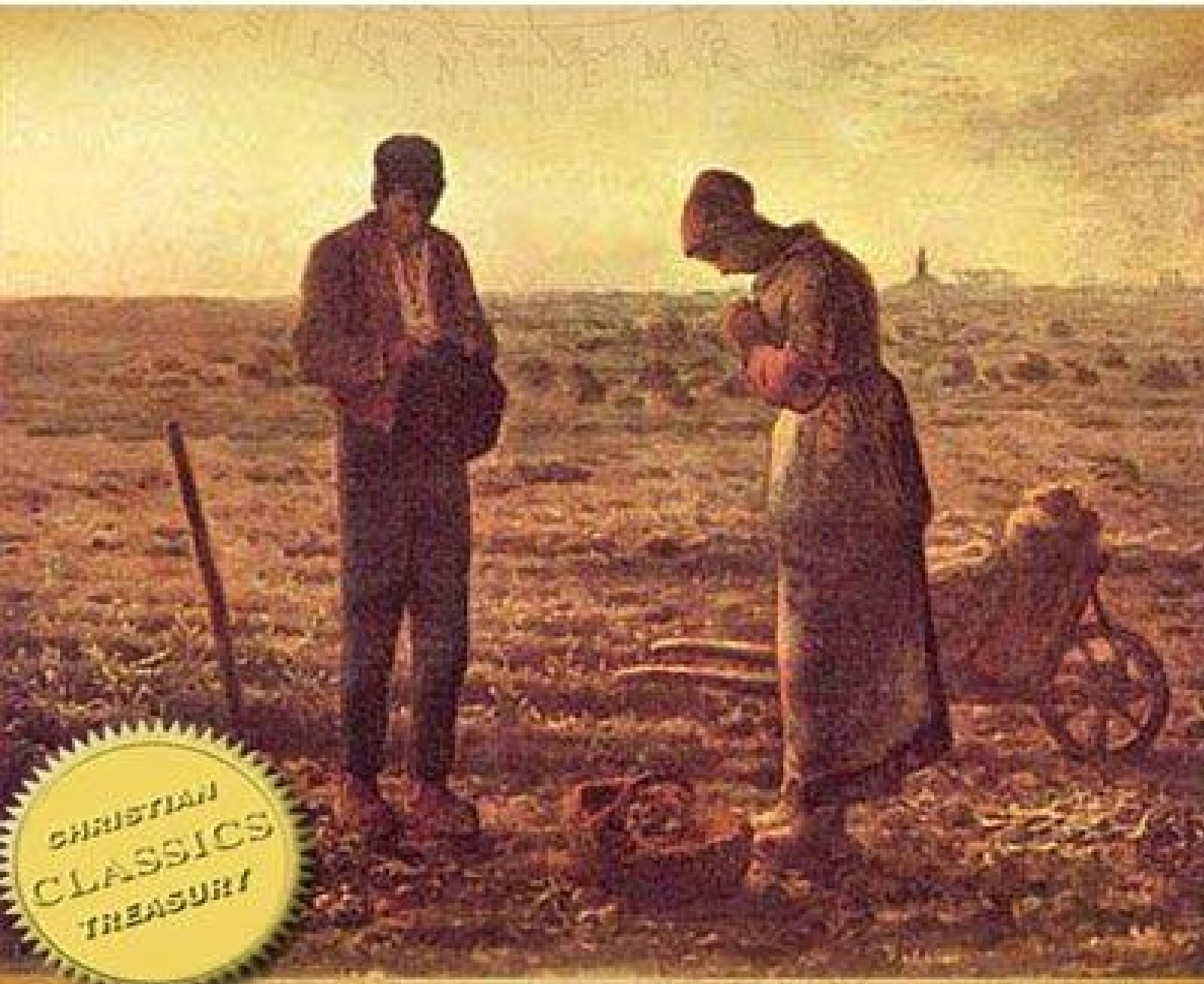
7 classics on PRAYER



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1. HOW TO PRAY – R. A. Torrey

SPIRE BOOKS, FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY,
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How to Pray,

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1. The Importance of Prayer

In the 6th chapter of Ephesians in the 18th verse we read words which put the tremendous importance of prayer with startling and overwhelming force:

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

When we stop to weigh the meaning of these words, then note the connection in which they are found, the intelligent child of God is driven to say,

“I must pray, pray, pray. I must put all my energy and all my heart into prayer. Whatever else I do, I must pray.”

The Revised Version is, if possible, stronger than the Authorized:

“With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.”

Note the ALLS: “with ALL prayer,” “at ALL seasons,” “in ALL perseverance,” “for ALL the saints.” Note the piling up of strong words, “prayer,” “supplication,” “perseverance.” Note once more the strong expression, “watching thereunto,” more literally, “being sleepless thereunto.” Paul realized the natural slothfulness of man, and especially his natural slothfulness in prayer. How seldom we pray things through! How often the church and the individual get right up to the verge of a great blessing in prayer and just then let go, get drowsy, quit. I wish that these words “being sleepless unto prayer” might burn into our hearts. I wish the whole verse might burn into our hearts.

But why is this constant, persistent, sleepless, overcoming prayer so needful?

1. First of all, BECAUSE THERE IS A DEVIL. He is cunning, he is mighty, he never rests, he is ever plotting the downfall of the child of God; and if the child of God

relaxes in prayer, the devil will succeed in ensnaring him.

This is the thought of the context. The 12th verse reads: “For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” (R.V.) Then comes the 13th verse: “Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.” (R.V.) Next follows a description of the different parts of the Christian’s armor, which we are to put on if we are to stand against the devil and his mighty wiles. Then Paul brings all to a climax in the 18th verse, telling us that to all else we must add prayer — constant, persistent, untiring, sleepless prayer in the Holy Spirit, or all else will go for nothing.

2. A second reason for this constant, persistent, sleepless, overcoming prayer is that PRAYER IS GOD’S APPOINTED WAY FOR OBTAINING THINGS, AND THE GREAT SECRET OF ALL LACK IN OUR EXPERIENCE, IN OUR LIFE AND IN OUR WORK IS NEGLECT OF PRAYER.

James brings this out very forcibly in the 4th chapter and 2nd verse of his epistle: “Ye have not because ye ask not.” These words contain the secret of the poverty and powerlessness of the average Christian — neglect of prayer.

“Why is it,” many a Christian is asking, “I make so little progress in my Christian life?”

“Neglect of prayer,” God answers. “You have not because you ask not.”

“Why is it,” many a minister is asking, “I see so little fruit from my labors?”

Again God answers, “Neglect of prayer. You have not because you ask not.”

“Why is it,” many a Sunday-School teacher is asking, “that I see so few converted in my Sunday-School class?”

Still God answers, “Neglect of prayer. You have not because you ask not.”

“Why is it,” both ministers and churches are asking, “that the church of Christ makes so little headway against unbelief and error and sin and worldliness?”

Once more we hear God answering, “Neglect of prayer. You have not because you ask not.”

3. The third reason for this constant, persistent, sleepless, overcoming prayer is that THOSE MEN WHOM GOD SET FORTH AS A PATTERN OF WHAT HE

EXPECTED CHRISTIANS TO BE — THE APOSTLES — REGARDED PRAYER AS THE MOST IMPORTANT BUSINESS OF THEIR LIVES.

When the multiplying responsibilities of the early church crowded in upon them, they "called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But WE WILL GIVE OURSELVES CONTINUALLY TO PRAYER and to the ministry of the Word." It is evident from what Paul wrote to the churches and to individuals about praying for them, that very much of his time and strength and thought was given to prayer. (Rom. 1:9, R.V.; Eph. 1:15,16; Col. 1:9, R.V.; 1 Thess. 3:10; 2 Tim. 1:3, R.V.)

All the mighty men of God outside the Bible have been men of prayer. They have differed from one another in many things, but in this they have been alike.

4. But there is a still weightier reason for this constant, persistent, sleepless, overcoming prayer. It is, PRAYER OCCUPIED A VERY PROMINENT PLACE AND PLAYED A VERY IMPORTANT PART IN THE EARTHLY LIFE OF OUR LORD.

Turn, for example, to Mark 1:35. We read, "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." The preceding day had been a very busy and exciting one, but Jesus shortened the hours of needed sleep that He might arise early and give Himself to more sorely needed prayer.

Turn again to Luke 6:12, where we read, "And it came to pass in those days that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." Our Savior found it necessary on occasion to take a whole night for prayer.

The words "pray" and "prayer" are used at least twenty-five times in connection with our Lord in the brief record of His life in the four Gospels, and His praying is mentioned in places where the words are not used. Evidently prayer took much of the time and strength of Jesus, and a man or woman who does not spend much time in prayer, cannot properly be called a follower of Jesus Christ.

5. There is another reason for constant, persistent, sleepless, overcoming prayer that seems if possible even more forcible than this, namely, PRAYING IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE PRESENT MINISTRY OF OUR RISEN LORD.

Christ's ministry did not close with His death. His atoning work was finished then, but when He rose and ascended to the right hand of the Father, He entered upon other work for us just as important in its place as His atoning work. It cannot be divorced from His atoning work; it rests upon that as its basis, but it is necessary to our

complete salvation.

What that great present work is, by which He carries our salvation on to completeness, we read in Heb. 7:25, “Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing HE EVER LIVETH TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR THEM.” This verse tells us that Jesus is able to save us unto the uttermost, not merely FROM the uttermost, but UNTO the uttermost, unto entire completeness, absolute perfection, because He not merely died, but because He also “ever liveth.” The verse also tells us for what purpose He now lives, “TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR US,” to pray. Praying is the principal thing He is doing in these days. It is by His prayers that He is saving us.

The same thought is found in Paul’s remarkable, triumphant challenge in Rom. 8:34 — “Who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, WHO ALSO MAKETH INTERCESSION FOR US.” (R.V.)

If we then are to have fellowship with Jesus Christ in His present work, we must spend much time in prayer; we must give ourselves to earnest, constant, persistent, sleepless, overcoming prayer. I know of nothing that has so impressed me with a sense of the importance of praying at all seasons, being much and constantly in prayer, as the thought that that is the principal occupation at present of my risen Lord. I want to have fellowship with Him, and to that end I have asked the Father that whatever else He may make me, to make me at all events an intercessor, to make me a man who knows how to pray, and who spends much time in prayer.

This ministry of intercession is a glorious and a mighty ministry, and we can all have part in it. The man or the woman who is shut away from the public meeting by sickness can have part in it; the busy mother; the woman who has to take in washing for a living can have part — she can mingle prayers for the saints, and for her pastor, and for the unsaved, and for foreign missionaries, with the soap and water as she bends over the washtub, and not do the washing any more poorly on that account; the hard driven man of business can have part in it, praying as he hurries from duty to duty. But of course we must, if we would maintain this spirit of constant prayer, take time — and take plenty of it — when we shall shut ourselves up in the secret place alone with God for nothing but prayer.

6. The sixth reason for constant, persistent, sleepless, overcoming prayer is that PRAYER IS THE MEANS THAT GOD HAS APPOINTED FOR OUR RECEIVING MERCY, AND OBTAINING GRACE TO HELP IN TIME OF NEED.

Heb. 4:16 is one of the simplest and sweetest verses in the Bible, — “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” These words make it very plain that God has appointed a way

by which we shall seek and obtain mercy and grace. That way is prayer; bold, confident, outspoken approach to the throne of grace, the most holy place of God's presence, where our sympathizing High Priest, Jesus Christ, has entered in our behalf. (Verses 14, 15.)

Mercy is what we need, grace is what we must have, or all our life and effort will end in complete failure. Prayer is the way to get them. There is infinite grace at our disposal, and we make it ours experimentally by prayer. Oh, if we only realized the fullness of God's grace, that is ours for the asking, its height and depth and length and breadth, I am sure that we would spend more time in prayer. The measure of our appropriation of grace is determined by the measure of our prayers.

Who is there that does not feel that he needs more grace? Then ask for it. Be constant and persistent in your asking. Be importunate and untiring in your asking. God delights to have us "shameless" beggars in this direction; for it shows our faith in Him, and He is mightily pleased with faith. Because of our "shamelessness" He will rise and give us as much as we need (Luke 11:8). What little streams of mercy and grace most of us know, when we might know rivers overflowing their banks!

7. The next reason for constant, persistent, sleepless, overcoming prayer is that PRAYER IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE WAY JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF HAS APPOINTED FOR HIS DISCIPLES TO OBTAIN FULLNESS OF JOY.

He states this simply and beautifully in John 16:24, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be fulfilled." "Made full" is the way the Revised Version reads. Who is there that does not wish his joy filled full? Well, the way to have it filled full is by praying in the name of Jesus. We all know people whose joy is filled full, indeed, it is just running over, is shining from their eyes, bubbling out of their very lips, and running off their finger tips when they shake hands with you. Coming in contact with them is like coming in contact with an electrical machine charged with gladness. Now people of that sort are always people that spend much time in prayer.

Why is it that prayer in the name of Christ brings such fullness of joy? In part, because we get what we ask. But that is not the only reason, nor the greatest. It makes God real. When we ask something definite of God, and He gives it, how real God becomes! He is right there! It is blessed to have a God who is real, and not merely an idea. I remember how once I was taken suddenly and seriously sick all alone in my study. I dropped upon my knees and cried to God for help. Instantly all pain left me — I was perfectly well. It seemed as if God stood right there, and had put out His hand and touched me. The joy of the healing was not so great as the joy of meeting God.

There is no greater joy on earth or in heaven, than communion with God, and prayer

in the name of Jesus brings us into communion with Him. The Psalmist was surely not speaking only of future blessedness, but also of present blessedness when he said, “In Thy presence is fullness of joy.” (Ps. 16.11.) O the unutterable joy of those moments when in our prayers we really press into the presence of God!

Does someone say. “I have never known any such joy as that in prayer”?

Do you take enough leisure for prayer to actually get into God’s presence? Do you really give yourself up to prayer in the time which you do take?

8. The eighth reason for constant, persistent, sleepless, overcoming prayer is that PRAYER, IN EVERY CARE AND ANXIETY AND NEED OF LIFE, WITH THANKSGIVING, IS THE MEANS THAT GOD HAS APPOINTED FOR OBTAINING FREEDOM FROM ALL ANXIETY, AND THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING.

“Be careful for nothing,” says Paul, “but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 4:6,7.) To many this seems at the first glance, the picture of a life that is beautiful, but beyond the reach of ordinary mortals; not so at all. The verse tells us how the life is attainable by every child of God: “Be careful for nothing,” or as the Revised Version reads, “In nothing be anxious.” The remainder of the verse tells us how, and it is very simple: “But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” What could be plainer or more simple than that? Just keep in constant touch with God, and when any trouble or vexation, great or small, comes up, speak to Him about it, never forgetting to return thanks for what He has already done. What will the result be? “The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.” (R.V.)

That is glorious, and as simple as it is glorious! Thank God, many are trying it. Don’t you know anyone who is always serene? Perhaps he is a very stormy man by his natural make-up, but troubles and conflicts and reverses and bereavements may sweep around him, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding guards his heart and his thoughts in Christ Jesus.

We all know such persons. How do they manage it?

Just by prayer, that is all. Those persons who know the deep peace of God, the unfathomable peace that passeth all understanding, are always men and women of much prayer.

Some of us let the hurry of our lives crowd prayer out, and what a waste of time and energy and nerve force there is by the constant worry! One night of prayer will save

us from many nights of insomnia. Time spent in prayer is not wasted, but time invested at big interest.

9. The ninth reason for constant, persistent, sleepless, overcoming prayer is that PRAYER IS THE METHOD THAT GOD HIMSELF HAS APPOINTED FOR OUR OBTAINING THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Upon this point the Bible is very plain. Jesus says, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” (Luke 11:13.) Men are telling us in these days, very good men too, “You must not pray for the Holy Spirit,” but what are they going to do with the plain statement of Jesus Christ, “How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit TO THEM THAT ASK HIM?”

Some years ago when an address on the baptism with the Holy Spirit was announced, a brother came to me before the address and said with much feeling,

“Be sure and tell them not to pray for the Holy Spirit.”

“I will surely not tell them that, for Jesus says, ‘How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him’.”

“Oh, yes,” he replied, “but that was before Pentecost.”

“How about Acts 4:31? was that before Pentecost, or after?”

“After, of course.”

“Read it.”

“‘And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST, and they spake the Word of God with boldness.’”

“How about Acts 8:15? was that before Pentecost or after?”

“After.”

“Please read.”

“‘Who, when they were come down PRAYED for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.’”

He made no answer. What could he answer? It is plain as day in the Word of God that before Pentecost and after, the first baptism and the subsequent fillings with the Holy

Spirit were received in answer to definite prayer. Experience also teaches this.

Doubtless many have received the Holy Spirit the moment of their surrender to God before there was time to pray, but how many there are who know that their first definite baptism with the Holy Spirit came while they were on their knees or faces before God, alone or in company with others, and who again and again since that have been filled with the Holy Spirit in the place of prayer!

I know this as definitely as I know that my thirst has been quenched while I was drinking water. Early one morning in the Chicago Avenue Church prayer room, where several hundred people had been assembled a number of hours in prayer, the Holy Spirit fell so manifestly, and the whole place was so filled with His presence, that no one could speak or pray, but sobs of joy filled the place. Men went out of that room to different parts of the country, taking trains that very morning, and reports soon came back of the out-pouring of God's Holy Spirit in answer to prayer. Others went out into the city with the blessing of God upon them. This is only one instance among many that might be cited from personal experience.

If we would only spend more time in prayer, there would be more fullness of the Spirit's power in our work. Many and many a man who once worked unmistakably in the power of the Holy Spirit is now filling the air with empty shoutings, and beating it with his meaningless gesticulations, because he has let prayer be crowded out. we must spend much time on our knees before God, if we are to continue in the power of the Holy Spirit.

10. The tenth reason for constant, persistent, sleepless, overcoming prayer is that PRAYER IS THE MEANS THAT CHRIST HAS APPOINTED WHEREBY OUR HEARTS SHALL NOT BECOME OVERCHARGED WITH SURFEITING AND DRUNKENNESS AND CARES OF THIS LIFE, AND SO THE DAY OF CHRIST'S RETURN COME UPON US SUDDENLY AS A SNARE.

One of the most interesting and solemn passages upon prayer in the Bible is along this line. (Luke 21:34-36) "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell in the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and PRAY ALWAYS, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." According to this passage there is only one way in which we can be prepared for the coming of the Lord when He appears, that is, through much prayer.

The coming again of Jesus Christ is a subject that is awakening much interest and much discussion in our day; but it is one thing to be interested in the Lord's return, and to talk about it, and quite another thing to be prepared for it. We live in an atmosphere that has a constant tendency to unfit us for Christ's coming. The world

tends to draw us down by its gratifications and by its cares. There is only one way by which we can rise triumphant above these things—by constant watching unto prayer, that is, by sleeplessness unto prayer. “Watch” in this passage is the same strong word used in Eph. 6:18, and “always” the same strong phrase “in every season.” The man who spends little time in prayer, who is not steadfast and constant in prayer, will not be ready for the Lord when He comes. But we may be ready. How? Pray! Pray! Pray!

11. There is one more reason for constant, persistent, sleepless, overcoming prayer, and it is a mighty one: BECAUSE OF WHAT PRAYER ACCOMPLISHES. Much has really been said upon that already, but there is much also that should be added.

(1) Prayer promotes our spiritual growth as almost nothing else, indeed as nothing else but Bible study; and true prayer and true Bible study go hand in hand.

It is through prayer that my sin is brought to light, my most hidden sin. As I kneel before God and pray, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me,” (Ps.139:23,24), God shoots the penetrating rays of His light into the innermost recesses of my heart, and the sins I never suspected are brought to view. In answer to prayer, God washes me from mine iniquity and cleanses me from my sin (Ps. 51:2). In answer to prayer my eyes are opened to behold wondrous things out of God’s Word (Ps. 119:18). In answer to prayer I get wisdom to know God’s way (Jas. 1:5) and strength to walk in it. As I meet God in prayer and gaze into His face, I am changed into His own image from glory to glory (2_Cor. 3:18). Each day of true prayer life finds me liker to my glorious Lord.

John Welch, son-in-law to John Knox, was one of the most faithful men of prayer this world ever saw. He counted that day ill-spent in which seven or eight hours were not used alone with God in prayer and the study of His Word. An old man speaking of him after his death said, “He was a type of Christ.”

How came he to be so like his Master?

His prayer life explains the mystery.

(2) Prayer brings power into our work.

If we wish power for any work to which God calls us, be it preaching, teaching, personal work, or the rearing of our children, we can get it by earnest prayer.

A woman with a little boy who was perfectly incorrigible, once came to me in desperation and said:

“What shall I do with him?”

I asked, “Have you ever tried prayer?”

She said that she had prayed for him, she thought. I asked if she had made his conversion and his character a matter of definite, expectant prayer. She replied that she had not been definite in the matter. She began that day, and at once there was a marked change in the child, and he grew up into Christian manhood.

How many a Sunday-school teacher has taught for months and years, and seen no real fruit from his labors, and then has learned the secret of intercession, and by earnest pleading with God, has seen his scholars brought one by one to Christ! How many a poor preacher has become a mighty man of God by casting away his confidence in his own ability and gifts, and giving himself up to God to wait upon Him for the power that comes from on high! John Livingstone spent a night, with some others likeminded, in prayer to God and religious conversation, and when he preached next day in the Kirk of Shotts five hundred people were converted, or dated some definite uplift in their life to that occasion. Prayer and power are inseparable.

(3) Prayer avails for the conversion of others. There are few converted in this world unless in connection with some one's prayers. I formerly thought that no human being had anything to do with my own conversion, for I was not converted in church or Sunday-school, or in personal conversation with any one. I was awakened in the middle of the night and converted. As far as I can remember I had not the slightest thought of being converted, or of anything of that character, when I went to bed and fell asleep; but I was awakened in the middle of the night and converted probably inside of five minutes. A few minutes before I was about as near eternal perdition as one gets. I had one foot over the brink and was trying to get the other one over. I say I thought no human being had anything to do with it, but I had forgotten my mother's prayers, and I afterward learned that one of my college classmates had chosen me as one to pray for until I was saved.

Prayer often avails where everything else fails. How utterly all of Monica's efforts and entreaties failed with her son, but her prayers prevailed with God, and the dissolute youth became St. Augustine, the mighty man of God. By prayer the bitterest enemies of the Gospel have become its most valiant defenders, the greatest scoundrels the truest sons of God, and the vilest women the purest saints. Oh, the power of prayer to reach down, down, down, where hope itself seems vain, and lift men and women up, up, up into fellowship with and likeness to God. It is simply wonderful! How little we appreciate this marvelous weapon!

(4) Prayer brings blessings to the church.

The history of the church has always been a history of grave difficulties to overcome. The devil hates the church and seeks in every way to block its progress; now by false doctrine, again by division, again by inward corruption of life. But by prayer, a clear way can be made through everything. Prayer will root out heresy, allay misunderstanding, sweep away jealousies and animosities, obliterate immoralities, and bring in the full tide of God's reviving grace. History abundantly proves this. In the hour of darkest portent, when the case of the church, local or universal, has

seemed beyond hope, believing men and believing women have met together and cried to God and the answer has come.

It was so in the days of Knox, it was so in the days of Wesley and Whitfield, it was so in the days of Edwards and Brainerd, it was so in the days of Finney, it was so in the days of the great revival of 1857 in this country and of 1859 in Ireland, and it will be so again in your day and mine. Satan has marshalled his forces. Christian science with its false Christ— a woman—lifts high its head. Others making great pretensions of apostolic methods, but covering the rankest dishonesty and hypocrisy with these pretensions, speak with loud assurance. Christians equally loyal to the great fundamental truths of the Gospel are glowering at one another with a devil-sent suspicion. The world, the flesh and the devil are holding high carnival. It is now a dark day, BUT—now "it is time for Thee, Lord, to work; for they have made void Thy law." (Ps. 199:126). And He is getting ready to work, and now He is listening for the voice of prayer. Will He hear it? Will He hear it from you? Will He hear it from the church as a body? I believe He will.

2. Praying Unto God

We have seen something of the tremendous importance and the resistless power of prayer, and now we come directly to the question- -how to pray with power.

1. In the 12th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we have the record of a prayer that prevailed with God, and brought to pass great results. In the 5th verse of this chapter, the manner and method of this prayer is described in few words:

"Prayer was made without ceasing of the church UNTO GOD for him."

The first thing to notice in this verse is the brief expression "unto God." The prayer that has power is the prayer that is offered unto God.

But some will say, "Is not all prayer unto God?"

No. Very much of so-called prayer, both public and private, is not unto God. In order that a prayer should be really unto God, there must be a definite and conscious approach to God when we pray; we must have a definite and vivid realization that God is bending over us and listening as we pray. In very much of our prayer there is really but little thought of God. Our mind is taken up with the thought of what we

need, and is not occupied with the thought of the mighty and loving Father of whom we are seeking it. Oftentimes it is the case that we are occupied neither with the need nor with the One to whom we are praying, but our mind is wandering here and there throughout the world. There is no power in that sort of prayer. But when we really come into God's presence, really meet Him face to face in the place of prayer, really seek the things that we desire FROM HIM, then there is power.

If, then, we would pray aright, the first thing that we should do is to see to it that we really get an audience with God, that we really get into His very presence. Before a word of petition is offered, we should have the definite and vivid consciousness that we are talking to God, and should believe that He is listening to our petition and is going to grant the thing that we ask of Him. This is only possible by the Holy Spirit's power, so we should look to the Holy Spirit to really lead us into the presence of God, and should not be hasty in words until He has actually brought us there.

One night a very active Christian man dropped into a little prayer-meeting that I was leading. Before we knelt to pray, I said something like the above, telling all the friends to be sure before they prayed, and while they were praying, that they really were in God's presence, that they had the thought of Him definitely in mind, and to be more taken up with Him than with their petition. A few days after I met this same gentleman, and he said that this simple thought was entirely new to him, that it had made prayer an entirely new experience to him.

If then we would pray aright, these two little words must sink deep into our hearts, "UNTO GOD."
2. The second secret of effective praying is found in the same verse, in the words "WITHOUT CEASING."

In the Revised Version, "without ceasing" is rendered "earnestly." Neither rendering gives the full force of the Greek. The word means literally "stretched-out-ed-ly." It is a pictorial word, and wonderfully expressive. It represents the soul on a stretch of earnest and intense desire. "Intensely" would perhaps come as near translating it as any English word. It is the word used of our Lord in Luke 22:44 where it is said, "He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

We read in Heb. 5:7 that "in the days of His flesh" Christ "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears." In Rom. 15:30, Paul beseeches the saints in Rome to STRIVE together with him in their prayers. The word translated "strive" means primarily to contend as in athletic games or in a fight. In other words, the prayer that prevails with God is the prayer into which we put our whole soul, stretching out toward God in intense and agonizing desire. Much of our modern prayer has no power in it because there is no heart in it. We rush into God's presence, run through a string of petitions, jump up and go out. If someone should ask us an hour afterward for what we prayed, oftentimes we could not tell. If we put so little heart into our prayers, we cannot expect God to put much heart into answering them.

We hear much in our day of the rest of faith, but there is such a thing as the fight of faith in prayer as well as in effort. Those who would have us think that they have attained to some sublime height of faith and trust because they never know any agony of conflict or of prayer, have surely gotten beyond their Lord, and beyond the mightiest victors for God, both in effort and prayer, that the ages of Christian history have known. When we learn to come to God with an intensity of desire that wrings the soul, then shall we know a power in prayer that most of us do not know now.

But how shall we attain to this earnestness in prayer?

Not by trying to work ourselves up into it. The true method is explained in Rom. 8:26, “And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” (R.V.) The earnestness that we work up in the energy of the flesh is a repulsive thing. The earnestness wrought in us by the power of the Holy Spirit is pleasing to God. Here again, if we would pray aright, we must look to the Spirit of God to teach us to pray.

It is in this connection that fasting comes. In Dan. 9:3 we read that Daniel set his face “unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes.” There are those who think that fasting belongs to the old dispensation; but when we look at Acts 14:23, and Acts 13:2,3, we find that it was practised by the earnest men of the apostolic day.

If we would pray with power, we should pray with fasting. This of course does not mean that we should fast every time we pray; but there are times of emergency or special crisis in work or in our individual lives, when men of downright earnestness will withdraw themselves even from the gratification of natural appetites that would be perfectly proper under other circumstances, that they may give themselves up wholly to prayer. There is a peculiar power in such prayer. Every great crisis in life and work should be met in that way. There is nothing pleasing to God in our giving up in a purely Pharisaic and legal way things which are pleasant, but there is power in that downright earnestness and determination to obtain in prayer the things of which we sorely feel our need, that leads us to put away everything, even the things in themselves most right and necessary, that we may set our faces to find God, and obtain blessings from Him.

3. A third secret of right praying is also found in this same verse, Acts 12:5. It appears in the three words “OF THE CHURCH.”

There is power in UNITED PRAYER. Of course there is power in the prayer of an individual, but there is vastly increased power in united prayer. God delights in the unity of His people, and seeks to emphasize it in every way, and so He pronounces a special blessing upon united prayer. We read in Matt. 18:19, “If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven.” This unity, however, must be real. The passage just

quoted does not say that if two shall agree in asking, but if two shall agree AS TOUCHING anything they shall ask. Two persons might agree to ask for the same thing, and yet there be no real agreement as touching the thing they asked. One might ask it because he really desired it, the other might ask it simply to please his friend. But where there is real agreement, where the Spirit of God brings two believers into perfect harmony as concerning that which they may ask of God, where the Spirit lays the same burden on two hearts; in all such prayer there is absolutely irresistible power.

3. Obeying and Praying

1. One of the most significant verses in the Bible on prayer is 1 John 3:22. John says, “And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.”

What an astounding statement! John says in so many words, that everything he asked for he got. How many of us can say this: “Whatsoever I ask I receive”? But John explains why this was so, “Because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” In other words, the one who expects God to do as he asks Him, must on his part DO WHATEVER GOD BIDS HIM. If we give a listening ear to all God’s commands to us, He will give a listening ear to all our petitions to Him. If, on the other hand, we turn a deaf ear to His precepts, He will be likely to turn a deaf ear to our prayers. Here we find the secret of much unanswered prayer. We are not listening to God’s Word, and therefore He is not listening to our petitions.

I was once speaking to a woman who had been a professed Christian, but had given it all up. I asked her why she was not a Christian still. She replied, because she did not believe the Bible. I asked her why she did not believe the Bible.

“Because I have tried its promises and found them untrue.”

“Which promises?”

“The promises about prayer.”

“Which promises about prayer?”

“Does it not say in the Bible, ‘Whatsoever ye ask believing ye shall receive’?”

“It says something nearly like that.”

“Well, I asked fully expecting to get and did not receive, so the promise failed.”

“Was the promise made to you?”

“Why, certainly, it is made to all Christians, is it not?”

“No, God carefully defines who the ‘ye’s’ are, whose believing prayers He agrees to answer.”

I then turned her to 1_John 3:22, and read the description of those whose prayers had power with God.

“Now,” I said, “were you keeping His commandments and doing those things which are pleasing in His sight?”

She frankly confessed that she was not, and soon came to see that the real difficulty was not with God’s promises, but with herself. That is the difficulty with many an unanswered prayer to-day: the one who offers it is not obedient.

If we would have power in prayer, we must be earnest students of His Word to find out what His will regarding us is, and then having found it, do it. One unconfessed act of disobedience on our part will shut the ear of God against many petitions.
2. But this verse goes beyond the mere keeping of God’s commandments. John tells us that we must DO THOSE THINGS THAT ARE PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT.

There are many things which it would be pleasing to God for us to do which He has not specifically commanded us. A true child is not content with merely doing those things which his father specifically commands him to do. He studies to know his father’s will, and if he thinks that there is any thing that he can do that would please his father, he does it gladly, though his father has never given him any specific order to do it. So it is with the true child of God. He does not ask merely whether certain things are commanded or certain things forbidden. He studies to know his Father’s will in all things.

There are many Christians to-day who are doing things that are not pleasing to God, and leaving undone things which would be pleasing to God. When you speak to them about these things they will confront you at once with the question, “Is there any command in the Bible not to do this thing?” And if you cannot show them some verse in which the matter in question is plainly forbidden, they think they are under no obligation whatever to give it up; but a true child of God does not demand a specific command. If we make it our study to find out and to do the things which are pleasing to God, He will make His study to do the things which are pleasing to us. Here again we find the explanation of much unanswered prayer: We are not making it

the study of our lives to know what would please our Father, and so our prayers are not answered.

Take as an illustration of questions that are constantly coming up, the matter of theater going, dancing and the use of tobacco. Many who are indulging in these things will ask you triumphantly if you speak against them, “Does the Bible say, ‘Thou shalt not go to the theater’?” “Does the Bible say,‘Thou shalt not dance’?” “Does the Bible say,‘Thou shalt not smoke’?” That is not the question. The question is, Is our heavenly Father well pleased when He sees one of His children in the theater, at the dance, or smoking? That is a question for each to decide for himself, prayerfully, seeking light from the Holy Spirit. “Where is the harm in these things?” many ask. It is aside from our purpose to go into the general question, but beyond a doubt there is this great harm in many a case; they rob our prayers of power.

3. Psalm 145:18 throws a great deal of light on the question of how to pray: “The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth.”

That little expression “in truth” is worthy of study. If you will take your concordance and go through the Bible, you will find that this expression means “in reality,” “in sincerity.” The prayer that God answers is the prayer that is real, the prayer that asks for something that is sincerely desired.

Much prayer is insincere. People ask for things which they do not wish. Many a woman is praying for the conversion of her husband, who does not really wish her husband to be converted. She thinks that she does, but if she knew what would be involved in the conversion of her husband, how it would necessitate an entire revolution in his manner of doing business, and how consequently it would reduce their income and make necessary an entire change in their method of living, the real prayer of her heart would be, if she were to be sincere with God:

“O God, do not convert my husband.”

She does not wish his conversion at so great cost.

Many a church is praying for a revival that does not really desire a revival. They think they do, for to their minds a revival means an increase of membership, an increase of income, an increase of reputation among the churches, but if they knew what a real revival meant, what a searching of hearts on the part of professed Christians would be involved, what a radical transformation of individual, domestic and social life would be brought about, and many other things that would come to pass if the Spirit of God was poured out in reality and power; if all this were known, the real cry of the church would be:

“O God, keep us from having a revival.”

Many a minister is praying for the baptism with the Holy Spirit who does not really desire it. He things he does, for the baptism with the Spirit means to him new joy,

new power in preaching the Word, a wider reputation among men, a larger prominence in the church of Christ. But if he understood what a baptism with the Holy Spirit really involved, how for example it would necessarily bring him into antagonism with the world, and with unspiritual Christians, how it would cause his name to be “cast out as evil,” how it might necessitate his leaving a good comfortable living and going down to work in the slums, or even in some foreign land; if he understood all this, his prayer quite likely would be—if he were to express the real wish of his heart,—

“O God, save me from being baptized with the Holy Ghost.”

But when we do come to the place where we really desire the conversion of friends at any cost, really desire the outpouring of the Holy Spirit whatever it may involve, really desire the baptism with the Holy Ghost come what may, where we desire anything “in truth” and then call upon God for it “in truth,” God is going to hear.

4. Praying in the Name of Christ and According To The Will of God

1. It was a wonderful word about prayer that Jesus spoke to His disciples on the night before His crucifixion, “Whatsoever ye shall ask IN MY NAME, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it.”

Prayer in the name of Christ has power with God. God is well pleased with His Son Jesus Christ. He hears Him always, and He also hears always the prayer that is really in His name. There is a fragrance in the name of Christ that makes acceptable to God every prayer that bears it.

But what is it to pray in the name of Christ?

Many explanations have been attempted that to ordinary minds do not explain. But there is nothing mystical or mysterious about this expression. If one will go through the Bible and examine all the passages in which the expression “in My name” or “in His name” or synonymous expressions are used, he will find that it means just about what it does in modern usage. If I go to a bank and hand in a check with my name signed to it, I ask of that bank IN MY OWN NAME. If I have money deposited in that bank, the check will be cashed; if not, it will not be. If, however, I go to a bank with somebody else’s name signed to the check, I am asking IN HIS NAME, and it does not matter whether I have money in that bank or any other, if the person whose name is signed to the check has money there, the check will be cashed.

If, for example, I should go to the First National Bank of Chicago, and present a check which I had signed for $50.00, the paying teller would say to me:

“Why, Mr. Torrey, we cannot cash that. You have no money in this bank.”

But if I should go to the First National Bank with a check for $5,000.00 made payable to me, and signed by one of the large depositors in that bank, they would not ask whether I had money in that bank or in any bank, but would honor the check at once.

So it is when I go to the bank of heaven, when I go to God in prayer. I have nothing deposited there, I have absolutely no credit there, and if I go in my own name I will get absolutely nothing; but Jesus Christ has unlimited credit in heaven, and He has granted to me the privilege of going to the bank with His name on my checks, and when I thus go, my prayers will be honored to any extent.

To pray then in the name of Christ is to pray on the ground, not of my credit, but His; to renounce the thought that I have any claims on God whatever, and approach Him on the ground of God’s claims. Praying in the name of Christ is not merely adding the phrase “I ask these things in Jesus’ name” to my prayer. I may put that phrase in my prayer and really be resting in my own merit all the time. But when I really do approach God, not on the ground of my merit, but on the ground of Christ’s merit, not on the ground of my goodness, but on the ground of the atoning blood (Heb. 10:19), God will hear me. Very much of our modern prayer is vain because men approach God imagining that they have some claim upon God whereby He is under obligations to answer their prayers.

Years ago when Mr. Moody was young in Christian work, he visited a town in Illinois. A judge in the town was an infidel. This judge’s wife besought Mr. Moody to call upon her husband, but Mr. Moody replied:

“I cannot talk with your husband. I am only an uneducated young Christian, and your husband is a book infidel.”

But the wife would not take no for an answer, so Mr. Moody made the call. The clerks in the outer office tittered as the young salesman from Chicago went in to talk with the scholarly judge.

The conversation was short. Mr. Moody said:

“Judge, I can’t talk with you. You are a book infidel, and I have no learning, but I simply want to say if you are ever converted, I want you to let me know.”

The judge replied: “Yes, young man, if I am ever converted I will let you know. Yes, I will let you know.”

The conversation ended. The clerks tittered still louder when the zealous young Christian left the office, but the judge was converted within a year. Mr. Moody visiting the town again asked the judge to explain how it came about. The judge said:

“One night, when my wife was at prayer meeting, I began to grow very uneasy and miserable. I did not know what was the matter with me, but finally retired before my wife come home. I could not sleep all that night. I got up early, told my wife that I would eat no breakfast, and went down to the office. I told the clerks they could take a holiday, and shut myself up in the inner office. I kept growing more and more miserable, and finally I got down and asked God to forgive my sins, but I would not say `for Jesus’ sake,’ for I was a Unitarian and I did not believe in the atonement. I kept praying ‘God forgive my sins’; but no answer came. At last in desperation I cried, ‘O God, for Christ’s sake forgive my sins,’ and found peace at once.”

The judge had no access to God until he came in the name of Christ, but when he thus came, he was heard and answered at once.
2. Great light is thrown upon the subject “How to Pray” by 1_John 5:14,15: “And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that if we ask anything ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, He heareth us; and if we know that He heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him.” (R.V.)

This passage teaches us plainly that if we are to pray aright, we must pray according to God’s will, then will we beyond a peradventure get the thing we ask of Him.

But can we know the will of God? Can we know that any specific prayer is according to His will?

We most surely can.

How?
(1) First by the Word. God has revealed His will in His Word. When anything is definitely promised in the Word of God, we know that it is His will to give that thing. If then when I pray, I can find some definite promise of God’s Word and lay that promise before God, I know that He hears me, and if I know that He hears me, I know that I have the petition that I have asked of Him. For example, when I pray for wisdom I know that it is the will of God to give me wisdom, for He says so in James 1:5: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” So when I ask for wisdom I know that the prayer is heard, and that wisdom will be given me. In like manner when I pray for the Holy Spirit I know from Luke 11:13 that it is God’s will, that my prayer is heard, and that I have the petition that I have asked of Him: “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?”

Some years ago a minister came to me at the close of an address on prayer at a

Y.M.C.A. Bible school, and said,

“You have produced upon those young men the impression that they can ask for definite things and get the very things that they ask.”
I replied that I did not know whether that was the impression that I produced or not, but that was certainly the impression that I desired to produce.

“But,” he replied, “that is not right. We cannot be sure, for we don’t know God’s will.”

I turned him at once to James 1:5, read it and said to him, “Is it not God’s will to give us wisdom, and if you ask for wisdom do you not know that you are going to get it?”

“Ah!” he said, “we don’t know what wisdom is.” I said, “No, if we did, we would not need to ask; but whatever wisdom may be, don’t you know that you will get it?”

Certainly it is our privilege to know. When we have a specific promise in the Word of God, if we doubt that it is God’s will, or if we doubt that God will do the thing that we ask, we make God a liar.

Here is one of the greatest secrets of prevailing prayer: To study the Word to find what God’s will is as revealed there in the promises, and then simply take these promises and spread them out before God in prayer with the absolutely unwavering expectation that He will do what He has promised in His Word.
(2) But there is still another way in which we may know the will of God, that is, by the teaching of His Holy Spirit. There are many things that we need from God which are not covered by any specific promise, but we are not left in ignorance of the will of God even then. In Rom. 8:26,27 we are told, “And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD.” (R.V.) Here we are distinctly told that the Spirit of God prays in us, draws out our prayer, in the line of God’s will. When we are thus led out by the Holy Spirit in any direction, to pray for any given object, we may do it in all confidence that it is God’s will, and that we are to get the very thing we ask of Him, even though there is no specific promise to cover the case. Often God by His Spirit lays upon us a heavy burden of prayer for some given individual. We cannot rest, we pray for him with groanings which cannot be uttered. Perhaps the man is entirely beyond our reach, but God hears the prayer, and in many a case it is not long before we hear of his definite conversion.

The passage 1_John 5:14,15 is one of the most abused passages in the Bible: “This is THE CONFIDENCE that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.” The Holy Spirit beyond a doubt

put it into the Bible to encourage our faith. It begins with “This is THE CONFIDENCE that we have in Him,” and closes with “WE KNOW that we have the petitions that we desired of Him;” but one of the most frequent usages of this passage, which was so manifestly given to beget confidence, is to introduce an element of uncertainty into our prayers. Oftentimes when one waxes confident in prayer, some cautious brother will come and say:

“Now, don’t be too confident. If it is God’s will He will do it. You should put in, `If it be Thy will.’”

Doubtless there are many times when we do not know the will of God, and in all prayer submission to the excellent will of God should underlie it; but when we know God’s will, there need be no “ifs”; and this passage was not put into the Bible in order that we might introduce “ifs” into all our prayers, but in order that we might throw our “ifs” to the wind, and have “CONFIDENCE” and “KNOW that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him.”

5. Praying in the Spirit

1. Over and over again in what has already been said, we have seen our dependence upon the Holy Spirit in prayer. This comes out very definitely in Eph. 6:18, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication IN THE SPIRIT,” and in Jude 20, “Praying IN THE HOLY GHOST.” Indeed the whole secret of prayer is found in these three words, “in the Spirit.” It is the prayer that God the Holy Spirit inspires that God the Father answers.

The disciples did not know how to pray as they ought, so they came to Jesus and said, “Lord teach us to pray.” We know not how to pray as we ought, but we have another Teacher and Guide right at hand to help us (John 14:16,17), “The Spirit helpeth our infirmity” (Rom. 8:26, R.V.). He teaches us how to pray. True prayer is prayer in the Spirit; that is, the prayer the Spirit inspires and directs. When we come into God’s presence we should recognize “our infirmity,” our ignorance of what we should pray for or how we should pray for it, and in the consciousness of our utter inability to pray aright we should look up to the Holy Spirit, casting ourselves utterly upon Him to direct our prayers, to lead out our desires and to guide our utterance of them.

Nothing can be more foolish in prayer than to rush heedlessly into God’s presence, and ask the first thing that comes into our mind, or that some thoughtless friend has asked us to pray for. When we first come into God’s presence we should be silent before Him. We should look up to Him to send His Holy Spirit to teach us how to pray. We must wait for the Holy Spirit, and surrender ourselves to the Spirit, then we shall pray aright.

Oftentimes when we come to God in prayer, we do not feel like praying. What shall one do in such a case? cease praying until he does feel like it? Not at all. When we feel least like praying is the time when we most need to pray. We should wait quietly before God and tell Him how cold and prayerless our hearts are, and look up to Him and trust Him and expect Him to send the Holy Spirit to warm our hearts and draw them out in prayer. It will not be long before the glow of the Spirit's presence will fill our hearts, and we will begin to pray with freedom, directness, earnestness and power. Many of the most blessed seasons of prayer I have ever known have begun with a feeling of utter deadness and prayerlessness, but in my helplessness and coldness I have cast myself upon God, and looked to Him to send His Holy Spirit to teach me to pray, and He has done it.

When we pray in the Spirit, we will pray for the right things and in the right way. There will be joy and power in our prayer.

2. If we are to pray with power we must pray WITH FAITH. In Mark 11:24 Jesus says, "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." No matter how positive any promise of God's Word may be, we will not enjoy it in actual experience unless we confidently expect its fulfillment in answer to our prayer. "If any of you lack wisdom," says James, "let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Now that promise is as positive as a promise can be, but the next verse adds, "But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." (R.V.) There must then be confident unwavering expectation. But there is a faith that goes beyond expectation, that believes that the prayer is heard and the promise granted. This comes out in the Revised Version of Mark 11:24, "Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye HAVE received them, and ye shall have them."

But how can one get this faith?

Let us say with all emphasis, it cannot be pumped up. Many a one reads this promise about the prayer of faith, and then asks for things that he desires and tries to make himself believe that God has heard the prayer. This ends only in disappointment, for it is not real faith and the thing is not granted. It is at this point that many people make a collapse of faith altogether by trying to work up faith by an effort of their will, and as the thing they made themselves believe they expected to get is not given, the very foundation of faith is oftentimes undermined.

But how does real faith come?

Rom 10:17 answers the question: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing BY THE WORD OF GOD." If we are to have real faith, we must study the Word of God and find out what is promised, then simply believe the promises of God. Faith must have a warrant. Trying to believe something that you want to believe is not faith.

Believing what God says in His Word is faith. If I am to have faith when I pray, I must find some promise in the Word of God on which to rest my faith. Faith furthermore comes through the Spirit. The Spirit knows the will of God, and if I pray in the Spirit, and look to the Spirit to teach me God's will, He will lead me out in prayer along the line of that will, and give me faith that the prayer is to be answered; but in no case does real faith come by simply determining that you are going to get the thing that you want to get.

