other branch who do not like all parts of the Joint Committee's plan may express that dislike, without putting themselves on record against the plan as a whole. It is proposed that they vote on each article of the Basis separately, and then that they vote on two Resolutions, which are a request that the Old School Assembly of 1869 renew its efforts to get our body to erase the Explanatory Clauses of the first article.

In all this struggle we are calm lookers-on. We shall adopt the Joint Committee's plan, as handed down by both Assemblies to the Presbyteries. If our O. S. brethren, even the Reunion men, repudiate their own adopted plan, on which they agreed solemnly to go into the struggle with us; and if they encourage this scattering and squandering of interest, to please an impracticable minority, and so contribute to the defeat of the plan, our own people, with the patience characteristic of them, may consent, and for the sake of Reunion, take whatever amended plan the other branch finally concludes to offer,—but if we do not, then the world will know on whom the responsibility lies; viz.: on the great majority at Albany, that had not the courage to stick to their principles, and that finched at last before the small but able minority that has so long swayed the body.

### FROM OUR ROCHESTER CORRESPONDENT.

OBITUARY.—Another of the good and true men of our State—*Simeon Benjamin*—has gone to his rest. He died on the 1st instant, at River Head, Long Island, where he had been spending a few weeks among the scenes and friends of his childhood. His remains reached Elmira on Thursday, and his funeral was to be attended this day from the 1st Presbyterian church in which he has long been a pillar and an office bearer.

Mr. Benjamin settled in Elmira in 1833. He had previously been a merchant in New York, where he had accumulated considerable property. On coming to Elmira he invested largely in real estate, which added much to his fortune; and in that city, and in all Western New York, he has ever since been known as one of the most earnest, active, and useful of men. He was a man of public spirit, doing much for the welfare of the chosen place of his residence, and for every cause of benevolence. He was Corporate Member of the American Board, and gave much to the cause of Missions.

But that to which in later years he has given special attention, was the *Elmira Female College*. He may be called, we believe, the founder and chief support of that admirable institution. To that he gave his thoughts, his time, his money, almost without limit. For years, we are told, he supplied all deficiencies in the annual receipts. He watched over it, as though it had been one of his own children. His gifts to it are supposed to be, in the aggregate, about \$30,000.

He was also an upright man, a sincere Christian, and died in peace at the mature age of seventy-two years. He had been for some time feeble, evidently failing, and his friends feared to have him undertake his annual visit to his birth-place; and yet he was so anxious to go that the journey was finally made, but proved to be his last. His pilgrimage thus ended where it began. He had completed the circle, and a little more, of three score and ten years. His death was so peaceful that the attendants did not for some minutes perceive that he was gone. "So He giveth his beloved sleep."

Death has also been busy in Canandaigua. *Hon. Francis Granger*, formerly one of the foremost men of this region, well known also in all the political world, died on the 28th ult., at 80 years of his age. [He was formerly the rival of Wm. H. Seward as leader of the Whig party in the State, and their nominee for Governor. In more recent years he had been associated with the Democrats.]

His son, *Gideon Granger*, a most genial, useful Christian man, of about forty-five years, was lying dangerously ill at the same time, and died on Thursday of this week. He was a man of wealth, of culture, of leisure, and of great benevolence; universally beloved and universally lamented. Even in the Episcopal and Catholic churches prayers were offered for his recovery; while in the Congregational church, where he was a member and an ornament, he is mourned as a brother beloved. The poor loved and honored him. He was the friend of all.

MORE ADMIRABLE READING.—We had something to say of one good book last week, and we now feel inclined to speak of another. "Ten Years upon the Euphrates, by C. H. Wheeler, Missionary of the American Board." This seems to us, in some respects at least, the most important Missionary book yet issued. It certainly is one of the most readable and most satisfactory, even though it bears evidence of being prepared in great haste. It is from the pen, however, of a man who does everything with all his might. Whatever leisure he might have had would probably have made no difference in the style of the book. Its pages glow with furnace heat.