If there is no promise in the Word of God, and no clear leading of the Spirit, there can be no real faith, and there should be no upbraiding of self for lack of faith in such a case. But if the thing desired is promised in the Word of God, we may well upbraid ourselves for lack of faith if we doubt; for we are making God a liar by doubting His Word.

6. Always Praying and Not Fainting

In two parables in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus teaches with great emphasis the lesson that men ought always to pray and not to faint. The first parable is found in Luke 11:5-8, and the other in Luke 18:1-8.

"And He said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him: 'Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?' And he from within shall answer and say: 'Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot rise and give thee.' I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth." (Luke 11:5-8)

"And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men always ought to pray and not to faint, saying: There was in a city a judge which feared not God, neither regarded man; and there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying:

"'Avenge me of mine adversary.'

"And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself: 'Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'

“And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:1-8)

In the former of these two parables Jesus sets forth the necessity of importunity in prayer in a startling way. The word rendered “importunity” means literally “shamelessness,” as if Jesus would have us understand that God would have us draw nigh to Him with a determination to obtain the things we seek that will not be put to shame by any seeming refusal or delay on God’s part. God delights in the holy boldness that will not take “no” for an answer. It is an expression of great faith, and nothing pleases God more than faith.

Jesus seemed to put the Syro-Phoenician woman away almost with rudeness, but she would not be put away, and Jesus looked upon her shameless importunity with pleasure, and said, “O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” (Matt. 15:28) God does not always let us get things at our first effort. He would train us and make us strong men by compelling us to work hard for the best things. So also He does not always give us what we ask in answer to the first prayer; He would train us and make us strong men of prayer by compelling us to pray hard for the best things. He makes us PRAY THROUGH.

I am glad that this is so. There is no more blessed training in prayer than that that comes through being compelled to ask again and again and again even through a long period of years before one obtains that which he seeks from God. Many people call it submission to the will of God when God does not grant them their requests at the first or second asking, and they say:

“Well, perhaps it is not God’s will.”

As a rule this is not submission, but spiritual laziness. We do not call it submission to the will of God when we give up after one or two efforts to obtain things by action; we call it lack of strength of character. When the strong man of action starts out to accomplish a thing, if he does not accomplish it the first, or second or one hundredth time, he keeps hammering away until he does accomplish it; and the strong man of prayer when he starts to pray for a thing keeps on praying until he prays it through, and obtains what he seeks. We should be careful about what we ask from God, but when we do begin to pray for a thing we should never give up praying for it until we get it, or until God makes it very clear and very definite to us that it is not His will to give it.

Some would have us believe that it shows unbelief to pray twice for the same thing, that we ought to “take it” the first time that we ask. Doubtless there are times when we are able through faith in the Word or the leading of the Holy Spirit to CLAIM the first time that which we have asked of God; but beyond question there are other times when we must pray again and again and again for the same thing before we get our answer. Those who have gotten beyond praying twice for the same thing have gotten beyond their Master,

(Matt. 26:44). George Muller prayed for two men daily for upwards of sixty years. One of these men was converted shortly before his death, I think at the last service that George Muller held, the other was converted within a year after his death. One of the great needs of the present day is men and women who will not only start out to pray for things, but pray on and on and on until they obtain that which they seek from the Lord.

7. Abiding in Christ

"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7) The whole secret of prayer is found in these words of our Lord. Here is prayer that has unbounded power: "Ask WHAT YE WILL, and it shall be done unto you."

There is a way then of asking and getting precisely what we ask and getting all we ask. Christ gives two conditions of this all- prevailing prayer:

1. The first condition is, "If ye abide in Me."

What is it to abide in Christ?

Some explanations that have been given of this are so mystical or so profound that to many simple-minded children of God they mean practically nothing at all; but what Jesus meant was really very simple.

He had been comparing Himself to a vine, His disciples to the branches in the vine. Some branches continued in the vine, that is, remained in living union with the vine, so that the sap or life of the vine constantly flowed into these branches. They had no independent life of their own. Everything in them was simply the outcome of the life of the vine flowing into them. Their buds, their leaves, their blossoms, their fruit, were really not theirs, but the buds, leaves, blossoms and fruit of the vine. Other branches were completely severed from the vine, or else the flow of the sap or life of the vine into them was in some way hindered. Now for us to abide in Christ is for us to bear the same relation to Him that the first sort of branches bear to the vine; that is to say, to abide in Christ is to renounce any independent life of our own, to give up trying to think our thoughts, or form our resolutions, or cultivate our feelings, and simply and constantly look to Christ to think His thoughts in us, to form His purposes in us, to feel His emotions and affections in us. It is to renounce all life independent of Christ, and constantly to look to Him for the inflow of His life into us, and the

outworking of His life through us. When we do this, and in so far as we do this, our prayers will obtain that which we seek from God.

This must necessarily be so, for our desires will not be our own desires, but Christ's, and our prayers will not in reality be our own prayers, but Christ praying in us. Such prayers will always be in harmony with God's will, and the Father heareth Him always. When our prayers fail it is because they are indeed our prayers. We have conceived the desire and framed the petition of ourselves, instead of looking to Christ to pray through us.

To say that one should be abiding in Christ in all his prayers, looking to Christ to pray through Him rather than praying himself, is simply saying in another way that one should pray "in the Spirit." When we thus abide in Christ, our thoughts are not our own thoughts, but His, our joys are not our own joys, but His, our fruit is not our own fruit, but His; just as the buds, leaves, blossoms and fruit of the branch that abides in the vine are not the buds, leaves, blossoms and fruit of the branch, but of the vine itself whose life is flowing into the branch and manifests itself in these buds, leaves, blossoms and fruit.

To abide in Christ, one must of course already be in Christ through the acceptance of Christ as an atoning Savior from the guilt of sin, a risen Savior from the power of sin, and a Lord and Master over all his life. Being in Christ, all that we have to do to abide (or continue) in Christ is simply to renounce our self-life—utterly renouncing every thought, every purpose, every desire, every affection of our own, and just looking day by day and hour by hour for Jesus Christ to form His thoughts, His purposes, His affections, His desires in us. Abiding in Christ is really a very simple matter, though it is a wonderful life of privilege and of power.

2. But there is another condition stated in this verse, though it is really involved in the first: "And My words abide in you."

If we are to obtain from God all that we ask from Him, Christ's words must abide or continue in us. We must study His words, fairly devour His words, let them sink into our thought and into our heart, keep them in our memory, obey them constantly in our life, let them shape and mold our daily life and our every act.

This is really the method of abiding in Christ. It is through His words that Jesus imparts Himself to us. The words He speaks unto us, they are spirit and they are life. (John 6:33) It is vain to expect power in prayer unless we meditate much upon the words of Christ, and let them sink deep and find a permanent abode in our hearts. There are many who wonder why they are so powerless in prayer, but the very simple explanation of it all is found in their neglect of the words of Christ. They have not hidden His words in their hearts; His words do not abide in them. It is not by seasons of mystical meditation and rapturous experiences that we learn to abide in Christ; it is by feeding upon His word, His written word as found in the Bible, and looking to the Holy Spirit to implant these words in our hearts and to make them a living thing in our hearts. If we thus let the words of Christ abide in us, they will stir us up in prayer.

They will be the mold in which our prayers are shaped, and our prayers will be necessarily along the line of God's will, and will prevail with Him. Prevailing prayer is almost an impossibility where there is neglect of the study of the Word of God.

Mere intellectual study of the Word of God is not enough; there must be meditation upon it. The Word of God must be revolved over and over and over in the mind, with a constant looking to God by His Spirit to make that Word a living thing in the heart. The prayer that is born of meditation upon the Word of God is the prayer that soars upward most easily to God's listening ear.

George Muller, one of the mightiest men of prayer of the present generation, when the hour for prayer came would begin by reading and meditating upon God's Word until out of the study of the Word a prayer began to form itself in his heart. Thus God Himself was a real author of the prayer, and God answered the prayers which He Himself had inspired.

The Word of God is the instrument through which the Holy Spirit works, it is the sword of the Spirit in more senses than one; and the one who would know the work of the Holy Spirit in any direction must feed upon the Word. The one who would pray in the Spirit must meditate much upon the Word, that the Holy Spirit may have something through which He can work. The Holy Spirit works His prayers in us through the Word, and neglect of the Word makes praying in the Holy Spirit an impossibility. If we would feed the fire of our prayers with the fuel of God's Word, all our difficulties in prayer would disappear.

8. Praying With Thanksgiving

There are two words often overlooked in the lesson about prayer which Paul gives us in Phil. 4:6,7, "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." (R.V.) The two important words often overlooked are, "WITH THANKSGIVING."

In approaching God to ask for new blessings, we should never forget to return thanks for blessings already granted. If any one of us would stop and think how many of the prayers which we have offered to God have been answered, and how seldom we have gone back to God to return thanks for the answers thus given, I am sure we would be overwhelmed with confusion. We should be just as definite in returning thanks as we are in prayer. We

come to God with most specific petitions, but when we return thanks to Him, our thanksgiving is indefinite and general.

Doubtless one reason why so many of our prayers lack power is because we have neglected to return thanks for blessings already received. If any one were to constantly come to us asking help from us, and should never say “Thank you” for the help thus given, we would soon tire of helping one so ungrateful. Indeed, regard for the one we were helping would hold us back from encouraging such rank ingratitude. Doubtless our heavenly Father out of a wise regard for our highest welfare oftentimes refuses to answer petitions that we send up to Him in order that we may be brought to a sense of our ingratitude and taught to be thankful.

God is deeply grieved by the thanklessness and ingratitude of which so many of us are guilty. When Jesus healed the ten lepers and only one came back to give Him thanks, in wonderment and pain He exclaimed,

“Were not the ten cleansed? but where are the nine?” (Luke 17:17, R.V.)

How often must He look down upon us in sadness at our forgetfulness of His repeated blessings, and His frequent answer to our prayers.

Returning thanks for blessings already received increases our faith and enables us to approach God with new boldness and new assurance. Doubtless the reason so many have so little faith when they pray, is because they take so little time to meditate upon and thank God for blessings already received. As one meditates upon the answers to prayers already granted, faith waxes bolder and bolder, and we come to feel in the very depths of our souls that there is nothing too hard for the Lord. As we reflect upon the wondrous goodness of God toward us on the one hand, and upon the other hand upon the little thought and strength and time that we ever put into thanksgiving, we may well humble ourselves before God and confess our sin.

The mighty men of prayer in the Bible, and the mighty men of prayer throughout the ages of the church’s history have been men who were much given to thanksgiving and praise. David was a mighty man of prayer, and how his Psalms abound with thanksgiving and praise. The apostles were mighty men of prayer; of them we read that “they were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.” Paul was a mighty man of prayer, and how often in his epistles he bursts out in definite thanksgiving to God for definite blessings and definite answers to prayers. Jesus is our model in prayer as in everything else. We find in the study of His life that His manner of returning thanks at the simplest meal was so noticeable that two of His disciples recognized Him by this after His resurrection.

Thanksgiving is one of the inevitable results of being filled with the Holy Spirit and one who does not learn “in everything to give thanks” cannot continue to pray in the Spirit. If we would learn to pray with power we would do well to let these two words sink deep into our hearts: “WITH THANKSGIVING.”

9. Hindrances To Prayer

We have gone very carefully into the positive conditions of prevailing prayer; but there are some things which hinder prayer. These God has made very plain in His Word.

1. The first hindrance to prayer we will find in James 4:3, “Ye ask and receive not BECAUSE YE ASK AMISS, THAT YE MAY SPEND IT IN YOUR PLEASURES.”

A selfish purpose in prayer robs prayer of power. Very many prayers are selfish. These may be prayers for things for which it is perfectly proper to ask, for things which it is the will of God to give, but the motive of the prayer is entirely wrong, and so the prayer falls powerless to the ground. The true purpose in prayer is that God may be glorified in the answer. If we ask any petition merely that we may receive something to use in our pleasures or in our own gratification in one way or another, we “ask amiss” and need not expect to receive what we ask. This explains why many prayers remain unanswered.

For example, many a woman is praying for the conversion of her husband. That certainly is a most proper thing to ask; but many a woman’s motive in asking for the conversion of her husband is entirely improper, it is selfish. She desires that her husband may be converted because it would be so much more pleasant for her to have a husband who sympathized with her; or it is so painful to think that her husband might die and be lost forever. For some such selfish reason as this she desires to have her husband converted. The prayer is purely selfish. Why should a woman desire the conversion of her husband? First of all and above all, that God may be glorified; because she cannot bear the thought that God the Father should be dishonored by her husband trampling underfoot the Son of God.

Many pray for a revival. That certainly is a prayer that is pleasing to God, it is along the line of His will; but many prayers for revivals are purely selfish. The churches desire revivals in order that the membership may be increased, in order that the church may have a position of more power and influence in the community, in order that the church treasury may be filled, in order that a good report may be made at the presbytery or conference or association. For such low purposes as these, churches and ministers oftentimes are praying for a revival, and oftentimes too God does not answer the prayer. Why should we pray for a revival? For the glory of God, because we cannot endure it that God should continue to be dishonored by the worldliness of

the church, by the sins of unbelievers, by the proud unbelief of the day; because God's Word is being made void; in order that God may be glorified by the outpouring of His Spirit on the Church of Christ. For these reasons first of all and above all, we should pray for a revival.

Many a prayer for the Holy Spirit is a purely selfish prayer. It certainly is God's will to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him—He has told us so plainly in His Word (Luke 11:13), but many a prayer for the Holy Spirit is hindered by the selfishness of the motive that lies back of the prayer. Men and women pray for the Holy Spirit in order that they may be happy, or in order that they may be saved from the wretchedness of defeat in their lives, or in order that they may have power as Christian workers, or for some other purely selfish motive. Why should we pray for the Spirit? In order that God may no longer be dishonored by the low level of our Christian lives and by our ineffectiveness in service, in order that God may be glorified in the new beauty that comes into our lives and the new power that comes into our service.

2. The second hindrance to prayer we find in Is. 59:1,2: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But YOUR INIQUITIES HAVE SEPARATED BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR GOD, and YOUR SINS HAVE HID HIS FACE FROM YOU, THAT HE WILL NOT HEAR."…

Sin hinders prayer. Many a man prays and prays and prays, and gets absolutely no answer to his prayer. Perhaps he is tempted to think that it is not the will of God to answer, or he may think that the days when God answered prayer, if He ever did, are over. So the Israelites seem to have thought. They thought that the Lord's hand was shortened, that it could not save, and that His ear had become heavy that it could no longer hear.

"Not so," said Isaiah, "God's ear is just as open to hear as ever, His hand just as mighty to save; but there is a hindrance. That hindrance is your own sins. Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you that He will not hear."

It is so to-day. Many and many a man is crying to God in vain, simply because of sin in his life. It may be some sin in the past that has been unconfessed and unjudged, it may be some sin in the present that is cherished, very likely is not even looked upon as sin, but there the sin is, hidden away somewhere in the heart or in the life, and God "will not hear."

Any one who finds his prayers ineffective should not conclude that the thing which he asks of God is not according to His will, but should go alone with God with the Psalmist's prayer, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me" (Ps. 139:23,24), and wait before Him until He puts His finger upon the thing that is displeasing in His sight. Then this sin should be confessed and put away.

I well remember a time in my life when I was praying for two definite things that it seemed that I must have, or God would be dishonored; but the answer did not come. I awoke in the middle of the night in great physical suffering and great distress of soul. I cried to God for these things, reasoned with Him as to how necessary it was that I get them, and get them at once; but no answer came. I asked God to show me if there was anything wrong in my own life. Something came to my mind that had often come to it before, something definite but which I was unwilling to confess as sin. I said to God, “If this is wrong I will give it up”; but still no answer came. In my innermost heart, though I had never admitted it, I knew it was wrong.

At last I said:

“This is wrong. I have sinned. I will give it up.”

I found peace. In a few moments I was sleeping like a child. In the morning I woke well in body, and the money that was so much needed for the honor of God’s name came.

Sin is an awful thing, and one of the most awful things about it is the way it hinders prayer, the way it severs the connection between us and the source of all grace and power and blessing. Any one who would have power in prayer must be merciless in dealing with his own sins. “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”(Ps. 66:18) So long as we hold on to sin or have any controversy with God, we cannot expect Him to heed our prayers. If there is anything that is constantly coming up in your moments of close communion with God, that is the thing that hinders prayer: put it away.
3. The third hindrance to prayer is found in Ez. 14:3, “Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their heart, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them?”(R.V.) IDOLS IN THE HEART CAUSE GOD TO REFUSE TO LISTEN TO OUR PRAYERS.

What is an idol? An idol is anything that takes the place of God, anything that is the supreme object of our affection. God alone has the right to the supreme place in our hearts. Everything and

everyone else must be subordinate to Him.

Many a man makes an idol of his wife. Not that a man can love his wife any too much, but he can put her in the wrong place, he can put her before God; and when a man regards his wife’s pleasure before God’s pleasure, when he gives her the first place and God the second place, his wife is an idol, and God cannot hear his prayers.

Many a woman makes an idol of her children. Not that we can love our children too much. The more dearly we love Christ, the more dearly we love our children; but we can put our children in the wrong place, we can put them before God, and their

interests before God's interests. When we do this our children are our idols.

Many a man makes an idol of his reputation or his business. Reputation or business is put before God. God cannot hear the prayers of such a man.

One great question for us to decide, if we would have power in prayer is, Is God absolutely first? Is He before wife, before children, before reputation, before business, before our own lives? If not, prevailing prayer is impossible.

God often calls our attention to the fact that we have an idol, by not answering our prayers, and thus leading us to inquire as to why our prayers are not answered, and so we discover the idol, put it away, and God hears our prayers.

4. The fourth hindrance to prayer is found in Prov. 21:13, "WHOSO STOPPETH HIS EARS AT THE CRY OF THE POOR, HE ALSO SHALL CRY HIMSELF, BUT SHALL NOT BE HEARD."

There is perhaps no greater hindrance to prayer than stinginess, the lack of liberality toward the poor and toward God's work. It is the one who gives generously to others who receives generously from God. "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." (Luke 6:38, R.V.) The generous man is the mighty man of prayer. The stingy man is the powerless man of prayer.

One of the most wonderful statements about prevailing prayer (already referred to) 1_John 3:22, "Whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight," is made in direct connection with generosity toward the needy. In the context we are told that it is when we love, not in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth, when we open our hearts toward the brother in need, it is then and only then we have confidence toward God in prayer.

Many a man and woman who is seeking to find the secret of their powerlessness in prayer need not seek far; it is nothing more nor less than downright stinginess. George Muller, to whom reference has already been made, was a mighty man of prayer because he was a mighty giver. What he received from God never stuck to his fingers; he immediately passed it on to others. He was constantly receiving because he was constantly giving. When one thinks of the selfishness of the professing church to-day, how the orthodox churches of this land do not average $1.oo per year per member for foreign missions, it is no wonder that the church has so little power in prayer. If we would get from God, we must give to others. Perhaps the most wonderful promise in the Bible in regard to God's supplying our need is Phil. 4:19, "And my God shall fulfill every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." (R.V.) This glorious promise was made to the Philippian church, and made in immediate connection with their generosity.

5. The fifth hindrance to prayer is found in Mark 11:25, "And when ye stand praying,

FORGIVE, if ye have ought against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

An unforgiving spirit is one of the commonest hindrances to prayer. Prayer is answered on the basis that our sins are forgiven; and God cannot deal with us on the basis of forgiveness while we are harboring ill-will against those who have wronged us. Any one who is nursing a grudge against another has fast closed the ear of God against his own petition. How many there are crying to God for the conversion of husband, children, friends, and wondering why it is that their prayer is not answered, when the whole secret is some grudge that they have in their hearts against some one who has injured them, or who they fancy has injured them. Many and many a mother and father are allowing their children to go down to eternity unsaved, for the miserable gratification of hating somebody.

6. The sixth hindrance to prayer is found in 1_Peter 3:7, "Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor unto the woman, as unto the weaker vessel as being also joint-heirs of the grace of life; to the end that your prayers be not hindered." (R.V.) Here we are plainly told that A WRONG RELATION BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE IS A HINDRANCE TO PRAYER.

In many and many a case the prayers of husbands are hindered because of their failure of duty toward their wives. On the other hand, it is also doubtless true that the prayers of wives are hindered because of their failure in duty toward their husbands. If husbands and wives should seek diligently to find the cause of their unanswered prayers, they would often find it in their relations to one another.

Many a man who makes great pretentions to piety, and is very active in Christian work, shows but little consideration in his treatment of his wife, and is oftentimes unkind, if not brutal; then he wonders why it is that his prayers are not answered. The verse that we have just quoted explains the seeming mystery. On the other hand, many a woman who is very devoted to the church, and very faithful in attendance upon all services, treats her husband with the most unpardonable neglect, is cross and peevish toward him, wounds him by the sharpness of her speech, and by her ungovernable temper; then wonders why it is that she has no power in prayer.

There are other things in the relations of husbands and wives which cannot be spoken of publicly, but which doubtless are oftentimes a hindrance in approaching God in prayer. There is much of sin covered up under the holy name of marriage that is a cause of spiritual deadness, and of powerlessness in prayer. Any man or woman whose prayers seem to bring no answer should spread their whole married life out before God, and ask Him to put His finger upon anything in it that is displeasing in His sight.

7. The seventh hindrance to prayer is found in James 1:5-7, "But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask IN FAITH, NOTHING DOUBTING: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." (R.V.)

Prayers are hindered by unbelief. God demands that we shall believe His Word absolutely. To question it is to make Him a liar. Many of us do that when we plead His promises, and is it any wonder that our prayers are not answered? How many prayers are hindered by our wretched unbelief! We go to God and ask Him for something that is positively promised in His Word, and then we do not more than half expect to get it. “Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.”

10. When To Pray

If we would know the fulness of blessing that there is in the prayer life, it is important not only that we pray in the right way, but also that we pray at the right time. Christ’s own example is full of suggestiveness as to the right time for prayer.

1. In the 1st chapter of Mark, the 35th verse, we read, “And IN THE MORNING, rising up A GREAT WHILE BEFORE DAY, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.”

JESUS CHOSE THE EARLY MORNING HOUR FOR PRAYER. Many of the mightiest men of God have followed the Lord’s example in this. In the morning hour the mind is fresh and at its very best. It is free from distraction, and that absolute concentration upon God which is essential to the most effective prayer is most easily possible in the early morning hours. Furthermore, when the early hours are spent in prayer, the whole day is sanctified, and power is obtained for overcoming its temptations, and for performing its duties. More can be accomplished in prayer in the first hours of the day than at any other time during the day. Every child of God who would make the most out of his life for Christ, should set apart the first part of the day to meeting God in the study of His Word and in prayer. The first thing we do each day should be to go alone with God and face the duties, the temptations, and the service of that day, and get strength from God for all. We should get victory before the hour of trial, temptation or service comes. The secret place of prayer is the place to fight our battles and gain our victories.

2. In the 6th chapter of Luke in the 12th verse, we get further light upon the right time to pray. We read, “And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued ALL NIGHT in prayer to God.”

Here we see Jesus praying in the night, spending the entire night in prayer. Of course we have no reason to suppose that this was the constant practice of our Lord, nor do we even know how common this practice was, but there were certainly times when the whole night was given up to prayer. Here too we do well to follow in the footsteps of the Master.

Of course there is a way of setting apart nights for prayer in which there is no profit; it is pure legalism. But the abuse of this practice is no reason for neglecting it altogether. One ought not to say, “I am going to spend a whole night in prayer,” with the thought that there is any merit that will win God’s favor in such an exercise; that is legalism. But we oftentimes do well to say, “I am going to set apart this night for meeting God, and obtaining His blessing and power; and if necessary, and if He so leads me, I will give the whole night to prayer.” Oftentimes we will have prayed things through long before the night has passed, and we can retire and find more refreshing and invigorating sleep than if we had not spent the time in prayer. At other times God doubtless will keep us in communion with Himself away into the morning, and when He does this in His infinite grace, blessed indeed are these hours of night prayer!

Nights of prayer to God are followed by days of power with men. In the night hours the world is hushed in slumber, and we can easily be alone with God and have undisturbed communion with Him. If we set apart the whole night for prayer, there will be no hurry, there will be time for our own hearts to become quiet before God, there will be time for the whole mind to be brought under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, there will be plenty of time to pray things through. A night of prayer should be put entirely under God’s control. We should lay down no rules as to how long we will pray, or as to what we shall pray about, but be ready to wait upon God for a short time or a long time as He may lead, and to be led out in one direction or another as He may see fit.

3. Jesus Christ prayed BEFORE ALL THE GREAT CRISES IN HIS EARTHLY LIFE.

He prayed before choosing the twelve disciples; before the sermon on the mount; before starting out on an evangelistic tour; before His anointing with the Holy Spirit and His entrance upon His public ministry; before announcing to the twelve His approaching death; before the great consummation of His life at the cross. (Luke 6:12,13; Luke 9:18,21,22; Luke 3:21,22; Mark 1:35-38; Luke 22:39 -46.) He prepared for every important crisis by a protracted season of prayer. So ought we to do also. Whenever any crisis of life is seen to be approaching, we should prepare for it by a season of very definite prayer to God. We should take plenty of time for this prayer.

4. Christ prayed not only before the great events and victories of His life, but He also prayed AFTER ITS GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPORTANT CRISES.

When He had fed the five thousand with the five loaves and two fishes, and the multitude desired to take Him and make Him king, having sent them away He went up into the mountain apart to pray, and spent hours there alone in prayer to God (Matt. 14:23; Jn. 6:15). So He went on from victory to victory.

It is more common for most of us to pray before the great events of life than it is to pray after them, but the latter is as important as the former. If we would pray after the great achievements of life, we might go on to still greater; as it is we are often either

puffed up or exhausted by the things that we do in the name of the Lord, and so we advance no further. Many and many a man in answer to prayer has been endued with power and thus has wrought great things in the name of the Lord, and when these great things were accomplished, instead of going alone with God and humbling himself before Him, and giving Him all the glory for what was achieved, he has congratulated himself upon what has been accomplished, has become puffed up, and God has been obliged to lay him aside. The great things done were not followed by humiliation of self, and prayer to God, and so pride has come in and the mighty man has been shorn of his power.

5. Jesus Christ gave a special time to prayer WHEN LIFE WAS UNUSUALLY BUSY. He would withdraw at such a time from the multitudes that thronged about Him, and go into the wilderness and pray. For example, we read in Luke 5:15,16, "But so much the more went abroad the report concerning Him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed of their infirmities. But He withdrew Himself in the deserts and prayed." (R.V.)

Some men are so busy that they find no time for prayer. Apparently the busier Christ's life was, the more He prayed. Sometimes He had no time to eat (Mark 3:20), sometimes He had no time for needed rest and sleep (Mark 6:31,33,46), but He always took time to pray; and the more the work crowded the more He prayed.

Many a mighty man of God has learned this secret from Christ, and when the work has crowded more than usual they have set an unusual amount of time apart for prayer. Other men of God, once mighty, have lost their power because they did not learn this secret, and allowed increasing work to crowd out prayer.

Years ago it was the writer's privilege, with other theological students, to ask questions of one of the most useful Christian men of the day. The writer was led to ask,

"Will you tell us something of your prayer life?"

The man was silent a moment, and then, turning his eyes earnestly upon me, replied:

"Well, I must admit that I have been so crowded with work of late that I have not given the time I should to prayer."

Is it any wonder that that man lost power, and the great work that he was doing was curtailed in a very marked degree? Let us never forget that the more the work presses on us, the more time must we spend in prayer.

6. Jesus Christ prayed BEFORE THE GREAT TEMPTATIONS OF HIS LIFE.

As He drew nearer and nearer to the cross, and realized that upon it was to come the great final test of His life, Jesus went out into the garden to pray. He came "unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder." (Matt. 26:36) The victory of Calvary was won that night in the garden of Gethsemane. The calm majesty of His bearing in meeting the awful onslaughts of

Pilate's Judgment Hall and of Calvary, was the outcome of the struggle, agony and victory of Gethsemane. While Jesus prayed the disciples slept, so He stood fast while they fell ignominiously.

Many temptations come upon us unawares and unannounced, and all that we can do is to lift a cry to God for help then and there; but many of the temptations of life we can see approaching from the distance, and in such cases the victory should be won before the temptation really reaches us.

7. In 1 Thess. 5:17 we read, "Pray WITHOUT CEASING," and in Eph. 6:18, R.V., "praying AT ALL SEASONS."

Our whole life should be a life of prayer. We should walk in constant communion with God. There should be a constant upward looking of the soul to God. We should walk so habitually in His presence that even when we awake in the night it would be the most natural thing in the world for us to speak to Him in thanksgiving or in petition.

11. The Need of a General Revival

If we are to pray aright in such a time as this, much of our prayer should be for a general revival. If there was ever a time in which there was need to cry unto God in the words of the Psalmist, "Wilt Thou not revive us again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?" (Ps. 85:6) it is this day in which we live. It is surely time for the Lord to work, for men have made void His law (Ps. 199:126). The voice of the Lord given in the written Word is set at naught both by the world and the church. Such a time is not a time for discouragement—the man who believes in God and believes in the Bible can never be discouraged; but it is a time for Jehovah Himself to step in and work. The intelligent Christian, the wide-awake watchman on the walls of Zion, may well cry with the Psalmist of old, "It is time for Jehovah to work, for they have made void Thy law." (Ps. 119:126, Am.R.V.)

The great need of the day is a general revival.

Let us consider first of all what a general revival is.

A revival is a time of quickening or impartation of life. As God alone can give life, a revival is a time when God visits His people and by the power of His Spirit imparts new life to them, and through them imparts life to sinners dead in trespasses and sins. We have

religious excitements gotten up by the cunning methods and hypnotic influence of the mere professional evangelist; but these are not revivals and are not needed. They are the devil's imitations of a revival. NEW LIFE FROM GOD—that is a revival. A general revival is a time when this new life from God is not confined to scattered localities, but is general throughout Christendom and the earth.

The reason why a general revival is needed is that spiritual dearth and desolation and death is general. It is not confined to any one country, though it may be more manifest in some countries than in others. It is found in foreign mission fields as well as in home fields. We have had local revivals. The life-giving Spirit of God has breathed upon this minister and that, this church and that, this community and that; but we need, we sorely need, a revival that shall be widespread and general.

Let us look for a few moments at the results of a revival. These results are apparent in ministers, in the church and in the unsaved.

1. The results of a revival in a minister are:

(1) The minister has a new love for souls. We ministers as a rule have no such love for souls as we ought to have, no such love for souls as Jesus had, no such love for souls as Paul had. But when God visits His people the hearts of ministers are greatly burdened for the unsaved. They go out in great longing for the salvation of their fellow men. They forget their ambition to preach great sermons and for fame, and simply long to see men brought to Christ.

(2) When true revivals come ministers get a new love for God's Word and a new faith in God's Word. They fling to the winds their doubts and criticisms of the Bible and of the creeds, and go to preaching the Bible and especially Christ crucified. Revivals make ministers who are loose in their doctrines orthodox. A genuine wide- sweeping revival would do more to turn things upside down and thus get them right side up than all the heresy trials ever instituted.

(3) Revivals bring to ministers new liberty and power in preaching. It is no week-long grind to prepare a sermon, and no nerve-consuming effort to preach it after it has been prepared. Preaching is a joy and a refreshment, and there is power in it in times of revival.

2. The results of a revival on Christians generally are as marked as its results upon the ministry.

(1) In times of revival Christians come out from the world and live separated lives. Christians who have been dallying with the world, who have been playing cards and dancing and going to the theater and indulging in similar follies, give them up. These things are found to be incompatible with increasing life and light.

(2) In times of revival Christians get a new spirit of prayer. Prayer-meetings are no longer a duty, but become the necessity of a hungry, importunate heart.

Private prayer is followed with new zest. The voice of earnest prayer to God is heard day and night. People no longer ask, “Does God answer prayer?” They know He does, and besiege the throne of grace day and night.

(3) In times of revival Christians go to work for lost souls. They do not go to meeting simply to enjoy themselves and get blessed. They go to meeting to watch for souls and to bring them to Christ. They talk to men on the street and in the stores and in their homes. The cross of Christ, salvation, heaven and hell become the subjects of constant conversation. Politics and the weather and new bonnets and the latest novels are forgotten.

(4) In times of revival Christians have new joy in Christ. Life is joy, and new life is new joy. Revival days are glad days, days of heaven on earth.

(5) In times of revival Christians get a new love for the Word of God. They want to study it day and night. Revivals are bad for saloons and theaters, but they are good for bookstores and Bible agencies.

3. But revivals also have a decided influence on the unsaved world.

(1) First of all, they bring deep conviction of sin. Jesus said that when the Spirit was come He would convince the world of sin (Jn. 16:7,8). Now we have seen that a revival is a coming of the Holy Spirit, and therefore there must be a new conviction of sin, and there always is. If you see something men call a revival, and there is no conviction of sin, you may know at once that it is bogus. It is a sure mark.

(2) Revivals bring also conversion and regeneration. When God refreshes His people, He always converts sinners also. The first result of Pentecost was new life and power to the one hundred and twenty disciples in the upper room; the second result was three thousand conversions in a single day. It is always so. I am constantly reading of revivals here and there, where Christians were greatly helped but there were no conversions. I have my doubts about that kind. If Christians are truly refreshed, they will get after the unsaved by prayer and testimony and persuasion, and there will be conversions.

WHY A GENERAL REVIVAL IS NEEDED

We see what a general revival is, and what it does; let us now face the question why it is needed at the present time.

I think that the mere description of what it is and what it does shows that it is needed, sorely needed, but let us look at some specific conditions that exist to-day that show the need of it. In showing these conditions one is likely to be called a pessimist. If facing the facts is to be called a pessimist, I am willing to be called a pessimist. If in order to be an optimist one must shut his eyes and call black white, and error truth, and sin righteousness, and death life, I don’t want to be called an optimist. But I am an optimist all the same. Pointing out the real condition will lead to a better condition.

1. Look first at the ministry.

(1) Many of us who are professedly orthodox ministers are practically infidels. That is plain speech, but it is also indisputable fact. There is no essential difference between the teachings of Tom Paine and Bob Ingersoll and the teachings of some of our theological professors. The latter are not so blunt and honest about it; they phrase it in more elegant and studied sentences; but it means the same. Much of the so-called new learning and higher criticism is simply Tom Paine infidelity sugar-coated. Prof. Howard Osgood, who is a real scholar and not a mere echo of German infidelity, once read a statement of some positions, and asked if they did not fairly represent the scholarly criticism of to-day, and when it was agreed that they did, he startled his audience by saying:

"I am reading from Tom Paine's `Age of Reason.'"

There is little new in the higher criticism. Our future ministers oftentimes are being educated under infidel professors, and being immature boys when they enter the college or seminary, they naturally come out infidels in many cases, and then go forth to poison the church.

(2) Even when our ministers are orthodox—as thank God so very many are!—they are oftentimes not men of prayer. How many modern ministers know what it is to wrestle in prayer, to spend a good share of a night in prayer? I do not know how many, but I do know that many do not.

(3) Many of us who are ministers have no love for souls. How many preach because they MUST preach, because they feel that men every where are perishing, and by preaching they hope to save some? And how many follow up their preaching as Paul did, by beseeching men everywhere to be reconciled to God?

Perhaps enough has been said about us ministers; but it is evident that a revival is needed for our sake or some of us will have to stand before God overwhelmed with confusion in an awful day of reckoning that is surely coming.

2. Look now at the church:

(1) Look at the doctrinal state of the church. It is bad enough. Many do not believe in the whole Bible. The book of Genesis is a myth, Jonah is an allegory, and even the miracles of the Son of God are questioned. The doctrine of prayer is old-fashioned, and the work of the Holy Spirit is sneered at. Conversion is unnecessary, and hell is no longer believed in. Then look at the fads and errors that have sprung up out of this loss of faith, Christian Science, Unitarianism, Spiritualism, Universalism, Babism, Metaphysical Healing, etc., etc., a perfect pandemonium of doctrines of devils.

(2) Look at the spiritual state of the church. Worldliness is rampant among church members. Many church members are just as eager as any in the rush to get rich. They use the methods of the world in the accumulation of wealth, and they hold just as fast to it as any when they have gotten it.

Prayerlessness abounds among church members on every hand. Some one has said that Christians on the average do not spend more than five minutes a day in prayer.

Neglect of the Word of God goes hand in hand with neglect of prayer to God. Very many Christians spend twice as much time every day wallowing through the more of the daily papers as they do bathing in the cleansing laver of God's Holy Word. How many Christians average an hour a day spent in Bible study?

Along with neglect of prayer and neglect of the Word of God goes a lack of generosity. The churches are rapidly increasing in wealth, but the treasuries of the missionary societies are empty. Christians do not average a dollar a year for foreign missions. It is simply appalling.

Then there is the increasing disregard for the Lord's Day. It is fast becoming a day of worldly pleasure, instead of a day of holy service. The Sunday newspaper with its inane twaddle and filthy scandal takes the place of the Bible; and visiting and golf and bicycle, the place of the Sunday-school and church service.

Christians mingle with the world in all forms of questionable amusements. The young man and young woman who does not believe in dancing with its rank immodesties, the card table with its drift toward gambling, and the theater with its ever-increasing appeal to lewdness, is counted an old fogy.

Then how small a proportion of our membership has really entered into fellowship with Jesus Christ in His burden for souls! Enough has been said of the spiritual state of the church.

3. Now look at the state of the world.

(1) Note how few conversions there are. The Methodist church, which has led the way in aggressive work has actually lost more members than it has gained the last year. Here and there a church has a large number of accessions upon confession of faith, but these churches are rare exceptions; and where there are such accessions, in how few cases are the conversions deep, thorough and satisfactory.

(2) There is lack of conviction of sin. Seldom are men overwhelmed with a sense of their awful guilt in trampling under foot the Son of God. Sin is regarded as a "misfortune" or as "infirmity," or even as "good in the making"; seldom as enormous wrong against a holy God.

(3) Unbelief is rampant. Many regard it as a mark of intellectual superiority to reject the Bible, and even faith in God and immortality. It is about the only mark of intellectual superiority many possess, and perhaps that is the reason they cling to it so tenaciously.

(4) Hand in hand with this widespread infidelity goes gross immorality, as has always been the case. Infidelity and immorality are Siamese twins. They always

exist and always grow and always fatten together. This prevailing immorality is found everywhere.

Look at the legalized adultery that we call divorce. Men marry one wife after another, and are still admitted into good society; and women do likewise. There are thousands of supposedly respectable men in America living with other men's wives, and thousands of supposedly respectable women living with other women's husbands.

This immorality is found in the theater. The theater at its best is bad enough, but now "Sapphos," and the "Degenerates," and all the unspeakable vile accessories of the stage rule the day, and the women who debauch themselves by appearing in such plays are defended in the newspapers and welcomed by supposedly respectable people.

Much of our literature is rotten, but decent people will read books as bad as "Trilby" because it is the rage. Art is oftentimes a mere covering for shameless indecency. Women are induced to cast modesty to the winds that the artist may perfect his art and defile his morals.

Greed for money has become a mania with rich and poor. The multi-millionaire will often sell his soul and trample the rights of his fellow men under foot in the mad hope of becoming a billionaire, and the laboring man will often commit murder to increase the power of the union and keep up wages. Wars are waged and men shot down like dogs to improve commerce, and to gain political prestige for unprincipled politicians who parade as statesmen.

The licentiousness of the day lifts its serpent head everywhere. You see it in the newspapers, you see it on the bill- boards, you see it on the advertisements of cigars, shoes, bicycles, patent medicines, corsets and everything else. You see it on the streets at night. You see it just outside the church door. You find it not only in the awful cesspools set apart for it in the great cities, but it is crowding further and further up our business streets and into the residence portions of our cities. Alas! now and then you find it, if you look sharp, in supposedly respectable homes; indeed it will be borne to your ears by the confessions of broken- hearted men and women. The moral condition of the world in our day is disgusting, sickening, appalling.

We need a revival, deep, widespread, general, in the power of the Holy Ghost. It is either a general revival or the dissolution of the church, of the home, of the state. A revival, new life from God, is the cure, and the only cure. That will stem the awful tide of immorality and unbelief. Mere argument will not do it; but a sign from heaven, a new outpouring of the Spirit of God, It was not discussion but the breath of God that relegated Tom Paine, Voltaire, Volney and other of the old infidels to the limbo of forgetfulness; and we need a new breath from God to send the Wellhausens and the Kuenens and the Grafs and the parrots they have trained to occupy chairs and pulpits in England and America to keep them company. I believe that breath from God is coming.

The great need of to-day is a general revival. The need is clear. It admits of no honest difference of opinion. What then shall we do? Pray. Take up the Psalmist's prayer, "Revive us again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee." Take up Ezekiel's prayer, "Come from the four winds, O breath (breath of God), and breathe upon these slain that they may live." Hark, I hear a noise! Behold a shaking! I can almost feel the breeze upon my cheek. I can almost see the great living army rising to their feet. Shall we not pray and pray and pray and pray, till the Spirit comes, and God revives His people?

12. The Place of Prayer Before and During Revivals

No treatment of the subject How to Pray would be at all complete if it did not consider the place of prayer in revivals.

The first great revival of Christian history had its origin on the human side in a ten-days' prayer-meeting. We read of that handful of disciples, "These all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer." (Acts 1:14, R.V.) The result of that prayer- meeting we read of in the 2nd chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (v.4) Further on in the chapter we read that "there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls." (v.41,R.V.) This revival proved genuine and permanent. The converts "continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." (v.42,R.V.) "And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved." (v.47,R.V.)

Every true revival from that day to this has had its earthly origin in prayer. The great revival under Jonathan Edwards in the 18th century began with his famous call to prayer. The marvelous work of grace among the Indians under Brainerd had its origin in the days and nights that Brainerd spent before God in prayer for an enduement of power from on high for this work.

A most remarkable and widespread display of God's reviving power was that which broke out at Rochester, New York, in 1830, under the labors of Charles G. Finney. It not only spread throughout the State but ultimately to Great Britain as well. Mr. Finney himself

attributed the power of this work to the spirit of prayer that prevailed. He describes it in his autobiography in the following words:
“When I was on my way to Rochester, as we passed through a village, some thirty miles east of Rochester, a brother minister whom I knew, seeing me on the canal-boat, jumped aboard to have a little conversation with me, intending to ride but a little way and return. He, however, became interested in conversation, and upon finding where I was going, he made up his mind to keep on and go with me to Rochester. We had been there but a few days when this minister became so convinced that he could not help weeping aloud at one time as we passed along the street. The Lord gave him a powerful spirit of prayer, and his heart was broken. As he and I prayed together, I was struck with his faith in regard to what the Lord was going to do there. I recollect he would say, `Lord, I do not know how it is; but I seem to know that Thou art going to do a great work in this city.’ The spirit of prayer was poured out powerfully, so much so that some persons stayed away from the public services to pray, being unable to restrain their feelings under preaching.

“And here I must introduce the name of a man, whom I shall have occasion to mention frequently, Mr. Abel Clary. He was the son of a very excellent man, and an elder of the church where I was converted. He was converted in the same revival in which I was. He had been licensed to preach; but his spirit of prayer was such, he was so burdened with the souls of men, that he was not able to preach much, his whole time and strength being given to prayer. The burden of his soul would frequently be so great that he was unable to stand, and he would writhe and groan in agony. I was well acquainted with him, and knew something of the wonderful spirit of prayer that was upon him. He was a very silent man, as almost all are who have that powerful spirit of prayer.

“The first I knew of his being in Rochester, a gentleman who lived about a mile west of the city, called on me one day and asked me if I knew a Mr. Abel Clary, a minister. I told him that I knew him well. ‘Well,’ he said, ‘he is at my house, and has been there for some time, and I don’t know what to think of him.’ I said, ‘I have not seen him at any of our meetings.’ ‘No,’ he replied, ‘he cannot go to meeting, he says. He prays nearly all the time, day and night, and in such agony of mind that I do not know what to make of it. Sometimes he cannot even stand on his knees, but will lie prostrate on the floor, and groan and pray in a manner that quite astonishes me.’ I said to the brother, ‘I understand it: please keep still. It will all come out right; he will surely prevail.’

“I knew at the time a considerable number of men who were exercised in the same way. A Deacon P–, of Camden, Oneida county; a Deacon T–, of Rodman, Jefferson county; a Deacon B–, of Adams, in the same county; this Mr. Clary and many others among the men, and a large number of women partook of the same spirit, and spent a great part of their time in prayer. Father Nash, as we called him, who in several of my fields of labor came to me and aided me, was another of those men that had such a powerful spirit of prevailing prayer. This Mr. Clary continued in Rochester as long as I did, and did not leave it until after I had left. He never, that I could learn, appeared in public, but gave himself wholly to prayer.

“I think it was the second Sabbath that I was at Auburn at this time, I observed in the

congregation the solemn face of Mr. Clary. He looked as if he was borne down with an agony of prayer. Being well acquainted with him, and knowing the great gift of God that was upon him, the spirit of prayer, I was very glad to see him there. He sat in the pew with his brother, the doctor, who was also a professor of religion, but who had nothing by experience, I should think, of his brother Abel's great power with God.

"At intermission, as soon as I came down from the pulpit, Mr. Clary, with his brother, met me at the pulpit stairs, and the doctor invited me to go home with him and spend the intermission and get some refreshments. I did so.

"After arriving at his house we were soon summoned to the dinner table. We gathered about the table, and Dr. Clary turned to his brother and said, 'Brother Abel, will you ask the blessing?' Brother Abel bowed his head and began, audibly, to ask a blessing. He had uttered but a sentence or two when he broke instantly down, moved suddenly back from the table, and fled to his chamber. The doctor supposed he had been taken suddenly ill, and rose up and followed him. In a few moments he came down and said, 'Mr. Finney, brother Abel wants to see you.' Said I, 'What ails him?' Said he, 'I do not know but he says, you know. He appears in great distress, but I think it is the state of his mind.' I understood it in a moment, and went to his room. He lay groaning upon the bed, the Spirit making intercession for him, and in him, with groanings that could not be uttered. I had barely entered the room, when he made out to say, 'Pray, brother Finney.' I knelt down and helped him in prayer, by leading his soul out for the conversion of sinners. I continued to pray until his distress passed away, and then I returned to the dinner table.

"I understood that this was the voice of God. I saw the spirit of prayer was upon him, and I felt his influence upon myself, and took it for granted that the work would move on powerfully. It did so. The pastor told me afterward that he found that in the six weeks that I was there, five hundred souls had been converted."

Mr. Finney in his lectures on revivals tells of other remarkable awakenings in answer to the prayers of God's people. He says in one place, "A clergyman in W–-n told me of a revival among his people, which commenced with a zealous and devoted woman in the church. She became anxious about sinners, and went to praying for them; she prayed, and her distress increased; and she finally came to her minister, and talked with him, and asked him to appoint an anxious meeting, for she felt that one was needed. The minister put her off, for he felt nothing of it. The next week she came again, and besought him to appoint an anxious meeting, she knew there would be somebody to come, for she felt as if God was going to pour out His Spirit. He put her off again. And finally she said to him, 'If you do not appoint an anxious meeting I shall die, for there is certainly going to be a revival.' The next Sabbath he appointed a meeting, and said that if there were any who wished to converse with him about the salvation of their souls, he would meet them on such an evening. He did not know of one, but when he went to the place, to his astonishment he found a large number of anxious inquirers."

In still another place he says, "The first ray of light that broke in upon the midnight which rested on the churches in Oneida county, in the fall of 1825, was from a woman in feeble

health, who, I believe had never been in a powerful revival. Her soul was exercised about sinners. She was in agony for the land. She did not know what ailed her, but she kept praying more and more, till it seemed as if her agony would destroy her body. At length she became full of joy and exclaimed, ‘God has come! God has come! There is no mistake about it, the work is begun, and is going over all the region!’ And sure enough the work began, and her family were almost all converted, and the work spread all over that part of the country.”

The great revival of 1857 in the United States began in prayer and was carried on by prayer more than by anything else. Dr. Cuyler in an article in a religious newspaper some years ago said, “Most revivals have humble beginnings, and the fire starts in a few warm hearts. Never despise the day of small things. During all my own long ministry, nearly every work of grace had a similar beginning. One commenced in a meeting gathered at a few hour’s notice in a private house. Another commenced in a group gathered for Bible study by Mr. Moody in our mission chapel. Still another—the most powerful of all—was kindled on a bitter January evening at a meeting of young Christians under my roof. Dr. Spencer, in his `Pastor’s Sketches’, (the most suggestive book of its kind I have ever read), tells us that a remarkable revival in his church sprang from the fervent prayers of a godly old man who was confined to his room by lameness. That profound Christian, Dr. Thomas H. Skinner, of the Union Theological Seminary, once gave me an account of a remarkable coming together of three earnest men in his study when he was the pastor of the Arch Street Church in Philadelphia. They literally wrestled in prayer. They made a clean breast in confession of sin, and humbled themselves before God. One and another church officer came in and joined them. The heaven-kindled flame soon spread through the whole congregation in one of the most powerful revivals ever known in that city.”

In the early part of the seventeenth century there was a great religious awakening in Ulster, Ireland. The lands of the rebel chiefs which had been forfeited to the British crown, were settled up by a class of colonists who for the most part were governed by a spirit of wild adventure. Real piety was rare. Seven ministers, five from Scotland and two from England, settled in that country, the earliest arrivals being in 1613. Of one of these ministers named Blair it is recorded by a contemporary, “He spent many days and nights in prayer, alone and with others, and was vouchsafed great intimacy with God.” Mr. James Glendenning, a man of very meager natural gifts, was a man similarly minded as regards prayer. The work began under this man Glendenning. The historian of the time says, “He was a man who never would have been chosen by a wise assembly of ministers nor sent to begin a reformation in this land. Yet this was the Lord’s choice to begin with him the admirable work of God which I mention on purpose that all may see how the glory is only the Lord’s in making a holy nation in this profane land, and that it was ‘not by might, nor by power, nor by man’s wisdom, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord.’” In his preaching at Oldstone multitudes of hearers felt in great anxiety and terror of conscience. They looked on themselves as altogether lost and damned, and cried out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?” They were stricken into a swoon by the power of His Word. A dozen in one day were carried out of doors as dead. These were not women, but some of the boldest spirits of the neighborhood; “some who had formerly feared not with their swords to put a whole market town into a fray.” Concerning one of them, then a mighty strong

man, now a mighty Christian, say that his end in coming into church was to consult with his companions how to work some mischief."

This work spread throughout the whole country. By the year 1626 a monthly concert of prayer was held in Antrim. The work spread beyond the bounds of Down and Antrim to the churches of the neighboring counties. So great became the religious interest that Christians would come thirty or forty miles to the communions, and continue from the time they came until they returned without wearying or making use of sleep. Many of them neither ate nor drank, and yet some of them professed that they "went away most fresh and vigorous, their souls so filled with the sense of God."

This revival changed the whole character of northern Ireland.

Another great awakening in Ireland in 1859 had a somewhat similar origin. By many who did not know, it was thought that this marvelous work came without warning and preparation, but Rev. William Gibson, the moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in 1860, in his very interesting and valuable history of the work tells how there had been preparation for two years. There had been constant discussion in the General Assembly of the low estate of religion, and of the need of a revival. There had been special sessions for prayer. Finally four young men, who became leaders in the origin of the great work, began to meet together in an old schoolhouse in the neighborhood of Kells. About the spring of 1858 a work of power began to manifest itself. It spread from town to town, and from county to county. The congregations became too large for the buildings, and the meetings were held in the open air, oftentimes attended by many thousands of people. Many hundreds of persons were frequently convicted of sin in a single meeting. In some places the criminal courts and jails were closed for lack of occupation. There were manifestations of the Holy Spirit's power of a most remarkable character, clearly proving that the Holy Spirit is as ready to work to-day as in apostolic days, when ministers and Christians really believe in Him and begin to prepare the way by prayer.

Mr. Moody's wonderful work in England and Scotland and Ireland that afterwards spread to America had its origin on the manward side in prayer. Mr. Moody made little impression until men and women began to cry to God. Indeed his going to England at all was in answer to the importunate cries to God of a bed-ridden saint. While the spirit of prayer continued the revival abode in strength, but in the course of time less and less was made of prayer and the work fell off very perceptibly in power. Doubtless one of the great secrets of the unsatisfactoriness and superficiality and unreality of many of our modern so-called revivals, is that more dependence is put upon man's machinery than upon God's power, sought and obtained by earnest, persistent, believing prayer. We live in a day characterized by the multiplication of man's machinery and the diminution of God's power. The great cry of our day is work, work, work, new organizations, new methods, new machinery; the great need of our day is prayer. It was a master stroke of the devil when he got the church so generally to lay aside this mighty weapon of prayer. The devil is perfectly willing that the church should multiply its organizations, and deftly contrive machinery for the conquest of the world for Christ if it will only give up praying. He

laughs as he looks at the church to-day and says to himself:

“You can have your Sunday-schools and your Young People’s Societies, your Young Men’s Christian Associations and your Women’s Christian Temperance Unions, your Institutional Churches and your Industrial Schools, and your Boy’s Brigades, your grand choirs and your fine organs, your brilliant preachers and your revival efforts too, if you don’t bring the power of Almighty God into them by earnest, persistent, believing, mighty prayer.”

Prayer could work as marvelous results today as it ever could, if the church would only betake itself to it.

There seem to be increasing signs that the church is awakening to this fact. Here and there God is laying upon individual ministers and churches a burden of prayer that they have never known before. Less dependence is being put upon machinery and more dependence upon God. Ministers are crying to God day and night for power. Churches and portions of churches are meeting together in the early morning hours and the late night hours crying to God for the latter rain. There is every indication of the coming of a mighty and widespread revival. There is every reason why, if a revival should come in any country at this time, it should be more widespread in its extent than any revival of history. There is the closest and swiftest communication by travel, by letter, and by cable between all parts of the world. A true fire of God kindled in America would soon spread to the uttermost parts of the earth. The only thing needed to bring this fire is prayer.

It is not necessary that the whole church get to praying to begin with. Great revivals always begin first in the hearts of a few men and women whom God arouses by His Spirit to believe in Him as a living God, as a God who answers prayer, and upon whose heart He lays a burden from which no rest can be found except in importunate crying unto God.

May God use this book to arouse many others to pray that the greatly-needed revival may come, and come speedily.

LET US PRAY

End

2. WITH CHRIST IN THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER – Andrew Murray

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Thoughts on Our Training

for the

Ministry of Intercession

BY

REV. ANDREW MURRAY

Lord, teach us to pray.

NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO

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Publishers of Evangelical Literature.

Preface

O

f all the promises connected with the command, 'ABIDE IN ME,' there is none higher, and none that sooner brings the confession, 'Not that I have already attained, or am already made perfect,' than this: 'If ye abide in me, *ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.'* Power with God is the highest attainment of the life of full abiding.

And of all the traits of a life LIKE CHRIST there is none higher and more glorious than conformity to Him in the work that now engages Him without ceasing in the Father's presence—His all-prevailing intercession. The more we abide in Him, and grow unto His likeness, will His priestly life work in us mightily, and our life become what His is, a life that ever pleads and prevails for men.

'Thou hast made us kings and priests unto God.' Both in the king and the priest the chief thing is power, influence, blessing. In the king it is the power coming downward; in the priest, the power rising upward, prevailing with God. In our blessed Priest-King, Jesus Christ, the kingly power is founded on the priestly '*He is able* to save to the uttermost, *because* He ever liveth to make intercession.' In us, His priests and kings, it is no otherwise: it is in intercession that the Church is to find and wield its highest power, that each member of the Church is to prove his descent from Israel, who as a prince had power with God and with men, and prevailed.

It is under a deep impression that the place and power of prayer in the Christian life is too little understood, that this book has been written. I feel sure that as long as we look on prayer chiefly as the means of maintaining our own Christian life, we shall not know fully what it is meant to be. But when we learn to regard it as the highest part of the work entrusted to us, the root and strength of all other work, we shall see that there is nothing that we so need to study and practise as the art of praying aright. If I have at all succeeded in pointing out the progressive teaching of our Lord in regard to prayer, and the distinct reference the wonderful promises of the last night (John xiv. 16) have to the works we are to do in His Name, to the greater works, and to the bearing much fruit, we shall all admit that it is only when the Church gives herself up to this holy work of intercession that we can expect the power of Christ to manifest itself in her behalf. It is my prayer that God may use this little book to make clearer to some of His children the wonderful place of power and influence which He is waiting for them to occupy, and for which a weary world is waiting too.

In connection with this there is another truth that has come to me with wonderful clearness as I studied the teaching of Jesus on prayer. It is this: that the Father waits to hear every prayer of faith, to give us whatsoever we will, and whatsoever we ask in Jesus' name. We have become so accustomed to limit the wonderful love and the large promises of our God, that we cannot read the simplest and clearest statements of our Lord without the qualifying clauses by which we guard and expound them. If there is one thing I think the Church needs to learn, it is that God means prayer to have an answer, and that it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive what God will do for His child who gives himself to believe that his prayer will be heard. *God hears prayer;* this is a truth universally admitted, but of which very few understand the meaning, or experience the power. If what I have written stir my reader to go to the Master's words, and take His wondrous promises simply and literally as they stand, my object has been attained.

And then just one thing more. Thousands have in these last years found an unspeakable blessing in learning how completely Christ is our life, and how He undertakes to be and to do all in us that we need. I know not if we have yet learned to apply this truth to our prayer-life. Many complain that they have not the power to pray in faith, to pray the effectual prayer that availeth much. The message I would fain bring them is that the blessed Jesus is waiting, is longing, to teach them this. Christ is our life: in heaven He ever liveth to pray; His life in us is an ever-praying life, if we will but trust Him for it. Christ teaches us to pray not only by example, by instruction, by command, by promises, but *by showing us* HIMSELF, *the ever-living Intercessor, as our Life.* It is when we believe this, and go and abide in Him for our prayer-life too, that our fears of not being able to pray aright will vanish, and we shall joyfully and triumphantly trust our Lord to teach us to pray, to be Himself the life and the power of our prayer. May God open our eyes to see what the holy ministry of intercession is to which, as His royal priesthood, we have been set apart. May He give us a large and strong heart to believe what mighty influence our prayers can exert. And may all fear as to our being able to fulfil our vocation vanish as we see Jesus, living ever to pray, living in us to pray, and standing surety for our prayer-life.

ANDREW MURRAY

WELLINGTON, 28*th October* 1895

1. FIRST LESSON – Lord, teach us to pray.

‘Lord, teach us to pray;’

Or, The Only Teacher.

‘And it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, that when He ceased, one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray.’—LUKE xi. 1.

T

HE disciples had been with Christ, and seen Him pray. They had learnt to understand something of the connection between His wondrous life in public, and His secret life of prayer. They had learnt to believe in Him as a Master in the art of prayer—none could pray like Him. And so they came to Him with the request, ‘Lord, teach us to pray.’ And in after years they would have told us that there were few things more wonderful or blessed that He taught them than His lessons on prayer.

And now still it comes to pass, as He is praying in a certain place, that disciples who see Him thus engaged feel the need of repeating the same request, ‘Lord, teach us to pray.’ As we grow in the Christian life, the thought and the faith of the Beloved Master in His never-failing intercession becomes ever more precious, and the hope of being *Like Christ* in His intercession gains an attractiveness before unknown. And as we see Him pray, and remember that there is none who can pray like Him, and none who can teach like Him, we feel the petition of the disciples, ‘Lord, teach us to pray,’ is just what we need. And as we think how all He is and has, how He Himself is our very own, how He is Himself our life, we feel assured that we have but to ask, and He will be delighted to take us up into closer fellowship with Himself, and teach us to pray even as He prays.

Come, my brothers! Shall we not go to the Blessed Master and ask Him to enrol our names too anew in that school which He always keeps open for those who long to continue their studies in the Divine art of prayer and intercession? Yes, let us this very day say to the Master, as they did of old, ‘Lord, teach us to pray.’ As we meditate, we shall find each word of the petition we bring to be full of meaning.

‘Lord, teach us *to pray*.’ Yes, *to pray.* This is what we need to be taught. Though in its beginnings prayer is so simple that the feeblest child can pray, yet it is at the same time the highest and holiest work to which man can rise. It is fellowship with the Unseen and Most Holy One. The powers of the eternal world have been placed at its disposal. It is the very essence of true religion, the channel of all blessings, the secret of power and life. Not only for ourselves, but for others, for the Church, for the world, it is to prayer that God has given the right to take hold of Him and His strength. It is on prayer that the promises wait for their fulfilment, the kingdom for its coming, the glory of God for its full revelation. And for this blessed work, how slothful and unfit we are. It is only the Spirit of God can enable us to do it aright. How speedily we are deceived into a resting in the form, while the power is wanting. Our early training, the teaching of the Church, the influence of habit, the stirring of the emotions—how easily these lead to prayer which has no spiritual power, and avails but little. True prayer, that takes hold of God’s strength, that availeth much, to which the gates of heaven are really opened wide—who would not cry, Oh for some one to teach me thus to pray?

Jesus has opened a school, in which He trains His redeemed ones, who specially desire it, to have power in prayer. Shall we not enter it with the petition, Lord! it is just this we need to be taught! O teach us to *pray.*

'Lord, teach *us* to pray.' Yes, *us,* Lord. We have read in They Word with what power Thy believing people of old used to pray, and what mighty wonders were done in answer to their prayers. And if this took place under the Old Covenant, in the time of preparation, how much more wilt Thou not now, in these days of fulfilment, give Thy people this sure sign of Thy presence in their midst. We have heard the promises given to Thine apostles of the power of prayer in Thy name, and have seen how gloriously they experienced their truth: we know for certain, they can become true to us too. We hear continually even in these days what glorious tokens of Thy power Thou dost still give to those who trust Thee fully. Lord! these all are men of like passions with ourselves; teach *us* to pray so too. The promises are for us, the powers and gifts of the heavenly world are for us. O teach *us* to pray so that we may receive abundantly. To us too Thou hast entrusted Thy work, on our prayer too the coming of Thy kingdom depends, in our prayer too Thou canst glorify Thy name; 'Lord teach us to pray.' Yes, us, Lord; we offer ourselves as learners; we would indeed be taught of Thee. 'Lord, teach *us* to pray.'

'Lord, *teach* us to pray.' Yes, we feel the need now of being *taught* to pray. At first there is no work appears so simple; later on, none that is more difficult; and the confession is forced from us: We know not how to pray as we ought. It is true we have God's Word, with its clear and sure promises; but sin has so darkened our mind, that we know not always how to apply the word. In spiritual things we do not always seek the most needful things, or fail in praying according to the law of the sanctuary. In temporal things we are still less able to avail ourselves of the wonderful liberty our Father has given us to ask what we need. And even when we know what to ask, how much there is still needed to make prayer acceptable. It must be to the glory of God, in full surrender to His will, in full assurance of faith, in the name of Jesus, and with a perseverance that, if need be, refuses to be denied. All this must be learned. It can only be learned in the school of much prayer, for practice makes perfect. Amid the painful consciousness of ignorance and unworthiness, in the struggle between believing and doubting, the heavenly art of effectual prayer is learnt. Because, even when we do not remember it, there is One, the Beginner and Finisher of faith and prayer, who watches over our praying, and sees to it that *in all who trust Him for it* their education in the school of prayer shall be carried on to perfection. Let but the deep undertone of all our prayer be the teachableness that comes from a sense of ignorance, and from faith in Him as a perfect teacher, and we may be sure we shall be taught, we shall learn to pray in power. Yes, we may depend upon it, He *teaches* to pray.

'*Lord,* teach us to pray.' None can teach like Jesus, none but Jesus; therefore we call on Him, 'LORD, teach us to pray.' A pupil needs a teacher, who knows his work, who has the gift of teaching, who in patience and love will descend to the pupil's needs. Blessed be God! Jesus is all this and much more. He knows what prayer is. It is Jesus, praying Himself, who teaches to pray. He knows what prayer is. He learned it amid the trials and tears of His earthly life. In heaven it is still His beloved work: His life there is prayer. Nothing delights Him more than to find those whom He can take with Him into the Father's presence, whom He can clothe with power to pray down God's blessing on those around them, whom He can train to be His fellow-workers in the intercession by which the kingdom is to be revealed on earth. He knows how to teach. Now by the urgency of felt need, then by the confidence with which joy inspires. Here by the teaching of the Word, there by the testimony of another believer who knows what it is to have prayer heard. By His Holy Spirit, He has access to our heart, and teaches us to pray by showing us the sin that hinders the prayer, or giving us the assurance that we please God. He teaches, by giving not only thoughts of what to ask or how to ask, but by breathing within us the very spirit of prayer, by living within us as the Great Intercessor. We may indeed and most joyfully say, 'Who teacheth like Him?' Jesus never taught His disciples how to preach, only how to pray. He did not speak much of what was needed to preach well, but much of praying well. To know how to speak to God is more than knowing how to speak to man. Not power with men, but power with God is the first thing. Jesus loves to teach us how to pray.

What think you, my beloved fellow-disciples! would it not be just what we need, to ask the Master for a month to give us a course of special lessons on the art of prayer? As we meditate on the words He spake on earth, let us yield ourselves to His teaching in the fullest confidence that, with such a teacher, we shall make progress. Let us take time not only to meditate, but to pray, to tarry at the foot of the throne, and be trained to the work of intercession. Let us do so in the assurance that amidst our stammerings and fears He is carrying on His work most beautifully. He will breathe His own life, which is all prayer, into us. As He makes us partakers of His righteousness and His life, He will of His intercession. too. As the members of His body, as a holy priesthood, we shall take part in His priestly work of pleading and prevailing with God for men. Yes, let us most joyfully say, ignorant and feeble though we be, 'Lord, teach us to pray.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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Blessed Lord! who ever livest to pray, Thou canst teach me too to pray, me too to live ever to pray. In this Thou lovest to make me share Thy glory in heaven, that I should pray without ceasing, and ever stand as a priest in the presence of my God.

Lord Jesus! I ask Thee this day to enrol my name among those who confess that they know not how to pray as they ought, and specially ask Thee for a course of teaching in prayer. Lord! teach me to tarry with Thee in the school, and give Thee time to train me. May a deep sense of my ignorance, of the wonderful privilege and power of prayer, of the need of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of prayer, lead me to cast away my thoughts of what I think I know, and make me kneel before Thee in true teachableness and poverty of spirit.

And fill me, Lord, with the confidence that with such a teacher as Thou art I shall learn to pray. In the assurance that I have as my teacher, Jesus who is ever praying to the Father, and by His prayer rules the destinies of His Church and the world, I will not be afraid. As much as I need to know of the mysteries of the prayer-world, Thou wilt unfold for me. And when I may not know, Thou wilt teach me to be strong in faith, giving glory to God.

Blessed Lord! Thou wilt not put to shame Thy scholar who trusts Thee, nor, by Thy grace, would he Thee either. Amen.

2. SECOND LESSON – *In Spirit and truth*.

‘In spirit and truth.’

Or, The True Worshippers.

‘The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth.’—JOHN iv. 23, 24.

THESE words of Jesus to the woman of Samaria are His first recorded teaching on the subject of prayer. They give us some wonderful first glimpses into the world of prayer. The Father *seeks* worshippers: our worship satisfies His loving heart and is a joy to Him. He seeks *true worshippers*, but finds many not such as He would have them. True worship is that which is *in spirit and truth. The Son has come* to open the way for this worship in spirit and in truth, and teach it us. And so one of our first lessons in the school of prayer must be to understand what it is to pray in spirit and in truth, and to know how we can attain to it.

To the woman of Samaria our Lord spoke of a threefold worship. There is first, the ignorant worship of the Samaritans: ‘Ye worship that which ye know not.’ The second, the intelligent worship of the Jew, having the true knowledge of God: ‘We worship that which we know; for salvation is of the Jews.’ And then the new, the spiritual worship which He Himself has come to introduce: ‘The hour is coming, and is now, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth.’ From the connection it is evident that the words ‘in spirit and truth’ do not mean, as if often thought, earnestly, from the heart, in sincerity. The Samaritans had the five books of Moses and some knowledge of God; there was doubtless more than one among them who honestly and earnestly sought God in prayer. The Jews had the true full revelation of God in His word, as thus far given; there were among them godly men, who called upon God with their whole heart. And yet not ‘in spirit and truth,’ in the full meaning of the words. Jesus says,

'The hour is coming, and now is;' it is only in and through Him that the worship of God will be in spirit and truth.

Among Christians one still finds the three classes of worshippers. Some who in their ignorance hardly know what they ask: they pray earnestly, and yet receive but little. Others there are, who have more correct knowledge, who try to pray with all their mind and heart, and often pray most earnestly, and yet do not attain to the full blessedness of worship in spirit and truth. It is into this third class we must ask our Lord Jesus to take us; we must be taught of Him how to worship in spirit and truth. This alone is spiritual worship; this makes us worshippers such as the Father seeks. In prayer everything will depend on our understanding well and practising the worship in spirit and truth.

'God is *a Spirit*, and they that worship Him, must worship Him *in spirit* and truth.' The first thought suggested here by the Master is that there must be harmony between God and His worshippers; such as God is, must His worship be. This is according to a principle which prevails throughout the universe: we look for correspondence between an object and the organ to which it reveals or yields itself. The eye has an inner fitness for the light, the ear for sound. The man who would truly worship God, would find and know and possess and enjoy God, must be in harmony with Him, must have the capacity for receiving Him. Because God *is Spirit*, we must worship *in spirit*. As God is, so His worshipper.

And what does this mean? The woman had asked our Lord whether Samaria or Jerusalem was the true place of worship. He answers that henceforth worship is no longer to be limited to a certain place: 'Woman, believe Me, *the hour cometh*, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father.' As God is Spirit, not bound by space or time, but in His infinite perfection always and everywhere the same, so His worship would henceforth no longer be confined by place or form, but spiritual as God Himself is spiritual. A lesson of deep importance. How much our Christianity suffers from this, that it is confined to certain times and places. A man, who seeks to pray earnestly in the church or in the closet, spends the greater part of the week or the day in a spirit entirely at variance with that in which he prayed. His worship was the work of a fixed place or hour, not of his whole being. God is a Spirit: He is the Everlasting and Unchangeable One; what He is, He is always and in truth. Our worship must even so be in spirit and truth: His worship must be the spirit of our life; our life must be worship in spirit as God is Spirit.

'God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth.' The second thought that comes to us is that the worship in the spirit must come from God Himself. God is Spirit: He alone has Spirit to give. It was for this He sent His Son, to fit us for such spiritual worship, by giving us the Holy Spirit. It is of His own work that Jesus speaks when He says twice, 'The hour cometh,' and then adds, 'and is now.' He came to baptize with the Holy Spirit; the Spirit could not stream forth till He was glorified (John i. 33, vii. 37, 38, xvi. 7). It was when He had made an end of sin, and entering into the Holiest of all with His blood, had there on our behalf *received* the Holy Spirit (Acts ii. 33), that He could send Him down to us as the Spirit of the Father. It was when Christ had redeemed us, and we in Him had received the position of children, that the Father sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts to cry, 'Abba, Father.' The worship in spirit is the worship of the Father in the Spirit of Christ , the Spirit of Sonship.

This is the reason why Jesus here uses the name of Father. We never find one of the Old Testament saints personally appropriate the name of child or call God his Father. The worship *of the Father* is only possible to those to whom the Spirit of the Son has been given. The worship *in spirit* is only possible to those to whom the Son has revealed the Father, and who have received the spirit of Sonship. It is only Christ who opens the way and teaches the worship in spirit.

And *in truth*. That does not only mean, *in sincerity.* Nor does it only signify, in accordance with the truth of God's Word. The expression is one of deep and Divine meaning. Jesus is 'the only-begotten of the Father, *full of* grace and *truth*.' 'The law was given by Moses; grace and *truth came* by Jesus Christ.' Jesus says, '*I am the truth* and the life.' In the Old Testament all was shadow and promise; Jesus brought and gives the reality, *the substance,* of things hoped for. In Him the blessings and powers of the eternal life are our actual possession and experience. Jesus is full of grace and truth; the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth; through Him the grace that is in Jesus is ours in deed and truth, a positive communication out of the Divine life. And so worship in spirit is worship *in truth*; actual living fellowship with God, a real correspondence and harmony between the Father, who is a Spirit, and the child praying in the spirit.

What Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, she could not at once understand. Pentecost was needed to reveal its full meaning. We are hardly prepared at our first entrance into the school of prayer to grasp such teaching. We shall understand it better later on. Let us only begin and take the lesson as He gives it. We are carnal and cannot bring God the worship He seeks. But Jesus came to give the Spirit: He has given Him to us. Let the disposition in which we set ourselves to pray be what Christ's words have taught us. Let there be the deep confession of our inability to bring God the worship that is pleasing to Him; the childlike teachableness that waits on Him to instruct us; the simple faith that yields itself to the breathing of the Spirit. Above all, let us hold fast the blessed truth—we shall find that the Lord has more to say to us about it—that the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God, the revelation of His infinite Fatherliness in our hearts, the faith in the infinite love that gives us His Son and His Spirit to make us children, is indeed the secret of

prayer in spirit and truth. This is the new and living way Christ opened up for us. To have Christ the Son, and *the Spirit of the Son*, dwelling within us, and revealing the Father, this makes us true, spiritual worshippers.

‘LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

——-

Blessed Lord! I adore the love with which Thou didst teach a woman, who had refused Thee a cup of water, what the worship of God must be. I rejoice in the assurance that Thou wilt no less now instruct Thy disciple, who comes to Thee with a heart that longs to pray in spirit and in truth. O my Holy Master! do teach me this blessed secret.

Teach me that the worship in spirit and truth is not of man, but only comes from Thee; that it is not only a thing of times and seasons, but the outflowing of a life in Thee. Teach me to draw near to God in prayer under the deep impression of my ignorance and my having nothing in myself to offer Him, and at the same time of the provision Thou, my Saviour, makest for the Spirit’s breathing in my childlike stammerings. I do bless Thee that in Thee I am a child, and have a child’s liberty of access; that in Thee I have the spirit of Sonship and of worship in truth. Teach me, above all, Blessed Son of the Father, how it is the revelation of the Father that gives confidence in prayer; and let the infinite Fatherliness of God’s Heart be my joy and strength for a life of prayer and of worship. Amen.

3. THIRD LESSON – *Alone with God.*

‘Pray to thy Father, which is in secret; ‘

Or, Alone with God.

‘But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee’—MATT. vi. 6.

A

FTER Jesus had called His first disciples, He gave them their first public teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. He there expounded to them the kingdom of God, its laws and its life. In that kingdom God is not only King, but Father, He not only gives all, but is Himself all. In the knowledge and fellowship of Him alone is its blessedness. Hence it came as a matter of course that the revelation of prayer and the prayer-life was a part of His teaching concerning the New Kingdom He came to set up. Moses gave neither command nor regulation with regard to prayer: even the prophets say little directly of the duty of prayer; it is Christ who teaches to pray.

And the first thing the Lord teaches His disciples is that they must have a secret place for prayer; every one must have some solitary spot where he can be alone with his God. Every teacher must have a schoolroom. We have learnt to know and accept Jesus as our only teacher in the school of prayer. He has already taught us at Samaria that worship is no longer confined to times and places; that worship, spiritual true worship, is a thing of the spirit and the life; the whole man must in his whole life be worship in spirit and truth. And yet He wants each one to choose for himself the fixed spot where He can daily meet him. That inner chamber, that solitary place, is Jesus’ schoolroom. That spot may be anywhere; that spot may change from day to day if we have to change our abode; but that secret place there must be, with the quiet time in which the pupil places himself in the Master’s presence, to be by Him prepared to worship the Father. There alone, but there most surely, Jesus comes to us to teach us to pray.

A teacher is always anxious that his schoolroom should be bright and attractive, filled with the light and air of

heaven, a place where pupils long to come, and love to stay. In His first words on prayer in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus seeks to set the inner chamber before us in its most attractive light. If we listen carefully, we soon notice what the chief thing is He has to tell us of our tarrying there. Three times He uses the name of Father: 'Pray to *thy Father*;' '*Thy Father* shall recompense thee;' '*Your Father* knoweth what things ye have need of.' The first thing in closet-prayer is: I must meet my Father. The light that shines in the closet must be: the light of the Father's countenance. The fresh air from heaven with which Jesus would have it filled, the atmosphere in which I am to breathe and pray, is: God's Father-love, God's infinite Fatherliness. Thus each thought or petition we breathe out will be simple, hearty, childlike trust in the Father. This is how the Master teaches us to pray: He brings us into the Father's living presence. What we pray there must avail. Let us listen carefully to hear what the Lord has to say to us.

First, '*Pray to thy Father which is in secret.*' God is a God who hides Himself to the carnal eye. As long as in our worship of God we are chiefly occupied with our own thoughts and exercises, we shall not meet Him who is a Spirit, the unseen One. But to the man who withdraws himself from all that is of the world and man, and prepares to wait upon God alone, the Father will reveal Himself. As he forsakes and gives up and shuts out the world, and the life of the world, and surrenders himself to be led of Christ into the secret of God's presence, the light of the Father's love will rise upon him. The secrecy of the inner chamber and the closed door, the entire separation from all around us, is an image of, and so a help to that inner spiritual sanctuary, the secret of God's tabernacle, within the veil, where our spirit truly comes into contact with the Invisible One. And so we are taught, at the very outset of our search after the secret of effectual prayer, to remember that it is in the inner chamber, where we are alone with the Father, that we shall learn to pray aright. The Father is in secret: in these words Jesus teaches us where He is waiting us, where He is always to be found. Christians often complain that private prayer is not what it should be. They feel weak and sinful, the heart is cold and dark; it is as if they have so little to pray, and in that little no faith or joy. They are discouraged and kept from prayer by the thought that they cannot come to the Father as they ought or as they wish. Child of God! listen to your Teacher. He tells you that when you go to private prayer your first thought must be: The Father is in secret, the Father waits me there. Just because your heart is cold and prayerless, get you into the presence of the loving Father. As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth you. Do not be thinking of how little you have to bring God, but of how much He wants to give you. Just place yourself before, and look up into, His face; think of His love, His wonderful, tender, pitying love. Just tell Him how sinful and cold and dark all is: it is the Father's loving heart will give light and warmth to yours. O do what Jesus says: Just shut the door, and pray to thy Father which is in secret. Is it not wonderful? to be able to go alone with God, the infinite God. And then to look up and say: My Father!

'*And thy Father, which seeth in secret, will recompense thee.*' Here Jesus assures us that secret prayer cannot be fruitless: its blessing will show itself in our life. We have but in secret, alone with God, to entrust our life before men to Him; He will reward us openly; He will see to it that the answer to prayer be made manifest in His blessing upon us. Our Lord would thus teach us that as infinite Fatherliness and Faithfulness is that with which God meets us in secret, so on our part there should be the childlike simplicity of faith, the confidence that our prayer does bring down a blessing. 'He that cometh to God must believe that *He is a rewarder* of them that seek Him.' Not on the strong or the fervent feeling with which I pray does the blessing of the closet depend, but upon the love and the power of the Father to whom I there entrust my needs. And therefore the Master has but one desire: Remember your Father is, and sees and hears in secret; go there and stay there, and go again from there in the confidence: He will recompense. Trust Him for it; depend upon Him: prayer to the Father cannot be vain; He will reward you openly.

Still further to confirm this faith in the Father-love of God, Christ speaks a third word: '*Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him.*' At first sight it might appear as if this thought made prayer less needful: God knows far better than we what we need. But as we get a deeper insight into what prayer really is, this truth will help much to strengthen our faith. It will teach us that we do not need, as the heathen, with the multitude and urgency of our words, to compel an unwilling God to listen to us. It will lead to a holy thoughtfulness and silence in prayer as it suggests the question: Does my Father really know that I need this? It will, when once we have been led by the Spirit to the certainty that our request is indeed something that, according to the Word, we do need for God's glory, give us wonderful confidence to say, My Father knows I need it and must have it. And if there be any delay in the answer, it will teach us in quiet perseverance to hold on: FATHER! THOU KNOWEST I need it. O the blessed liberty and simplicity of a child that Christ our Teacher would fain cultivate in us, as we draw near to God: let us look up to the Father until His Spirit works it in us. Let us sometimes in our prayers, when we are in danger of being so occupied with our fervent, urgent petitions, as to forget that the Father knows and hears, let us hold still and just quietly say: My Father sees, my Father hears, my Father knows; it will help our faith to take the answer, and to say: We know that we have the petitions we have asked of Him.

And now, all ye who have anew entered the school of Christ to be taught to pray, take these lessons, practise them, and trust Him to perfect you in them. Dwell much in the inner chamber, with the door shut—shut in from men, shut up with God; it is there the Father waits you, it is there Jesus will teach you to pray. To be alone in secret with THE FATHER: this be your highest joy. To be assured that THE FATHER will openly reward the secret prayer, so that it

cannot remain unblessed: this be your strength day by day. And to know that THE FATHER knows that you need what you ask; this be your liberty to bring every need, in the assurance that your God will supply it according to His riches in Glory in Christ Jesus.

‘LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

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Blessed Saviour! with my whole heart I do bless Thee for the appointment of the inner chamber, as the school where Thou meetest each of Thy pupils alone, and revealest to him the Father. O my Lord! strengthen my faith so in the Father’s tender love and kindness, that as often as I feel sinful or troubled, the first instinctive thought may be to go where I know the Father waits me, and where prayer never can go unblessed. Let the thought that He knows my need before I ask, bring me, in great restfulness of faith, to trust that He will give what His child requires. O let the place of secret prayer become to me the most beloved spot of earth.

And, Lord! hear me as I pray that Thou wouldest everywhere bless the closets of Thy believing people. Let Thy wonderful revelation of a Father’s tenderness free all young Christians from every thought of secret prayer as a duty or a burden, and lead them to regard it as the highest privilege of their life, a joy and a blessing. Bring back all who are discouraged, because they cannot find ought to bring Thee in prayer. O give them to understand that they have only to come with their emptiness to Him who has all to give, and delights to do it. Not, what they have to bring the Father, but what the Father waits to give them, be their one thought.

And bless especially the inner chamber of all Thy servants who are working for Thee, as the place where God’s truth and God’s grace is revealed to them, where they are daily anointed with fresh oil, where their strength is renewed, and the blessings are received in faith, with which they are to bless their fellow-men. Lord, draw us all in the closet nearer to Thyself and the Father. Amen.

4. FOURTH LESSON – *The Model Prayer.*

‘After this manner pray;’

Or, The Model Prayer.

‘After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven.’—Matt. vi. 9.

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VERY teacher knows the power of example. He not only tells the child what to do and how to do it, but shows him how it really can be done. In condescension to our weakness, our heavenly Teacher has given us the very words we are to take with us as we draw near to our Father. We have in them a form of prayer in which there breathe the freshness and fulness of the Eternal Life. So simple that the child can lisp it, so divinely rich that it comprehends all that God can give. A form of prayer that becomes the model and inspiration for all other prayer, and yet always draws us back to itself as the deepest utterance of our souls before our God.

’*Our Father which art in heaven!*‘ To appreciate this word of adoration aright, I must remember that none of the saints had in Scripture ever ventured to address God as

their Father. The invocation places us at once in the centre of the wonderful revelation the Son came to make of His Father as our Father too. It comprehends the mystery of redemption—Christ delivering us from the curse that we might become the children of God. The mystery of regeneration—the Spirit in the new birth giving us the new life. And the mystery of faith—ere yet the redemption is accomplished or understood, the word is given on the lips of the disciples to prepare them for the blessed experience still to come. The words are the key to the whole prayer, to all prayer. It takes time, it takes life to study them; it will take eternity to understand them fully. The knowledge of God's Father-love is the first and simplest, but also the last and highest lesson in the school of prayer. It is in the personal relation to the living God, and the personal conscious fellowship of love with Himself, that prayer begins. It is in the knowledge of God's Fatherliness, revealed by the Holy Spirit, that the power of prayer will be found to root and grow. In the infinite tenderness and pity and patience of the infinite Father, in His loving readiness to hear and to help, the life of prayer has its joy. O let us take time, until the Spirit has made these words to us spirit and truth, filling heart and life: 'Our Father which art in heaven.' Then we are indeed within the veil, in the secret place of power where prayer always prevails.

'*Hallowed be Thy name.*' There is something here that strikes us at once. While we ordinarily first bring our own needs to God in prayer, and then think of what belongs to God and His interests, the Master reverses the order. First, *Thy* name, *Thy* kingdom, *Thy* will; then, give *us*, forgive *us*, lead *us*, deliver *us*. The lesson is of more importance than we think. In true worship the Father must be first, must be all. The sooner I learn to forget myself in the desire that HE may be glorified, the richer will the blessing be that prayer will bring to myself. No one ever loses by what he sacrifices for the Father.

This must influence all our prayer. There are two sorts of prayer: personal and intercessory. The latter ordinarily occupies the lesser part of our time and energy. This may not be. Christ has opened the school of prayer specially to train intercessors for the great work of bringing down, by their faith and prayer, the blessings of His work and love on the world around. There can be no deep growth in prayer unless this be made our aim. The little child may ask of the father only what it needs for itself; and yet it soon learns to say, Give some for sister too. But the grown-up son, who only lives for the father's interest and takes charge of the father's business, asks more largely, and gets all that is asked. And Jesus would train us to the blessed life of consecration and service, in which our interests are all subordinate to the Name, and the Kingdom, and the Will of the Father. O let us live for this, and let, on each act of adoration, Our Father! there follow in the same breath *Thy* Name, *Thy* Kingdom, *Thy* Will;—for this we look up and long.

'*Hallowed be Thy name.*' What name? This new name of Father. The word *Holy* is the central word of the Old Testament; the *name* Father of the New. In this name of Love all the holiness and glory of God are now to be revealed. And how is the name to be hallowed? By God Himself: '*I will hallow* My great name which ye have profaned.' Our prayer must be that in ourselves, in all God's children, in presence of the world, God Himself would reveal the holiness, the Divine power, the hidden glory of the name of Father. The Spirit of the Father is the *Holy* Spirit: it is only when we yield ourselves to be led *of Him*, that the name will be *hallowed* in our prayers and our lives. Let us learn the prayer: 'Our Father, hallowed be Thy name.'

'*Thy kingdom come.*' The Father is a King and has a kingdom. The son and heir of a king has no higher ambition than the glory of his father's kingdom. In time of war or

danger this becomes his passion; he can think of nothing else. The children of the Father are here in the enemy's territory, where the kingdom, which is in heaven, is not yet fully manifested. What more natural than that, when they learn to hallow the Father-name, they should long and cry with deep enthusiasm: 'Thy kingdom come.' The coming of the kingdom is the one great event on which the revelation of the Father's glory, the blessedness of His children, the salvation of the world depends. On our prayers too the coming of the kingdom waits. Shall we not join in the deep longing cry of the redeemed: 'Thy kingdom come'? Let us learn it in the school of Jesus.

'*Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.*' This petition is too frequently applied alone to the *suffering* of the will of God. In heaven God's will is *done*, and the Master teaches the child to ask that the will may be done on earth just as in heaven: in the spirit of adoring submission and ready obedience. Because the will of God is the glory of heaven, the doing of it is the blessedness of heaven. As the will is done, the kingdom of heaven comes into the heart. And wherever faith has accepted the Father's love, obedience accepts the Father's will. The surrender to, and the prayer for a life of heaven-like obedience, is the spirit of childlike prayer.

'*Give us this day our daily bread.*' When first the child has yielded himself to the Father in the care for His Name, His Kingdom, and His Will, he has full liberty to ask for his daily bread. A master cares for the food of his servant, a general of his soldiers, a father of his child. And will not the Father in heaven care for the child who has in prayer given himself up to His interests? We may indeed in full confidence say: Father, I live for Thy honour and Thy work; I know Thou carest for me. Consecration to God and His will gives wonderful liberty in prayer for temporal things: the whole earthly life is given to the Father's loving care.

'*And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*' As bread is the first need of the body, so forgiveness for the soul. And the provision for the one is as sure as for the other. We are children but sinners too; our right of access to the Father's presence we owe to the precious blood and the forgiveness it has won for us. Let us beware of the prayer for forgiveness becoming a formality: only what is really confessed is really forgiven. Let us in faith accept the forgiveness as promised: as a spiritual reality, an actual transaction between God and us, it is the entrance into all the Father's love and all the privileges of children. Such forgiveness, as a living experience, is impossible without a forgiving spirit to others: as *forgiven* expresses the heavenward, so *forgiving* the earthward, relation of God's child. In each prayer to the Father I must be able to say that I know of no one whom I do not heartily love.

'*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*' Our daily bread, the pardon of our sins, and then our being kept from all sin and the power of the evil one, in these three petitions all our personal need is comprehended. The prayer for bread and pardon must be accompanied by the surrender to live in all things in holy obedience to the Father's will, and the believing prayer in everything to be kept by the power of the indwelling Spirit from the power of the evil one.

Children of God! it is thus Jesus would have us to pray to the Father in heaven. O let His Name, and Kingdom, and Will, have the first place in our love; His providing, and pardoning, and keeping love will be our sure portion. So the prayer will lead us up to the

true child-life: the Father all to the child, the Father all for the child. We shall understand how Father and child, the *Thine* and the *Our*, are all one, and how the heart that begins its prayer with the God-devoted THINK, will have the power in faith to speak out the OUR too. Such prayer will, indeed, be the fellowship and interchange of love, always bringing us back in trust and worship to Him who is not only the Beginning but the End: 'FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER, AMEN.' Son of the Father, teach us to pray, 'OUR FATHER.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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O Thou who art the only-begotten Son, teach us, we beseech Thee, to pray, 'OUR FATHER.' We thank Thee, Lord, for these Living Blessed Words which Thou has given us. We thank Thee for the millions who in them have learnt to know and worship the Father, and for what they have been to us. Lord! it is as if we needed days and weeks in Thy school with each separate petition; so deep and full are they. But we look to Thee to lead us deeper into their meaning: do it, we pray Thee, for Thy Name's sake; Thy name is Son of the Father.

Lord! Thou didst once say: ‘No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him.’ And again: ‘I made known unto them Thy name, and will make it known, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them.’ Lord Jesus! reveal to us the Father. Let His name, His infinite Father-love, the love with which He loved Thee, according to Thy prayer, BE IN US. Then shall we say aright, ‘OUR FATHER!’ Then shall we apprehend Thy teaching, and the first spontaneous breathing of our heart will be: ‘Our Father, Thy Name, Thy Kingdom, Thy Will.’ And we shall bring our needs and our sins and our temptations to Him in the confidence that the love of such a Father care for all.

Blessed Lord! we are Thy scholars, we trust Thee; do teach us to pray, ‘OUR FATHER.’ Amen.

5. FIFTH LESSON – *Ask and it shall be given.*

‘Ask, and it shall be given you; ‘

Or, The Certainty of the Answer to Prayer.

’Ask, and it *shall* be given you; seek, and ye *shall* find; knock, and it *shall* be opened unto you: for every one that asketh *receiveth*, and he that seeketh *findeth*; and to him that knocketh it *shall be opened,’*—MATT. vii. 7, 8.

‘Ye ask, and *receive not*, because ye ask amiss.’—Jas. iv. 3.

OUR Lord returns here in the Sermon on the Mount a second time to speak of prayer. The first time He had spoken of the Father who is to be found in secret, and rewards openly, and had given us the pattern prayer (Matt. vi. 5-15). Here He wants to teach us what in all Scripture is considered the chief thing in prayer: the assurance that prayer will be heard and answered. Observe how He uses words which mean almost the same thing, and each time repeats the promise so distinctly: ‘Ye *shall* receive, ye *shall* find, it *shall* be opened unto you;’ and then gives as ground for such assurance the law of the kingdom: ‘He that asketh, *receiveth*; he that seeketh, *findeth*; to him that knocketh, *it shall be opened.*‘ We cannot but feel how in this sixfold repetition He wants to impress deep on our minds this one truth, that we may and must most confidently expect an answer to our prayer. Next to the revelation of the Father’s love, there is, in the whole course of the school of prayer, not a more important lesson than this: Every one that asketh, receiveth.

In the three words the Lord uses, *ask, seek, knock*, a difference in meaning has been sought. If such was indeed His purpose, then the first, ASK, refers to the gifts we pray for. But I may ask and receive the gift without the Giver. SEEK is the word Scripture uses of God Himself; Christ assures me that I can find Himself. But it is not enough to find God in time of need, without coming to abiding fellowship: KNOCK speaks of admission to dwell with Him and in Him. Asking and receiving the gift would thus lead to seeking and finding the Giver, and this again to the knocking and opening of the door of the Father’s home and love. One thing is sure: the Lord does want us to count most certainly on it that asking, seeking, knocking, cannot be in vain: receiving an answer, finding God, the opened heart and home of God, are the certain fruit of prayer.