And yet it took ten years of hard, untiring

and successful work to gather the materials. It is a succinct, graphic, touching story of devoted Missionary labors. The book ought to be read by every lover of the cause of Missions, and much more by those who care nothing for it. It is instructive, encouraging, and inspiring. It shows how the knowledge of the Lord may cover the earth much sooner than many have dared to suppose it would.

### PERSONAL.

*Rev. William W. W. W.*, D.D., of Ithaca, now, we believe, in the 86th year of his age, has been passing a few days in our city. He is still remarkably vigorous. He was settled in this city as pastor of the Second church—now the Brick—in 1831. He had previously preached for fifteen years in Ithaca, where he commenced his labors in 1816. His ministry thus extends over a period of fifty-two years. He still preaches occasionally, and will be remembered as having spoken often and vigorously at the meeting of the American Board last fall in Buffalo.

*Prof. Upson*, of Hamilton College, preached most acceptably to the Central Church of this city last Sabbath, in the absence of the pastor. His morning sermon was especially spoken of, as instructive and inspiring in thought, beautiful in arrangement, language, and imagery, as well as charming in delivery. He is a welcome preacher in our city.

*Rev. Dwight W. Marsh*, after preaching for a year in Illinois, returns to our city to take charge of the Rochester Seminary for Young Ladies, with which he was connected before going West. He and his wife are admirable instructors, and will make their school one of a high order.

*Rev. Dr. Knox*, of Rome, has had substantial evidence of the good feeling and kindly care of his people. The parsonage has been nicely remodelled in part, and refitted, greatly to the comfort of the occupants. His study is especially admirable in arrangement and furnishing.

*Rev. E. L. Boing*, formerly of Angelica, has been appointed District Secretary of the Church Erection Committee for Western New York, to reside in this city.

*Rev. G. P. Hamilton*, whose call to the Pittsford church we mentioned last week, has accepted the invitation given him, and is to enter at once upon pastoral labors in the new field.

There are two *Headleys*—*Hon.* and *Rev. J. T.* and *Rev. P. C.* The former is the most famous writer; author of *Napoleon* and his Marshals; *Washington* and his Generals; *Sacred Mountains*, and other works. The latter is a younger brother, a worthy minister of the Gospel, writer of the *Life of Josephine* and other small books. It is the latter also who has recently published *The Court and Camp of David*, in imitation of *Napoleon* and his Marshals by J. T., the older brother. We see that the book notices sometimes confound the two, and seem to think that all the books that bear the *Headley* name are from one prolific pen, that which so glowingly eulogized the "Little Captain." We happen to know that J. T. prefers credit for his own works, and no others; and we presume P. C. does not relish being ignored altogether.

GENESEE.

Rochester, Sept. 5, 1868.

### NEW CITY POSTAL ARRANGEMENT.

As a result of recent explanatory legislation upon the Post Office laws in Congress, procured by the personal efforts and correspondence of a few persons connected with the religious press in this city, we are now able to use the Post Office for the City distribution of our papers, thus lessening the expense to a large class of our subscribers. From and after the 1st of October, the fifty cents additional, hitherto charged in the city, will be abolished, and the papers will be served by letter-carriers in all parts of the city at five cents per quarter, or may be had free of charge, by calling at the Post Office. Subscribers having any preferences in the matter will please give us due notice.

The new Episcopal "Church of the Holy Apostles," which has been worshipping for some months past in the lecture room of Tabor Church, has secured a lot at Twenty-first and Christian streets. Mr. John Rice has erected for them, at his own expense, a temporary wooden house of worship (or, in Philadelphia parlance, "a frame-building") to accommodate 300 or 400 people. The vestry will erect and furnish a school-building in the rear. The chapel was opened last Sabbath with appropriate services by Rev. Chas. D. Cooper, the rector. There is no other church of the denomination west of Thirtieth and south of Lombard.

Phillips Brooks is not going to Boston.