That the Lord should have thought it needful in so many forms to repeat the truth, is a lesson of deep import. It proves that He knows our heart, how doubt and distrust toward God are natural to us, and how easily we are inclined to rest in prayer as a religious work without an answer. He knows too how, even when we believe that God is the Hearer of prayer, believing prayer that lays hold of the promise, is something spiritual, too high and difficult for the half-hearted disciple. He therefore at the very outset of His instruction to those who would learn to pray, seeks to lodge this truth deep into their hearts: prayer does avail much; ask and ye *shall* receive; *every one* that asketh, receiveth. This is the fixed eternal law of the kingdom: if you ask and receive not, it must be because there is something amiss or wanting in

the prayer. Hold on; let the Word and the Spirit teach you to pray aright, but do not let go the confidence He seeks to waken: Every one that asketh, receiveth.

'*Ask, and it shall be given you.*' Christ has no mightier stimulus to persevering prayer in His school than this. As a child has to prove a sum to be correct, so the proof that we have prayed aright is, *the answer*. If we ask and receive not, it is because we have not learned to pray aright. Let every learner in the school of Christ therefore take the Master's word in all simplicity: Every one that asketh, receiveth. He had good reasons for speaking so unconditionally. Let us beware of weakening the Word with our human wisdom. When He tells us heavenly things, let us believe Him: His Word will explain itself to him who believes it fully. If questions and difficulties arise, let us not seek to have them settled before we accept the Word. No; let us entrust them all to Him: it is His to solve them: our work is first and fully to accept and hold fast His promise. Let in our inner chamber, in the inner chamber of our heart too, the Word be inscribed in letters of light: Every one that asketh, receiveth.

According to this teaching of the Master, prayer consists of two parts, has two sides, a human and a Divine. The human is the asking, the Divine is the giving. Or, to look at both from the human side, there is the asking and the receiving—the two halves that make up a whole. It is as if He would tell us that we are not to rest without an answer, because it is the will of God, the rule in the Father's family: every childlike believing petition is granted. If no answer comes, we are not to sit down in the sloth that calls itself resignation, and suppose that it is not God's will to give an answer. No; there must be something in the prayer that is not as God would have it, childlike and believing; we must seek for grace to pray so that the answer may come. It is far easier to the flesh to submit without the answer than to yield itself to be searched and purified by the Spirit, until it has learnt to pray the prayer of faith.

It is one of the terrible marks of the diseased state of Christian life in these days, that there are so many who rest content without the distinct experience of answer to prayer. They pray daily, they ask many things, and trust that some of them will be heard, but know little of direct definite answer to prayer as the rule of daily life. And it is this the Father wills: He seeks daily intercourse with His children in listening to and granting their petitions. he wills that I should come to Him day by day with distinct requests; He wills day by day to do for me what I ask. It was in His answer to prayer that the saints of old learned to know God as the Living One, and were stirred to praise and love (Ps. xxxiv., lxvi. 19, cxvi. 1). Our Teacher waits to imprint this upon our minds: prayer and its answer, the child asking and the father giving, belong to each other.

There may be cases in which the answer is a refusal, because the request is not according to God's Word, as when Moses asked to enter Canaan. But still, there was an answer: God did not leave His servant in uncertainty as to His will. The gods of the heathen are dumb and cannot speak. Our Father lets His child know when He cannot give him what he asks, and he withdraws his petition, even as the Son did in Gethsemane. Both Moses the servant and Christ the Son knew that what they asked was not according to what the Lord had spoken: their prayer was the humble supplication whether it was not possible for the decision to be changed. God will teach those who are teachable and give Him time, by His Word and Spirit, whether their request be according to His will or not. Let us withdraw the request, if it be not according to God's mind, or persevere till the answer come. Prayer is appointed to obtain the answer. It is in prayer and its answer that the interchange of love between the Father and His child takes place.

How deep the estrangement of our heart from God must be, that we find it so difficult to grasp such promises. Even while we accept the words and believe their truth, the faith of the heart, that fully has them and rejoices in them, comes so slowly. It is because our spiritual life is still so weak, and the capacity for taking God's thoughts is so feeble. But let us look to Jesus to teach us as none but He can teach. If we take His words in simplicity, and trust Him by His Spirit to make them within us life and power, they will so enter into our inner being, that the spiritual Divine reality of the truth they contain will indeed take possession of us, and we shall not rest content until every petition we offer is borne heavenward on Jesus' own words: 'Ask, and it shall be given you.'

Beloved fellow-disciples in the school of Jesus! let us set ourselves to learn this lesson well. Let us take these words just as they were spoken. Let us not suffer human reason to weaken their force. Let us take them as Jesus gives them, and believe them. He will teach us in due time how to understand them fully: let us begin by implicitly believing them. Let us take time, as often as we pray, to listen to His voice: Every one that asketh, receiveth. Let us not make the feeble experiences of our unbelief the measure of what our faith may expect. Let us seek, not only just in our seasons of prayer, but at all times, to hold fast the joyful assurance: man's prayer on earth and God's answer in heaven are meant for each other. Let us trust Jesus to teach us so to pray that the answer can come. He will do it, if we hold fast the word He gives today: 'Ask, and ye shall receive.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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O Lord Jesus! teach me to understand and believe what Thou hast now promised me. It is not hid from Thee, O my Lord, with what reasonings my heart seeks to satisfy itself, when no answer comes. There is the thought that my prayer is not in harmony with the Father's secret counsel; that there is perhaps something better Thou wouldest give me; or that prayer as fellowship with God is blessing enough without an answer. And yet, my blessed Lord, I find in Thy teaching on prayer that Thou didst not speak of these things, but didst say so plainly, that prayer may and must expect an answer. Thou dost assure us that this is the fellowship of a child with the Father: the child asks and the Father gives.

Blessed Lord! Thy words are faithful and true. It must be, because I pray amiss, that my experience of answered prayer is not clearer. It must be, because I live too little in the Spirit, that my prayer is too little in the Spirit, and that the power for the prayer of faith is wanting.

Lord! teach me to pray. Lord Jesus! I trust Thee for it; teach me to pray in faith. Lord! teach me this lesson of today: Every one that asketh receiveth. Amen.

6. SIXTH LESSON – *The Fatherliness of God.*

'How much more?'

Or, The Infinite Fatherliness of God.

'Or what man is there of you, who, if his son ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone; or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?'—MATT. vii. 9-11

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N these words our Lord proceeds further to confirm what He had said of the certainty of an answer to prayer. To remove all doubt, and show us on what sure ground His promise rests, He appeals to what every one has seen and experienced here on earth. We are all children, and know what we expected of our fathers. We are fathers, or continually see them; and everywhere we look upon it as the most natural thing there can be, for a father to hear his child. And the Lord asks us to look up from earthly parents, of whom the best are but evil, and to calculate HOW MUCH MORE the heavenly Father will give good gifts to them that ask Him. Jesus would lead us up to see, that as much greater as God is than sinful man, *so much greater* our assurance ought to be that He will more surely than any earthly father grant our childlike petitions. As much greater as God is than man, *so much surer* is it that prayer will be heard with the Father in heaven than with a father on earth.

As simple and intelligible as this parable is, so deep and spiritual is the teaching it contains. The Lord would remind us that the prayer of a child owes its influence entirely to the relation in which he stands to the parent. The prayer can exert that influence only when the child is really living in that relationship, in the home, in the love, in the service of the Father. The power of the promise, 'Ask, and it shall be given you,' lies in the loving relationship between us as children and the Father in heaven; when we live and walk in that relationship, the prayer of faith and its answer will be the natural result. And so the lesson we have today in the school of prayer is this: Live as a child of God, then you will be able to pray as a child, and as a child you will most assuredly be heard.

And what is the true child-life? The answer can be found in any home. The child that by preference forsakes the father's house, that finds no pleasure in the presence and love and obedience of the father, and still thinks to ask and

obtain what he will, will surely be disappointed. On the contrary, he to whom the intercourse and will and honour and love of the father are the joy of his life, will find that it is the father's joy to grant his requests. Scripture says, 'As many as are *led* by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God:' the childlike privilege of asking all is inseparable from the childlike life under the leading of the Spirit. He that gives himself to be led by the Spirit in his life, will be led by Him in his prayers too. And he will find that Fatherlike giving is the Divine response to childlike living.

To see what this childlike living is, in which childlike asking and believing have their ground, we have only to notice what our Lord teaches in the Sermon on the Mount of the Father and His children. In it the prayer-promises are imbedded in the life-precepts; the two are inseparable. They form one whole; and He alone can count on the fulfilment of the promise, who accepts too all that the Lord has connected with it. It is as if in speaking the word, 'Ask, and ye shall receive,' He says: I give these promises to those whom in the beatitudes I have pictured in their childlike poverty and purity, and of whom I have said, 'They shall be called the children of God' (Matt. v. 3-9): to children, who 'let your light shine before men, so that they may glorify your Father in heaven:' to those who walk in love, 'that ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven,' and who seek to be perfect 'even as your Father in heaven is perfect' (v. 45): to those whose fasting and praying and almsgiving (vi. 1-18) is not before men, but 'before your Father which seeth in secret;' who forgive 'even as your Father forgiveth you' (vi. 15); who trust the heavenly Father in all earthly need, seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (vi. 26-32); who not only say, Lord, Lord, but do the will of my Father which is in heaven (vii. 21). Such are the children of the Father, and such is the life in the Father's love and service; in such a child-life answered prayers are certain and abundant.

But will not such teaching discourage the feeble one? If we are first to answer to this portrait of a child, must not many give up all hope of answers to prayer? The difficulty is removed if we think again of the blessed name of father and child. A child is weak; there is a great difference among children in age and gift. The Lord does not demand of us a perfect fulfilment of the law; no, but only the childlike and whole-hearted surrender to live as a child with Him in obedience and truth. Nothing more. But also, nothing less. The Father must have the whole heart. When this is given, and He sees the child with honest purpose and steady will seeking in everything to be and live as a child, then our prayer will count with Him as the prayer of a child. Let any one simply and honestly begin to study the Sermon on the Mount and take it as his guide in life, and he will find, notwithstanding weakness and failure, an ever-growing liberty to claim the fulfilment of its promises in regard to prayer. In the names of father and child he has the pledge that his petitions will be granted.

This is the one chief thought on which Jesus dwells here, and which He would have all His scholars take in. He would have us see that the secret of effectual prayer is: to have the heart filled with the Father-love of God. It is not enough for us to know that God is a Father: He would have us take time to come under the full impression of what that name implies. We must take the best earthly father we know; we must think of the tenderness and love with which he regards the request of his child, the love and joy with which he grants every reasonable desire; we must then, as we think in adoring worship of the infinite Love and Fatherliness of God, consider with *how much more* tenderness and joy *He* sees us come to Him, and gives us what we ask aright. And then, when we see how much this Divine arithmetic is beyond our comprehension, and feel how impossible it is for us to apprehend God's readiness to hear us, then He would have us come and open our heart for the Holy Spirit to shed abroad God's Father-love there. Let us do this not only when we want to pray, but let us yield heart and life to dwell in that love. The child who only wants to know the love of the father when he has something to ask, will be disappointed. But he who lets God be Father always and in everything, who would fain live his whole life in the Father's presence and love, who allows God in all the greatness of His love to be a Father to him, oh! he will experience most gloriously that a life in God's infinite Fatherliness and continual answers to prayer are inseparable.

Beloved fellow-disciple! we begin to see what the reason is that we know so little of daily answers to prayer, and what the chief lesson is which the Lord has for us in His school. It is all in the name of Father. We thought of new and deeper insight into some of the mysteries of the prayer-world as what we should get in Christ's school; He tells us the first is the highest lesson; we must learn to say well, 'Abba, Father!' 'Our Father which art in heaven.' He that can say this, has the key to all prayer. In all the compassion with which a father listens to his weak or sickly child, in all the joy with which he hears his stammering child, in all the gentle patience with which he bears with a thoughtless child, we must, as in so many mirrors, study the heart of our Father, until every prayer be borne upward on the faith of this Divine word: 'How *much more* shall your heavenly Father give good gifts to them that ask Him.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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Blessed Lord! Thou knowest that this, though it be one of the first and simplest and most glorious lessons in Thy school, is to our hearts one of the hardest to learn: we know so little of the love of the Father. Lord! teach us so to live with the Father that His love may be to us nearer, clearer, dearer, than the love of any earthly father. And let the assurance of His hearing our prayer be as much greater than the confidence in an earthly parent, as the heavens are higher than earth, as God is infinitely greater than man. Lord! show us that it is only our unchildlike distance from the Father that hinders the answer to prayer, and lead us on to the true life of God's children. Lord Jesus! it is fatherlike love that wakens childlike trust. O reveal to us the Father, and His tender, pitying love, that we may become childlike, and experience how in the child-life lies the power of prayer.

Blessed Son of God! the Father loveth Thee and hath given Thee all things. And Thou lovest the Father, and hast done all things He commanded Thee, and therefore hast the power to ask all things. Lord! give us Thine own Spirit, the Spirit of the Son. Make us childlike, as Thou wert on earth. And let every prayer be breathed in the faith that as the heaven is higher than the earth, so God's Father-love, and His readiness to give us what we ask, surpasses all we can think or conceive. Amen.

NOTE.[1]

'*Your Father which is in heaven*.' Alas! we speak of it only as the utterance of a reverential homage. We think of it as a figure borrowed from an earthly life, and only in some faint and shallow meaning to be used of God. We are afraid to take God as our own tender and pitiful father. He is a schoolmaster, or almost farther off than that, and knowing less about us—an inspector, who knows nothing of us except through our lessons. His eyes are not on the scholar, but on the book, and all alike must come up to the standard.

Now open the ears of the heart, timid child of God; let it go sinking right down into the inner most depths of the soul. Here is the starting-point of holiness, in the love and patience and pity of our heavenly Father. We have not to learn to be holy as a hard lesson at school, that we may make God think well of us; we are to learn it at home with the Father to help us. God loves you not because you are clever not because you are good, but because He is *your Father*. The Cross of Christ does not make God love us; it is the outcome and measure of His love to us. He loves all His children, the clumsiest, the dullest, the worst of His children. His love lies at the back of everything, and we must get upon that as the solid foundation of our religious life, not growing up into that, but growing up *out if it*. We must begin there or our beginning will come to nothing. Do take hold of this mightily. We must go out of ourselves for any hope, or any strength, or any confidence. And what hope, what strength, what confidence may be ours now that we begin here, *your Father which is in heaven*!

We need to get in at the tenderness and helpfulness which lie in these words, and to rest upon it—*your Father*. Speak them over to yourself until something of the wonderful truth is felt by us. It means that I am bound to God by the closest and tenderest relationship; that I have a right to His love and His power and His blessing, such as nothing else could give me. O the boldness with which we can draw near! O the great things we have a right to ask for! *Your Father*. It means that all His infinite love and patience and wisdom bend over *me* to help *me*. In this relationship lies not only the possibility of holiness; there is infinitely more than that.

Here we are to begin, in the patient love of our Father. Think how He knows us apart and by ourselves, in all our peculiarities, and in all our weaknesses and difficulties. The master judges by the result, but our Father judges by the effort. Failure does not always mean fault. He knows how much things cost, and weighs them where others only measure. YOUR FATHER. Think how great store His love sets by the poor beginnings of the little ones, clumsy and unmeaning as they may be to others. All this lies in this blessed relationship and infinitely more. Do not fear to take it all as your own.

[1]From *Thoughts on Holiness*, by Mark Guy Pearse. What is so beautifully said of the knowledge of God's Fatherliness as the starting-point of holiness is no less true of prayer.

7. SEVENTH LESSON – *The all-comprehensive Gift.*

‘How much more the Holy Spirit;

Or, The All-Comprehensive Gift.

‘If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?’—LUKE xi. 13.

I

N the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord had already given utterance to His wonderful HOW MUCH MORE? Here in Luke, where He repeats the question, there is a difference. Instead of speaking, as then of giving *good gifts*, He says, ‘How much more shall the heavenly Father give THE HOLY SPIRIT?’ He thus teaches us that the chief and the best of these gifts is the Holy Spirit, or rather, that in this gift all others are comprised The Holy Spirit is the first of the Father’s gifts, and the one He delights most to bestow. The Holy Spirit is therefore the gift we ought first and chiefly to seek.

The unspeakable worth of this gift we can easily understand. Jesus spoke of the Spirit as ‘*the* promise of the Father;’ the one promise in which God’s Fatherhood revealed itself. The best gift a good and wise father can bestow on a child on earth is his own spirit. This is the great object of a father in education—to reproduce in his child his own disposition and character. If the child is to know and understand his father; if, as he grows up, he is to enter into all his will and plans; if he is to have his highest joy in the father, and the father in him,—he must be of one mind and spirit with him. And so it is impossible to conceive of God bestowing any higher gift on His child than this, His own Spirit. God is what He is through His Spirit; the Spirit is the very life of God. Just think what it means—God giving His own Spirit to His child on earth.

Or was not this the glory of Jesus as a Son upon earth, that the Spirit of the Father was in Him? At His baptism in Jordan the two things were united,—the voice, proclaiming Him the Beloved Son, and the Spirit, descending upon Him. And so the apostle says of us, ‘Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.’ A king seeks in the whole education of his son to call forth in him a kingly spirit. Our Father in heaven desires to educate us as His children for the holy, heavenly life in which He dwells, and for this gives us, from the depths of His heart, His own Spirit. It was this which was the whole aim of Jesus when, after having made atonement with His own blood, He entered for us into God’s presence, that He might obtain for us, and send down to dwell in us, the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit of the Father, and of the Son, the whole life and love of the Father and the Son are in Him; and, coming down into us, He lifts us up into their fellowship. As Spirit of the Father, He sheds abroad the Father’s love, with which He loved the Son, in our hearts, and teaches us to live in it. As Spirit of the Son, He breathes in us the childlike liberty, and devotion, and obedience in which the Son lived upon earth. The Father can bestow no higher or more wonderful gift than this: His own Holy Spirit, the Spirit of sonship.

This truth naturally suggests the thought that this first and chief gift of God must be the first and chief object of all prayer. For every need of the spiritual life this is the one thing needful, the Holy Spirit. All the fulness is in Jesus; the fulness of grace and truth, out of which we receive grace for grace. The Holy Spirit is the appointed conveyancer, whose special work it is to make Jesus and all there is in Him for us ours in personal appropriation, in blessed experience. He is the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; as wonderful as the life is, so wonderful is the provision by which such an agent is provided to communicate it to us. If we but yield ourselves entirely to the disposal of the Spirit, and let Him have His way with us, He will manifest the life of Christ within us. He will do this with a Divine power, maintaining the life of Christ in us in uninterrupted continuity. Surely, if there is one prayer that should draw us to the Father’s throne and keep us there, it is this: for the Holy Spirit, whom we as children have received, to stream into us and out from us in greater fulness.

In the variety of the gifts which the Spirit has to dispense, He meets the believer's every need. Just think of the names He bears. The Spirit of grace, to reveal and impart all of grace there is in Jesus. The Spirit of faith, teaching us to begin and go on and increase in ever believing. The Spirit of adoption and assurance, who witnesses that we are God's children, and inspires the confiding and confident Abba, Father! The Spirit of truth, to lead into all truth, to make each word of God ours in deed and in truth. The Spirit of prayer, through whom we speak with the Father; prayer that must be heard. The Spirit of judgment and burning, to search the heart, and convince of sin. The Spirit of holiness, manifesting and communicating the Father's holy presence within us. The Spirit of power, through whom we are strong to testify boldly and work effectually in the Father's service. The Spirit of glory, the pledge of our inheritance, the preparation and the foretaste of the glory to come. Surely the child of God needs but one thing to be able really to live as a child: it is, to be filled with this Spirit.

And now, the lesson Jesus teaches us today in His school is this: That the Father is just longing to give Him to us if we will but ask in the childlike dependence on what He says: 'If ye know to give good gifts unto your children, HOW MUCH MORE shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.' In the words of God's promise, 'I will pour out my Spirit *abundantly*;' and of His command, 'Be ye *filled* with the Spirit' we have the measure of what God is ready to give, and what we may obtain. As God's children, we have already received the Spirit. But we still need to ask and pray for His special gifts and operations as we require them. And not only this, but for Himself to take complete and entire possession; for His unceasing momentary guidance. Just as the branch, already filled with the sap of the vine, is ever crying for the continued and increasing flow of that sap, that it may bring its fruit to perfection, so the believer, rejoicing in the possession of the Spirit, ever thirsts and cries for more. And what the great Teacher would have us learn is, that nothing less than God's promise and God's command may be the measure of our expectation and our prayer; we must be filled abundantly. He would have us ask this in the assurance that the wonderful HOW MUCH MORE of God's Father-love is the pledge that, when we ask, we do most certainly receive.

Let us now believe this. As we pray to be filled with the Spirit, let us not seek for the answer in our feelings. All spiritual blessings must be received, that is, accepted or taken in faith.[1] Let me believe, the Father *gives* the Holy Spirit to His praying child. Even now, while I pray, I must say in faith: I have what I ask, the fulness of the Spirit is mine. Let us continue stedfast in this faith. On the strength of God's Word we know that we have what we ask. Let us, with thanksgiving that we have been heard, with thanksgiving for what we have received and taken and now hold as ours, continue stedfast in believing prayer that the blessing, *which has already been given* us, and which we hold in faith, may break through and fill our whole being. It is in such believing thanksgiving and prayer, that our soul opens up for the Spirit to take entire and undisturbed possession. It is such prayer that not only asks and hopes, but takes and holds, that inherits the full blessing. In all our prayer let us remember the lesson the Saviour would teach us this day, that, *if there is one thing on earth we can be sure of, it is this, that the Father desires to have us filled with His Spirit, that He delights to give us His Spirit.*

And when once we have learned thus to believe for ourselves, and each day to take out of the treasure we hold in heaven, what liberty and power to pray for the outpouring of the Spirit on the Church of God, on all flesh, on individuals, or on special efforts! He that has once learned to know the Father in prayer for himself, learns to pray most confidently for others too. The Father gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, not least, but most, when they ask for others.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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Father in heaven! Thou didst send Thy Son to reveal Thyself to us, Thy Father-love, and all that that love has for us. And He has taught us, that the gift above all gifts which Thou wouldst bestow in answer to prayer is, the Holy Spirit.

O my Father! I come to Thee with this prayer; there is nothing I would—may I not say, I do—desire so much as to be filled with the Spirit, the Holy Spirit. The blessings He brings are so unspeakable, and just what I need. He sheds abroad Thy love in the heart, and fills it with Thy self. I long for this. He breathes the mind and life of Christ in me, so that I live as He did, in and for the Father's love. I long for this. He endues with power from on high for all my walk and work. I long for this. O Father! I beseech Thee, give me this day the fulness of Thy Spirit.

Father! I ask this, resting on the words of my Lord: 'HOW MUCH MORE THE HOLY SPIRIT.' I do believe that Thou hearest my prayer; I receive now what I ask; Father! I claim and I take it: the fulness of Thy Spirit is mine. I receive the gift this day again as a faith gift; in faith I reckon my Father works through the Spirit all He has promised.

The Father delights to breathe His Spirit into His waiting child as He tarries in fellowship with Himself. Amen.

[1]The Greek word for receiving and taking is the same. When Jesus said, 'Everyone that asketh *receiveth*,' He used the same verb as at the Supper, '*Take*, eat,' or on the resurrection morning, '*Receive*,' accept, take, 'the Holy Spirit.' Receiving not only implies God's bestowment, but our acceptance.

8. EIGHTH LESSON – *Because of his importunity*.

'Because of his importunity;'

Or, The Boldness of God's Friends.

'And He said unto them, Which of you shall have *a friend*, and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, *Friend*, lend me three loaves; for *a friend* of mine is come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him' and he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is *his friend*, yet *because of his importunity* he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.'—LUKE xi. 5-8.

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HE first teaching to His disciples was given by our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. It was near a year later that the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray. In answer He gave them a second time the Lord's Prayer, so teaching them *what* to pray. He then speaks of *how* they ought to pray, and repeats what he formerly said of God's Fatherliness and the certainty of an answer. But in between He adds the beautiful parable of the friend at midnight, to teach them the two fold lesson, that God does not only want us to pray for ourselves, but for the perishing around us, and that in such intercession great boldness of entreaty is often needful, and always lawful, yea, pleasing to God.

The parable is a perfect storehouse of instruction in regard to true intercession. There is, first, *the love* which seeks to help the needy around us: '*my friend* is come to me.' Then *the need* which urges to the cry '*I have nothing* to set before him.' Then follows *the confidence* that help is to be had: 'which of you shall have a *friend*, and say, *Friend*, lend me three loaves.' Then comes the unexpected *refusal*: 'I *cannot* rise and give thee.' Then again the *perseverance* that takes no refusal: 'because of his *importunity*.' And lastly, the reward of such prayer: 'he will give him *as many as he needeth*.' A wonderful setting forth of the way of prayer and faith in which the blessing of God has so often been sought and found.

Let us confine ourselves to the chief thought: prayer as an appeal to the friendship of God; and we shall find that two lessons are specially suggested. The one, that if we are God's friends, and come as such to Him, we must prove ourselves the friends of the needy; God's friendship to us and ours to others go hand in hand. The other, that when we come thus we may use the utmost liberty in claiming an answer.

There is a twofold use of prayer: the one, to obtain strength and blessing for our own life; the other, the higher,

the true glory of prayer, for which Christ has taken us into His fellowship and teaching, is intercession, where prayer is the royal power a child of God exercises in heaven on behalf of others and even of the kingdom. We see it in Scripture, how it was in intercession for others that Abraham and Moses, Samuel and Elijah, with all the holy men of old, proved that they had power with God and prevailed. It is when we give ourselves to be a blessing that we can specially count on the blessing of God. It is when we draw near to God as the friend of the poor and the perishing that we may count on His friendliness; the righteous man who is the friend of the poor is very specially the friend of God. This gives wonderful liberty in prayer. Lord! I have a needy friend whom I must help. As a friend I have undertaken to help him. In Thee I have a Friend, whose kindness and riches I know to be infinite: I am sure Thou wilt give me what I ask. If I, being evil, am ready to do for my friend what I can, how much more wilt Thou, O my heavenly Friend, now do for Thy friend what he asks?

The question might suggest itself, whether the Fatherhood of God does not give such confidence in prayer, that the thought of His Friendship can hardly teach us anything more: a father is more than a friend. And yet, if we consider it, this pleading the friendship of God opens new wonders to us. That a child obtains what he asks of his father looks so perfectly natural, we almost count it the father's duty to give. But with a friend it is as if the kindness is more free, dependent, not on nature, but on sympathy and character. And then the relation of a child is more that of perfect dependence; two friends are more nearly on a level. And so our Lord, in seeking to unfold to us the spiritual mystery of prayer, would fain have us approach God in this relation too, as those whom He has acknowledged as His friends, whose mind and life are in sympathy with His.

But then we must be living as His friends. I am still a child even when a wanderer; but friendship depends upon the conduct. 'Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.' 'Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and he was called *the friend of God*.' It is the Spirit, '*the same* Spirit,' that leads us that also bears witness to our acceptance with God; '*likewise*, also,' the same Spirit helpeth us in prayer. It is a life as the friend of God that gives the wonderful liberty to say: I have a friend to whom I can go even at midnight. And how much more when I go in the very spirit of that friendliness, manifesting myself the very kindness I look for in God, seeking to help my friend as I want God to help me. When I come to God in prayer, He always looks to what the aim is of my petition. If it be merely for my own comfort or joy I seek His grace, I do not receive. But if I can say that it is that He may be glorified in my dispensing His blessings to others, I shall not ask in vain. Or if I ask for others, but want to wait until God has made me so rich, that it is no sacrifice or act of faith to aid them, I shall not obtain. But if I can say that I have already undertaken for my needy friend, that in my poverty I have already begun the work of love, because I know I had a friend Who would help me, my prayer will be heard. Oh, we know not how much the plea avails: the friendship of earth looking in its need to the friendship of heaven: 'He will give him as much as he needeth.'

But not always at once. The one thing by which man can honour and enjoy his God is *faith*. Intercession is part of faith's training-school. There our friendship with men and with God is tested. There it is seen whether my friendship with the needy is so real, that I will take time and sacrifice my rest, will go even at midnight and not cease until I have obtained for them what I need. There it is seen whether my friendship with God is so clear, that I can depend on Him not to turn me away and therefore pray on until He gives.

O what a deep heavenly mystery this is of persevering prayer. The God who has promised, who longs, whose fixed purpose it is to give the blessing, holds it back. It is to Him a matter of such deep importance that His friends on earth should know and fully trust their rich Friend in heaven, that He trains them, in the school of answer delayed, to find out how their perseverance really does prevail, and what the mighty power is they can wield in heaven, if they do but set themselves to it. There is a faith that sees the promise, and embraces it, and yet does not receive it (Heb. xi. 13, 39). It is when the answer to prayer does not come, and the promise we are most firmly trusting appears to be of none effect, that the trial of faith, more precious than of gold, takes place. It is in this trial that the faith that has embraced the promise is purified and strengthened and prepared in personal, holy fellowship with the living God, to see the glory of God. It takes and holds the promise until it has received the fulfilment of what it had claimed in a living truth in the unseen but living God.

Let each child of God who is seeking to work the work of love in his Father's service take courage. The parent with his child, the teacher with his class, the visitor with his district, the Bible reader with his circle, the preacher with his hearers, each one who, in his little circle, has accepted and is bearing the burden of hungry, perishing souls,—let them all take courage. Nothing is at first so strange to us as that God should really require persevering prayer, that there should be a real spiritual needs-be for importunity. To teach it us, the Master uses this almost strange parable. If the unfriendliness of a selfish earthly friend can be conquered by importunity, how much more will it avail with the heavenly Friend, who does so love to give, but is held back by our spiritual unfitness, our incapacity to possess what He has to give. O let us thank Him that in delaying His answer He is educating us up to our true position and the exercise of all our power with Him, training us to live with Him in the fellowship of undoubting faith and trust, to be indeed the

friends of God. And let us hold fast the threefold cord that cannot be broken: the hungry friend needing the help, and the praying friend seeking the help, and the Mighty Friend, loving to give as much as he needeth.

‘LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

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O my Blessed Lord and Teacher! I must come to Thee in prayer. Thy teaching is so glorious, and yet too high for me to grasp. I must confess that my heart is too little to take in these thoughts of the wonderful boldness I may use with Thy Father as my Friend. Lord Jesus! I trust Thee to give me Thy Spirit with Thy Word, and to make the Word quick and powerful in my heart. I desire to keep Thy Word of this day: ‘Because of his importunity he will give him as many as he needeth.’

Lord! teach me more to know the power of persevering prayer. I know that in it the Father suits Himself to our need of time for the inner life to attain its growth and ripeness, so that His grace may indeed be assimilated and made our very own. I know that He would fain thus train us to the exercise of that strong faith that does not let Him go even in the face of seeming disappointment. I know He wants to lift us to that wonderful liberty, in which we understand how really He has made the dispensing of His gift dependent on our prayer. Lord! I know this: O teach me to see it in spirit and truth.

And may it now be the joy of my life to become the almoner of my Rich Friend in heaven, to care for all the hungry and perishing, even at midnight, because I know MY FRIEND, who always gives to him who perseveres, because of his importunity, as many as he needeth. Amen.

9. NINTH LESSON – *Pray the Lord of the harvest.*

‘Pray the Lord of the harvest;’

Or, Prayer provides Labourers.

‘Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest.’—MATT. ix. 37-38**.**

T

HE Lord frequently taught His disciples *that* they must pray, and *how*; but seldom *what* to pray. This he left to their sense of need, and the leading of the Spirit. But here we have one thing He expressly enjoins them to remember: in view of the plenteous harvest, and the need of reapers, they must cry to the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers. Just as in the parable of the friend at midnight, He would have them understand that prayer is not to be selfish; so here it is the power through which blessing can come to others. The Father is Lord of the harvest; when we pray for the Holy Spirit, we must pray for Him to prepare and send forth labourers for the work.

Strange, is it not, that He should ask His disciples to pray for this? And could He not pray Himself? And would not one prayer of His avail more than a thousand of theirs? And God, the Lord of the harvest, did He not see the need? And would not He, in His own good time, send forth labourers without their prayer? Such questions lead us up to the deepest mysteries of prayer, and its power in the Kingdom of God. The answer to such questions will convince us that

prayer is indeed a power, on which the ingathering of the harvest and the coming of the Kingdom do in very truth depend.

Prayer is no form or show. The Lord Jesus was Himself the truth; everything He spake was the deepest truth. It was when (see ver. 36) 'He saw the multitude, and was moved with compassion on them, because they were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd,' that He called on the disciples to pray for labourers to be sent among them. He did so because He really believed that their prayer was needed, and would help. The veil which so hides the invisible world from us was wonderfully transparent to the holy human soul of Jesus. He had looked long and deep and far into the hidden connection of cause and effect in the spirit world. He had marked in God's Word how, when God called men like Abraham and Moses, Joshua and Samuel and Daniel, and given them authority over men in His name, He had at the same time given them authority and right to call in the powers of heaven to their aid as they needed them. He knew that as to these men of old, and to Himself for a time, here upon earth, the work of God had been entrusted, so it was now about to pass over into the hands of His disciples. He knew that when this work should be given in charge to them, it would not be a mere matter of form or show, but that on them, and their being faithful or unfaithful, the success of the work would actually depend. As a single individual, within the limitations of a human body and a human life, Jesus feels how little a short visit can accomplish among these wandering sheep He sees around Him, and He longs for help to have them properly cared for. And so He tells His disciples now to begin and pray, and, when they have taken over the work from Him on earth, to make this one of the chief petitions in their prayer: That the Lord of the harvest Himself would send forth labourers into His harvest. The God who entrusted them with the work, and made it to so large extent dependent on them, gives them authority to apply to Him for labourers to help, and makes the supply dependent on their prayer.

How little Christians really feel and mourn the need of labourers in the fields of the world so white to the harvest. And how little they believe that our labour-supply depends on prayer, that prayer will really provide 'as many as he needeth.' Not that the dearth of labour is not known or discussed. Not that efforts are not sometimes put forth to supply the want. But how little the burden of the sheep wandering without a Shepherd is really borne in the faith that the Lord of the harvest *will*, in answer to prayer, send forth the labourers, and in the solemn conviction that without this prayer fields ready for reaping will be left to perish. And yet it is so. So wonderful is the surrender of His work into the hands of His Church, so dependent has the Lord made Himself on them as His body, through whom alone His work can be done, so real is the power which the Lord gives His people to exercise in heaven and earth, that the number of the labourers and the measure of the harvest does actually depend upon their prayer.

Solemn thought! O why is it that we do not obey the injunction of the Master more heartily, and cry more earnestly for labourers? There are two reasons for this. The one is: We miss the compassion of Jesus, which gave rise to this request for prayer. When believers learn that to love their neighbours as themselves, that to live entirely for God's glory in their fellow-men, is the Father's first commandment to His redeemed ones, they will accept of the perishing ones as the charge entrusted to them by their Lord. And, accepting them not only as a field of labour, but as the objects of loving care and interest, it will not be long before compassion towards the hopelessly perishing will touch their heart, and the cry ascend with an earnestness till then unknown: Lord! send labourers. The other reason for the neglect of the command, the want of faith, will then make itself felt, but will be overcome as our pity pleads for help. We believe too little in the power of prayer to bring about definite results. We do not live close enough to God, and are not enough entirely given up to His service and Kingdom, to be capable of the confidence that He will give it in answer to our prayer. O let us pray for a life so one with Christ, that His compassion may stream into us, and His Spirit be able to assure us that our prayer avails.

Such prayer will ask and obtain a twofold blessing. There will first be the desire for the increase of men entirely given up to the service of God. It is a terrible blot upon the Church of Christ that there are times when actually men cannot be found for the service of the Master as ministers, missionaries, or teachers of God's Word. As God's children make this a matter of supplication for their own circle or Church, it will be given. The Lord Jesus is now Lord of the harvest. He has been exalted to bestow gifts—the gifts of the Spirit. His chief gifts are men filled with the Spirit. But the supply and distribution of the gifts depend on the co-operation of Head and members. It is just prayer will lead to such co-operation; the believing suppliants will be stirred to find the men and the means for the work.

The other blessing to be asked will not be less. Every believer is a labourer; not one of God's children who has not been redeemed for service, and has not his work waiting. It must be our prayer that the Lord would so fill all His people with the spirit of devotion, that not one may be found standing idle in the vineyard. Wherever there is a complaint of the want of helpers, or of fit helpers in God's work, prayer has the promise of a supply. There is no Sunday school or district visiting, no Bible reading or rescue work, where God is not ready and able to provide. It may take time and importunity, but the command of Christ to ask the Lord of the harvest is the pledge that the prayer will be heard: 'I say unto you, he will arise and give him as many as he needeth.'

Solemn, blessed thought! this power has been given us in prayer to provide in the need of the world, to secure the servants for God's work. The Lord of the harvest will hear. Christ, who called us so specially to pray thus, will support our prayers offered in His name and interest. Let us set apart time and give ourselves to this part of our intercessory work. It will lead us into the fellowship of that compassionate heart of His that led Him to call for our prayers. It will elevate us to the insight of our regal position, as those whose will counts for something with the great God in the advancement of His Kingdom. It will make us feel how really we are God's fellow-workers on earth, to whom a share in His work has in downright earnest been entrusted. It will make us partakers in the soul travail, but also in the soul satisfaction of Jesus, as we know how, in answer to our prayer, blessing has been given that otherwise would not have come.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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Blessed Lord! Thou hast this day again given us another of Thy wondrous lessons to learn. We humbly ask Thee, O give us to see aright the spiritual realities of which Thou hast been speaking. There is the harvest which is so large, and perishing, as it waits for sleepy disciples to give the signal for labourers to come. Lord, teach us to look out upon it with a heart moved with compassion and pity. There are the labourers, so few. Lord, show us how terrible the sin of the want of prayer and faith, of which this is the token. And there is the Lord of the harvest, so able and ready to send them forth. Lord, show us how He does indeed wait for the prayer to which He has bound His answer. And there are the disciples, to whom the commission to pray has been given: Lord, show us how Thou canst pour down Thy Spirit and breathe upon them, so that Thy compassion and the faith in Thy promise shall rouse them to unceasing, prevailing prayer.

O our Lord! we cannot understand how Thou canst entrust such work and give such power to men so slothful and unfaithful. We thank Thee for all whom Thou art teaching to cry day and night for labourers to be sent forth. Lord, breathe Thine own Spirit on all Thy children, that they may learn to live for this one thing alone—the Kingdom and glory of their Lord—and become fully awake to the faith of what their prayer can accomplish. And let all our hearts in this, as in every petition, be filled with the assurance that prayer, offered in loving faith in the living God, will bring certain and abundant answer. Amen.

10. TENTH LESSON – *Prayer must be definite.*

'What wilt thou?'

Or, Prayer must be Definite.

'And Jesus answered him, and said, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?'—MARK x. 51; LUKE xviii. 41.

T

HE blind man had been crying out aloud, and that a great deal, 'Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.' The cry had reached the ear of the Lord; He knew what he wanted, and was ready to grant it him. But ere He does it, He asks him: '*What wilt thou* that I should do unto thee?' He wants to hear from his own lips, not only the general petition for mercy, but the distinct expression of what his desire was. Until he speaks it out, he is not healed.

There is now still many a suppliant to whom the Lord puts the same question, and who cannot, until it has been answered, get the aid he ask. Our prayers must not be a vague appeal to His mercy, an indefinite cry for blessing, but the distinct expression of definite need. Not that His loving heart does not understand our cry, or is not ready to hear. But He desires it for our own sakes. Such definite prayer teaches us to know our own needs better. It demands time, and thought, and self-scrutiny to find out what really is our greatest need. It searches us and puts us to the test as to whether our desires are honest and real, such as we are ready to persevere in. It leads us to judge whether our desires are according to God's Word, and whether we really believe that we shall receive the things we ask. It helps us to wait for the special answer, and to mark it when it comes.

And yet how much of our prayer is vague and pointless. Some cry for mercy, but take not the trouble to know what mercy must do for them. Others ask, perhaps, to be delivered from sin, but do not begin by bringing any sin by name from which the deliverance may be claimed. Still others pray for God's blessing on those around them, for the outpouring of God's Spirit on their land or the world, and yet have no special field where they wait and expect to see the answer. To all the Lord says: And what is it now you really want and expect Me to do? Every Christian has but limited powers, and as he must have his own special field of labour in which he works, so with his prayers too. Each believer has his own circle, his family, his friends, his neighbours. If he were to take one or more of these by name, he would find that this really brings him into the training-school of faith, and leads to personal and pointed dealing with his God. It is when in such distinct matters we have in faith claimed and received answers, that our more general prayers will be believing and effectual.

We all know with what surprise the whole civilised world heard of the way in which trained troops were repulsed by the Transvaal Boers at Majuba. And to what did they owe their success? In the armies of Europe the soldier fires upon the enemy standing in large masses, and never thinks of seeking an aim for every bullet. In hunting game the Boer had learnt a different lesson: his practised eye knew to send every bullet on its special message, to seek and find its man. Such aiming must gain the day in the spiritual world too. As long as in prayer we just pour out our hearts in a multitude of petitions, without taking time to see whether every petition is sent with the purpose and expectation of getting an answer, not many will reach the mark. But if, as in silence of soul we bow before the Lord, we were to ask such questions as these: What is now really my desire? do I desire it in faith, expecting to receive? am I now ready to place and leave it in the Father's bosom? is it a settled thing between God and me that I am to have the answer? we should learn so to pray that God would see and we would know what we really expect.

It is for this, among other reasons, that the Lord warns us against the vain repetitions of the Gentiles, who think to be heard for their much praying. We often hear prayers of great earnestness and fervour, in which a multitude of petitions are poured forth, but to which the Saviour would undoubtedly answer 'What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?' If I am in a strange land, in the interests of the business which my father owns, I would certainly write two different sorts of letters. There will be family letters giving expression to all the intercourse to which affection prompts; and there will be business letters, containing orders for what I need. And there may be letters in which both are found. The answers will correspond to the letters. To each sentence of the letters containing the family news I do not expect a special answer. But for each order I send I am confident of an answer whether the desired article has been forwarded. In our dealings with God the business element must not be wanting. With our expression of need and sin, of love and faith and consecration, there must be the pointed statement of what we ask and expect to receive; it is in the answer that the Father loves to give us the token of His approval and acceptance.

But the word of the Master teaches us more. He does not say, What dost thou *wish*? but, What does thou *will*? One often wishes for a thing without willing it. I *wish* to have a certain article, but I find the price too high; I resolve not to take it; I *wish*, but do not *will* to have it. The sluggard wishes to be rich, but does not will it. Many a one wishes to be saved, but perishes because he does not will it. The will rules the whole heart and life; if I really will to have anything that is within my reach, I do not rest till I have it. And so, when Jesus says to us, 'What wilt thou?' He asks whether it is indeed our purpose to have what we ask at any price, however great the sacrifice. Dost thou indeed so will to have it that, though He delay it long, thou dost not hold thy peace till He hear thee? Alas! how many prayers are wishes, sent up for a short time and then forgotten, or sent up year after year as matter of duty, while we rest content with the prayer without the answer.

But, it may be asked, is it not best to make our wishes known to God, and then to leave it to Him to decide what is best, without seeking to assert our will? By no means. This is the very essence of the prayer of faith, to which Jesus sought to train His disciples, that it does not only make known its desire and then leave the decision to God. That would be the prayer of submission, for cases in which we cannot know God's will. But the prayer of faith, finding God's will in some promise of the Word, pleads for that till it come. In Matthew (ix. 28) we read Jesus said to the blind man: '*Believe ye* that I can do this?' Here, in Mark, He says: '*What wilt thou* that I should do?' In both cases He said that faith had saved them. And so He said to the Syrophenician woman, too: 'Great is thy *faith*: be it unto thee even as thou *wilt*.' Faith is nothing but the purpose of the will resting on God's word, and saying: I must have it. To believe truly is to will firmly.

But is not such a will at variance with our dependence on God and our submission to Him? By no means; it is much rather the true submission that honours God. It is only when the child has yielded his own will in entire surrender to the Father, that he receives from the Father liberty and power to will what he would have. But, when once the believer has accepted the will of God, as revealed through the Word and Spirit, as his will, too, then it is the will of God that His child should use this renewed will in His service. The will is the highest power in the soul; grace wants above everything to sanctify and restore this will, one of the chief traits of God's image, to full and free exercise. As a son, who only lives for his father's interests, who seeks not his own but his father's will is trusted by the father with his business, so God speaks to His child in all truth, 'What wilt thou?' It is often spiritual sloth that, under the appearance of humility, professes to have no will, because it fears the trouble of searching out the will of God, or, when found, the struggle of claiming it in faith. True humility is ever in company with strong faith, which only seeks to know what is according to the will of God, and then boldly claims the fulfilment of the promise: 'Ye shall ask *what ye will*, and it shall be done unto you.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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Lord Jesus! teach me to pray with all my heart and strength, that there may be no doubt with Thee or with me as to what I have asked. May I so know what I desire that, even as my petitions are recorded in heaven, I can record them on earth too, and note each answer as it comes. And may my faith in what Thy Word has promised be so clear that the Spirit may indeed work in me the liberty to will that it shall come. Lord! renew, strengthen, sanctify wholly my will for the work of effectual prayer.

Blessed Saviour! I do beseech Thee to reveal to me the wonderful condescension Thou showest us, thus asking us to say what we will that Thou shouldest do, and promising to do whatever we will. Son of God! I cannot understand it; I can only believe that Thou hast indeed redeemed us wholly for Thyself, and dost seek to make the will, as our noblest part, Thy most efficient servant. Lord! I do most unreservedly yield my will to Thee, as the power through which Thy Spirit is to rule my whole being. Let Him take possession of it, lead it into the truth of Thy promises, and make it so strong in prayer that I may ever hear Thy voice saying: 'Great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.' Amen.

11. ELEVENTH LESSON – *Believe that ye have received.*

'Believe that ye have received;'

Or, The Faith that Takes.

'Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them.'—MARK xi. 24

W

HAT a promise! so large, so Divine, that our little hearts cannot take it in, and in every possible way seek to limit it to what we think safe or probable; instead of allowing it, in its quickening power and energy, just as He gave it, to enter in, and to enlarge our hearts to the measure of what His love and power are really ready to do for us. Faith is very far from being a mere conviction of the truth of God's word, or a conclusion drawn from certain premises. It is the ear which has heard God say what He will do, the eye which has seen Him doing it, and, therefore, where there is true faith, it is impossible but the answer must come. If we only see to it that we do the one thing that He asks of us as we pray: BELIEVE *that ye have received*; He will see to it that He does the thing He has promised: '*Ye shall have them.*' The key-note of Solomon's prayer (2 Chron. vi. 4), 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath *with His hands fulfilled* that which *He spake with His mouth* to my father David,' is the key-note of all true prayer: the joyful adoration of a God whose *hand* always secures the fulfilment of what His *mouth* hath spoken. Let us in this spirit listen to the promise Jesus gives; each part of it has its Divine message.

'*All things whatsoever*.' At this first word our human wisdom at once begins to doubt and ask: This surely cannot be literally true? But if it be not, why did the Master speak it, using the very strongest expression He could find: 'All things whatsoever.' And it is not as if this were the only time He spoke thus; is it not He who also said, 'If thou canst believe, ALL THINGS are possible to him that believeth;' 'If ye have faith, NOTHING shall be impossible to you.' Faith is so wholly the work of God's Spirit through His word in the prepared heart of the believing disciple, that it is impossible that the fulfilment should not come; faith is the pledge and forerunner of the coming answer. Yes, 'ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER ye shall ask in prayer *believing, ye receive*.' The tendency of human reason is to interpose here, and with certain qualifying clauses, 'if expedient,' 'if according to God's will,' to break the force of a statement which appears dangerous. O let us beware of dealing thus with the Master's words. His promise is most literally true. He wants His oft repeated 'ALL THINGS' to enter into our hearts, and reveal to us how mighty the power of faith is, how truly the Head calls the members to share with Him in His power, how wholly our Father places His power at the disposal of the child that wholly trusts Him. In this 'all things' faith is to have its food and strength: as we weaken it we weaken faith. The WHATSOEVER is unconditional: the only condition is what is implied in the believing. Ere we can believe we must find out and know what God's will is' believing is the exercise of a soul surrendered and given up to the influence of the Word and the Spirit; but when once we do believe nothing shall be impossible. God forbid that we should try and bring down His ALL THINGS to the level of what we think possible. Let us now simply take Christ's 'WHATSOEVER' as the measure and the hope of our faith: it is a seed-word which, if taken just as He gives it, and kept in the heart, will unfold itself and strike root, fill our life with its fulness, and bring forth fruit abundantly.

'All things whatsoever *ye pray and ask for*.' It is in prayer that these 'all things' are to be brought to God, to be asked and received of Him. The faith that receives them is the fruit of the prayer. In one aspect there must be faith before there can be prayer; in another the faith is the outcome and the growth of prayer. It is in the personal presence of the Saviour, in intercourse with Him, that faith rises to grasp what at first appeared too high. It is in prayer that we hold up our desire to the light of God's Holy Will, that our motives are tested, and proof given whether we ask indeed in the name of Jesus, and only for the glory of God. It is in prayer that we wait for the leading of the Spirit to show us whether we are asking the right thing and in the right spirit. It is in prayer that we become conscious of our want of faith, that we are led on to say to the Father that we do believe, and that we prove the reality of our faith by the confidence with which we persevere. It is in prayer that Jesus teaches and inspires faith. He that waits to pray, or loses heart in prayer, because he does not yet feel the faith needed to get the answer, will never learn to believe. He who begins to pray and ask will find the Spirit of faith is given nowhere so surely as at the foot of the Throne.

'*Believe* that ye have received.' It is clear that what we are to believe is, that we receive the very things we ask. The Saviour does not hint that because the Father knows what is best He may give us something else. The very mountain faith bids depart is cast into the sea. There is a prayer in which, in everything, we make known our requests with prayer and supplication, and the reward is the sweet peace of God keeping heart and mind. This is the prayer of trust. It has reference to things of which we cannot find out if God is going to give them. As children we make known our desires in the countless things of daily life, and leave it to the Father to give or not as He thinks best. But the prayer of faith of which Jesus speaks is something different, something higher. When, whether in the greater interests of the Master's work, or in the lesser concerns of our daily life, the soul is led to see how there is nothing that so honours the Father as the faith that is assured that He will do what He has said in giving us whatsoever we ask for, and takes its stand on the promise as brought home by the Spirit, it may know most certainly that it does receive exactly what it asks. Just

see how clearly the Lord sets this before us in verse 23: 'Whosoever shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that *what he saith* cometh to pass, he shall have it.' This is the blessing of the prayer of faith of which Jesus speaks.

'Believe that ye *have received*.' This is the word of central importance, of which the meaning is too often misunderstood. Believe that you have received! now, while praying, the thing you ask for. It may only be later that you shall have it in personal experience, that you shall see what you believe; but now, without seeing, you are to believe that it has been given you of the Father in heaven. The receiving or accepting of an answer to prayer is just like the receiving or accepting of Jesus or of pardon, a spiritual thing, an act of faith apart from all feeling. When I come as a supplicant for pardon, I believe that Jesus in heaven is for me, and so I receive or take Him. When I come as a supplicant for any special gift, which is according to God's word, I believe that what I ask is given me: I believe that I have it, I hold it in faith; I thank God that it is mine. 'If we know that He heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him.'

'*And ye shall have them.*' That is, the gift which we first hold in faith as bestowed upon us in heaven will also become ours in personal experience. But will it be needful to pray longer if once we know we have been heard and have received what we asked? There are cases in which such prayer will not be needful, in which the blessing is ready to break through at once, if we but hold fast our confidence, and prove our faith by praising for what we have received, in the face of our not yet having it in experience. There are other cases in which the faith that has received needs to be still further tried and strengthened in persevering prayer. God only knows when everything in and around us is fully ripe for the manifestation of the blessing that has been given to faith. Elijah knew for certain that rain would come; God had promised it; and yet he had to pray the seven times. And that prayer was no show or play; an intense spiritual reality in the heart of him who lay pleading there, and in the heaven above where it had its effectual work to do. It is 'through faith *and patience* we inherit the promises.' Faith says most confidently, I have received it. Patience perseveres in prayer until the gift bestowed in heaven is seen on earth. 'Believe that *ye have received*, and *ye shall have*.' Between the *have received* in heaven, and the *shall have* of earth, *believe*: believing praise and prayer is the link.

And now, remember one thing more: It is Jesus who said this. As we see heaven thus opened to us, and the Father on the Throne offering to give us whatsoever we ask in faith, our hearts feel full of shame that we have so little availed ourselves of our privilege, and full of fear lest our feeble faith still fail to grasp what is so clearly placed within our reach. There is one thing must make us strong and full of hope: it is Jesus who has brought us this message from the Father. He Himself, when He was on earth, lived the life of faith and prayer. It was when the disciples expressed their surprise at what He had done to the fig-tree, that He told them that the very same life He led could be theirs; that they could not only command the fig-tree, but the very mountain, and it must obey. And He is our life: all He was on earth He is in us now; all He teaches He really gives. He is Himself the Author and the Perfecter of our faith: He gives the spirit of faith; let us not be afraid that such faith is not meant for us. It is meant for every child of the Father; it is within reach of each one who will but be childlike, yielding himself to the Father's Will and Love, trusting the Father's Word and Power. Dear fellow-Christian! let the thought that this word comes through Jesus, the Son, our Brother, give us courage, and let our answer be: Yea, Blessed Lord, we do believe Thy Word, we do believe that we receive.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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Blessed Lord! Thou didst come from the Father to show us all His love, and all the treasures of blessing that love is waiting to bestow. Lord! Thou hast this day again flung the gates so wide open, and given us such promises as to our liberty in prayer, that we must blush that our poor hearts have so little taken it in. It has been too large for us to believe.

Lord! we now look up to Thee to teach us to take and keep and use this precious word of Thine: 'All things whatsoever ye ask, believe that ye have received.' Blessed Jesus! it is Thy self in whom our faith must be rooted if it is

to grow strong. Thy work has freed us wholly from the power of sin, and opened the way to the Father; Thy Love is ever longing to bring us into the full fellowship of Thy glory and power; Thy Spirit is ever drawing us upward into a life of perfect faith and confidence; we are assured that in Thy teaching we shall learn to pray the prayer of faith. Thou wilt train us to pray so that we believe that we receive, to believe that we really have what we ask. Lord! teach me so to know and trust and love Thee, so to live and abide in Thee, that all my prayers rise up and come before God in Thee, and that my soul may have in Thee the assurance that I am heard. Amen.

12. TWELFTH LESSON – *Have faith in God.*

'Have faith in God;'

Or, The Secret of believing Prayer.

'Jesus, answering, said unto them, Have faith in God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what He saith cometh to pass; he shall have it. Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them.'—MARK xi. 22-24.

THE promise of answer to prayer which formed our yesterday's lesson is one of the most wonderful in all Scripture. In how many hearts it has raised the question: How ever can I attain the faith that knows that it receives all it asks?

It is this question our Lord would answer today. Ere He gave that wonderful promise to His disciples, He spoke another word, in which He points out where the faith in the answer to prayer takes its rise, and ever finds its strength. HAVE FAITH IN GOD: this word precedes the other, Have faith in the promise of an answer to prayer. The power to believe *a promise* depends entirely, but only, on faith in *the promiser*. Trust in the person begets trust in his word. It is only where we live and associate with God in personal, loving intercourse, where GOD HIMSELF is all to us, where our whole being is continually opened up and exposed to the mighty influences that are at work where His Holy Presence is revealed, that the capacity will be developed for believing that He gives whatsoever we ask.

This connection between faith in God and faith in His promise will become clear to us if we think what faith really is. It is often compared to the hand or the mouth, by which we take and appropriate what is offered to us. But it is of importance that we should understand that faith is also the ear by which I hear what is promised, the eye by which I see what is offered me. On this the power to take depends. I must *hear* the person who gives me the promise: the very tone of his voice gives me courage to believe. I must *see* him: in the light of his eye and countenance all fear as to my right to take passes away. The value of the promise depends on the promiser: it is on my knowledge of what the promiser is that faith in the promise depends.

It is for this reason that Jesus, ere He gives that wonderful prayer-promise, first says, 'HAVE FAITH IN GOD.' That is, let thine eye be open to the Living God, and gaze on Him, seeing Him who is Invisible. It is through the eye that I yield myself to the influence of what is before me; I just allow it to enter, to exert its influence, to leave its impression upon my mind. So believing God is just looking to God and what He is, allowing Him to reveal His presence, giving Him time and yielding the whole being to take in the full impression of what He is as God, the soul opened up to receive and rejoice in the overshadowing of His love. Yes, faith is the eye to which God shows what He is and does: through faith the light of His presence and the workings of His mighty power stream into the soul. As that which I see lives in me, so by faith God lives in me too.

And even so faith is also the ear through which the voice of God is always heard and intercourse with Him kept up. It is through the Holy Spirit the Father speaks to us; the Son is the Word, the substance of what God says; the Spirit is the living voice. This the child of God needs to lead and guide him; the secret voice from heaven must teach him, as it

taught Jesus, what to say and what to do. An ear opened towards God, that is, a believing heart waiting on Him, to hear what He says, will hear Him speak. The words of God will not only be the words of a Book, but, proceeding from the mouth of God, they will be spirit and truth, life and power. They will bring in deed and living experience what are otherwise only thoughts. Through this opened ear the soul tarries under the influence of the life and power of God Himself. As the words I hear enter the mind and dwell and work there, so through faith God enters the heart, and dwells and works there.

When faith now is in full exercise as eye and ear, as the faculty of the soul by which we see and hear God, then it will be able to exercise its full power as hand and mouth, by which we appropriate God and His blessing. The power of reception will depend entirely on the power of spiritual perception. For this reason Jesus said, ere He gave the promise that God would answer believing prayer: 'HAVE FAITH IN GOD.' Faith is simply surrender: I yield myself to the impression the tidings I hear make on me. By faith *I yield myself to the living God.* His glory and love fill my heart, and have the mastery over my life. Faith is fellowship; I give myself up to the influence of the friend who makes me a promise, and become linked to him by it. And it is when we enter into this living fellowship *with God Himself,* in a faith that always sees and hears Him, that it becomes easy and natural to believe His promise as to prayer. Faith in the promise is the fruit of faith in the promiser: the prayer of faith is rooted in the life of faith. And in this way the faith that prays effectually is indeed a gift of God. Not as something that He bestows or infuses at once, but in a far deeper and truer sense, as the blessed disposition or habit of soul which is wrought and grows up in us in a life of intercourse with Him. Surely for one who knows his Father well, and lives in constant close intercourse with Him, it is a simple thing to believe the promise that He will do the will of His child who lives in union with Himself.

It is because very many of God's children do not understand this connection between the life of faith and the prayer of faith that their experience of the power of prayer is so limited. When they desire earnestly to obtain an answer from God, they fix their whole heart upon the promise, and try their utmost to grasp that promise in faith. When they do not succeed, they are ready to give up hope; the promise is true, but it is beyond their power to take hold of it in faith. Listen to the lesson Jesus teaches us this day: HAVE FAITH IN GOD, the Living God: let faith look to God more than the thing promised: it is His love, His power, His living presence will waken and work the faith. A physician would say to one asking for some means to get more strength in his arms and hands to seize and hold, that his whole constitution must be built up and strengthened. So the cure of a feeble faith is alone to be found in the invigoration of our whole spiritual life by intercourse with God. Learn to believe in God, to take hold of God, to let God take possession of thy life, and it will be easy to take hold of the promise. He that knows and trusts God finds it easy to trust the promise too.

Just note how distinctly this comes out in the saints of old. Every special exhibition of the power of faith was the fruit of a special revelation of God. See it in Abraham: 'And *the word of the Lord came* unto Abram, saying, Fear not, Abram; *I am thy shield*. And *He brought him forth* abroad, *and said* … AND HE BELIEVED THE LORD.' And later again: 'The Lord *appeared unto him, and said* unto him, I am God Almighty. And Abram fell on his face, and *God talked with him*, saying, As for me, behold my covenant is with thee.' It was the revelation of God Himself that gave the promise its living power to enter the heart and work the faith. Because they knew God, these men of faith could not do anything but trust His promise. God's promise will be to us what God Himself is. It is the man who walks before the Lord, and falls upon his face to listen while the living God speaks to him, who will really receive the promise. Though we have God's promises in the Bible, with full liberty to take them, the spiritual power is wanting, except as *God Himself speaks them to us. And He speaks to those who walk and live with Him*. Therefore, HAVE FAITH IN GOD: let faith be all eye and ear, the surrender to let God make His full impression, and reveal Himself fully in the soul. Count it one of the chief blessings of prayer to exercise faith in God, as the Living Mighty God who waits to fulfil in us all the good pleasure of His will, and the work of faith with power. See in Him the God of Love, whose delight it is to bless and impart Himself. In such worship of faith in God the power will speedily come to believe the promise too: 'ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER YE ASK, BELIEVE THAT YE RECEIVE.' Yes, see that thou dost in faith make God thine own; the promise will be thine too.

Precious lessons that Jesus has to teach us this day. We seek God's gifts: God wants to give us HIMSELF first. We think of prayer as the power to draw down good gifts from heaven; Jesus as the means to draw ourselves up to God. We want to stand at the door and cry; Jesus would have us first enter in and realize that we are friends and children. Let us accept the teaching. Let every experience of the littleness of our faith in prayer urge us first to have and exercise more faith in the living God, and in such faith to yield ourselves to Him. A heart full of God has power for the prayer of faith. Faith in God begets faith in the promise, in the promise too of an answer to prayer.

Therefore, child of God, take time, take time, to bow before *Him*, to wait on *Him* to reveal *Himself*. Take time, and let thy soul in holy awe and worship exercise and express its faith in the Infinite One, and as He imparts Himself and takes possession of thee, the prayer of faith will crown thy faith in God.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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O my God! I do believe in Thee. I believe in Thee as the Father, Infinite in Thy Love and Power. And as the Son, my Redeemer and my Life. And as the Holy Spirit, Comforter and Guide and Strength. Three-One God, I have faith in Thee. I know and am sure that all that Thou art Thou art to me, that all Thou hast promised Thou wilt perform.

Lord Jesus! increase this faith. Teach me to take time, and wait and worship in the Holy Presence until my faith takes in all there is in my God for me. Let it see Him as the Fountain of all Life, working with Almighty Strength to accomplish His will on the world and in me. Let it see Him in His love longing to meet and fulfil my desires. Let it so take possession of my heart and life that through faith God alone may dwell there. Lord Jesus, help me! with my whole heart would I believe in God. Let faith in God each moment fill me.

O my Blessed Saviour! how can Thy Church glorify Thee, how can it fulfil that work of intercession through which Thy kingdom must come, unless our whole life be FAITH IN GOD. Blessed Lord! speak Thy Word, 'HAVE FAITH IN GOD,' unto the depths of our souls.

13. THIRTEENTH LESSON – *Prayer and fasting*.

'Prayer and fasting;'

Or, The Cure of Unbelief.

'Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, *Because of your unbelief:* for verily I say unto you, *If ye have faith* as a grain of mustard seed, *nothing shall be impossible* to you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting'—MATT. xvii. 19-21.

W

HEN the disciples saw Jesus cast the evil spirit out of the epileptic whom 'they could not cure,' they asked the Master for the cause of their failure. He had given them 'power and authority over all devils, and to cure all diseases.' They had often exercised that power, and joyfully told how the devils were subject to them. And yet now, while He was on the Mount, they had utterly failed. That there had been nothing in the will of God or in the nature of the case to render deliverance impossible, had been proved: at Christ's bidding the evil spirit had gone out. From their expression, 'Why could we not?' it is evident that they had wished and sought to do so; they had probably used the Master's name, and called upon the evil spirit to go out. Their efforts had been vain, and in presence of the multitude, they had been put to shame. 'Why could we not?'

Christ's answer was direct and plain: 'Because of your unbelief.' The cause of His success and their failure, was not owing to His having a special power to which they had no access. No; the reason was not far to seek. He had so often taught them that there is one power, that of faith, to which, in the kingdom of darkness, as in the kingdom of God, everything must bow; in the spiritual world failure has but one cause, the want of faith. Faith is the one condition on which all Divine power can enter into man and work through him. It is the susceptibility of the unseen: man's will yielded up to, and moulded by, the will of God. The power they had received to cast out devils, they did not hold in themselves as a permanent gift or possession; the power was in Christ, to be received, and held, and used by faith alone, living faith in Himself. Had they been full of faith *in Him* as Lord and Conqueror in the spirit-world, had they been full of faith *in Him* as having given them authority to cast out in His name, this faith would have given them the victory. 'Because of your unbelief' was, for all time, the Master's explanation and reproof of impotence and failure in His Church.

But such want of faith must have a cause too. Well might the disciples have asked: 'And why could we not believe? Our faith has cast out devils before this: why have we now failed in believing? 'The Master proceeds to tell them ere they ask: 'This kind goeth not out but by fasting and prayer.' As faith is the simplest, so it is the highest exercise of the spiritual life, where our spirit yields itself in perfect receptivity to God's Spirit and so is strengthened to its highest activity. This faith depends entirely upon the state of the spiritual life; only when this is strong and in full health, when the Spirit of God has full sway in our life, is there the power of faith to do its mighty deeds. And therefore Jesus adds: 'Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by fasting and prayer.' The faith that can overcome such stubborn resistance as you have just seen in this evil spirit, Jesus tells them, is not possible except to men living in very close fellowship with God, and in very special separation from the world—in prayer and fasting. And so He teaches us two lessons in regard to prayer of deep importance. The one, that faith needs a life of prayer in which to grow and keep strong. The other, that prayer needs fasting for its full and perfect development.

Faith needs a life of prayer for its full growth. In all the different parts of the spiritual life, there is such close union, such unceasing action and re-action, that each may be both cause and effect. Thus it is with faith. There can be no true prayer without faith; some measure of faith must precede prayer. And yet prayer is also the way to more faith; there can be no higher degrees of faith except through much prayer. This is the lesson Jesus teaches here. There is nothing needs so much to grow as our faith. 'Your faith groweth exceedingly,' is said of one Church. When Jesus spoke the words, 'According to your faith be it unto you,' He announced the law of the kingdom, which tells us that all have not equal degrees of faith, that the same person has not always the same degree, and that the measure of faith must always determine the measure of power and of blessing. If we want to know where and how our faith is to grow, the Master points us to the throne of God. It is in prayer, in the exercise of the faith I have, in fellowship with the living God, that faith can increase. Faith can only live by feeding on what is Divine, on God Himself.

It is in the adoring worship of God, the waiting on Him and for Him, the deep silence of soul that yields itself for God to reveal Himself, that the capacity for knowing and trusting God will be developed. It is as we take His word from the Blessed Book, and bring it to Himself, asking him to speak it to us with His living loving voice, that the power will

come fully to believe and receive the word as God's own word to us. It is in prayer, in living contact with God in living faith, that faith, the power to trust God, and in that trust, to accept everything He says, to accept every possibility He has offered to our faith will become strong in us. Many Christians cannot understand what is meant by the much prayer they sometimes hear spoken of: they can form no conception, nor do they feel the need, of spending hours with God. But what the Master says, the experience of His people has confirmed: men of strong faith are men of much prayer.

This just brings us back again to the lesson we learned when Jesus, before telling us to believe that we receive what we ask, first said, 'Have faith in God.' It is God, the living God, into whom our faith must strike its roots deep and broad; then it will be strong to remove mountains and cast out devils. 'If ye have faith, nothing shall be impossible to you.' Oh! if we do but give ourselves up to the work God has for us in the world, coming into contact with the mountains and the devils there are to be cast away and cast out, we should soon comprehend the need there is of much faith, and of much prayer, as the soil in which alone faith can be cultivated. Christ Jesus is our life, the life of our faith too. It is His life in us that makes us strong, and makes us simple to believe. It is in the dying to self which much prayer implies, in closer union to Jesus, that the spirit of faith will come in power. *Faith needs prayer* for its full growth.

And *prayer needs fasting* for its full growth: this is the second lesson. Prayer is the one hand with which we grasp the invisible; fasting, the other, with which we let loose and cast away the visible. In nothing is man more closely connected with the world of sense than in his need of food, and his enjoyment of it. It was the fruit, good for food, with which man was tempted and fell in Paradise. It was with bread to be made of stones that Jesus, when an hungered, was tempted in the wilderness, and in fasting that He triumphed. The body has been redeemed to be a temple of the Holy Spirit; it is in body as well as spirit, it is very specially, Scripture says, in eating and drinking, we are to glorify God. It is to be feared that there are many Christians to whom this eating to the glory of God has not yet become a spiritual reality. And the first thought suggested by Jesus' words in regard to fasting and prayer, is, that it is only in a life of moderation and temperance and self-denial that there will be the heart or the strength to pray much.

But then there is also its more literal meaning. Sorrow and anxiety cannot eat: joy celebrates its feasts with eating and drinking. There may come times of intense desire, when it is strongly felt how the body, with its appetites, lawful though they be, still hinder the spirit in its battle with the powers of darkness, and the need is felt of keeping it under. We are creatures of the senses: our mind is helped by what comes to us embodied in concrete form; fasting helps to express, to deepen, and to confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, to sacrifice ourselves, to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God. And He who accepted the fasting and sacrifice of the Son, knows to value and accept and reward with spiritual power the soul that is thus ready to give up all for Christ and His kingdom.

And then follows a still wider application. Prayer is the reaching out after God and the unseen; fasting, the letting go of all that is of the seen and temporal. While ordinary Christians imagine that all that is not positively forbidden and sinful is lawful to them, and seek to retain as much as possible of this world, with its property, its literature, its enjoyments, the truly consecrated soul is as the soldier who carries only what he needs for the warfare. Laying aside every weight, as well as the easily besetting sin, afraid of entangling himself with the affairs of this life, he seeks to lead a Nazarite life, as one specially set apart for the Lord and His service. Without such voluntary separation, even from what is lawful, no one will attain power in prayer: this kind goeth not out but by fasting and prayer.

Disciples of Jesus! who have asked the Master to teach you to pray, come now and accept His lessons. He tells you that prayer is the path to faith, strong faith, that can cast out devils. He tells you: 'If ye have faith, nothing shall be impossible to you;' let this glorious promise encourage you to pray much. Is the prize not worth the price? Shall we not give up all to follow Jesus in the path He opens to us here; shall we not, if need be, fast? Shall we not do anything that neither the body nor the world around hinder us in our great life-work,—having intercourse with our God in prayer, that we may become men of faith, whom He can use in His work of saving the world.

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O Lord Jesus! how continually Thou hast to reprove us for our unbelief! How strange it must appear to Thee, this terrible incapacity of trusting our Father and His promises. Lord! let Thy reproof, with its searching, ‘Because of your unbelief,’ sink into the very depths of our hearts, and reveal to us how much of the sin and suffering around us is our blame. And then teach us, Blessed Lord, that there is a place where faith can be learned and gained,—even in the prayer and fasting that brings into living and abiding fellowship with Thyself and the Father.

O Saviour! Thou Thyself art the Author and the Perfecter of our faith; teach us what it is to let Thee live in us by Thy Holy Spirit. Lord! our efforts and prayers for grace to believe have been so unavailing. We know why it was: we sought for strength in ourselves to be given from Thee. Holy Jesus! do at length teach us the mystery of Thy life in us, and how Thou, by Thy Spirit, dost undertake to live in us the life of faith, to see to it that our faith shall not fail. O let us see that our faith will just be a part of that wonderful prayer-life which Thou givest in them who expect their training for the ministry of intercession, not in word and thought only, but in the Holy Unction Thou givest, the inflowing of the Spirit of Thine own life. And teach us how, in fasting and prayer, we may grow up to the faith to which nothing shall be impossible. Amen.

NOTE

At the time when Blumhardt was passing through his terrible conflict with the evil spirits in those who were possessed, and seeking to cast them out by prayer, he often wondered what it was that hindered the answer. One day a friend, to whom he had spoken of his trouble, directed his attention to our Lord’s words about fasting. Blumhardt resolved to give himself to fasting, sometimes for more than thirty hours. From reflection and experience he gained the conviction that it is of more importance than is generally thought. He says, ‘Inasmuch as the fasting is before God, a practical proof that the thing we ask is to us a matter of true and pressing interest, and inasmuch as in a high degree it strengthens the intensity and power of the prayer, and becomes the unceasing practical expression of a prayer without words, I could believe that it would not be without efficacy, especially as the Master’s words had reference to a case like the present. I tried it, without telling any one, and in truth the later conflict was extraordinarily lightened by it. I could speak with much greater restfulness and decision. I did not require to be so long present with the sick one; and I felt that I could influence without being present.’

14. FOURTEENTH LESSON - *Forgive*.

‘When ye stand praying, forgive;’

Or, Prayer and Love.

‘And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.’—MARK xi. 25.

T

HESE words follow immediately on the great prayer-promise, ‘All things whatsoever ye pray, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them.’ We have already seen how the words that preceded that promise, ‘Have faith in God,’ taught us that in prayer all depends upon our relation to God being clear; these words that follow on it remind us that our relation with fellow-men must be clear too. Love to God and love to our neighbour are inseparable: the prayer

from a heart, that is either not right with God on the one side, or with men on the other, cannot prevail. Faith and love are essential to each other.

We find that this is a thought to which our Lord frequently gave expression. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 23, 24), when speaking of the sixth commandment, He taught His disciples how impossible acceptable worship to the Father was if everything were not right with the brother: 'If thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.' And so later, when speaking of prayer to God, after having taught us to pray, 'Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors,' He added at the close of the prayer: 'If you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.' At the close of the parable of the unmerciful servant He applies His teaching in the words: 'So shall also my Heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.' And so here, beside the dried-up fig-tree, where He speaks of the wonderful power of faith and the prayer of faith, He all at once, apparently without connection, introduces the thought, 'Whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.' It is as if the Lord had learned during His life at Nazareth and afterwards that disobedience to the law of love to men was the great sin even of praying people, and the great cause of the feebleness of their prayer. And it is as if He wanted to lead us into His own blessed experience that nothing gives such liberty of access and such power in believing as the consciousness that we have given ourselves in love and compassion, for those whom God loves.

The first lesson taught here is that of a forgiving disposition. We pray, 'Forgive, *even as* we have forgiven.' Scripture says, 'Forgive one another, even as God also in Christ forgave you.' God's full and free forgiveness is to be the rule of ours with men. Otherwise our reluctant, half-hearted forgiveness, which is not forgiveness at all, will be God's rule with us. Every prayer rests upon our faith in God's pardoning grace. If God dealt with us after our sins, not one prayer could be heard. Pardon opens the door to all God's love and blessing: because God has pardoned all our sin, our prayer can prevail to obtain all we need. The deep sure ground of answer to prayer is God's forgiving love. When it has taken possession of the heart, we pray in faith. But also, when it has taken possession of the heart, we live in love. God's forgiving disposition, revealed in His love to us, becomes a disposition in us; as the power of His forgiving love shed abroad and dwelling within us, we forgive even as He forgives. If there be great and grievous injury or injustice done us, we seek first of all to possess a Godlike disposition; to be kept from a sense of wounded honour, from a desire to maintain our rights, or from rewarding the offender as he has deserved. In the little annoyances of daily life, we are watchful not to excuse the hasty temper, the sharp word, the quick judgment, with the thought that we mean no harm, that we do not keep the anger long, or that it would be too much to expect from feeble human nature, that we should really forgive the way God and Christ do. No, we take the command literally, '*Even as* Christ forgave, *so also* do ye.' The blood that cleanses the conscience from dead works, cleanses from selfishness too; the love it reveals is pardoning love, that takes possession of us and flows through us to others. Our forgiving love to men is the evidence of the reality of God's forgiving love in us, and so the condition of the prayer of faith.

There is a second, more general lesson: our daily life in the world is made the test of our intercourse with God in prayer. How often the Christian, when he comes to pray, does his utmost to cultivate certain frames of mind which he thinks will be pleasing. He does not understand, or forgets, that life does not consist of so many loose pieces, of which now the one, then the other, can be taken up. Life is a whole, and the pious frame of the hour of prayer is judged of by God from the ordinary frame of the daily life of which the hour of prayer is but a small part. Not the feeling I call up, but the tone of my life during the day, is God's criterion of what I really am and desire. My drawing nigh to God is of one piece with my intercourse with men and earth: failure here will cause failure there. And that not only when there is the distinct consciousness of anything wrong between my neighbour and myself; but the ordinary current of my thinking and judging, the unloving thoughts and words I allow to pass unnoticed, can hinder my prayer. The effectual prayer of faith comes out from a life given up to the will and the love of God. Not according to what I try to be when praying, but what I am when not praying, is my prayer dealt with by God.

We may gather these thoughts into a third lesson: In our life with men the one thing on which everything depends is love. The spirit of forgiveness is the spirit of love. Because God is love, He forgives: it is only when we are dwelling in love that we can forgive as God forgives. In love to the brethren we have the evidence of love to the Father, the ground of confidence before God, and the assurance that our prayer will be heard, (1 John iv. 20, iii. 18-21, 23.). 'Let us love in deed and truth; *hereby* shall we assure our heart before Him. If our heart condemn us not, we have boldness toward God, and whatever we ask, we receive of Him.' Neither faith nor work will profit if we have not love; it is love that unites with God, it is love that proves the reality of faith. As essential as in the word that precedes the great prayer-promise in Mark xi. 24, 'Have faith in God,' is this one that follows it, 'Have love to men.' The right relations to the living God above me, and the living men around me, are the conditions of effectual prayer.

This love is of special consequence when we labour for such and pray for them. We sometimes give ourselves to work for Christ, from zeal for His cause, as we call it, or for our own spiritual health, without giving ourselves in

personal self-sacrificing love for those whose souls we seek. No wonder that our faith is feeble and does not conquer. To look on each wretched one, however unloveable he be, in the light of the tender love of Jesus the Shepherd seeking the lost; to see Jesus Christ in him, and to take him up, for Jesus' sake, in a heart that really loves, —this, this is the secret of believing prayer and successful effort. Jesus, in speaking of forgiveness, speaks of love as its root. Just as in the Sermon on the Mount He connected His teaching and promises about prayer with the call to be merciful, as the Father in heaven is merciful (Matt. v. 7, 9, 22, 38-48), so we see it here: a loving life is the condition of believing prayer.

It has been said: There is nothing so heart-searching as believing prayer, or even the honest effort to pray in faith. O let us not turn the edge of that self-examination by the thought that God does not hear our prayer for reasons known to Himself alone. By no means. 'Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss.' Let that word of God search us. Let us ask whether our prayer be indeed the expression of a life wholly given over to the will of God and the love of man. Love is the only soil in which faith can strike its roots and thrive. As it throws its arms up, and opens its heart heavenward, the Father always looks to see if it has them opened towards the evil and the unworthy too. In that love, not indeed the love of perfect attainment, but the love of fixed purpose and sincere obedience, faith can alone obtain the blessing. It is he who gives himself to let the love of God dwell in him, and in the practice of daily life to love as God loves, who will have the power to believe in the Love that hears his every prayer. It is *the Lamb*, who is in the midst of the throne: it is suffering and forbearing love that prevails with God in prayer. The merciful shall obtain mercy; the meek shall inherit the earth.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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Blessed Father! Thou art Love, and only he that abideth in love abideth in Thee and in fellowship with Thee. The Blessed Son hath this day again taught me how deeply true this is of my fellowship with Thee in prayer. O my God! let Thy love, shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Spirit, be in me a fountain of love to all around me, that out of a life in love may spring the power of believing prayer. O my Father! grant by the Holy Spirit that this may be my experience, that a life in love to all around me is the gate to a life in the love of my God. And give me especially to find in the joy with which I forgive day by day whoever might offend me, the proof that Thy forgiveness to me is a power and a life.

Lord Jesus! my Blessed Teacher! teach Thou me to forgive and to love. Let the power of Thy blood make the pardon of my sins such a reality, that forgiveness, as shown by Thee to me, and by me to others, may be the very joy of heaven. Show me whatever in my intercourse with fellowmen might hinder my fellowship with God, so that my daily life in my own home and in society may be the school in which strength and confidence are gathered for the prayer of faith. Amen.

15. FIFTEENTH LESSON – *If two agree*.

'If two agree;'

Or, The Power of United Prayer

'Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, *it shall be done* for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.—MATT. xviii. 19, 20.

O

NE of the first lessons of our Lord in His school of prayer was: Not to be seen of men. Enter thy inner chamber; be alone with the Father. When He has thus taught us that the meaning of prayer is personal individual contact with God, He comes with a second lesson: You have need not only of secret solitary, but also of public united prayer. And He gives us a very special promise for the united prayer of two or three who agree in what they ask. As a tree has its root hidden in the ground and its stem growing up into the sunlight, so prayer needs equally for its full development the hidden secrecy in which the soul meets God alone, and the public fellowship with those who find in the name of Jesus their common meeting-place.

The reason why this must be so is plain. The bond that unites a man to his fellow-men is no less real and close than that which unites him to God: he is one with them. Grace renews not alone our relation to God but to man too. We not only learn to say 'My Father,' but 'Our Father.' Nothing would be more unnatural than that the children of a family should always meet their father separately, but never in the united expression of their desires or their love. Believers are not only members of one family, but even of one body. Just as each member of the body depends on the other, and the full action of the spirit dwelling in the body depends on the union and co-operation of all, so Christians cannot reach the full blessing God is ready to bestow through His Spirit, but as they seek and receive it in fellowship with each other. It is in the union and fellowship of believers that the Spirit can manifest His full power. It was to the hundred and twenty continuing in one place together, and praying with one accord, that the Spirit came from the throne of the glorified Lord.

The marks of true united prayer are given us in these words of our Lord. The first is *agreement* as to the thing asked. There must not only be generally the consent to agree with anything another may ask: there must be some special thing, matter of distinct united desire; the agreement must be, as all prayer, in spirit and in truth. In such agreement it will become very clear to us what exactly we are asking, whether we may confidently ask according to God's will, and whether we are ready to believe that we have received what we ask.

The second mark is the gathering in, or into, the Name of Jesus. We shall afterwards have much more to learn of the need and the power of the Name of Jesus in prayer; here our Lord teaches us that the Name must be the centre of union to which believers gather, the bond of union that makes them one, just as a home contains and unites all who are in it. 'The Name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and escape.' That Name is such a reality to those who understand and believe it, that to meet within it is to have Himself present. The love and unity of His disciples have to Jesus infinite attraction: 'Where two or three are gathered in my Name, *there am I in the midst of them.*' It is the living presence of Jesus, in the fellowship of His loving praying disciples, that gives united prayer its power.

The third mark is, the sure answer: 'It shall be done for them of my Father.' A prayer-meeting for maintaining religious fellowship, or seeking our own edification, may have its use; this was not the Saviour's view in its appointment. He meant it as a means of securing *special answer to prayer*. A prayer meeting without recognised answer to prayer ought to be an anomaly. When any of us have distinct desires in regard to which we feel too weak to exercise the needful faith, we ought to seek strength in the help of other. In the unity of faith and of love and of the Spirit, the power of the Name and the Presence of Jesus acts more freely and the answer comes more surely. The mark that there has been true united prayer is the fruit, the answer, the receiving of the thing we have asked: 'I say unto you, *It shall be done* for them of my Father which is in heaven.'

What an unspeakable privilege this of united prayer is, and what a power it might be. If the believing husband and wife knew that they were joined together in the Name of Jesus to experience His presence and power in united prayer (1 Peter); if friends believed what mighty help two or three praying in concert could give each other; if in every prayer meeting the coming together in the Name, the faith in the Presence, and the expectation of the answer, stood in the foreground; if in every Church united effectual prayer were regarded as one of the chief purposes for which they are banded together, the highest exercise of their power as a Church; if in the Church universal the coming of the kingdom, the coming of the King Himself, first in the mighty outpouring of His Holy Spirit, then in His own glorious person, were really matter of unceasing united crying to God;—O who can say what blessing might come to, and through, those who thus agreed to prove God in the fulfilment of His promise.

In the Apostle Paul we see very distinctly what a reality his faith in the power of united prayer was. To the Romans he writes (xv. 30): 'I beseech you, brethren, by the love of the Spirit, that ye *strive together with me* in your prayer to God for me.' He expects in answer to be delivered from his enemies, and to be prospered in his work. To the Corinthians (2 Cor. i. 11), 'God will still deliver us, ye also helping together on our behalf by your supplications;' their prayer is to have a real share in his deliverance. To the Ephesians he writes: 'With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit for all the saints and on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me.' His power and success

in his ministry he makes to depend on their prayers. With the Philippians (i. 19) he expects that his trials will turn to his salvation and the progress of the gospel '*through your supplications and* the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ.; To the Colossians (iv. 3) he adds to the injunction to continue stedfast in prayer: 'Withal praying for us too, that God may open unto us a door for the word.' And to the Thessalonians (2 Thess. iii. 1) he writes: 'Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable men.' It is everywhere evident that Paul felt himself the member of a body, on the sympathy and co-operation of which he was dependent, and that he counted on the prayers of these Churches to gain for him, what otherwise might not be given. The prayers of the Church were to him as real a factor in the work of the kingdom, as the power of God.

Who can say what power a Church could develop and exercise, if it gave itself to the work of prayer day and night for the coming of the kingdom, for God's power on His servants and His word, for the glorifying of God in the salvation of souls? Most Churches think their members are gathered into one simply to take care of and build up each other. They know not that God rules the world by the prayers of His saints; that prayer is the power by which Satan is conquered; that by prayer the Church on earth has disposal of the powers of the heavenly world. They do not remember that Jesus has, by His promise, consecrated every assembly in His Name to be a gate of heaven, where His Presence is to be felt, and His Power experienced in the Father fulfilling their desires.

We cannot sufficiently thank God for the blessed week of united prayer, with which Christendom in our days opens every year. As proof of our unity and our faith in the power of united prayer, as a training-school for the enlargement of our hearts to take in all the needs of the Church universal, as a help to united persevering prayer, it is of unspeakable value. But very specially as a stimulus to continued union in prayer in the smaller circles, its blessing has been great. And it will become even greater, as God's people recognise what it is, all to meet as one in the Name of Jesus to have His presence in the midst of a body all united in the Holy Spirit, and boldly to claim the promise that it shall be done of the Father what they agree to ask.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY'

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Blessed Lord! who didst in Thy high-priestly prayer ask so earnestly for the unity of Thy people, teach us how Thou dost invite and urge us to this unity by Thy precious promise given to united prayer. It is when we are one in love and desire that our faith has Thy presence and the Father's answer.

O Father! we pray for Thy people, and for every smaller circle of those who meet together, that they may be one. Remove, we pray, all selfishness and self-interest, all narrowness of heart and estrangement, by which that unity is hindered. Cast out the spirit of the world and the flesh, through which Thy promise loses all its power. O let the though of Thy presence and the Father's favour draw us all nearer to each other.

Grant especially Blessed Lord, that Thy Church may believe that it is by the power of united prayer that she can bind and loose in heaven; that Satan can be cast out; that souls can be saved; that mountains can be removed; that the kingdom can be hastened. And grant, good Lord! that in the circle with which I pray, the prayer of the Church may indeed be the power through which Thy Name and Word are glorified. Amen.

16. SIXTEENTH LESSON – *Persevering Prayer.*

‘Speedily, though bearing long;’

Or, The Power of Persevering Prayer.

‘And He spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint… . And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge saith. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry to Him day and night, and He is long-suffering over them? I say unto you, that He will avenge them speedily.’—LUKE xviii. 108.

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F all the mysteries of the prayer world, the need of persevering prayer is one of the greatest. That the Lord, who is so loving and longing to bless, should have to be supplicated time after time, sometimes year after year, before the answer comes, we cannot easily understand. It is also one of the greatest practical difficulties in the exercise of believing prayer. When, after persevering supplication, our prayer remains unanswered, it is often easiest for our slothful flesh, and it has all the appearance of pious submission, to think that we must now cease praying, because God may have His secret reason for withholding His answer to our request.

It is by faith alone that the difficulty is overcome. When once faith has taken its stand upon God’s word, and the Name of Jesus, and has yielded itself to the leading of the Spirit to seek God’s will and honour alone in its prayer, it need not be discouraged by delay. It knows from Scripture that the power of believing prayer is simply irresistible; real faith can never be disappointed. It knows how, just as water, to exercise the irresistible power it can have, must be gathered up and accumulated, until the stream can come down in full force, there must often be a heaping up of prayer, until God sees that the measure is full, and the answer comes. It knows how, just as the ploughman has to take his ten thousand steps, and sow his ten thousand seeds, each one a part of the preparation for the final harvest, so there is a need-be for oft-repeated persevering prayer, all working out some desired blessing. It knows for certain that not a single believing prayer can fail of its effect in heaven, but has its influence, and is treasured up to work out an answer in due time to him who persevereth to the end. It knows that it has to do not with human thoughts or possibilities, but with the word of the living God. And so even as Abraham through so many years ‘in hope believed against hope,’ and then ‘through faith *and patience* inherited the promise,’ it counts that the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation, *waiting* and *hasting* unto the coming of its Lord to fulfil His promise.

To enable us, when the answer to our prayer does not come at once, to combine quiet patience and joyful confidence in our persevering prayer, we must specially try to understand the two words in which our Lord sets forth the character and conduct, not of the unjust judge, but of our God and Father towards those whom He allows to cry day and night to Him: ‘He is *long-suffering* over them; He will avenge them *speedily*.’

He will avenge them *speedily*, the Master says. The blessing is all prepared; He is not only willing but most anxious to give them what they ask; everlasting love burns with the longing desire to reveal itself fully to its beloved, and to satisfy their needs. God will not delay one moment longer than is absolutely necessary; He will do all in His power to hasten and speed the answer.

But why, if this be true and His power be infinite, does it often last so long with the answer to prayer? And why must God’s own elect so often, in the midst of suffering and conflict, cry day and night? ‘He is *long-suffering* over them.’ ‘Behold! the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being *long-suffering* over it, till it receive the early and the latter rain.’ The husbandman does indeed long for his harvest, but knows that it must have its full time of sunshine and rain, and has long patience. A child so often wants to pick the half-ripe fruit; the husbandman knows to wait till the proper time. Man, in his spiritual nature too, is under the law of gradual growth that reigns in all created life. It is only in the path of development that he can reach his divine destiny. And it is the Father, in whose hands are the times and seasons, who alone knows the moment when the soul or the Church is ripened to that fulness of faith in which it can really take and keep the blessing. As a father who longs to have his only child home from school, and yet waits patiently till the time of training is completed, so it is with God and His children: He is the long-suffering One, and answers speedily.

The insight into this truth leads the believer to cultivate the corresponding dispositions: *patience* and *faith*,

waiting and *hasting*, are the secret of his perseverance. By faith in the promise of God, we know that we *have* the petitions we have asked of Him. Faith takes and holds the answer in the promise, as an unseen spiritual possession, rejoices in it, and praises for it. But there is a difference between the faith that thus holds the word and knows that it has the answer, and the clearer, fuller, riper faith that obtains the promise as a present experience. It is in persevering, not unbelieving, but confident and praising prayer, that the soul grows up into that full union with its Lord in which it can enter upon the possession of the blessing in Him. There may be in these around us, there may be in that great system of being of which we are part, there may be in God's government, things that have to be put right through our prayer, ere the answer can fully come: the faith that has, according to the command, believed that it has received, can allow God to take His time: it knows it has prevailed and must prevail. In quiet, persistent, and determined perseverance it continues in prayer and thanksgiving until the blessing come. And so we see combined what at first sight appears so contradictory; the faith that rejoices in the answer of the unseen God as a present possession, with the patience that cries day and night until it be revealed. The *speedily* of God's *long-suffering* is met by the triumphant but patient faith of His waiting child.

Our great danger in this school of the answer delayed, is the temptation to think that, after all, it may not be God's will to give us what we ask. If our prayer be according to God's word, and under the leading of the Spirit, let us not give way to these fears. Let us learn to give God time. God needs time with us. If we only give Him time, that is, time in the daily fellowship with Himself, for Him to exercise the full influence of His presence on us, and time, day by day, in the course of our being kept waiting, for faith to prove its reality and to fill our whole being, He Himself will lead us from faith to vision; we shall see the glory of God. Let no delay shake our faith. Of faith it holds good: first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. Each believing prayer brings a step nearer the final victory. Each believing prayer helps to ripen the fruit and bring us nearer to it; it fills up the measure of prayer and faith known to God alone; it conquers the hindrances in the unseen world; it hastens the end. Child of God! give the Father time. He is long-suffering over you. He wants the blessing to be rich, and full, and sure; give Him time, while you cry day and night. Only remember the word: 'I say unto you, He will avenge them speedily.'

The blessing of such persevering prayer is unspeakable. There is nothing so heart-searching as the prayer of faith. It teaches you to discover and confess, and give up everything that hinders the coming of the blessing; everything there may be not in accordance with the Father's will. It leads to closer fellowship with Him who alone can teach to pray, to a more entire surrender to draw nigh under no covering but that of the blood, and the Spirit. It calls to a closer and more simple abiding in Christ alone. Christian! give God time. He will perfect that which concerneth you. 'Long-suffering—speedily,' this is God's watchword as you enter the gates of prayer: be it yours too.

Let it be thus whether you pray for yourself, or for others. All labour, bodily or mental, needs time and effort: we must give up *ourselves* to it. Nature discovers her secrets and yields her treasures only to diligent and thoughtful labour. However little we can understand it, in the spiritual husbandry it is the same: the seed we sow in the soil of heaven, the efforts we put forth, and the influence we seek to exert in the world above, need our whole being: we must *give ourselves* to prayer. But let us hold fast the great confidence, that in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

And let us specially learn the lesson as we pray for the Church of Christ. She is indeed as the poor widow, in the absence of her Lord, apparently at the mercy of her adversary, helpless to obtain redress. Let us, when we pray for His Church or any portion of it, under the power of the world, asking Him to visit her with the mighty workings of His Spirit and to prepare her for His coming, let us pray in the assured faith: prayer does help, praying always and not fainting will bring the answer. Only give God time. And then keep crying day and night. 'Hear what the unrighteous judge saith. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry to Him day and night, and *He is long-suffering* over them. I say unto you, *He will avenge them speedily.'*

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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O Lord my God! teach me now to know Thy way, and in faith to apprehend what Thy Beloved Son has taught: 'He will avenge them speedily.' Let Thy tender love, and the delight Thou hast in hearing and blessing Thy children, lead me implicitly to accept Thy promise, that we receive what we believe, that we have the petitions we ask, and that the answer will in due time be seen. Lord! we understand the seasons in nature, and know to wait with patience for the fruit we long for—O fill us with the assurance that not one moment longer than is needed wilt Thou delay, and that faith will hasten the answer.

Blessed Master! Thou hast said that it is a sign of God's elect that they cry day and night. O teach us to

understand this. Thou knowest how speedily we grow faint and weary. It is as if the Divine Majesty is so much beyond the need or the reach of continued supplication, that it does not become us to be too importunate. O Lord! do teach me how real the labour of prayer is. I know how here on earth, when I have failed in an undertaking, I can often succeed by renewed and more continuing effort, by giving more time and thought: show me how, by giving myself more entirely to prayer, to live in prayer, I shall obtain what I ask. And above all, O my blessed Teacher! Author and perfecter of faith, let by Thy grace my whole life be one of faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me—in whom my prayer gains acceptance, in whom I have the assurance of the answer, in whom the answer will be mine. Lord Jesus! in this faith I will pray always and not faint. Amen.

NOTE

The need of persevering importunate prayer appears to some to be at variance with the faith which knows that it has received what it asks (Mark xi. 24). One of the mysteries of the Divine life is the harmony between the gradual and the sudden, immediate full possession, and slow imperfect appropriation. And so here persevering prayer appears to be the school in which the soul is strengthened for the boldness of faith. And with the diversity of operations of the Spirit there may be some in whom faith takes more the form of persistent waiting; while to others, triumphant thanksgiving appears the only proper expressions of the assurance of having been heard.

In a remarkable way the need of persevering prayer, and the gradual rising into greater ease in obtaining answer, is illustrated in the life of Blumhardt. Complaints had been lodged against him of neglecting his work as a minister of the gospel, and devoting himself to the healing of the sick; and especially his unauthorized healing of the sick belonging to other congregations. In his defense he writes: 'I simply ventured to do what becomes one who has the charge of souls, and to pray according to the command of the Lord in James i. 6, 7. In no way did I trust to my own power, or imagine that I had any gift that others had not. But this is true, I set myself to the work as a minister of the gospel, who has a right to pray. But I speedily discovered that the gates of heaven were not fully opened to me. Often I was inclined to retire in despair. But the sight of the sick ones, who could find help nowhere, gave me no rest. I thought of the word of the Lord: "Ask, and it shall be given you" (Luke xi. 9, 10). And farther, I thought that if the Church and her ministers had, through unbelief, sloth, and disobedience lost what was needed for overcoming of the power of Satan, it was just for such times of leanness and famine that the Lord had spoken the parable of the friend at midnight and his three loaves. I felt that I was not worthy thus at midnight, in a time of great darkness, to appear before God as His friend and ask for a member of my congregation what he needed. And yet, to leave him uncared for, I could not either. And so I kept knocking, as the parable directs, or, as some have said, with great presumption and tempting God. Be this as it may, I could not leave my guest unprovided. At this time the parable of the widow became very precious to me. I saw that the Church was the widow, and I was a minister of the Church. I had the right to be her mouthpiece against the adversary; but for a long time the Lord would not. I asked nothing more than the three loaves; what I needed for my guest. At last the Lord listened to the importunate beggar, and helped me. Was it wrong of me to pray thus? The two parables must surely be applicable somewhere, and where was greater need to be conceived?

And what was the fruit of my prayer? The friend who was at first unwilling, did not say, Go now; I will myself give to your friend what he needs; I do not require you; but gave it to me as His friend, to give to my guest. And so I used the three loaves, and had to spare. But the supply was small, and new guests came; because they saw I had a heart to help them, and that I would take the trouble even at midnight to go to my friend. When I asked for them, too, I got the needful again, and there was again to spare. How could I help that the needy continually came to my house? Was I to harden myself, and say, What do you come to me? there are large and better homes in the city, go there. Their answer was, Dear sir, we cannot go there. We have been there: they were very sorry to send us away so hungry, but they could not undertake to go and ask a friend for what we wanted. Do go, and get us bread for we suffer great pain. What could I do? They spoke the truth, and their suffering touched my heart. However much labour it cost me, I went each time again, and got the three loaves. Often I got what I asked much quicker than at first, and also much more abundantly. But all did not care for this bread, so some left my home hungry.'[1]

In his first struggles with the evil spirits, it took him more than eighteen months of prayer and labour before the final victory was gained. Afterwards he had such ease of access to the throne, and stood in such close communication with the unseen world, that often, with letters came asking prayer for sick people, he could, after just looking upward for a single moment, obtain the answer as to whether they would be healed.

[1]From *Johann Christophe Blumhardt, Ein Lebenabild von F. Etindel.*

17. SEVENTEENTH LESSON – *Prayer in harmony with God.*

'I know that Thou hearest me always;'

Or Prayer in harmony with the being of God.

'Father, I thank Thee that Thou heardest me. And I knew that Thou hearest me always.'—JOHN xi. 41, 42.

'Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of me, and I shall give Thee.'—PS. ii. 7, 8.

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N the New Testament we find a distinction made between faith and knowledge. 'To one is given, through the Spirit, the word of *wisdom*; to another the word of *knowledge*, according to the same Spirit; to another *faith*, in the same Spirit.' In a child or a simple-minded Christian there may be much faith with little knowledge. Childlike simplicity accepts the truth without difficulty, and often cares little to give itself or others any reason for its faith but this: God has said. But it is the will of God that we should love and serve Him, not only with all the heart but also with all the mind; that we should grow up into an insight into the Divine wisdom and beauty of all His ways and words and works. It is only thus that the believer will be able fully to approach and rightly to adore the glory of God's grace; and only thus that our heart can intelligently apprehend the treasures of wisdom and knowledge there are in redemption, and be prepared to enter fully into the highest note of the song that rises before the throne: 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!'

In our prayer life this truth has its full application. While prayer and faith are so simple that the new-born convert can pray with power, true Christian science finds in the doctrine of prayer some of its deepest problems. In how far is the power of prayer a reality? If so, how God can grant to prayer such mighty power? How can the action of prayer be harmonized with the will and the decrees of God? How can God's sovereignty and our will, God's liberty and ours, be reconciled?—these and other like questions are fit subjects for Christian meditation and inquiry. The more earnestly and reverently we approach such mysteries, the more shall we in adoring wonder fall down to praise Him who hath in prayer given such power to man.

One of the secret difficulties with regard to prayer,—one which, though not expressed, does often really hinder prayer,—is derived from the perfection of God, in His absolute independence of all that is outside of Himself. Is He not the Infinite Being, who owes what He is to Himself alone, who determines Himself, and whose wise and holy will has determined all that is to be? How can prayer influence Him, or He be moved by prayer to do what otherwise would not be done? Is not the promise of an answer to prayer simply a condescension to our weakness? Is what is said of the power—the much-availing power—of prayer anything more than an accommodation to our mode of thought, because the Deity never can be dependent on any action from without for its doings? And is not the blessing of prayer simply the influence it exercises upon ourselves?

In seeking an answer to such questions, we find the key in the very being of God, in the mystery of the Holy Trinity. If God was only one Person, shut up within Himself, there could be no thought of nearness to Him or influence on Him. But in God there are three Persons. In God we have Father and Son, who have in the Holy Spirit their living bond of unity and fellowship. When eternal Love begat the Son, and the Father gave the Son as the Second Person a place next Himself as His Equal and His Counsellor, there was a way opened for prayer and its influence in the very inmost life of Deity itself. Just as on earth, so in heaven the whole relation between Father and Son is that of giving and taking. And if that taking is to be as voluntary and self-determined as the giving, there must be on the part of the Son an asking and receiving. In the holy fellowship of the Divine Persons, this asking of the Son was one of the great operations of the Thrice Blessed Life of God. Hence we have it in Psalm ii.: 'This day I have begotten Thee: ask of me and I will give Thee.' The Father gave the Son the place and the power to act upon Him. The asking of the Son was no mere show or shadow, but one of those life-movements in which the love of the Father and the Son met and completed each other. The Father had determined that He should not be alone in His counsels: there was a Son on whose asking and accepting their fulfilment should depend. And so there was in the very Being and Life of God an asking of which prayer on earth was to be the reflection and the outflow. It was not without including this that Jesus said, "I knew that Thou always hearest me.' Just as the Sonship of Jesus on earth may not be separated from His Sonship in heaven, even so with His prayer on earth, it is the continuation and the counterpart of His asking in heaven. The prayer of the man Christ Jesus is the link between the eternal asking of the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father and the prayer of men upon earth. Prayer has its rise and its deepest source in the very Being of God. In the bosom of Deity nothing is ever done without prayer—the asking of the Son and the giving of the Father.[1]

This may help us somewhat to understand how the prayer of man, coming through the Son, can have effect upon God. The decrees of God are not decisions made by Him without reference to the Son, or His petition, or the petition to be sent up through Him. By no means. The Lord Jesus is the first-begotten, the Head and Heir of all things: all things were created *through Him* and *unto Him*, and all things consist *in Him*. In the counsels of the Father, the Son, as Representative of all creation, had always a voice; in the decrees of the eternal purpose there was always room left for the liberty of the Son as Mediator and Intercessor, and so for the petitions of all who draw nigh to the Father in the Son.

And if the thought come that this liberty and power of the Son to act upon the Father is at variance with the immutability of the Divine decrees, let us not forget that there is not with God as with man, a past by which He is irrevocably bound. God does not live in time with its past and future; the distinctions of time have no reference to Him who inhabits Eternity. And Eternity is an ever-present Now, in which the past is never past, and the future always present. To meet our human weakness, Scripture must speak of past decrees, and a coming future. In reality, the immutability of God's counsel is ever still in perfect harmony with His liberty to do whatsoever He will. Not so were the prayers of the Son and His people taken up into the eternal decrees that their effect should only be an apparent one; but so, that the Father-heart holds itself open and free to listen to every prayer that rises through the Son, and that God does indeed allow Himself to be decided by prayer to do what He otherwise would not have done.

This perfect harmony and union of Divine Sovereignty and human liberty is to us an unfathomable mystery, because God as THE ETERNAL ONE transcends all our thoughts. But let it be our comfort and strength to be assured that in the eternal fellowship of the Father and the Son, the power of prayer has its origin and certainty, and that through our union with the Son, our prayer is taken up and can have its influence in the inner life of the Blessed Trinity. God's decrees are no iron framework against which man's liberty would vainly seek to struggle. No. God Himself is the Living Love, who in His Son as man has entered into the tenderest relation with all that is human, who through the Holy Spirit takes up all that is human into the Divine life of love, and keeps Himself free to give every human prayer its place in His government of the world.

It is in the daybreak light of such thoughts that the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity no longer is an abstract speculation, but the living manifestation of the way in which it were possible for man to be taken up into the fellowship of God, and his prayer to become a real factor in God's rule of this earth. And we can, as in the distance, catch glimpses of the light that from the eternal world shines out on words such as these: 'THROUGH HIM we have access BY ONE SPIRIT unto THE FATHER.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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Everlasting God! the Three-One and Thrice Holy! in deep reverence would I with veiled face worship before the holy mystery of Thy Divine Being. And if it please Thee, O most glorious God, to unveil aught of that mystery, I would bow with fear and trembling, lest I sin against Thee, as I meditate on Thy glory.

Father! I thank Thee that Thou bearest this name not only as the Father of Thy children here on earth, but as having from eternity subsisted as the Father with Thine only-begotten Son. I thank Thee that as Father Thou canst hear our prayer, because Thou hast from eternity given a place in Thy counsels to the asking of Thy Son. I thank Thee that we have seen in Him on earth, what the blessed intercourse was He had with Thee in heaven; and how from eternity in all Thy counsels and decrees there had been room left for His prayer and their answers. And I thank Thee above all that through His true human nature on Thy throne above, and through Thy Holy Spirit in our human nature here below, a way has been opened up by which every human cry of need can be taken up into and touch the Life and the Love of God, and receive in answer whatsoever it shall ask.

Blessed Jesus! in whom as the Son the path of prayer has been opened up, and who givest us assurance of the answer, we beseech Thee, teach Thy people to pray. O let this each day be the sign of our sonship, that, like Thee, we know that the Father heareth us always. Amen.

NOTE.

"*God hears prayer*." This simplest view of prayer is taken throughout Scripture. It dwells not on the reflex influence of prayer on our heart and life, although it abundantly shows the connection between prayer as an act, and prayer as a state. It rather fixes with great definiteness the objective or real purposes of prayer, to obtain blessing, gifts, deliverances from God. 'Ask and it shall be given," Jesus says.

'However true and valuable the reflection may be, that God, foreseeing and foreordaining all things, has also foreseen and foreordained our prayers as links in the chain of events, of cause and effect, as a real power, yet we feel convinced that this is not the light in which the mind can find peace in this great subject, nor do we think that here is the attractive power to draw us in prayer. We feel rather that such a reflection *diverts* the attention from the Object whence comes the impulse, life, and strength of prayer. The living God, *cotemporary and not merely eternal*,[1] the living, merciful, holy One, God manifesting Himself to the soul, God saying, "Seek my face;" this is the magnet that draws us, this alone can open heart and lips…

'In Jesus Christ the Son of God we have the full solution of the difficulty. He prayed on earth, and that not merely as man, but as the Son of God incarnate. His prayer on earth is only the manifestation of His prayer from all eternity, when in the Divine counsel He was set up as the Christ… . The Son was appointed to be heir of all things. From all eternity the Son of God was the Way, the Mediator. He was, to use our imperfect language, from eternity speaking unto the Father on behalf of the world.'—SAPHIR, *The Hidden Life*, chap. vi. See also *The Lord's Prayer*, p. 12.

[1]Should it not rather be *cotemporary, because eternal,* in the proper meaning of this latter word?

18. EIGHTEENTH LESSON – *Whose is this image?*

'Whose is this image?'

Or, Prayer in Harmony with the Destiny of Man.

'He saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?—MATT. xxi. 20.

‘And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.’—GEN. i. 26.

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HOSE is this image?’ It was by this question that Jesus foiled His enemies, when they thought to take Him, and settled the matter of duty in regard to the tribute. The question and the principle it involves are of universal application. Nowhere more truly than in man himself. The image he bears decides his destiny. Bearing God’s image, he belongs to God: prayer to God is what he was created for. Prayer is part of the wondrous likeness he bears to His Divine original; of the deep mystery of the fellowship of love in which the Three-One has His blessedness, prayer is the earthly image and likeness.

The more we meditate on what prayer is, and the wonderful power with God which it has, the more we feel constrained to ask who and what man is, that such a place in God’s counsels should have been allotted to him. Sin has so degraded him, that from what he is now we can form no conception of what he was meant to be. We must turn back to God’s own record of man’s creation to discover there what God’s purpose was, and what the capacities with which man was endowed for the fulfilment of that purpose.

Man’s destiny appears clearly from God’s language at creation. It was to *fill*, to *subdue*, to *have dominion* over the earth and all in it. All the three expressions show us that man was meant, as God’s representative, to hold rule here on earth. As God’s viceroy he was to fill God’s place: himself subject to God, he was to keep all else in subjection to Him. It was the will of God that all that was to be done on earth should be done through him: the history of the earth was to be entirely in his hands.

In accordance with such a destiny was the position he was to occupy, and the power at his disposal. When an earthly sovereign sends a viceroy to a distant province, it is understood that he advises as to the policy to be adopted, and that that advice is acted on: that he is at liberty to apply for troops and the other means needed for carrying out the policy or maintaining the dignity of the empire. If his policy be not approved of, he is recalled to make way for some one who better understands his sovereign’s desires’ as long as he is trusted, his advice is carried out. As God’s representative man was to have ruled; all was to have been done under his will and rule; on his advice and at his request heaven was to have bestowed its blessing on earth. His prayer was to have been the wonderful, though simple and most natural channel, in which the intercourse between the King in heaven and His faithful servant man, as lord of this world, was to have been maintained. The destinies of the world were given into the power of the wishes, the will, the prayer of man.

With sin all this underwent a terrible change—man’s fall brought all creation under the curse. With redemption the beginning was seen of a glorious restoration. No sooner had God begun in Abraham to form for Himself a people from whom kings, yea the Great King, should come forth, than we see what power the prayer of God’s faithful servant has to decide the destinies of those who come into contact with him. In Abraham we see how prayer is not only, or even chiefly, the means of obtaining blessing for ourselves, but is the exercise of his royal prerogative to influence the destinies of men, and the will of God which rules them. We do not once find Abraham praying for himself. His prayer for Sodom and Lot, for Abimelech, for Ishmael, prove what power a man, who is God’s friend, has to make the history of those around him.

This had been man’s destiny from the first. Scripture not only tells us this, but also teaches us how it was that God could entrust man with such a high calling. It was because He had created him *in His own image and likeness*. The external rule was not committed to him without the inner fitness: the bearing God’s image in having dominion, in being lord of all, had its root in the inner likeness, in his nature. There was an inner agreement and harmony between God and man, and incipient Godlikeness, which gave man a real fitness for being the mediator between God and His world, for he was to be prophet, priest, and king, to interpret God’s will, to represent nature’s needs, to receive and dispense God’s bounty. It was in bearing God’s image that he could bear God’s rule; he was indeed so like God, so capable of entering into God’s purposes, and carrying out His plans, that God could trust him with the wonderful privilege of asking and obtaining what the world might need. And although sin has for a time frustrated God’s plans, prayer still remains what it would have been if man had never fallen: the proof of man’s Godlikeness, the vehicle of his intercourse with the Infinite Unseen One, the power that is allowed to hold the hand that holds the destinies of the universe. Prayer is not merely the cry of the suppliant for mercy; it is the highest forth-putting of his will by man, knowing himself to be of Divine origin, created for and capable of being, in king-like liberty, the executor of the counsels of the Eternal.

What sin destroyed, grace has restored. What the first Adam lost, the second has won back. In Christ man regains his original position, and the Church, abiding in Christ, inherits the promise: 'Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' Such a promise does by no means, in the first place, refer to the grace or blessing we need for ourselves. It has reference to our position as the fruit-bearing branches of the Heavenly Vine, who, like Him, only live for the work and glory of the Father. It is for those who abide in Him, who have forsaken self to take up their abode in Him with His life of obedience and self-sacrifice, who have lost their life and found it in Him, who are now entirely given up to the interests of the Father and His kingdom. These are they who understand how their new creation has brought them back to their original destiny, has restored God's image and likeness, and with it the power to have dominion. Such have indeed the power, each in their own circle, to obtain and dispense the powers of heaven here on earth. With holy boldness they may make known what they will: they live as priests in God's presence; as kings the powers of the world to come begin to be at their disposal.[1] They enter upon the fulfilment of the promise: 'Ask whatsoever ye will, it shall be done unto you.'

Church of the living God! thy calling is higher and holier than thou knowest. Through thy members, as kings, and priests unto God, would God rule the world; their prayers bestow and withhold the blessing of heaven. In His elect who are not just content to be themselves saved, but yield themselves wholly, that through them, even as through the Son, the Father may fulfil all His glorious counsel, in these His elect, who cry day and night unto Him, God would prove how wonderful man's original destiny was. As the image-bearer of God on earth, the earth was indeed given into his hand. When he fell, all fell with him: the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together. But now he is redeemed; the restoration of the original dignity has begun. It is in very deed God's purpose that the fulfilment of His eternal purpose, and the coming of His kingdom, should depend on those of His people who, abiding in Christ, are ready to take up their position in Him their Head, the great Priest-King, and in their prayers are bold enough to say what they will that their God should do. As image-bearer and representative of God on earth, redeemed man has by his prayers to determine the history of this earth. Man was created, and has now again been redeemed, to pray, and by his prayer to have dominion.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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Lord! what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? for Thou has made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the work of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things under his feet. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!

Lord God! how low has sin made man to sink. And how terribly has it darkened his mind, that he does not even know his Divine destiny, to be Thy servant and representative. Alas! that even Thy people, when their eyes are opened, are so little ready to accept their calling and to seek to have power with God, that they may have power with men too to bless them.

Lord Jesus! it is in Thee the Father hath again crowned man with glory and honour, and opened the way for us to be what He would have us. O Lord, have mercy on Thy people, and visit Thine heritage! Work mightily in Thy Church, and teach Thy believing disciples to go forth in their royal priesthood, and in the power of prayer, to which Thou hast given such wonderful promises, to serve Thy kingdom, to have rule over the nations, and make the name of God glorious in the earth. Amen.

[1]'God is seeking priests among the sons of men. A human priesthood is one of the essential parts of His eternal plan. To *rule* creation by man is His design; to carry on the worship of creation by man is no less part of His design.

'Priesthood is the appointed link between heaven and earth, the channel of intercourse between the sinner and God. Such a priesthood, in so far as expiation is concerned, is in the hands of the Son of God alone; in so far as it is to be the medium of communication between Creator and creature, is also in the hands of redeemed men—of the Church of God.

'God is seeking kings. Not out of the ranks of angels. Fallen man must furnish Him with the rulers of His universe. Human hands must wield the sceptre, human heads must wear the crown.—*The Rent Veil*, by Dr. H. Bonar.

19. NINTEENTH LESSON – *I go unto the Father.*

‘I go unto the Father!’

Or, Power for Praying and Working.

‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do.’—JOHN xiv. 12, 13.

AS the Saviour opened His public ministry with His disciples by the Sermon on the Mount, so He closes it by the Parting Address preserved to us by John. In both He speaks more than once of prayer. But with a difference. In the Sermon on the Mount it is as to disciples who have only just entered His school, who scarcely know that God is their Father, and whose prayer chiefly has reference to their personal needs. In His closing address He speaks to disciples whose training time is now come to an end, and who are ready as His messengers to take His place and His work. In the former the chief lesson is: Be childlike, pray believingly, and trust the Father that He will give you all good gifts. Here He points to something higher: They are now His friends to whom He has made known all that He has heard of the Father; His messengers, who have entered into His plans, and into whose hands the care of His work and kingdom on earth is to be entrusted. They are now to go out and do His works, and in the power of His approaching exaltation, even greater works: prayer is now to be the channel through which that power is to be received for their work. With Christ’s ascension to the Father a new epoch commences for their working and praying both.

See how clearly this connection comes out in our text. As His body here on earth, as those who are one with Him in heaven, they are now to do greater works than He had done; their success and their victories are to be greater than His. He mentions two reasons for this. The one, because He was to go to the Father, to receive all power; the other, because they might now ask and expect all in His Name. ‘Because I go to the Father, *and*—notice this and—*and*, whatsoever ye shall ask, I will do.’ His going to the Father would thus bring the double blessing: they would ask and receive all in His Name, and as a consequence, would do the greater works. This first mention of prayer in our Saviour’s parting words thus teaches us two most important lessons. He that would do the works of Jesus *must pray* in His Name. He that would pray in His Name *must work* in His Name.

He who would work *must pray*: it is in prayer that the power for work is obtained. He that in faith would do the works that Jesus did, must pray in His Name. As long as Jesus was here on earth, He Himself did the greatest works: devils the disciples could not cast out, fled at His word. When He went to the Father, He was no longer here in the body to work directly. The disciples were now His body: all His work from the throne in

heaven here on earth must and could be done through them. One might have thought that now He was leaving the scene Himself, and could only work through commissioners, the works might be fewer and weaker. He assures us of the contrary: *Verily, verily*, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and he shall do greater works.' His approaching death was to be such a real breaking down and making an end of the power of sin; with the resurrection the powers of the Eternal Life were so truly to take possession of the human body and to obtain supremacy over human life; with His ascension He was to receive the power to communicate the Holy Spirit so fully to His own; the union, the oneness between Himself on the throne and them on earth, was to be so intensely and divinely perfect, that He meant it as the literal truth: 'Greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father.' And the issue proved how true it was. While Jesus, during three years of personal labour on earth, gathered little more than five hundred disciples, and the most of them so feeble that they were but little credit to His cause, it was given to men like Peter and Paul manifestly to do greater things than He had done. From the throne He could do through them what He Himself in His humiliation could not yet do.

But there is one condition: 'He that believeth on me, he shall do greater works, because I go to the Father; *and whatsover ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do.*' His going to the Father would give Him a new power to hear prayer. For the doing of the greater works, two things were needed: His going to the Father to receive all power, our prayer in His Name to receive all power from Him again. As He asks the Father, He receives and bestows on us the power of the new dispensation for the greater works; as we believe, and ask in His Name, the power comes and takes possession of us to do the greater works.

Alas! how much working there is in the work of God, in which there is little or nothing to be seen of the power to do anything like Christ's works, not to speak of greater works. There can be but one reason: the believing on Him, the believing prayer in His Name, this is so much wanting. O that every labourer and leader in church, or school, in the work of home philanthropy or foreign missions might learn the lesson: Prayer in the Name of Jesus is the way to share in the mighty power which Jesus has received of the Father for His people, and it is in this power alone that he that believeth can do the greater works. To every complaint as to weakness or unfitness, as to difficulties or want of success, Jesus gives this one answer: '*He that believeth* on me shall do greater works, because I go to the Father, and *whatsoever ye shall ask* in my Name, *that will I do.*' We must understand that the first and chief thing for everyone who would do the work of Jesus, is to believe, and so to get linked to Him, the Almighty One, and then to pray the prayer of faith in His Name. Without this our work is but human and carnal; it may have some use in restraining sin, or preparing the way for blessing, but the real power is wanting. Effectual working needs first effectual prayer.

And now the second lesson: He who would pray *must work.* It is for power to work that prayer has such great promises: it is in working that the power for the effectual prayer of faith will be gained. In these parting words of our blessed Lord we find that He no less than six times (John xiv. 13, 14, xv. 7, 16, xvi. 23, 24) repeats those unlimited prayer-promises which have so often awakened our anxious questionings as to their real meaning: '*whatsoever,*' '*anything,*' '*what ye will,*' '*ask and ye shall receive.*' How many a believer has read these over with joy and hope, and in deep earnestness of soul has sought to plead them for his own need. And he has come out disappointed. The simple reason was this: he had rent away the promise from its surrounding. The Lord gave the

wonderful promise of the free use of His Name with the Father in connection with the *doing of His works*. It is the disciple who gives himself wholly to live for Jesus' work and kingdom, for His will and honour, to whom the power will come to appropriate the promise. He that would fain grasp the promise when he wants something very special for himself, will be disappointed, because he would make Jesus the servant of his own comfort. But to him who seeks to pray the effectual prayer of faith, because he needs it for the work of the Master, to him it will be given to learn it; because he has made himself the servant of his Lord's interests. Prayer not only teaches and strengthens to work: work teaches and strengthens to pray.

This is in perfect harmony with what holds good both in the natural and the spiritual world. Whosoever hath, to him shall be given; or, He that is faithful in a little, is faithful also in much. Let us with the small measure of grace already received, give ourselves to the Master for His work: work will be to us a real school of prayer. It was when Moses had to take full charge of a rebellious people that he felt the need, but also the courage, to speak boldly to God and to ask great things of Him (Ex. xxxiii. 12, 15, 18). As you give yourself entirely to God for His work, you will feel that nothing less than these great promises are what you need, that nothing less is what you may most confidently expect.

Believer in Jesus! You are called, you are appointed, to do the works of Jesus, and even greater works, because He has gone to the Father to receive the power to do them in and through you.

Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that *will I do*. Give yourself, and live, to do the works of Christ and you will learn to pray so as to obtain wonderful answers to prayer. Give yourself, and live, to pray and you will learn to do the works He did, and greater works. With disciples full of faith in Himself, and bold in prayer to ask great things, Christ can conquer the world.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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O my Lord! I have this day again heard words from Thee which pass my comprehension. And yet I cannot do aught but in simple childlike faith take and keep them as Thy gift to me too. Thou hast said that in virtue of Thy going to the Father, he that believeth on Thee will do the works which Thou hast done, and greater works. Lord! I worship Thee as the Glorified One, and look for the fulfilment of Thy promise. May my whole life just be one of continued believing in Thee. So purify and sanctify my heart, make it so tenderly susceptible of Thyself and Thy love, that believing on Thee may be the very life it breathes.

And Thou hast said that in virtue of Thy going to the Father, whatsoever we ask, Thou wilt do. From Thy throne of power Thou wouldest make Thy people share the power given Thee, and work through them as the members of Thy body, in response to their believing prayers in Thy Name. Power in prayer with Thee, and power in work with men, is what Thou has promised Thy people and me too.

Blessed Lord! Forgive us all that we have so little believed Thee and Thy promise, and so little proved Thy faithfulness in fulfilling it. O forgive us that we have so little honoured Thy all-prevailing Name in heaven or upon earth.

Lord! Teach me to pray so that I may prove that Thy Name is indeed all-prevailing with God and men and devils. Yea, teach me so to work and so to pray that Thou canst glorify Thyself in me as the Omnipotent One, and do Thy great work through me too. Amen.

20. TWENTIETH LESSON – That the Father be glorified.

'That the Father may be glorified;'

Or, The Chief End of Prayer.

I go unto the Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.'—JOHN xiv. 13.

*T*HAT *the Father may be glorified in the Son*: it is to this end that Jesus on His throne in glory will do all we ask in His Name. Every answer to prayer He gives will have this as its object: when there is no prospect of this object being obtained, He will not answer. It follows as a matter of course that this must be with us, as with Jesus, the essential element in our petitions: the glory of the Father must be the aim and end, the very soul and life of our prayer.

It was so with Jesus when He was on earth. 'I seek not mine own honour: I seek the honour of Him that sent me;' in such words we have the keynote of His life. In the first words of the high-priestly prayer He gives utterance to it: Father! Glorify Thy son, *that Thy Son may glorify Thee. 'I have glorified Thee* on earth; glorify me with Thyself.' The ground on which He asks to be taken up into the glory He had with the Father, is the twofold one: He has glorified Him on earth; He will still glorify Him in heaven. What He asks is only to enable Him to glorify the Father more. It is as we enter into sympathy with Jesus on this point, and gratify Him by making the Father's glory our chief object in prayer too, that our prayer cannot fail of an answer. There is nothing of which the Beloved Son has said more distinctly that it will glorify the Father than this, His doing what we ask; He will not, therefore, let any opportunity slip of securing this object. Let us make His aim ours: let the glory of the Father be the link between our asking and His

doing: such prayer must prevail.[1]

This word of Jesus comes indeed as a sharp two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. Jesus in His prayers on earth, in His intercession in heaven, in His promise of an answer to our prayers from there, makes this His first object—the glory of His Father. Is it so with us too? Or are not, in large measure, self-interest and self-will the strongest motives urging us to pray? Or, if we cannot see that this is the case, have we not to acknowledge that the distinct, conscious longing for the glory of the Father is not what animates our prayers? And yet it must be so.

Not as if the believer does not at times desire it. But he has to mourn that he has so little attained. And he knows the reason of his failure too. It was, because the separation between the spirit of daily life and the spirit of the hour of prayer was too wide. We begin to see that the desire for the glory of the Father is not something that we can awake and present to our Lord when we prepare ourselves to pray. No! it is only when the whole life, in all its parts, is given up to God's glory, that we can really pray to His glory too. '*Do all* to the glory of God,' and, '*Ask all* to the glory of God,'—these twin commands are inseparable: obedience to the former is the secret of grace for the latter. A life to the glory of God is the condition of the prayers that Jesus can answer, 'that the Father may be glorified.'

This demand in connection with prevailing prayer—that it should be to the glory of God—is no more than right and natural. There is none glorious but the Lord: there is no glory but His, and what He layeth on His creatures. Creation exists to show forth His glory; all that is not for His glory is sin, and darkness, and death: it is only in the glorifying of God that the creatures can find glory. What the Son of Man did, to give Himself wholly, His whole life, to glorify the Father, is nothing but the simple duty of every redeemed one. And Christ's reward will be his too. Because He gave Himself so entirely to the glory of the Father, the Father crowned Him with glory and honour, giving the kingdom into His hands, with the power to ask what He will, and, as Intercessor, to answer our prayers. And just as we become one with Christ in this, and as our prayer is part of a life utterly surrendered to God's glory, will the Saviour be able to glorify the Father to us by the fulfilment of the promise: 'Whatsoever ye shall ask, *I will do it.*'

To such a life, with God's glory our only aim, we cannot attain by any effort of our own. It is only in the man Christ Jesus that such a life is to be seen: in Him it is to be found for us. Yes blessed be God! His life is our life; He gave *Himself* for us; He Himself is now our life. The discovery, and the confession, and the denial, of self, as usurping the place of God, of self-seeking and self-trusting, is essential, and yet is what we cannot accomplish in our own strength. It is the incoming and indwelling, the Presence and the Rule in the heart, of our Lord Jesus who glorified the Father on earth, and is now glorified with Him, that thence He might glorify Him in us;—it is Jesus Himself coming in, who can cast out all self-glorifying, and give us instead His own God-glorifying life and Spirit. It is Jesus, who longs to glorify the Father in hearing our prayers, who will teach us to live and to pray to the glory of God.

And what motive, what power is there that can urge our slothful hearts to yield themselves to our Lord to work this in us? Surely nothing more is needed than a sight of

how glorious, how alone worthy of glory the Father is. Let our faith learn in adoring worship to bow before Him, to ascribe to Him alone the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, to yield ourselves to dwell in His light as the ever-blessed, ever-loving One. Surely we shall be stirred to say, 'To Him alone be glory.' And we shall look to our Lord Jesus with new intensity of desire for a life that refuses to see or seek ought but the glory of God. When there is but little prayer that can be answered, the Father is not glorified. It is a duty, for the glory of God, to live and pray so that our prayer can be answered. For the sake of God's glory, let us learn to pray well.

What a humbling thought that so often there is earnest prayer for a child or a friend, for a work or a circle, in which the thought of our joy or our pleasure was far stronger than any yearnings for God's glory. No wonder that there are so many unanswered prayers: here we have the secret. God would not be glorified when that glory was not our object. He that would pray the prayer of faith, will have to give himself to live literally so that the Father in all things may be glorified in him. This must be his aim: without this there cannot be the prayer of faith. 'How can ye believe,' said Jesus, 'which receive glory of one another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?' All seeking of our own glory with men makes faith impossible: it is the deep, intense self-sacrifice that gives up its own glory, and seeks the glory of God alone, that wakens in the soul that spiritual susceptibility of the Divine, which is faith. The surrender to God to seek His glory, and the expectation that He will show His glory in hearing us, are one at root: He that seeks God's glory will see it in the answer to his prayer, and he alone.

And how, we ask again, shall we attain to it? Let us begin with confession. How little has the glory of God been an all-absorbing passion; how little our lives and our prayers have been full of it. How little have we lived in the likeness of the Son, and in sympathy with Him—for God and His glory alone. Let us take time, until the Holy Spirit discover it to us, and we see how wanting we have been in this. True knowledge and confession of sin are the sure path to deliverance.

And then let us look to Jesus. In Him we can see by what death we can glorify God. In death He glorified Him; through death He was glorified with Him. It is by dying, being dead to self and living to God, that we can glorify Him. And this—this death to self, this life to the glory of God—is what Jesus gives and lives in each one who can trust Him for it. Let nothing less than these—the desire, the decision to live only for the glory of the Father, even as Christ did; the acceptance of Him with His life and strength working it in us; the joyful assurance that we can live to the glory of God, because Christ lives in us;—let this be the spirit of our daily life. Jesus stands surety for our living thus; the Holy Spirit is given, and waiting to make it our experience, if we will only trust and let Him; O let us not hold back through unbelief, but confidently take as our watchword—All to the glory of God! The Father accepts the will, the sacrifice is well-pleasing; the Holy Spirit will seal us within with the consciousness, we are living for God and His glory.

And then what quiet peace and power there will be in our prayers, as we know ourselves through His grace, in perfect harmony with Him who says to us, when He promises to do what we ask: 'That the Father may be glorified in the Son.' With our whole being consciously yielded to the inspiration of the Word and Spirit, our desires will be no longer ours but His; their chief end the glory of God. With increasing liberty we

shall be able in prayer to say: Father! Thou knowest, we ask it only for Thy glory. And the condition of prayer-answers, instead of being as a mountain we cannot climb, will only give us the greater confidence that we shall be heard, because we have seen that prayer has no higher beauty or blessedness than this, that it glorifies the Father. And the precious privilege of prayer will become doubly precious because it brings us into perfect unison with the Beloved Son in the wonderful partnership He proposes: '*You ask*, and *I do*, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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Blessed Lord Jesus! I come again to Thee. Every lesson Thou givest me convinces me more deeply how little I know to pray aright. But every lesson also inspires me with hope that Thou art going to teach me, that Thou art teaching me not only to know what prayer should be, but actually to pray as I ought. O my Lord! I look with courage to Thee, the Great Intercessor, who didst pray and dost hear prayer, only that the Father may be glorified, to teach me too to live and to pray to the glory of God.

Saviour! To this end I yield myself to Thee again. I would be nothing. I have given self, as already crucified with Thee, to the death. Through the Spirit its workings are mortified and made dead; Thy life and Thy love of the Father are taking possession of me. A new longing begins to fill my soul, that every day, every hour, that in every prayer the glory of the Father may be everything to me. O my Lord! I am in Thy school to learn this: teach Thou it me.

And do Thou, the God of glory, the Father of glory, my God and my Father, accept the desire of a child who has seen that Thy glory is indeed alone worth living for. O Lord! Show me Thy glory. Let it overshadow me. Let it fill the temple of my heart. Let me dwell in it as revealed in Christ. And do Thou Thyself fulfil in me Thine own good pleasure, that Thy child should find his glory in seeking the glory of his Father. Amen.

[1]See in the note on George Muller, at the close of this volume, how he was led to make God's glory his first object.

21. TWENTY-FIRST LESSON – *If ye abide in me.*

'If ye abide in me;'

Or The All-Inclusive Condition.

‘If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.’—JOHN xv. 7.

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N all God’s intercourse with us, the promise and its conditions are inseparable. If we fulfil the conditions, He fulfils the promise. What He is to be to us depends upon what we are willing to be to Him. ‘Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.’ And so in prayer the unlimited promise, *Ask whatsoever ye will*, has its one simple and natural condition, *if ye abide in me*. It is Christ whom the Father always hears; God is *in Christ*, and can only be reached by being in Him; to be IN HIM is the way to have our prayer heard; fully and wholly ABIDING IN HIM, we have the right to ask whatsoever we will, and the promise that it shall be done unto us.

When we compare this promise with the experiences of most believers, we are startled by a terrible discrepancy. Who can number up the countless prayers that rise and bring no answer? The cause must be either that we do not fulfil the condition, or God does not fulfil the promise. Believers are not willing to admit either, and therefore have devised a way of escape from the dilemma. They put into the promise the qualifying clause our Saviour did not put there—if it be God’s will; and so maintain both God’s integrity and their own. O if they did but accept it and hold it fast as it stands, trusting to Christ to vindicate His truth, how God’s Spirit would lead them to see the Divine propriety of such a promise to those who really abide in Christ in the sense in which He means it, and to confess that the failure in the fulfilling the condition is the one sufficient explanation of unanswered prayer. And how the Holy Spirit would then make our feebleness in prayer one of the mightiest motives to urge us on to discover the secret, and obtain the blessing, of full abiding in Christ.

‘*If ye abide in me.’* As a Christian grows in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, he is often surprised to find how the words of God grow too, in the new and deeper meaning with which they come to him. He can look back to the day when some word of God was opened up to him and he rejoiced in the blessing he had found in it. After a time some deeper experience gave it a new meaning, and it was as if he never had seen what it contained. And yet once again, as he advanced in the Christian life, the same word stood before him again as a great mystery, until anew the Holy Spirit led him still deeper into its Divine fulness. One of these ever-growing, never-exhausted words, opening up to us step by step the fulness of the Divine life, is the Master’s precious ‘Abide in me.’ As the union of the branch with the vine is one of growth, never-ceasing growth and increase, so our abiding in Christ is a life process in which the Divine life takes ever fuller and more complete possession of us. The young and feeble believer may be really abiding in Christ up to the measure of his light; it is he who reaches onward to the full abiding in the sense in which the Master understood the words, who inherits all the promises connected with it.

In the growing life of abiding in Christ, the first stage is that of faith. As the believer sees that, with all his feebleness, the command is really meant for him, his great aim is simply to believe that, as he knows he is in Christ, so now, notwithstanding unfaithfulness and failure, abiding in Christ is his immediate duty, and a blessing within his reach. He is

specially occupied with the love, and power, and faithfulness of the Saviour: he feels his one need to be believing.

It is not long before he sees something more is needed. Obedience and faith must go together. Not as if to the faith he has the obedience must be added, but faith must be made manifest in obedience. Faith is obedience at home and looking to the Master: obedience is faith going out to do His will. He sees how he has been more occupied with the privilege and the blessings of this abiding than with its duties and its fruit. There has been much of self and of self-will that has been unnoticed or tolerated: the peace which, as a young and feeble disciple, he could enjoy in believing goes from him; it is in practical obedience that the abiding must be maintained: 'If ye keep my commands, ye shall abide in my love.' As before his great aim was through the *mind*, and the truth it took hold of, to let the heart rest on Christ and His promises; so now, in this stage, he chief effort is to get his *will* united with the will of his Lord, and the heart and the life brought entirely under His rule.

And yet it is as if there is something wanting. The will and the heart are on Christ's side; he obeys and he loves his Lord. But still, why is it that the fleshly nature has yet so much power, that the spontaneous motions and emotions of the inmost being are not what they should be? The will does not approve or allow, but here is a region beyond control of the will. And why also, even when there is not so much of positive commission to condemn, why so much of omission, the deficiency of that beauty of holiness, that zeal of love, that conformity to Jesus and His death, in which the life of self is lost, and which is surely implied in the abiding, as the Master meant it? There must surely be something in our abiding in Christ and Christ in us, which he has not yet experienced.

It is so. Faith and obedience are but the pathway of blessing. Before giving us the parable of the vine and the branches, Jesus had very distinctly told what the full blessing is to which faith and obedience are to lead. Three times over He had said, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments,' and spoken of the threefold blessing with which He would crown such obedient love. The Holy Spirit would come from the Father; the Son would manifest Himself; the Father and the Son would come and make their abode. It is as our faith grows into obedience, and in obedience and love our whole being goes out and clings itself to Christ, that our inner life becomes opened up, and the capacity is formed within of receiving the life, the spirit, of the glorified Jesus, as a distinct and conscious union with Christ and with the Father. The word is fulfilled in us: 'In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father and ye in me, and I in you.' We understand how, just as Christ is in God, and God in Christ, one together not only in will and in love, but in identity of nature and life, because they exist in each other, so we are in Christ and Christ in us, in union not only of will and love, but of life and nature too.

It was after Jesus had spoken of our thus through the Holy Spirit knowing that He is in the Father, and even so we in Him and He in us, that He said, 'Abide in me, and I in you. Accept, consent to receive that Divine life of union with myself, in virtue of which, as you abide in me, I also abide in you, even as I abide in the Father. So that your life is mine and mine is yours.' This is the true abiding, the occupying of the position in which Christ can come and abide; so abiding in Him that the soul has come away from self to find that He has taken the place and become our life. It is the becoming as little children

who have no care, and find their happiness in trusting and obeying the love that has done all for them.

To those who thus abide, the promise comes as their rightful heritage: Ask whatsoever ye will. It cannot be otherwise. Christ has got full possession of Them. Christ dwells in their love, their will, their life. Not only has their will been given up; Christ has entered it, and dwells and breathes in it by His Spirit. He whom the Father always hears, prays in them; they pray in Him: what they ask shall be done unto them.

Beloved fellow-believer! let us confess that it is because we do not abide in Christ as He would have us, that the Church is so impotent in presence of the infidelity and worldliness and heathendom, in the midst of which the Lord is able to make her more than conqueror. Let us believe that He means what He promises, and accept the condemnation the confession implies.

But let us not be discouraged. The abiding of the branch in the Vine is a life of never-ceasing growth. The abiding, as the Master meant it, is within our reach, for He lives to give it us. Let us but be ready to count all things loss, and to say, 'Not as though I had already attained; I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I also am apprehended of Christ Jesus.' Let us not be so much occupied with the abiding, as with *Him* to whom the abiding links us, and His fulness. Let it be *Him*, the whole Christ, in His obedience and humiliation, in His exaltation and power, in whom our soul moves and acts; He Himself will fulfil His promise in us.

And then as we abide, and grow evermore into the full abiding, let us exercise our right, the will to enter into all God's will. Obeying what that will commands, let us claim what it promises. Let us yield to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, to show each of us, according to his growth and measure, what the will of God is which we may claim in prayer. And let us rest content with nothing less than the personal experience of what Jesus gave when He said, 'If ye abide in me, ask whatsoever ye will, it shall be done unto you.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!'

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Beloved Lord! do teach me to take this promise anew in all its simplicity, and to be sure that the only measure of Thy holy giving is our holy willing. Lord! Let each word of this Thy promise be anew made quick and powerful in my soul.

Thou sayest: *Abide in me!* O my Master, my Life, my All, I do abide in Thee. Give Thou me to grow up into all Thy fulness. It is not the effort of faith, seeking to cling to Thee, nor even the rest of faith, trusting Thee to keep me; it is not the obedience of the will, nor the keeping the commandments; but it is Thyself living in me and in the Father, that alone can satisfy me. It is Thy self, my Lord, no longer before me and above me, but one with me, and abiding in me; it is this I need, it is this I seek. It is this I trust Thee for.

Thou sayest: *Ask whatsoever ye will!* Lord! I know that the life of full, deep abiding

will so renew and sanctify and strengthen the will that I shall have the light and the liberty to ask great things. Lord! let my will, dead in Thy death, living in Thy life, be bold and large in its petitions.

Thou sayest: *It shall be done.* O Thou who art the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, give me in Thyself the joyous confidence that Thou wilt make this word yet more wonderfully true to me than ever, because it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for them that love Him. Amen.

NOTE

On a thoughtful comparison of what we mostly find in books or sermons on prayer, and the teaching of the Master, we shall find one great difference: the importance assigned to the answer to prayer is by no means the same. In the former we find a great deal on the blessing of prayer as a spiritual exercise even if there be no answer, and on the reasons why we should be content without it. God's fellowship ought to be more to us than the gift we ask; God's wisdom only knows what is best; God may bestow something better than what He withholds. Though this teaching looks very high and spiritual, it is remarkable that we find nothing of it with our Lord. The more carefully we gather together all He spoke on prayer, the clearer it becomes that He wished us to think of prayer simply as the means to an end, and that the answer was to be the proof that we and our prayer are acceptable to the Father in heaven. It is not that Christ would have us count the gifts of higher value than the fellowship and favour of the Father. By no means. But the Father means the answer to be the token of His favour and of the reality of our fellowship with Him. 'To-day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant.'

A life marked by daily answer to prayer is the proof of our spiritual maturity; that we have indeed attained to the true abiding in Christ; that our will is truly at one with God's will; that our faith has grown strong to see and take what God has prepared for us; that the Name of Christ and His nature have taken full possession of us; and that we have been found fit to take a place among those whom God admits to His counsels, and according to whose prayer He rules the world. These are they in whom something of man's original dignity hath been restored, in whom, as they abide in Christ, His power as the all-prevailing Intercessor can manifest itself, in whom the glory of His Name is shown forth. Prayer is very blessed; *the answer is more blessed still*, as the response from the Father that our prayer, our faith, our will are indeed as He would wish them to be.

I make these remarks with the one desire of leading my readers themselves to put together all that Christ has said on prayer, and to yield themselves to the full impression of the truth that when prayer is what it should be, or rather when we are what we should be, abiding in Christ, the answer must be expected. It will bring us out from those refuges where we have comforted ourselves with unanswered prayer. It will discover to us the place of power to which Christ has appointed His Church, and which it so little occupies. It will reveal the terrible feebleness of our spiritual life as the cause of our not knowing to pray boldly in Christ's Name. It will urge us mightily to rise to a life in the full union with Christ, and in the fulness of the Spirit, as the secret of effectual prayer. And it will so lead us on to realize our destiny: '*At that day*: Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, He will give it you in my Name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be fulfilled.' Prayer that is really, spiritually, *in union with Jesus*, is always answered.

22. TWENTY-SECOND LESSON – *My words in you.*

'My words in you.'

Or, The Word and Prayer.

‘If ye abide in me, *and my words abide in you*, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.’—JOHN xv. 7.

T

HE vital connection between the word and prayer is one of the simplest and earliest lessons of the Christian life. As that newly-converted heathen put it: I pray—I speak to my father; I read—my Father speaks to me. Before prayer, it is God’s word that prepares me for it by revealing what the Father has bid me ask. In prayer, it is God’s word strengthens me by giving my faith its warrant and its plea. And after prayer, it is God’s word that brings me the answer when I have prayed, for in it the Spirit gives me to hear the Father’s voice. Prayer is not monologue but dialogue; God’s voice in response to mine in its most essential part. Listening to God’s voice is the secret of the assurance that He will listen to mine. ‘Incline thine ear, and hear;’ ‘Give ear to me;’ Hearken to my voice;’ are words which God speaks to man as well as man to God. His hearkening will depend on ours; the entrance His words find with me, will be the measure of the power of my words with Him. What God’s words are to me, is the test of what He Himself is to me, and so of the uprightness of my desire after Him in prayer.

It is this connection between His word and our prayer that Jesus points to when He says, ‘If ye abide in me, *and my words abide in you*, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.’ The deep importance of this truth becomes clear if we notice the other expression of which this one has taken the place. More than once Jesus had said, “Abide in me and *I in you*.’ His abiding in us was the complement and the crown of our abiding in Him. But here, instead of ‘Ye in me *and I in you*,’ He says, ‘Ye in me *and my words in you*.’ His words abiding are the equivalent of Himself abiding.

What a view is here opened up to us of the place the words of God in Christ are to have in our spiritual life, and especially in our prayer. In a man’s words *he reveals himself.* In his promises *he gives himself away*, he binds himself to the one who receives his promise. In his commands he sets forth his will, seeks *to make himself master* of him whose obedience he claims, to guide and use him as if he were part of himself. It is through our words that spirit holds fellowship with spirit, that the spirit of one man passes over and transfers itself into another. It is through the words of a man, heard and accepted, and held fast and obeyed, that he can impart himself to another. But all this in a very relative and limited sense.

But when God, the infinite Being, in whom everything is life and power, spirit and truth, in the very deepest meaning of the words,—when God speaks forth Himself in His words, He does indeed give HIMSELF, His Love and His Life, His Will and His Power, to those who receive these words, in a reality passing comprehension. In every promise He puts *Himself* in our power to lay hold of and possess; in every command He puts *Himself* in our power for us to share with Him His Will, His Holiness, His Perfection. In God’s Word God gives us HIMSELF; His Word is nothing less than the Eternal Son, Christ Jesus. And so all Christ’s words are God’s words, full of a Divine quickening life and power. ‘The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.’

Those who have made the deaf and dumb their study, tell us how much the power of speaking depends on that of hearing, and how the loss of hearing in children is followed by that of speaking too. This is true in a wider sense: as we hear, so we speak. This is

true in the highest sense of our intercourse with God. To offer a prayer—to give utterance to certain wishes and to appeal to certain promises—is an easy thing, and can be learned of man by human wisdom. But to pray in the Spirit, to speak words that reach and touch God, that affect and influence the powers of the unseen world,—such praying, such speaking, depends entirely upon our hearing God's voice. Just as far as we listen to the voice and language that God speaks, and in the words of God receive His thoughts, His mind, His life, into our heart, we shall learn to speak in the voice and the language that God hears. It is the ear of the learner, wakened morning by morning, that prepares for the tongue of the learned, to speak to God as well as men, as should be (Isa. l. 4).

This hearing the voice of God is something more than the thoughtful study of the Word. There may be a study and knowledge of the Word, in which there is but little real fellowship with the living God. But there is also a reading of the Word, in the very presence of the Father, and under the leading of the Spirit, in which the Word comes to us in living power from God Himself; it is to us the very voice of the Father, a real personal fellowship with Himself. It is the living voice of God that enters the heart, that brings blessing and strength, and awakens the response of a living faith that reaches the heart of God again.

It is on this hearing the voice, that the power both to obey and believe depends. The chief thing is, not to know *what* God has said we must do, but that *God Himself* says it to us. It is not the law, and not the book, not the knowledge of what is right, that works obedience, but the personal influence of God and His living fellowship. And even so it is not the knowledge of *what* God has promised, but the presence of *God Himself* as the Promiser, that awakens faith and trust in prayer. It is only in the full presence of God that disobedience and unbelief become impossible.

'If ye abide in me, and *my words abide in you*, ask whatsoever ye will, it shall be done unto you.' We see what this means. In the words the Saviour gives Himself. We must have the words *in us*, taken up into our will and life, reproduced in our disposition and conduct. We must have them *abiding* in us: our whole life one continued exposition of the words that are within, and filling us; the words revealing Christ within, and our life revealing Him without. It is as the words of Christ enter our very heart, become our life and influence it, that our words will enter His heart and influence Him. My prayer will depend on my life; what God's words are to me and in me, my words will be to God and in God. If I do what God says, God will do what I say.

How well the Old Testament saints understood this connection between God's words and ours, and how really prayer with them was the loving response to what they had heard God speak! If the word were a promise, they counted *on God to do as He had spoken.* 'Do as Thou hast said;' 'For Thou, Lord, hast spoken it;' 'According to Thy promise;' 'According to Thy word;' in such expressions they showed that what God spake in promise was the root and the life of what they spake in prayer. If the word was a command, they simply *did as the Lord had spoken:* 'So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken.' Their life was fellowship with God, the interchange of word and thought. What God spoke they heard and did; what they spoke God heard and did. In each word He speaks to us, the whole Christ gives Himself to fulfil it for us. For each word He asks no less that we give the whole man to keep that word, and to receive its fulfilment.

‘If my words abide in you;’ the condition is simple and clear. In His words His will is revealed. As the words abide in me, His will rules me; my will becomes the empty vessel which His will fills, the willing instrument which His will wields; He fills my inner being. In the exercise of obedience and faith my will becomes ever stronger, and is brought into deeper inner harmony with Him. He can fully trust it to will nothing but what He wills; He is not afraid to give the promise, ‘If my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, it shall be done unto you.’ To all who believe it, and act upon it, He will make it literally true.

Disciples of Christ! is it not becoming more and more clear to us that while we have been excusing our unanswered prayers, our impotence in prayer, with a fancied submission to God’s wisdom and will, the real reason has been that our own feeble life has been the cause of our feeble prayers. Nothing can make strong men but the word coming to us from God’s mouth: by that we must live. It is the word of Christ, loved, lived in, abiding in us, becoming through obedience and action part of our being, that makes us one with Christ, that fits us spiritually for touching, for taking hold of God. All that is of the world passeth away; he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. O let us yield heart and life to the words of Christ, the words in which He ever gives HIMSELF, the personal living Saviour, and His promise will be our rich experience: ‘If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.’

‘LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!’

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Blessed Lord! Thy lesson this day has again discovered to me my folly. I see how it is that my prayer has not been more believing and prevailing. I was more occupied with my speaking to Thee than Thy speaking to me. I did not understand that the secret of faith is this: there can be only so much faith as there is of the Living Word dwelling in the soul.

And Thy word had taught me so clearly: Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak; let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God. Lord, teach me that it is only with Thy word taken up into my life that my words can be taken into Thy heart; that Thy word, if it be a living power within me, will be a living power with Thee; what Thy mouth hath spoken Thy hand will perform.

Lord! deliver me from the uncircumcised ear. Give me the opened ear of the learner, wakened morning by morning to hear the Father’s voice. Even as Thou didst only speak what Thou didst hear, may my speaking be the echo of Thy speaking to me. ‘When Moses went into the tabernacle to speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking unto him from off the mercy-seat.’ Lord, may it be so with me too. Let a life and character bearing the one mark, that Thy words abide and are seen in it, be the preparation for the full blessing: ‘Ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.’ Amen.

23. TWENTY-THIRD LESSON – *Obedience the path to power.*

‘Bear fruit, that the Father may give what ye ask;’

Or, Obedience the Path to Power in Prayer.

‘Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide: *that whatsoever ye shall ask* the Father in my name, He may give it you.’—JOHN xv. 16.

‘The fervent effectual prayer of a *righteous* man availeth much.’—JAS. v. 16.

T

HE promise of the Father’s giving whatsoever we ask is here once again renewed, in such a connection as to show us to whom it is that such wonderful influence in the council chamber of the Most High is to be granted. ‘I chose you,’ the Master says, ‘and appointed you that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide;’ and then He adds, *to the end ‘that* whatsoever ye,’ the fruit-bearing ones, ‘shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you.’ This is nothing but the fuller expression of what He had spoken in the words, ‘If ye abide in me.’ He had spoken of the object of this abiding as the bearing ‘fruit,’ ‘more fruit,’ ‘much fruit;’ in this was God to be glorified, and the mark of discipleship seen. No wonder that He now adds, that where the reality of the abiding is seen in fruit abounding and abiding, this would be the qualification for praying so as to obtain what we ask. Entire consecration to the fulfilment of our calling is the condition of effectual prayer, is the key to the unlimited blessings of Christ’s wonderful prayer-promises.

There are Christians who fear that such a statement is at variance with the doctrine of free grace. But surely not of free grace rightly understood, nor with so many express statements of God’s blessed word. Take the words of St. John (1 John iii. 22): ‘Let us love in deed and truth; *hereby* shall we assure our heart before Him. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, *because* we keep His commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.’’ Or take the oft-quoted words of James: ‘The fervent effectual prayer of a *righteous* man availeth much;’ that is, of a man of whom, according to the definition of the Holy Spirit, it can be said, ‘He that doeth righteousness, is righteous even as He is righteous.’ Mark the spirit of so many of the Psalms, with their confident appeal to the integrity and righteousness of the supplicant. In Ps. xviii, David says: ‘The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath He recompensed me… . I was upright before Him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity: therefore hath the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness.’ (Ps. xviii. 20-26. See also Ps. vii. 3-5, xv. 1, 2, xviii. 3, 6, xxvi. 1-6, cxix. 121, 153.) If we carefully consider such utterances in the light of the New Testament, we shall find them in perfect harmony with the explicit teaching of the Saviour’s parting words: ‘*If ye keep* my commandments, ye shall abide in my love;’ ‘Ye are my friends *if ye do* what I command you.’ The word is indeed meant literally: ‘I appointed you that ye should go and bear fruit, *that*,’ then, ‘whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you.’

Let us seek to enter into the spirit of what the Saviour here teaches us. There is a danger in our evangelical religion of looking too much at what it offers from one side, as a certain experience to be obtained in prayer and faith. There is another side which God's word puts very strongly, that of obedience as the only path to blessing. What we need is to realize that in our relationship to the Infinite Being whom we call God who has created and redeemed us, the first sentiment that ought to animate us is that of subjection: the surrender to His supremacy, His glory, His will, His pleasure, ought to be the first and uppermost thought of our life. The question is not, how we are to obtain and enjoy His favour, for in this the main thing may still be self. But what this Being in the very nature of things rightfully claims, and is infinitely and unspeakably worthy of, is that His glory and pleasure should be my one object. Surrender to His perfect and blessed will, a life of service and obedience, is the beauty and the charm of heaven. Service and obedience, these were the thoughts that were uppermost in the mind of the Son, when He dwelt upon earth. Service and obedience, these must become with us the chief objects of desire and aim, more so than rest or light, or joy or strength: in them we shall find the path to all the higher blessedness that awaits us.

Just note what a prominent place the Master gives it, not only in the 15th chapter, in connection with the abiding, but in the 14th, where He speaks of the indwelling of the Three-One God. In verse 15 we have it: '*If ye* love me, *keep my commandments*, and the Spirit will be given you of the Father. Then verse 21: 'He that hath *my commandments and keepeth them*, he it is that loveth me;' and he shall have the special love of my Father resting on him and the special manifestation of myself. And then again, verse 23, one of the highest of all the exceeding great and precious promises: 'If a man love me *he will keep my words*, and the Father and I will come and take up our abode with him.' Could words put it more clearly that obedience is the way to the indwelling of the Spirit, to His revealing the Son within us, and to His again preparing us to be the abode, the home of the Father? The indwelling of the Three-One God is the heritage of them that obey. Obedience and faith are but two aspects of one act,—surrender to God and His will. As faith strengthens for obedience, it is in turn strengthened by it: faith is made perfect by works. It is to be feared that often our efforts to believe have been unavailing because we have not taken up the only position in which a large faith is legitimate or possible,—that of entire surrender to the honour and the will of God. It is the man who is entirely consecrated to God and His will who will find the power come to claim everything that His God has promised to be for him.

The application of this in the school of prayer is very simple, but very solemn. 'I chose you,' the Master says, 'and appointed you that ye should go and bear fruit,' much fruit (verses 5, 8), 'and that your fruit should abide,' that your life might be one of abiding fruit and abiding fruitfulness, '*that*' thus, as fruitful branches abiding in me, 'whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you.' O how often we have sought to be able to pray the effectual prayer for much grace to bear fruit, and have wondered that the answer came not. It was because we were reversing the Master's order. We wanted to have the comfort and the joy and the strength first, that we might do the work easily and without any feeling of difficulty or self-sacrifice. And He wanted us in faith, without asking whether we felt weak or strong, whether the work was hard or easy, in the obedience of faith to do what He said: the path of fruit-bearing would have led us to the

place and the power of prevailing prayer. Obedience is the only path that leads to the glory of God. Not obedience instead of faith, nor obedience to supply the shortcomings of faith; no, but faith's obedience gives access to all the blessings our God has for us. The baptism of the Spirit (xiv. 16), the manifestation of the Son (xiv. 21), the indwelling of the Father (xiv. 23), the abiding in Christ's love (xv. 10), the privilege of His holy friendship (xv. 14), and the power of all-prevailing prayer (xv. 16),—all wait for the obedient.

Let us take home the lessons. Now we know the great reason why we have not had power in faith to pray prevailingly. Our life was not as it should have been: simple downright obedience, abiding fruitfulness, was not its chief mark. And with our whole heart we approve of the Divine appointment: men to whom God is to give such influence in the rule of the world, as at their request to do what otherwise would not have taken place, men whose will is to guide the path in which God's will is to work, must be men who have themselves learned obedience, whose loyalty and submission to authority must be above all suspicion. Our whole soul approves the law: obedience and fruit-bearing, the path to prevailing prayer. And with shame we acknowledge how little our lives have yet borne this stamp.

Let us yield ourselves to take up the appointment the Saviour gives us. Let us study His relation to us as Master. Let us seek no more with each new day to think in the first place of comfort, or joy, or blessing. Let the first thought be: I belong to the Master. Every moment and every movement I must act as His property, as a part of Himself, as one who only seeks to know and do His will. A servant, a slave of Jesus Christ,—let this be the spirit that animates me. If He says, 'No longer do I call you servants, but I have called you friends,' let us accept the place of friends: 'Ye are my friends if ye do the things which I command you.'

The one thing He commands us as His branches is to bear fruit. Let us live to bless others, to testify of the life and the love there is in Jesus. Let us in faith and obedience give our whole life to that which Jesus chose us for and appointed us to—fruit-bearing. As we think of His electing us to this, and take up our appointment as coming from Him who always gives all He demands, we shall grow strong in the confidence that a life of fruit-bearing, abounding and abiding, is within our reach. And we shall understand why this fruit-bearing alone can be the path to the place of all prevailing prayer. It is the man who, in obedience to the Christ of God, is proving that he is doing what his Lord wills, for whom the Father will do whatsoever he will: 'Whatsoever we ask we receive, because we keep His commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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Blessed Master! teach me to apprehend fully what I only partly realize, that it is only through the will of God, accepted and acted out in obedience to His commands, that we obtain the power to grasp His will in His promises and fully to appropriate them in our prayers. And teach me that it is in the path of fruit-bearing that the deeper growth of the branch into the Vine can be perfected, and we attain to the perfect oneness with Thyself in

which we ask whatsoever we will.

O Lord! Reveal to us, we pray Thee, how with all the hosts of heaven, and with Thyself the Son on earth, and with all the men of faith who have glorified Thee on earth, *obedience to God is our highest privilege, because it gives access to oneness with Himself in that which is His highest glory—His all perfect will.* And reveal to us, we pray Thee, how in keeping Thy commandments and bearing fruit according to Thy will, our spiritual nature will grow up to the full stature of the perfect man, with power to ask and to receive whatsoever we will.

O Lord Jesus! Reveal Thyself to us, and the reality of Thy purpose and Thy power to make these Thy wonderful promises the daily experience of all who utterly yield themselves to Thee and Thy words. Amen.

24. TWENTY-FOURTH LESSON – *In my Name.*

'In my Name;'

Or, The All-prevailing Plea.

'Whatsoever ye shall ask *in my Name,* that will I do. If ye shall ask me anything *in my Name*, that will I do. That whatsoever ye shall ask the Father *in my Name,* He may give it you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, He will give it you *in my Name*. Hitherto ye have asked nothing *in my Name*: ask, and ye shall receive. In that day ye shall ask *in my Name.*'—JOHN xiv. 13, 14, xv. 16, xvi. 23, 24, 26.

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ITHERTO the disciples had not asked in the Name of Christ, nor had He Himself ever used the expression. The nearest approach is, 'met together in my Name.' Here in His parting words, He repeats the word unceasingly in connection with those promises of unlimited meaning, '*Whatsoever,*' '*Anything,*' '*What ye will,*' to teach them and us that His Name is our only, but also our all-sufficient plea. The power of prayer and the answer depend on the right use of the Name.

What is a person's name? That word or expression in which the person is called up or represented to us. When I mention or hear a name, it calls up before me the whole man, what I know of him, and also the impression he has made on me. The name of a king includes his honour, his power, his kingdom. His name is the symbol of his power. And so each name of God embodies and represents some part of the glory of the Unseen One. And the Name of Christ is the expression of all He has done and all He is and lives to do as our Mediator.

And what is it to do a thing in the name of another? It is to come with the power and authority of that other, as his representative and substitute. We know how such a use of another's name always supposes a community of interest. No one would give another the

free use of his name without first being assured that his honour and interest were as safe with that other as with himself.

And what is it when Jesus gives us power over His Name, the free use of it, with the assurance that whatever we ask in it will be given to us? The ordinary comparison of one person giving another, on some special occasion, the liberty to ask something in his name, comes altogether short here,—Jesus solemnly gives to *all* His disciples a general and unlimited power of the free use of His Name at *all* times for *all* they desire. He could not do this if He did not know that He could trust us with His interests, that His honour would be safe in our hands. The free use of the name of another is always the token of great confidence, of close union. He who gives his name to another stands aside, to let that other act for him; he who takes the name of another, gives up his own as of no value. When I go in the name of another, I deny myself, I take not only his name, but himself and what he is, instead of myself and what I am.

Such a use of the name of a person may be in virtue of *a legal union.* A merchant leaving his home and business, gives his chief clerk a general power, by which he can draw thousands of pounds in the merchant's name. The clerk does this, not for himself, but only in the interests of the business. It is because the merchant knows and trusts him as wholly devoted to his interests and business, that he dares put his name and property at his command. When the Lord Jesus went to heaven, He left His work, the management of His kingdom on earth, in the hands of His servants. He could not do otherwise than also give them His Name to draw all the supplies they needed for the due conduct of His business. And they have the spiritual power to avail themselves of the Name of Jesus just to the extent to which they yield themselves to live only for the interests and the work of the Master. The use of the Name always supposes the surrender of our interests to Him whom we represent.

Or such a use of the name may be in virtue of a *life union*. In the case of the merchant and his clerk, the union is temporary. But we know how oneness of life on earth gives oneness of name: a child has the father's name because he has his life. And often the child of a good father has been honoured or helped by others for the sake of the name he bore. But this would not last long if it were found that it was only a name, and that the father's character was wanting. The name and the character or spirit must be in harmony. When such is the case, the child will have a double claim on the father's friends: the character secures and increases the love and esteem rendered first for the name's sake. So it is with Jesus and the believer: we are one, we have one life, one Spirit with Him; for this reason we may come in His Name. Our power in using that Name, whether with God, or men, or devils *depends on the measure of our spiritual life-union*. The use of the name rests on the unity of life; the Name and the Spirit of Jesus are one.[1]

Or the union that empowers to the use of the Name may be *the union of love.* When a bride whose life has been one of poverty, becomes united to the bridegroom, she gives up her own name, to be called by his, and has now the full right to use it. She purchases in his name, and that name is not refused. And this is done because the bridegroom has chosen her for himself, counting on her to care for his interests: they are now one. And so the Heavenly Bridegroom could do nothing less; having loved us and made us one with Himself, what could He do but give those who bear His Name the right to present it before

the Father, or to come with it to Himself for all they need. And there is no one who gives himself really to live in the Name of Jesus, who does not receive in ever-increasing measure the spiritual capacity to ask and receive in that Name what he will. The bearing of the name of another supposes my having given up my own, and with it my own independent life; but then, as surely, my possession of all there is in the name I have taken instead of my own.

Such illustrations show us how defective the common view is of a messenger sent to ask in the name of another, or a guilty one appealing to the name of a surety. No Jesus Himself is with the Father; it is not an absent one in whose name we come. Even when we pray to Jesus Himself, it must be in His Name. The name represents the person; to ask in the Name is to ask in full union of interest and life and love with Himself, as one who lives in and for Him. Let the Name of Jesus only have undivided supremacy in my heart and life, my faith will grow to the assurance that what I ask in that Name cannot be refused. The name and the power of asking go together: when the Name of Jesus has become the power that rules my life, its power in prayer with God will be seen too.

We see thus that everything depends on our own relation to the Name: the power it has on my life is the power it will have in my prayers. There is more than one expression in Scripture which can make this clear to us. When it says, '*Do all* in the Name of the Lord Jesus,' we see how this is the counterpart of the other, '*Ask all.*' To do all and to ask all in His Name, these go together. When we read, 'We shall walk in the Name of our God,' we see how the power of the Name must rule in the whole life; only then will it have power in prayer. It is not to the lips but to the life God looks to see what the Name is to us. When Scripture speaks of 'men who have given their lives for the Name of the Lord Jesus,' or of one 'ready to die for the Name of the Lord Jesus,' we see what our relation to the Name must be: when it is everything to me, it will obtain everything for me. If I let it have all I have, it will let me have all it has.

'WHATSOEVER ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do.' Jesus means the promise literally. Christians have sought to limit it: it looked too free; it was hardly safe to trust man so unconditionally. We did not understand that the word 'in my Name' is its own safeguard. It is a spiritual power which no one can use further than he obtains the capacity for, by his living and acting in that Name. As we bear that Name before men, we have power to use it before God. O let us plead for God's Holy Spirit to show us what the Name means, and what the right use of it is. It is through the Spirit that the Name, which is above every name in heaven, will take the place of supremacy in our heart and life too.

Disciples of Jesus! Let the lessons of this day enter deep into your hearts. The Master says: Only pray in my Name; whatsoever ye ask will be given. Heaven is set open to you; the treasures and powers of the world of spirit are placed at your disposal on behalf of men around you. O come, and let us learn to pray in the Name of Jesus. As to the disciples, He says to us, 'Hitherto ye have not asked in my Name: ask, and ye shall receive.' Let each disciple of Jesus seek to avail himself of the rights of his royal priesthood, and use the power placed at his disposal for his circle and his work. Let Christians awake and hear the message: your prayer can obtain what otherwise will be withheld, can accomplish what otherwise remains undone. O awake, and use the name of Jesus to open the treasures of heaven for this perishing world. Learn as the servants of the

King to use His Name: ‘WHATSOEVER ye shall ask in my Name, THAT WILL I DO.’

‘LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

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Blessed Lord! It is as if each lesson Thou givest me has such fulness and depths of meaning, that if I can only learn that one, I shall know how to pray aright. This day I feel again as if I needed but one prayer every day: Lord! Teach me what it is to pray in Thy Name. Teach me so to live and act, to walk and speak, so to do all in the Name of Jesus, that my prayer cannot be anything else but in that blessed Name too.

And teach me, Lord! to hold fast the precious promise that WHATSOEVER we ask in Thy Name, Thou wilt do, the Father will give. Though I do not yet fully understand, and still less have fully attained, the wondrous union Thou meanest when Thou sayest, IN MY NAME, I would yet hold fast the promise until it fills my heart with the undoubting assurance: Anything in the Name of Jesus.

O my Lord! let Thy Holy Spirit teach me this. Thou didst say of Him, ‘The Comforter, whom the Father shall send IN MY NAME.’ He knows what it is to be sent from heaven in Thy Name, to reveal and to honour the power of that Name in Thy servants, to use that Name alone, and so to glorify Thee. Lord Jesus! let Thy Spirit dwell in me, and fill me. I would, I do yield my whole being to His rule and leading. Thy Name and Thy Spirit are one; through Him Thy Name will be the strength of my life and my prayer. Then I shall be able for Thy Name’s sake to forsake all, in Thy Name to speak to men and to God, and to prove that this is indeed the Name above every name.

Lord Jesus! O teach me by Thy Holy Spirit to pray in Thy Name. Amen.

NOTE.

‘What is meant by praying in Christ’s name? It cannot mean simply appearing before God with faith in the mediation of the Saviour. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, He supplied them with petitions. And afterwards Jesus said to them, “Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my Name.” Until the Spirit came, the seven petitions of the Lord’s prayer lay as it were dormant within them. When by the Holy Ghost Christ descended into their hearts, they desired the very blessings which Christ as our High Priest obtains for us by His prayer from the Father. And such petitions are always answered. The Father is always willing to give what Christ asks. The Spirit of Christ always teaches and influences us to offer the petitions which Christ ratifies and presents to the Father. To pray in Christ’s name is therefore to be identified with Christ as to our righteousness, and *to be identified with Christ in our desires by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.* To pray *in the Spirit*, to pray *according to the will of the Father*, to pray *in Christ’s name, are identical expressions*. The Father Himself loveth us, and is willing to hear us: two intercessors, Christ the Advocate above, and the Holy Ghost, the Advocate within, are the gifts of His love.

‘This view may appear at first less consoling than a more prevalent one, which refers prayer in Christ’s name chiefly to our trust in Christ’s merit. The defect of this opinion is, that it does not combine the intercession of the Saviour with the will of the Father, and the indwelling Spirit’s aid in prayer. Nor does it fully realize the mediation of Christ; for the mediation consists not merely in that for Christ’s sake the Holy Father is able to regard me and my prayer; but also, in that Christ Himself presents my petitions as His petitions, desired by Him for me, even as all blessings are purchased for me by His precious blood.

‘In all prayer, the one essential condition is that we are able to offer it in the name of Jesus, as according to His desire for us, according to the Father’s will, according to the Spirit’s teaching. And thus praying in Christ’s name is impossible without self-examination, without reflection, without self-denial; in short, without the aid of the Spirit.’—*Saphiv, The Lord’s Prayer*, pp. 411, 142.

[1]’Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name,’ that is, in my nature; for things with God are called according to their nature. We ask in Christ’s Name, not when at the end of some request we say, ‘This I ask in the Name of Jesus Christ,’ but when we pray *according to His nature*, which is love, which seeketh not its own but only the will of God and the good of all creatures. Such asking is the cry of His own Spirit in our hearts.—*Jukes. The New Man.*

25. TWENTY-FIFTH LESSON – *The Holy Spirit and prayer.*

‘At that day;’

Or, The Holy Spirit and Prayer.

‘*In that day* ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, *Whatsoever ye shall ask* the Father in my Name, He will give it you. *Hitherto* have ye asked nothing in my Name: ask, and *ye shall receive*, that your joy may be full. *At that day* ye shall ask in my Name: and I say not, that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth you.’—JOHN xvi. 23-26.

‘Praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God.’—JUDE 20, 21.

T

HE words of John (I John ii. 12-14) to little children, to young men, and to fathers suggest the thought that there often are in the Christian life three great stages of experience. The first, that of the new-born child, with the assurance and the joy of forgiveness. The second, the transition stage of struggle and growth in knowledge and strength: young men growing strong, God’s word doing its work in them and giving them victory over the Evil One. And then the final stage of maturity and ripeness: the Fathers, who have entered deeply into the knowledge and fellowship of the Eternal One.

In Christ’s teaching on prayer there appear to be three stages in the prayer-life, somewhat analogous. In the Sermon on the Mount we have the initial stage: His teaching is all comprised in one word, Father. Pray to your Father, your Father sees, hears, knows, and will reward: *how much more* than any earthly father! Only be childlike and trustful. Then comes later on something like the transition stage of conflict and conquest, in words like these: ‘This sort goeth not out but by fasting and prayer;’ ‘Shall not God avenge His own elect who cry day and night unto Him?’ And then we have in the parting words, a higher stage. The children have become men: they are now the Master’s friends, from whom He has no secrets, to whom He says, ‘All things that I heard from my Father I made known unto you;’ and to whom, in the oft-repeated ‘whatsoever ye will,’ He hands over

the keys of the kingdom. Now the time has come for the power of prayer in His Name to be proved.

The contrast between this final stage and the previous preparatory ones our Saviour marks most distinctly in the words we are to meditate on: '*Hitherto* ye have asked nothing in my Name;' '*At that day* ye shall ask in my Name. ' We know what '*at that day*' means. It is the day of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The great work Christ was to do on the cross, the mighty power and the complete victory to be manifested in His resurrection and ascension, were to issue in the coming down from heaven, as never before, of the glory of God to dwell in men. The Spirit of the glorified Jesus was to come and be the life of His disciples. And one of the marks of that wonderful spirit-dispensation was to be a power in prayer hitherto unknown—prayer in the Name of Jesus, asking and obtaining whatsoever they would, is to be the manifestation of the reality of the Spirit's indwelling.

To understand how the coming of the Holy Spirit was indeed to commence a new epoch in the prayer-world, we must remember who He is, what His work, and what the significance of His not being given until Jesus was glorified. It is in the Spirit that God exists, for He is Spirit. It is in the Spirit that the Son was begotten of the Father: it is in the fellowship of the Spirit that the Father and the Son are one. The eternal never-ceasing giving to the Son which is the Father's prerogative and the eternal asking and receiving which is the Son's right and blessedness—it is through the Spirit that this communion of life and love is maintained. It has been so from all eternity. It is so specially now, when the Son as Mediator ever liveth to pray. The great work which Jesus began on earth of reconciling in His own body God and man, He carries on in heaven. To accomplish this He took up into His own person the conflict between God's righteousness and our sin. On the cross He once for all ended the struggle in His own body. And then He ascended to heaven, that thence He might in each member of His body carry out the deliverance and manifest the victory He had obtained. It is to do this that He ever liveth to pray; in His unceasing intercession He places Himself in living fellowship with the unceasing prayer of His redeemed ones. Or rather, it is His unceasing intercession which shows itself in their prayers, and gives them a power they never had before.

And He does this through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the glorified Jesus, was not (John vii, 39), could not be, until He had been glorified. This gift of the Father was something distinctively new, entirely different from what Old Testament saints had known. The work that the blood effected in heaven when Christ entered within the veil, was something so true and new, the redemption of our human nature into fellowship with His resurrection-power and His exaltation-glory was so intensely real, the taking up of our humanity in Christ into the life of the Three-One God was an event of such inconceivable significance, that the Holy Spirit, who had to come from Christ's exalted humanity to testify in our hearts of what Christ had accomplished, was indeed no longer only what He had been in the Old Testament. It was literally true 'the Holy Spirit was not yet, for Christ was not yet glorified.' He came now first as the Spirit of the glorified Jesus. Even as the Son, who was from eternity God, had entered upon a new existence as man, and returned to heaven with what He had not before, so the Blessed Spirit, whom the Son, on His ascension, received from the Father (Acts ii. 33) into His glorified humanity, came to us with a new life, which He had not previously to communicate. Under the Old Testament He was invoked as the Spirit of God: at Pentecost He descended as the Spirit of the glorified Jesus, bringing down and communicating to us the full fruit and power of the accomplished redemption.

It is in the intercession of Christ that the continued efficacy and application of His redemption is maintained. And it is through the Holy Spirit descending from Christ to us that we are drawn up into the great stream of His ever-ascending prayers. The Spirit prays for us without words: in the depths of a heart where even thoughts are at times formless, the Spirit takes us up into the wonderful flow of the life of the Three-One God. Through the Spirit, Christ's prayers become ours, and ours are made His: we ask what we will, and it is given to us. We then understand from experience, 'Hitherto ye have not asked in my Name. *At that day* ye shall ask in my Name.'

Brother! what we need to pray in the Name of Christ, to ask that we may receive that

our joy may be full, is the baptism of this Holy Ghost. This is more than the Spirit of God under the Old Testament. This is more than the Spirit of conversion and regeneration the disciples had before Pentecost. This is more than the Spirit with a measure of His influence and working. This is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the glorified Jesus in His exaltation-power, coming on us as the Spirit of the indwelling Jesus, revealing the Son and the Father within. (John xiv. 16-23.) It is when this Spirit is the Spirit not of our hours of prayer, but of our whole life and walk, when this Spirit glorifies Jesus in us by revealing the completeness of His work, and making us wholly one with Him and like Him, that we can pray in His Name, because we are in very deed one with Him. Then it is that we have that immediateness of access to the Father of which Jesus says, 'I say not that I will pray the Father for you.' Oh! we need to understand and believe that to be filled with this, the Spirit of the glorified One, is the one need of God's believing people. Then shall we realize what it is, 'with all prayer and supplication to be praying at all seasons in the Spirit,' and what it is, 'praying in the Holy Ghost, to keep ourselves in the love of God.' '*At that day* ye shall ask in my Name.'

And so once again the lesson comes: What our prayer avails, depends upon what we are and what our life is. It is living in the Name of Christ that is the secret of praying in the Name of Christ; living in the Spirit that fits for praying in the Spirit. It is abiding in Christ that gives the right and power to ask what we will: the extent of the abiding is the exact measure of the power in prayer. It is the Spirit dwelling within us that prays, not in words and thoughts always, but in a breathing and a being deeper than utterance. Just so much as there is of Christ's Spirit in us, is there real prayer. Our lives, our lives, O let our lives be full of Christ, and full of His Spirit, and the wonderfully unlimited promises to our prayer will no longer appear strange. 'Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my Name. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. At that day ye shall ask in my Name. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the father in my Name, He will give it you.'

'LORD , TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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O my God! in holy awe I bow before Thee, the Three in One. Again I have seen how the mystery of prayer is the mystery of the Holy Trinity. I adore the Father who ever hears, and the Son who ever lives to pray, and the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, to lift us up into the fellowship of that ever-blessed, never-ceasing asking and receiving. I bow, my God, in adoring worship, before the infinite condescension that thus, through the Holy Spirit, takes us and our prayers into the Divine Life, and its fellowship of love.

O my Blessed Lord Jesus! Teach me to understand Thy lesson, that it is the indwelling Spirit, streaming from Thee, uniting to Thee, who is the Spirit of prayer. Teach me what it is as an empty, wholly consecrated vessel, to yield myself to His being my life. Teach me to honour and trust Him, as a living Person, to lead my life and my prayer. Teach me specially in prayer to wait in holy silence, and give Him place to breathe within

me His unutterable intercession. And teach me that through Him it is possible to pray without ceasing, and to pray without failing, because He makes me partaker of the never-ceasing and never-failing intercession in which Thou, the Son, dost appear before the Father. Yea, Lord, fulfil in me Thy promise, At that day ye shall ask in my Name. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, that will He give.' Amen.

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NOTE.

Prayer has often been compared to breathing: we have only to carry out the comparison fully to see how wonderful the place is which the Holy Spirit occupies. With every breath we expel the impure air which would soon cause our death, and inhale again the fresh air to which we owe our life. So we give out from us, in confession the sins, in prayer the needs and the desires of our heart. And in drawing in our breath again, we inhale the fresh air of the promises, and the love, and the life of God in Christ. We do this through the Holy Spirit, who is the breath of our life.

And this He is because He is the breath of God. The Father breathes Him into us, to unite Himself with our life. And then just as on every expiration there follows again the inhaling or drawing in of the breath, so God draws in again His breath, and the Spirit returns to Him laden with the desires and needs of our hearts. And thus the Holy Spirit is the breath of the life of God, and the breath of the new life in us. As God breathes Him out, we receive Him in answer to prayer; as we breathe Him back again, He rises to God laden with our supplications. As the Spirit of God, in whom the Father and the Son are one, and the intercession of the Son reaches the Father, He is to us the Spirit of prayer. True prayer is the living experience of the truth of the Holy Trinity. The Spirit's breathing, the Son's intercession, the Father's will, these three become one in us.

26. TWENTY-SIXTH LESSON – *Christ the Intercessor.*

'I have prayed for thee;'

Or, Christ the Intercessor.

'But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.'—LUKE xxii. 32.

'I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you.'—JOHN xvi. 26.

'He ever liveth to make intercession.'—HEB. vii. 25.

A

LL growth in the spiritual life is connected with the clearer insight into what Jesus is to us. The more I realize that Christ must be all to me and in me, that all in Christ is indeed for me, the more I learn to live the real life of faith, which, dying to self, lives wholly in Christ. The Christian life is no longer the vain struggle to live right, but the resting in Christ and finding strength in Him as our life, to fight the fight and gain the victory of faith. This is specially true of the life of prayer. As it too comes under the law of faith alone, and is seen in the light of the fulness and completeness there is in Jesus, the believer understands that it need no longer be a matter of strain or anxious care, but an experience of what Christ will do for him and in him—a participation in that life of Christ which, as on earth, so in heaven, ever ascends to the Father as prayer. And he begins to pray, not only trusting in the merits of Jesus, or in the intercession by which our unworthy prayers are made acceptable, but in that near and close union in virtue of which He prays in us and we in Him.[1] The whole of salvation is Christ Himself: He has given HIMSELF to us; He Himself lives in us. Because He prays, we pray too. As the disciples, when they saw Jesus pray, asked Him to make them partakers of what He knew of prayer, so we, now we see Him as intercessor on the throne, know that He makes us participate with Himself in the life of prayer.

How clearly this comes out in the last night of His life. In His high-priestly prayer (John xvii.), He shows us how and what He has to pray to the Father, and will pray when once ascended to heaven. And yet He had in His parting address so repeatedly also connected His going to the Father with *their* new life of prayer. The two would be ultimately connected: His entrance on the work of His eternal intercession *would be the commencement and the power of their new prayer-life in His Name.* It is the sight of Jesus in His intercession that gives us power to pray in His Name: all right and power of prayer is Christ's; He makes us share in His intercession.

To understand this, think first of *His intercession:* He ever liveth to make intercession. The work of Christ on earth as Priest was but a beginning. It was as Aaron He shed His blood; it is as Melchizedek that He now lives within the veil to continue His work, after the power of the eternal life. As Melchizedek is more glorious than Aaron, so it is in the work of intercession that the atonement has its true power and glory. 'It is Christ that died: *yea more*, who is even at the right hand of God, who maketh intercession for us.' That intercession is an intense reality, a work that is absolutely necessary, and without which the continued application of redemption cannot take place. In the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus the wondrous reconciliation took place, by which man became partaker of the Divine life and blessedness. But the real personal appropriation of this reconciliation in each of His members here below cannot take place without the unceasing exercise of His Divine power by the head in heaven. In all conversion and sanctification, in every victory over sin and the world, there is a real forth-putting of the power of Him who is mighty to save. And this exercise of His power only takes place through His prayer: He asks of the Father, and receives from the Father. '*He is able* to save to the uttermost, *because* He ever liveth to make intercession.' There is not a need of His people but He receives in intercession what the Godhead has to give: His mediation on the throne is as real and indispensable as on the cross. Nothing takes place without His intercession: it engages all His time and powers, is His unceasing occupation at the right hand of the Father.

And we participate not only in the benefits of this His work, but in the work itself. This because we are His body. Body and members are one: 'The head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of thee.' We share with Jesus in all He is and has: 'The glory which Thou gavest me, I have given them.' We are partakers of His life, His righteousness, His work: we share with Him in His intercession too; it is not a work He does without us.

We do this because we are partakers of His life: 'Christ is our life;' 'No longer I, but Christ liveth in me.' The life in Him and in us is identical, one and the same. His life in us is an *ever-praying* life. When it descends and takes possession of us, it does not lose its character; in us too it is the *every-praying* life—a life that without ceasing asks and receives from God. And this not as if there were two separate currents of prayer rising upwards, one from Him, and one from His people. No, but the substantial life-union is also prayer-union: what He prays passes through us, what we pray passes through Him. He is the angel with the golden censer: 'UNTO HIM there was given much incense,' the secret of acceptable prayer, 'that He should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar.' We live, we abide in Him, the Interceding One.

The Only-begotten is the only one who has the right to pray: to Him alone it was said, 'Ask, and it shall be given Thee.' As in all other things the fulness dwells in Him, so the true prayer-fulness too; He alone has the power of prayer. And just as the growth of the spiritual life consists in the clearer insight that all the treasures are *in Him,* and that we too are *in Him*, to receive each moment what we possess in Him, grace for grace, so with the prayer-life too. Our faith in the intercession of Jesus must not only be that He prays in our stead, when we do not or cannot pray, but that, as the Author of our life and our faith, He draws us on to pray in unison with Himself. Our prayer must be a work of faith in this sense too, that as we know that Jesus communicates His whole life in us, He also out of that prayerfulness which is His alone breathes into us our praying.

To many a believer it was a new epoch in his spiritual life when it was revealed to him how truly and entirely Christ was his life, standing good as surety for his remaining faithful and obedient. It was then first that he really began to life a *faith-life.* No less blessed will be the discovery that Christ is surety for our prayer-life too, the centre and embodiment of all prayer, to be communicated by Him through the Holy Spirit to His people. 'He ever liveth to make intercession' as the Head of the body, as the Leader in that new and living way which He hath opened up, as the Author and the Perfecter of our faith. He provides in everything for the life of His redeemed ones by giving His own life in them: He cares for their life of prayer, by taking them up into His heavenly prayer-life, by giving and maintaining His prayer-life within them. 'I have prayed for thee,' not to render thy faith needless, but 'that *thy faith* fail not:' our faith and prayer of faith is rooted in His. It is, 'if ye abide in me,' the ever-living Intercessor, and pray with me and in me: 'ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.'

The thought of our fellowship in the intercession of Jesus reminds us of what He has taught us more than once before, how all these wonderful prayer-promises have as their aim and their justification, the glory of God in the manifestation of His kingdom and the salvation of sinners. As long as we only or chiefly pray for ourselves, the promises of the last night must remain a sealed book to us. It is to the fruit-bearing branches of the Vine; it is to disciples sent into the world as the Father sent Him, to live for perishing men; it is

to His faithful servants and intimate friends who take up the work He leaves behind, who have like their Lord become as the seed-corn, losing its life to multiply it manifold;—it is to such that the promises are given. Let us each find out what the work is, and who the souls are entrusted to our special prayers; let us make our intercession for them our life of fellowship with God, and we shall not only find the promises of power in prayer made true to us, but we shall then first begin to realize how our abiding in Christ and His abiding in us makes us share in His own joy of blessing and saving men.

O most wonderful intercession of our Blessed Lord Jesus, to which we not only owe everything, but in which we are taken up as active partners and fellow-workers! Now we understand what it is to pray in the Name of Jesus, and why it has such power. In His Name, in His Spirit, in Himself, in perfect union with Him. O wondrous, ever active, and most efficacious intercession of the man Christ Jesus! When shall we be wholly taken up into it and always pray in it?

‘LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

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Blessed Lord! In lowly adoration I would again bow before Thee. Thy whole redemption work has now passed into prayer; all that now occupies Thee in maintaining and dispensing what Thou didst purchase with Thy blood is only prayer. Thou ever livest to pray. And because we are and abide in Thee, the direct access to the Father is always open, our life can be one of unceasing prayer, and the answer to our prayer is sure.

Blessed Lord! Thou hast invited Thy people to be Thy fellow-workers in a life of prayer. Thou hast united Thyself with Thy people and makest them as Thy body share with Thee in that ministry of intercession through which alone the world can be filled with the fruit of Thy redemption and the glory of the Father. With more liberty than ever I come to Thee, my Lord, and beseech Thee: Teach me to pray. Thy life is prayer, Thy life is mine. Lord! teach me to pray, in Thee, like Thee.

And, O my Lord! Give me specially to know, as Thou didst promise Thy disciples, that Thou art in the Father, and I in Thee, and Thou in me. Let the uniting power of the Holy Spirit make my whole life an abiding in Thee and Thy intercession, so that my prayer may be its echo, and the Father hear me in Thee and Thee in me. Lord Jesus! let Thy mind in everything be in me, and my life in everything by in Thee. So shall I be prepared to be the channel through which Thy intercession pours its blessing on the world. Amen.

NOTE.

‘The new epoch of prayer in the Name of Jesus is pointed out by Christ as the time of the outpouring of the Spirit, in which the disciples enter upon a more enlightened apprehension of the economy of redemption, and become as clearly conscious of their oneness with Jesus as of His oneness with the Father. Their prayer in the Name of Jesus is now directly to the Father Himself. “*I say not that I will pray* for you, for the Father Himself loveth you,” Jesus says; while

He had previously spoken of the time before the Spirit's coming: *"I will pray* the Father, and He will give you the Comforter." This prayer thus has as its central thought the insight into our being united to God in Christ as on both sides the living bond of union between God and us (John xvii 23: "I in them and Thou in me"), so that in Jesus we behold the Father as united to us, and ourselves as united to the Father. Jesus Christ must have been revealed to us, not only through the truth in the mind, but in our inmost personal consciousness as the living personal reconciliation, as He in whom God's Fatherhood and Father-love have been perfectly united with human nature and it with God. Not that with the immediate prayer to the Father, the mediatorship of Christ is set aside; but it is no longer looked at as something external, existing outside of us, but as a real living spiritual existence within us, so that the Christ *for us*, the Mediator, has really become Christ *in us.*

'When the consciousness of this oneness between God in Christ and us in Christ still is wanting, or has been darkened by the sense of guilt, then the prayer of faith looks to our Lord as the Advocate, who pays the Father *for us.* (Compare John xvi. 26 with xiv. 16, 17, ix. 20; Luke xxi. 32; I John ii. 1.) To take Christ thus in prayer as Advocate, is according to John xvi. 26 not perfectly the same as the prayer in His Name. Christ's advocacy is meant to lead us on to that inner self-standing life-union with Him, and with the Father in Him, in virtue of which Christ is He in whom God enters into immediate relation and unites Himself with us, and in whom we in all circumstances enter into immediate relation with God. Even so the prayer in the Name of Jesus does not consist in our prayer at His command: the disciples had prayed thus ever since the Lord had given them His "Our Father," and yet He says, "Hitherto ye have not prayed in my Name." Only when the mediation of Christ has become, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, life and power within us, and so *His mind, as it found expression in His word and work, has taken possession of and filled our personal consciousness and will*, so that in faith and love we have Jesus in us as the Reconciler who has actually made us one with God: only then His Name, which included His nature and His work, is become truth and power in us (not only for us), and we have in the Name of Jesus the free, direct access to the Father which is sure of being heard. Prayer in the Name of Jesus is the liberty of a son with the Father, just as Jesus had this as the First-begotten. We pray in the place of Jesus, not as if we could put ourselves in His place, but in as far as we are in Him and He in us. We go direct to the Father, but only as the Father is in Christ, not as if He were separate from Christ. Wherever thus the inner man does not live in Christ and has Him not present as the Living One, where His word is not ruling in the heart in its Spirit-power, where His truth and life have not become the life of our soul, it is vain to think that a formula like "for the sake of Thy dear Son" will avail.'—*Christliche Ethik, von Dr. I. T. Beck, Tubingen,* iii. 39.

[1]See on the difference between having Christ as an Advocate or Intercessor who stands outside of us, and the having Him within us, we abiding in Him and He in us through the Holy Spirit perfecting our union with Him, so that we ourselves can come directly to the Father in His Name,—the note above from Beck of Tubingen**.**

27. TWENTY-SEVENTH LESSON – *Christ the High Priest.*

'Father, I will;'

Or, Christ the High Priest

'Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me may be with me where I am.'—JOHN xvii. 24.

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N His parting address, Jesus gives His disciples the full revelation of what the New Life was to be, when once the kingdom of God had come in power. In the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, in union with Him the heavenly Vine, in their going forth to witness and to suffer for Him, they were to find their calling and their blessedness. In between His setting forth of their future new life, the Lord had repeatedly given the most unlimited promises as to the power their prayers might have. And now in closing, He Himself proceeds to pray. To let His disciples have the joy of knowing what His intercession for them in heaven as their High Priest will be, He gives this precious legacy of His prayer to the Father. He does this at the same time because they as priests are to share in His work of intercession, that they and we might know how to perform this holy work. In the teaching of our Lord on this last night, we have learned to understand that these astonishing prayer-promises have not been given in our own behalf, but in the interest of the Lord and His kingdom: it is from the Lord Himself alone that we can learn what the prayer in His Name is to be and to obtain. We have understood that to pray in His Name is to pray in perfect unity with Himself: the high-priestly prayer will teach all that the prayer in the Name of Jesus may ask and expect.

This prayer is ordinarily divided into three parts. Our Lord first prays for Himself (v. 1-5), then for His disciples (6-19), and last for all the believing people through all ages (20-26). The follower of Jesus, who gives himself to the work of intercession, and would fain try how much of blessing he can pray down upon his circle in the Name of Jesus, will in all humility let himself be led of the Spirit to study this wonderful prayer as one of the most important lessons of the school of prayer.

First of all, Jesus prays for Himself, for His being glorified, that so He may glorify the Father. 'Father! Glorify Thy Son. And now, Father, glorify me.' And He brings forward the grounds on which He thus prays. A holy covenant had been concluded between the Father and the Son in heaven. The Father had promised Him power over all flesh as the reward of His work: He had done the work, He had glorified the Father, and His one purpose is now still further to glorify Him. With the utmost boldness He asks that the Father may glorify Him, that He may now be and do for His people all He has undertaken.

Disciple of Jesus! here you have the first lesson in your work of priestly intercession, to be learned from the example of your great High Priest. To pray in the Name of Jesus is to pray in unity, in sympathy with Him. As the Son began His prayer by making clear His relation to the Father, pleading His work and obedience and His desire to see the Father glorified, do so too. Draw near and appear before the Father in Christ. Plead His finished work. Say that you are one with it, that you trust on it, live in it. Say that you too have given yourself to finish the work the Father has given you to do, and to live alone for His glory. And ask then confidently that the Son may be glorified in you. This is praying in the Name, in the very words, in the Spirit of Jesus, in union with Jesus Himself. Such prayer has power. If with Jesus you glorify the Father, the Father will glorify Jesus by doing what you ask in His Name. It is only when your own personal relation on this point, like Christ's, is clear with God, when you are glorifying Him, and seeking all for His glory, that like Christ, you will have power to intercede for those around you.

Our Lord next prays for the circle of His disciples. He speaks of them as those whom the Father has given Him. Their chief mark is that they have received Christ's word. He says of them that He now sends them into the world in His place, just as the Father had sent Himself. And He asks two things for them: that the Father keep them from the evil one, and sanctify them through His Word, because He sanctifies Himself for them.

Just like the Lord, each believing intercessor has his own immediate circle for whom he first prays. Parents have their children, teachers their pupils, pastors their flocks, all workers their special charge, all believers those whose care lies upon their hearts. It is of

great consequence that intercession should be personal, pointed, and definite. And then our first prayer must always be that they may receive the word. But this prayer will not avail unless with our Lord we say, 'I have given them Thy word:' it is this gives us liberty and power in intercession for souls. Not only pray for them, but speak to them. And when they have received the word, let us pray much for their being kept from the evil one, for their being sanctified through that word. Instead of being hopeless or judging or giving up those who fall, let us pray for our circle, 'Father! Keep them in Thy Name;' 'Sanctify them through Thy truth.' Prayer in the Name of Jesus availeth much: 'What ye will shall be done unto you.'

And then follows our Lord's prayer for a still wider circle. 'I pray not only for these, but for them who through their word shall believe.' His priestly heart enlarges itself to embrace all places and all time, and He prays that all who belong to Him may everywhere be one, as God's proof to the world of the divinity of His mission, and then that they may ever be with Him in His glory. Until then 'that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.'

The disciple of Jesus, who has first in his own circle proved the power of prayer, cannot confine himself within its limits: he prays for the Church universal and its different branches. He prays specially for the unity of the Spirit and of love. He prays for its being one in Christ, as a witness to the world that Christ, who hath wrought such a wonder as to make love triumph over selfishness and separation, is indeed the Son of God sent from heaven. Every believer ought to pray much that the unity of the Church, not in external organizations, but in spirit and in truth, may be made manifest.

So much for the matter of the prayer. Now for its mode. Jesus says, 'FATHER! I WILL.' On the ground of His right as Son, and the Father's promise to Him, and His finished work, He might do so. The Father had said to Him, 'Ask of me, and I will give Thee.' He simply availed Himself of the Father's promise. Jesus has given us a like promise: '*Whatsoever ye will* shall be done unto you.' He asks me in His Name to say what I will. Abiding in Him, in a living union with Him in which man is nothing and Christ all, the believer has the liberty to take up that word of His High Priest and, in answer to the question '*What wilt thou?*' to say, 'FATHER! I WILL all that Thou hast promised.' This is nothing but true faith; this is honouring God: to be assured that such confidence in saying what I will is indeed acceptable to Him. At first sight, our heart shrinks from the expression; we feel neither the liberty nor the power to speak thus. It is a word for which alone in the most entire abnegation of our will grace will be given, but for which grace will most assuredly be given to each one who loses his will in his Lord's. He that loseth his will shall find it; he that gives up his will entirely shall find it again renewed and strengthened with a Divine Strength. 'FATHER! I WILL:' this is the keynote of the everlasting, ever-active, all-prevailing intercession of our Lord in heaven. It is only in union with Him that our prayer avails; in union with Him it avails much. If we but abide in Him, living, and walking, and doing all things in His Name; if we but come and bring each separate petition, tested and touched by His Word and Spirit, and cast it into the mighty stream of intercession that goes up from Him, to be borne upward and presented before the Father;—we shall have the full confidence that we receive the petitions we ask: the 'Father! *I will*' will be breathed into us by the Spirit Himself. We shall lose ourselves in Him, and become nothing, to find that in our impotence we have

power and prevail.

Disciples of Jesus! Called to be like your Lord in His priestly intercession, when, O when! Shall we awaken to the glory, passing all conception, of this our destiny to plead and prevail with God for perishing men? O when shall we shake off the sloth that clothes itself with the pretence of humility, and yield ourselves wholly to God's Spirit, that He may fill our wills with light and with power, to know, and to take, and to possess all that our God is waiting to give to a will that lays hold on Him.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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O my Blessed High Priest! who am I that Thou shouldest thus invite me to share with Thee in Thy power of prevailing intercession! And why, O my Lord! am I so slow of heart to understand and believe and exercise this wonderful privilege to which Thou hast redeemed Thy people. O Lord! give Thy grace that this may increasingly be my unceasing life-work—in praying without ceasing to draw down the blessing of heaven on all my surroundings on earth.

Blessed Lord! I come now to accept this my calling. For this I would forsake all and follow Thee. Into Thy hands I would believingly yield my whole being: form, train, inspire me to be one of Thy prayer-legion, wrestlers who watch and strive in prayer, Israels, God's princes, who have power and prevail. Take possession of my heart, and fill it with the one desire for the glory of God in the ingathering, and sanctification, and union of those whom the Father hath given Thee. Take my mind and let this be my study and my wisdom, to know when prayer can bring a blessing. Take me wholly and fit me as a priest ever to stand before God and to bless in His Name.

Blessed Lord! Be it here, as through all the spiritual life: Thou all, I nothing. And be it here my experience too that he that has and seeks nothing for himself, receives all, even to the wonderful grace of sharing with Thee in Thine everlasting ministry of intercession. Amen.

28. TWENTY-EIGHTH LESSON – *Christ the sacrifice.*

'Father! Not what I will;'

Or, Christ the Sacrifice.

'And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; remove this cup from me: howbeit not what I will, but what Thou wilt.'—MARK xiv. 36.

WHAT a contrast within the space of a few hours! What a transition from the quiet elevation of that, He lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, FATHER I WILL,' to that falling on the ground and crying in agony. 'My Father! Not what I will.' In the one we see the High Priest within the veil in His all-prevailing intercession; in the other, the sacrifice on the altar opening the way through the rent veil. The high-priestly 'Father! I will,' in order of time precedes the sacrificial 'Father! Not what I will;' but this was only by anticipation, to show what the intercession would be when once the sacrifice was brought. In reality it was that prayer at the altar, 'Father! Not what I will,' in which the prayer before the throne, 'Father! I will,' had its origin and its power. It is from the entire surrender of His will in Gethsemane that the High Priest on the throne has the power to ask what He will, has the right to make His people share in that power too, and ask what they will.

For all who would learn to pray in the school of Jesus, this Gethsemane lesson is one of the most sacred and precious. To a superficial scholar it may appear to take away the courage to pray in faith. If even the earnest supplication of the Son was not heard, if even the Beloved had to say, 'NOT WHAT I WILL!' how much more do we need to speak so. And thus it appears impossible that the promises which the Lord had given only a few hours previously, 'WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK,' 'WHATSOEVER YE WILL,' could have been meant literally. A deeper insight into the meaning of Gethsemane would teach us that we have just here the sure ground and the open way to the assurance of an answer to our prayer. Let us draw nigh in reverent and adoring wonder, to gaze on this great sight—God's Son thus offering up prayer and supplications with strong crying and tears, and not obtaining what He asks. He Himself is our Teacher, and will open up to us the mystery of His holy sacrifice, as revealed in this wondrous prayer.

To understand the prayer, let us note the infinite difference between what our Lord prayed a little ago as a Royal High Priest, and what He here supplicates in His weakness. *There* it was for the glorifying of the Father He prayed, and the glorifying of Himself and His people as the fulfilment of distinct promises that had been given Him. He asked what He knew to be according to the word and the will of the Father; He might boldly say, 'FATHER! I WILL.' *Here* He prays for something in regard to which the Father's will is not yet clear to Him. As far as He knows, it is the Father's will that He should drink the cup. He had told His disciples of the cup He must drink: a little later He would again say, 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' It was for this He had come to this earth. But when, in the unutterable agony of soul that burst upon him as the power of darkness came upon Him, and He began to taste the first drops of death as the wrath of God against sin, His human nature, as it shuddered in presence of the awful reality of being made a curse, gave utterance in this cry of anguish, to its desire that, if God's purpose could be accomplished without it, He might be spared the awful cup: 'Let this cup pass from me.' That desire was the evidence of the intense reality of His humanity. The 'Not as I will' kept that desire from being sinful: as He pleadingly cries, 'All things are possible with Thee,' and returns again to still more earnest prayer that the

cup may be removed, it is His thrice-repeated 'NOT WHAT I WILL' that constitutes the very essence and worth of His sacrifice. He had asked for something of which He could not say: I know it is Thy will. He had pleaded God's power and love, and had then withdrawn it in His final, 'THY WILL BE DONE.' The prayer that the cup should pass away could not be answered; the prayer of submission that God's will be done was heard, and gloriously answered in His victory first over the fear, and then over the power of death.

It is in this denial of His will, this complete surrender of His will to the will of the Father, that Christ's obedience reached its highest perfection. It is from the sacrifice of the will in Gethsemane that the sacrifice of the life on Calvary derives its value. It is here, as Scripture saith, that He learned obedience, and became the author of everlasting salvation to all that obey Him. It was because He there, in that prayer, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him the power to ask what He will. It was in that 'Father! Not what I will,' that He obtained the power for that other 'FATHER! I will.' It was by Christ's submittal in Gethsemane to have not His will done, that He secured for His people the right to say to them, 'Ask whatsoever ye will.'

Let me look at them again, the deep mysteries that Gethsemane offers to my view. There is the first: the Father offers His Well-beloved the cup, the cup of wrath. The second: the Son, always so obedient, shrinks back, and implores that He may not have to drink it. The third: the Father does not grant the Son His request, but still gives the cup. And then the last: the Son yields His will, is content that His will be not done, and goes out to Calvary to drink the cup. O Gethsemane! in thee I see how my Lord could give me such unlimited assurance of an answer to my prayers. As my surety He won it for me, by His consent to have His petition unanswered.

This is in harmony with the whole scheme of redemption. Our Lord always wins for us the opposite of what He suffered. He was bound that we might go free. He was made sin that we might become the righteousness of God. He died that we might live. He bore God's curse that God's blessing might be ours. He endured the not answering of His prayer, that our prayers might find an answer. Yea, He spake, '*Not as I will,'* that He might say to us, 'If ye abide in me, *ask what ye will;* it shall be done unto you.'

Yes, 'If ye abide in me;' here in Gethsemane the word acquires new force and depth. Christ is our Head, who as surety stands in our place, and bears what we must for ever have borne. We had deserved that God should turn a deaf ear to us, and never listen to our cry. Christ comes, and suffers this too for us: He suffers what we had merited; for our sins He suffers beneath the burden of that unanswered prayer. But now His suffering this avails for me: what He has borne is taken away for me; His merit has won for me the answer to every prayer, if I abide in Him.

Yes, in Him, as He bows there in Gethsemane, I must abide. As my Head, He not only once suffered for me, but ever lives in me, breathing and working His own disposition in me too. The Eternal Spirit, through which He offered Himself unto God, is the Spirit that dwells in me too, and makes me partaker of the very same obedience, and the sacrifice of the will unto God. That Spirit teaches me to yield my will entirely to the will of the Father, to give it up even unto the death, in Christ to be dead to it. Whatever is

my own mind and thought and will, even though it be not directly sinful, He teaches me to fear and flee. He opens my ear to wait in great gentleness and teachableness of soul for what the Father has day by day to speak and to teach. He discovers to me how union with God's will in the love of it is union with God Himself; how entire surrender to God's will is the Father's claim, the Son's example, and the true blessedness of the soul. He leads my will into the fellowship of Christ's death and resurrection, my will dies in Him, in Him to be made alive again. He breathes into it, as a renewed and quickened will, a holy insight into God's perfect will, a holy joy in yielding itself to be an instrument of that will, a holy liberty and power to lay hold of God's will to answer prayer. With my whole will I learn to live for the interests of God and His kingdom, to exercise the power of that will—crucified but risen again—in nature and in prayer, on earth and in heaven, with men and with God. The more deeply I enter into the 'FATHER! NOT WHAT I WILL' of Gethsemane, and into Him who spake it, to abide in Him, the fuller is my spiritual access into the power of His 'FATHER! I WILL. And the soul experiences that it is the will, which has become nothing that God's will may be all, which now becomes inspired with a Divine strength to really will what God wills, and to claim what has been promised it in the name of Christ.

O let us listen to Christ in Gethsemane, as He calls, 'If ye abide in me, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' Being of one mind and spirit with Him in His giving up everything to God's will, living like Him in obedience and surrender to the Father; this is abiding in Him; this is the secret of power in prayer.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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Blessed Lord Jesus! Gethsemane was Thy school, where Thou didst learn to pray and to obey. It is still Thy school, where Thou leadest all Thy disciples who would fain learn to obey and to pray even as Thou. Lord! teach me there to pray, in the faith that Thou has atoned for and conquered our self-will, and canst indeed give us grace to pray like Thee.

O Lamb of God! I would follow Thee to Gethsemane, there to become one with Thee, and to abide in Thee as Thou dost unto the very death yield Thy will unto the Father. With Thee, through Thee, in Thee, I do yield my will in absolute and entire surrender to the will of the Father. Conscious of my own weakness, and the secret power with which self-will would assert itself and again take its place on the throne, I claim in faith the power of Thy victory. Thou didst triumph over it and deliver me from it. In Thy death I would daily live; in Thy life I would daily die. Abiding in Thee, let my will, through the power of Thine eternal Spirit, only be the tuned instrument which yields to every touch of the will of my God. With my whole soul do I say with Thee and in Thee, 'Father! Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'

And then, Blessed Lord! Open my heart and that of all Thy people, to take in fully the glory of the truth, that a will given up to God is a will accepted of God to be used in his service, to desire, and purpose, and determine, and will what is according to God's

will. A will which, in the power of the Holy Spirit the indwelling God, is to exercise its royal prerogative in prayer, to loose and to bind in heaven and upon earth, to ask whatsoever it will, and to say it shall be done.

O Lord Jesus! teach me to pray. Amen.

29. TWENTY-NINTH LESSON – *According to His will.*

'If we ask according to His will;

Or, Our Boldness in Prayer.

'And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that, if we *ask anything according to His will,* He heareth us. And if we know that He hear us, *whatsoever we ask,* we know that *we have the petitions* which we have asked of Him.'—I JOHN v. 14, 15.

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NE of the greatest hindrances to believing prayer is with many undoubtedly this: they know not if what they ask is according to the will of God. As long as they are in doubt on this point, they cannot have the boldness to ask in the assurance that they certainly shall receive. And they soon begin to think that, if once they have made known their requests, and receive no answer, it is best to leave it to God to do according to His good pleasure. The words of John, 'If we ask anything *according to His will,* He heareth us,' as they understand them, make certainty as to answer to prayer impossible, because they cannot be sure of what really may be the will of God. They think of God's will as His hidden counsel—how should man be able to fathom what really may be the purpose of the all-wise God.

This is the very opposite of what John aimed at in writing thus. He wished to rouse us to boldness, to confidence, to full assurance of faith in prayer. He says, '*This is the boldness which we have toward Him,'* that we can say: Father! Thou knowest and I know that I ask according to Thy will: I know Thou hearest me. 'This is the boldness, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us.' On this account He adds at once: 'If we know that He heareth us whatsoever we ask, we *know,*' through this faith, that we have,' that we now while we pray receive 'the petition,' the special things, 'we have asked of Him.' John supposes that when we pray, we first find out if our prayers are according to the will of God. They may be according to God's will, and yet not come at once, or without the persevering prayer of faith. It is to give us courage thus to persevere and to be strong in faith, that He tells us: This gives us boldness or confidence in prayer, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us. It is evident that if it be a matter of uncertainty to us whether our petitions be according to His will, we cannot have the comfort of what he says, 'We know that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him.'

But just this is the difficulty. More than one believer says: 'I do not know if what I desire be according to the will of God. God's will is the purpose of His infinite wisdom: it is impossible for me to know whether He may not count something else better for me than what I desire, or may not have some reasons for withholding what I ask.' Every one feels how with such thoughts the prayer of faith, of which Jesus said, 'Whosoever shall believe that *these things which he saith* shall come to pass, he shall have *whatsoever* he saith,' becomes an impossibility. There may be the prayer of submission, and of trust in God's wisdom; there cannot be the prayer of faith. The great mistake here is that God's children do not really believe that it is possible to know God's will. Or if they believe this, they do not take the time and trouble to find it out. What we need is to see clearly in what way it is that the Father leads His waiting, teachable child to know that his petition is according to His will.[1] It is through God's holy word, taken up and kept in the heart, the life, the will; and through God's Holy Spirit, accepted in His indwelling and leading, that we shall learn to know that our petitions are according to His will.

Through the word. There is a secret will of God, with which we often fear that our prayers may be at variance. It is not with this will of God, but His will as revealed in His word, that we have to do in prayer. Our notions of what the secret will may have decreed, and of how it might render the answers to our prayers impossible, are mostly very erroneous. Childlike faith as to what He is willing to do for His children, simply keeps to the Father's assurance, that it is His will to hear prayer and to do what faith in His word desires and accepts. In the word the Father has revealed in general promises the great principles of His will with His people. The child has to take the promise and apply it to the special circumstances in His life to which it has reference. Whatever he asks within the limits of that revealed will, he can know to be according to the will of God, and he may confidently expect. In His word, God has given us the revelation of His will and plans with us, with His people, and with the world, with the most precious promises of the grace and power with which through His people He will carry out His plans and do His work. As faith becomes strong and bold enough to claim the fulfilment of the general promise in the special case, we may have the assurance that our prayers are heard: they are according to God's will. Take the words of John in the verse following our text as an illustration: 'If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask and *God will give him life.'* Such is the general promise; and the believer who pleads on the ground of this promise, prays according to the will of God, and John would give him boldness to know that he has the petition which he asks.

But this apprehension of God's will is something spiritual, and must be spiritually discerned. It is not as a matter of logic that we can argue it out: God has said it; I must have it. Nor has every Christian the same gift or calling. While the general will revealed in the promise is the same for all, there is for each one a special different will according to God's purpose. And herein is the wisdom of the saints, to know this special will of God for each of us, according to the measure of grace given us, and so to ask in prayer just what God has prepared and made possible for each. It is to communicate this wisdom *that the Holy Ghost dwells in us*. The personal application of the general promises of the word to our special personal needs—*it is for this that the leading of the Holy Spirit is given us.*

It is this union of the teaching of the word and Spirit that many do not understand, and so there is a twofold difficulty in knowing what God's will may be. Some seek the

will of God in an inner feeling or conviction, and would have the Spirit lead them without the word. Others seek it in the word, without the living leading of the Holy Spirit. The two must be united: only in the word, only in the Spirit, but in these most surely, can we know the will of God, and learn to pray according to it. In the heart the word and the Spirit must meet: it is only by indwelling that we can experience their teaching. The word must dwell, must abide in us: heart and life must day by day be under its influence. Not from without, but from within, comes the quickening of the word by the Spirit. It is only he who yields himself entirely in his whole life to the supremacy of the word and the will of God, who can expect in special cases to discern what that word and will permit him boldly to ask. And even as with the word, just so with the Spirit: if I would have the leading of the Spirit in prayer to assure me what God's will is, my whole life must be yielded to that leading; so only can mind and heart become spiritual and capable of knowing God's holy will. It is he who, through word and Spirit, *lives in the will* of God by doing it, who will know to pray according to that will in the confidence that He hears us.

Would that Christians might see what incalculable harm they do themselves by the thought that because possibly their prayer is not according to God's will, they must be content without an answer. God's word tells us that the great reason of unanswered prayer is that we do not pray aright: 'Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss.' In not granting an answer, the Father tells us that there is something wrong in our praying. He wants to teach us to find it out and confess it, and so to educate us to true believing and prevailing prayer. He can only attain His object when He brings us to see that we are to blame for the withholding of the answer; our aim, or our faith, or our life is not what it should be. But this purpose of God is frustrated as long as we are content to say: It is perhaps because my prayer is not according to His will that He does not hear me. O let us no longer throw the blame of our unanswered prayers on the secret will of God, but on our praying amiss. Let that word, 'Ye receive not because ye ask amiss,' be as the lantern of the Lord, searching heart and life to prove that we are indeed such as those to whom Christ gave His promises of certain answers. Let us believe that we *can know* if our prayer be according to God's will. Let us yield our heart to have the word of the Father dwell richly there, to have Christ's word abiding in us. Let us live day by day with the anointing which teacheth us all things. Let us yield ourselves unreservedly to the Holy Spirit as He teaches us to abide in Christ, to dwell in the Father's presence, and we shall soon understand how the Father's love longs that the child should know His will, and should, in the confidence that that will includes all that His power and love have promised to do, know too that He hears the petitions which we ask of Him. '*This is* the boldness which we have, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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Blessed Master! With my whole heart I thank Thee for this blessed lesson, that the path to a life full of answers to prayer is through the will of God. Lord! Teach me to

know this blessed will by living it, loving it, and always doing it. So shall I learn to offer prayers according to that will, and to find in their harmony with God's blessed will, my boldness in prayer and my confidence in accepting the answer.

Father! *it is Thy will* that Thy child should enjoy Thy presence and blessing. *It is Thy will* that everything in the life of Thy child should be in accordance with Thy will, and that the Holy Spirit should work this in Him. *It is Thy will* that Thy child should live in the daily experience of distinct answers to prayer, so as to enjoy living and direct fellowship with Thyself. *It is Thy will* that Thy Name should be glorified in and through Thy children, and that it will be in those who trust Thee. O my Father! let this Thy will be my confidence in all I ask.

Blessed Saviour! Teach me to believe in the glory of this will. That will is the eternal love, which with Divine power works out its purpose in each human will that yields itself to it. Lord! Teach me this. Thou canst make me see how every promise and every command of the word is indeed the will of God, and that its fulfilment is secured to me by God Himself. Let thus the will of God become to me the sure rock on which my prayer and my assurance of an answer ever rest. Amen.

NOTE.

There is often great confusion as to the will of God. People think that what God wills must inevitably take place. This is by no means the case. God wills a great deal of blessing to His people, which never comes to them. He wills it most earnestly, but they do not will it, and it cannot come to them. This is the great mystery of man's creation with a free will, and also of the renewal of his will in redemption, that God has made the execution of His will, in many things, dependent on the will of man. Of God's will revealed in His promises, so much will be fulfilled as our faith accepts. Prayer is the power by which that comes to pass which otherwise would not take place. And faith, the power by which it is decided how much of God's will shall be done in us. When once God reveals to a soul what He is willing to do for it, the responsibility for the execution of that will rests with us.

Some are afraid that this is putting too much power into the hands of man. But all power is put into the hands of man in Christ Jesus. The key of all prayer and all power is His, and when we learn to understand that He is just as much with us as with the Father, and that we are also just as much one with Him as He with the Father, we shall see how natural and right and safe it is that to those who abide in Him as He in the Father, such power should be given. It is Christ the Son who has the right to ask what He will: it is through the abiding in Him and His abiding in us (in a Divine reality of which we have too little apprehension) that His Spirit breathes in us what He wants to ask and obtain through us. We pray in His Name: the prayers are really ours and as really His.

Others again fear that to believe that prayer has such power is limiting the liberty and the love of God. O if we only knew how we are limiting His liberty and His love by not allowing Him to act in the only way in which He chooses to act, now that He has taken us up into fellowship with himself—through our prayers and our faith. A brother in the ministry once asked, as we were speaking on this subject, whether there was not a danger of our thinking that our love to souls and our willingness to see them blessed were to move God's love and God's willingness to bless them. We were just passing some large water-pipes, by which water was being carried over hill and dale from a large mountain stream to a town at some distance. Just look at these pipes, was the answer; they did not make the water willing to flow downwards from the hills, nor did they give it its power of blessing and refreshment: this is its very nature. All that they could do is to decide its direction: by it the inhabitants of the town said they want the blessing there. And just so, it is the very nature of God to love and to bless. Downward and ever downward His love longs to come with its quickening and refreshing streams. But He has left it to prayer to say where the blessing is to come. He has committed it to His believing people to bring the living water to the desert places: the will of God to bless is dependent upon the will of man to say where the blessing must descend. 'Such honour have His saints.' 'And this is *the boldness* which we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us. And if *we know* that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, *we know that we have* the petitions which we have asked of Him.'

1See this illustrated in the extracts from George Muller at the end of this volume.

30. THIRTIETH LESSON – *The ministry of intercession.*

‘An holy priesthood;’

Or, The Ministry of Intercession.

‘An holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.’—I PETER ii. 5.

‘Ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord.’—ISAIAH lxi. 6.

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HE Spirit of the Lord God is upon me: because the Lord hath anointed me.’ These are the words of Jesus in Isaiah. As the fruit of His work all redeemed ones are priests, fellow-partakers with Him of His anointing with the Spirit as High Priest. ‘Like the precious ointment upon the beard of Aaron, that went down to the skirts of his garments.’ As every son of Aaron, so every member of Jesus’ body has a right to the priesthood. But not every one exercises it: many are still entirely ignorant of it. And yet it is the highest privilege of a child of God, the mark of greatest nearness and likeness to Him, ‘who ever liveth to pray.’ Do you doubt if this really be so? Think of what constitutes priesthood. There is, first, the *work of the priesthood.* This has two sides, one Godward, the other manward. ‘Every priest is *ordained for men* in things *pertaining to God’* (Heb. v. 1); or, as it is said by Moses (Deut. x. 8, see also xxi. 5, xxxiii. 10; Mal. ii. 6): ‘The Lord separated the tribe of Levi, *to stand before the Lord* to minister unto Him, and *to bless His Name.’* On the one hand, the priest had the power to draw nigh to God, to dwell with Him in His house, and to present before Him the blood of the sacrifice or the burning incense. This work he did not do, however, on his own behalf, but for the sake of the people whose representative he was. This is the other side of his work. He received from the people their sacrifices, presented them before God, and then came out to bless in His Name, to give the assurance of His favour and to teach them His law.

A priest is thus a man who does not at all live for himself. *He lives with God and for God.* His work is as God’s servant to care for His house, His honour, and His worship, to make known to men His love and His will. *He lives with men and for men* (Heb. v. 2). His work is to find out their sin and need, and to bring it before God, to offer sacrifice and incense in their name, to obtain forgiveness and blessing for them, and then to come out and bless them in His Name. This is the high calling of every believer. ‘Such honour have all His saints.’ They have been redeemed with the one purpose to be in the midst of the perishing millions around them, God’s priests, who in conformity to Jesus, the Great High Priest, are to be the ministers and stewards of the grace of God to all around them.

And then there is *the walk of the priesthood,* in harmony with its work. As God is holy, so the priest was to be especially holy. This means not only separated from

everything unclean, but *holy unto God*, being set apart and given up to God for His disposal. The separation from the world and setting apart unto God was indicated in many ways.

It was seen in the clothing: the holy garments, made after God's own order, marked them as His (Ex. xxviii.). It was seen in the command as to their special purity and freedom from all contact from death and defilement (Lev. xi. 22). Much that was allowed to an ordinary Israelite was forbidden to them. It was seen in the injunction that the priest must have no bodily defect or blemish; bodily perfection was to be the type of wholeness and holiness in God's service. And it was seen in the arrangement by which the priestly tribes were to have no inheritance with the other tribes; God was to be their inheritance. Their life was to be one of faith: set apart unto God, they were to live on Him as well as for Him.

All this is the emblem of what the character of the New Testament priest is to be. Our priestly power with God depends on our personal life and walk. We must be of them of whose walk on earth Jesus says, 'They have not defiled their garments.'

In the surrender of what may appear lawful to others in our separation from the world, we must prove that our consecration to be holy to the Lord is whole-hearted and entire. The bodily perfection of the priest must have its counterpart in our too being 'without spot or blemish;' 'the man of God perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works,' 'perfect and entire, wanting nothing' (Lev. xxi. 17-21; Eph. v. 27; 2 Tim. ii. 7; Jas. i. 4). And above all, we consent to give up all inheritance on earth; to forsake all, and like Christ to have only God as our portion: to possess as not possessing, and hold all for God alone: it is this marks the true priest, the man who only lives for God and his fellow-men.

And now *the way to the priesthood*. In Aaron God had chosen all his sons to be priests: each of them was a priest by birth. And yet he could not enter upon his work without a special act of ordinance—his consecration. Every child of God is priest in light of his birth, his blood relationship to the Great High Priest; but this is not enough: he will exercise his power only as he accepts and realizes his consecration.

With Aaron and his sons it took place thus (Ex. xxix.): After being washed and clothed, they were anointed with the holy oil. Sacrifices were then offered, and with the blood the right ear, the right hand, and the right foot were touched. And then they and their garments were once again sprinkled with the blood and the oil together. And so it is as the child of God enters more fully into what THE BLOOD and THE SPIRIT of which he already is partaker, are to him, that the power of the Holy Priesthood will work in him. The blood will take away all sense of unworthiness; the Spirit, all sense of unfitness.

Let us notice what there was new in the application of the blood to the priest. If ever he had as a penitent brought a sacrifice for his sin, seeking forgiveness, the blood was sprinkled on the altar, but not on his person. But now, for priestly consecration, there was to be closer contact with the blood; ear and hand and foot were by a special act brought under its power, and the whole being taken possession of and sanctified for God. And so, when the believer, who had been content to think chiefly of the blood sprinkled on the mercy-seat as what he needs for pardon, is led to seek full priestly access to God, he feels the need of a fuller and more abiding experience of the power of the blood, as really

sprinkling and cleansing the heart from an evil conscience, so that he has ‘no more conscience of sin’ (Heb. x. 2) as cleansing from all sin. And it is as he gets to enjoy this, that the consciousness is awakened of his wonderful right of most intimate access to God, and of the full assurance that his intercessions are acceptable.

And as the blood gives the right, the Spirit gives the power, and fits for believing intercession. He breathes into us the priestly spirit—burning love for God’s honour and the saving of souls. He makes us so one with Jesus that prayer in His Name is a reality. He strengthens us to believing, importunate prayer. The more the Christian is truly filled with the Spirit of Christ, the more spontaneous will be his giving himself up to the life of priestly intercession. Beloved fellow-Christians! God needs, greatly needs, priests who can draw near to Him, who live in His presence, and by their intercession draw down the blessings of His grace on others. And the world needs, greatly needs, priests who will bear the burden of the perishing ones, and intercede on their behalf.

Are you willing to offer yourself for this holy work? You know the surrender it demands—nothing less than the Christ-like giving up of all, that the saving purposes of God’s love may be accomplished among men. Oh, be no longer of those who are content if they have salvation, and just do work enough to keep themselves warm and lively. O let nothing keep you back from giving yourselves to be wholly and only priests—nothing else, nothing less than the priests of the Most High God. The thought of unworthiness, of unfitness, need not keep you back. In *the Blood*, the objective power of the perfect redemption works in you: in *the Spirit* its full subjective personal experience as a divine life is secured. *The Blood* provides an infinite worthiness to make your prayers most acceptable: *The Spirit* provides a Divine fitness, teaching you to pray just according to the will of God. *Every priest knew that when he presented a sacrifice according to the law of the sanctuary, it was accepted:* under the covering of the Blood and Spirit you have the assurance that all the wonderful promises to prayer in the Name of Jesus will be fulfilled in you. Abiding in union with the Great High Priest, ‘you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.’ You will have power to pray the effectual prayer of the righteous man that availeth much. You will not only join in the general prayer of the Church for the world, but be able in your own sphere to take up your special work in prayer—as priests, to transact it with God, to receive and know the answer, and so to bless in His Name. Come, brother, come, and be a priest, *only* priest, *all* priest. Seek now to walk before the Lord in the full consciousness that you have been set apart for the holy Ministry of Intercession. This is the true blessedness of conformity to the image of God’s Son.

‘LORD TEACH US TO PRAY.’

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O Thou my blessed High Priest, accept the consecration in which my soul now would respond to Thy message.

I believe in the HOLY PRIESTHOOD OF THY SAINTS, and that I too am a priest, with power to appear before the Father, and in the prayer that avails much bring down blessing on the perishing around me.

I believe in the POWER OF THY PRECIOUS BLOOD to cleanse from all sin, to give me perfect confidence toward God, and bring me near in the full assurance of faith that my intercession will be heard.

I believe in the ANOINTING OF THE SPIRIT, coming down daily from Thee, my Great High Priest, to sanctify me, to fill me with the consciousness of my priestly calling, and with love to souls, to teach me what is according to God's will, and how to pray the prayer of faith.

I believe that, as Thou my Lord Jesus art Thyself in all things my life, so Thou, too, art THE SURETY FOR MY PRAYER-LIFE, and wilt Thyself draw me up into the fellowship of Thy wondrous work of intercession.

In this faith I yield myself this day to my God, as one of His anointed priests, to stand before His face to intercede in behalf of sinners, and to come out and bless in His Name.

Holy Lord Jesus! accept and seal my consecration. Yea, Lord, do Thou lay Thy hands on me, and Thyself consecrate me to this Thy holy work. And let me walk among men with the consciousness and the character of a priest of the Most High God.

Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins IN HIS OWN BLOOD, AND HATH MADE US kings and priests unto God and His Father; TO HIM be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen

31. THIRTY-FIRST LESSON – *Pray Without ceasing.*

'Pray without ceasing;'

Or, A Life of Prayer.

'Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks.—I THESS. v. 16, 17, 18.

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UR Lord spake the parable of the widow and the unjust judge to teach us that men ought to pray always and not faint. As the widow persevered in seeking one definite thing, the parable appears to have reference to persevering prayer for some one blessing, when God delays or appears to refuse. The words in the Epistles, which speak of continuing instant in prayer, continuing in prayer and watching in the same, of praying always in the Spirit, appear more to refer to the whole life being one of prayer. As the soul is filling with the longing for the manifestation of God's glory to us and in us, through us and around us, and with the confidence that He hears the prayers of His children; the inmost life of the soul is continually rising upward in dependence and faith, in longing desire and trustful expectation.

At the close of our meditations it will not be difficult to say what is needed to live

such a life of prayer. The first thing is undoubtedly the entire sacrifice of the life to God's kingdom and glory. He who seeks to pray without ceasing because he wants to be very pious and good, will never attain to it. It is the forgetting of self and yielding ourselves to live for God and His honour that enlarges the heart, that teaches us to regard everything in the light of God and His will, and that instinctively recognises in everything around us the need of God's help and blessing, an opportunity for His being glorified. Because everything is weighed and tested by the one thing that fills the heart—the glory of God, and because the soul has learnt that only what is of God can really be to Him and His glory, the whole life becomes a looking up, a crying from the inmost heart, for God to prove His power and love and so show forth His glory. The believer awakes to the consciousness that he is one of the watchmen on Zion's walls, one of the Lord's remembrancers, whose call does really touch and move the King in heaven to do what would otherwise not be done. He understands how real Paul's exhortation was, 'praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit for all the saints and for me,' and 'continue in prayer, withal praying also for us.' To forget oneself, to live for God and His kingdom among men, is the way to learn to pray without ceasing.

This life devoted to God must be accompanied by the deep confidence that our prayer is effectual. We have seen how our Blessed Lord insisted upon nothing so much in His prayer-lessons as faith in the Father as a God who most certainly does what we ask. 'Ask and ye shall receive;' count confidently on an answer, is with Him the beginning and the end of His teaching (compare Matt. vii. 8 and John xvi. 24). In proportion as this assurance masters us, and it becomes a settled thing that our prayers do tell and that God does what we ask, we dare not neglect the use of this wonderful power: the soul turns wholly to God, and our life becomes prayer. We see that the Lord needs and takes time, because we and all around us are the creatures of time, under the law of growth; but knowing that not one single prayer of faith can possibly be lost that there is sometimes a needs-be for the storing up and accumulating of prayer, that persevering pray is irresistible, prayer becomes the quiet, persistent living of our life of desire and faith in the presence of our God. O do not let us any longer by our reasonings limit and enfeeble such free and sure promises of the living God, robbing them of their power, and ourselves of the wonderful confidence they are meant to inspire. Not in God, not in His secret will, not in the limitations of His promises, but in us, in ourselves is the hindrance; we are not what we should be to obtain the promise. Let us open our whole heart to God's words of promise in all their simplicity and truth: they will search us and humble us; they will lift us up and make us glad and strong. And to the faith that knows it gets what it asks, prayer is not a work or a burden, but a joy and a triumph; it becomes a necessity and a second nature.

This union of strong desire and firm confidence again is nothing but the life of the Holy Spirit within us. The Holy Spirit dwells in us, hides Himself in the depths of our being, and stirs the desire after the Unseen and the Divine, after God Himself. Now in groanings that cannot be uttered, then in clear and conscious assurance; now in special distinct petitions for the deeper revelation of Christ to ourselves, then in pleadings for a soul, a work, the Church or the world, it is always and alone the Holy Spirit who draws out the heart to thirst for God, to long for His being made known and glorified. Where the child of God really lives and walks in the Spirit, where he is not content to remain carnal,

but seeks to be spiritual, in everything a fit organ for the Divine Spirit to reveal the life of Christ and Christ Himself, there the never-ceasing intercession-life of the Blessed Son cannot but reveal and repeat itself in our experience. Because it is the Spirit of Christ who prays in us, our prayer must be heard; because it is we who pray in the Spirit, there is need of time, and patience, and continual renewing of the prayer, until every obstacle be conquered, and the harmony between God's Spirit and ours is perfect.

But the chief thing we need for such a life of unceasing prayer is, to know that Jesus teaches us to pray. We have begun to understand a little what *His* teaching is. Not the communication of new thoughts or views, not the discovery of failure or error, not the stirring up of desire and faith, of however much importance all this be, but the taking us up into the fellowship of His own prayer-life before the Father—this it is by which Jesus really teaches. It was the sight of the praying Jesus that made the disciples long and ask to be taught to pray. It is the faith of the ever-praying Jesus, whose alone is the power to pray, that teaches us truly to pray. We know why: He who prays is our Head and our Life. All He has is ours and is given to us when we give ourselves all to Him. By His blood He leads us into the immediate presence of God. The inner sanctuary is our home, we dwell there. And He that lives so near God, and knows that He has been brought near to bless those who are far, cannot but pray. Christ makes us partakers with Himself of His prayer-power and prayer-life. We understand then that our true aim must not be to work much and have prayer enough to keep the work right, but to pray much and then to work enough for the power and blessing obtained in prayer to find its way through us to men. It is Christ who ever lives to pray, who saves and reigns. He communicates His prayer-life to us: He maintains it in us if we trust Him. He is surety for our praying without ceasing. Yes, Christ teaches to pray by showing how He does it, by doing it in us, by leading us to do it in Him and like Him. Christ is all, the life and the strength too for a never-ceasing prayer-life.

It is the sight of this, the sight of the ever-praying Christ as our life, that enables us to pray without ceasing. Because His priesthood is the power of an endless life, that resurrection-life that never fades and never fails, and because His life is our life, praying without ceasing can become to us nothing less than the life-joy of heaven. So the Apostle says: 'Rejoice *evermore;* pray *without ceasing*; *in everything* give thanks.' Borne up between the never-ceasing joy and the never-ceasing praise, never-ceasing prayer is the manifestation of the power of the eternal life, where Jesus always prays. The union between the Vine and the branch is in very deed a prayer-union. The highest conformity to Christ, the most blessed participation in the glory of His heavenly life, is that we take part in His work of intercession: He and we live ever to pray. In the experience of our union with Him, praying without ceasing becomes a possibility, a reality, the holiest and most blessed part of our holy and blessed fellowship with God. We have our abode within the veil, in the presence of the Father. What the Father says, we do; what the Son says, the Father does. Praying without ceasing is the earthly manifestation of heaven come down to us, the foretaste of the life where they rest not day or night in the song of worship and adoration.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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O my Father, with my whole heart do I praise Thee for this wondrous life of never-ceasing prayer, never-ceasing fellowship, never-ceasing answers, and never-ceasing experience of my oneness with Him who ever lives to pray. O my God! keep me ever so dwelling and walking in the presence of Thy glory, that prayer may be the spontaneous expression of my life with Thee.

Blessed Saviour! with my whole heart I praise Thee that Thou didst come from heaven to share with me in my needs and cries, that I might share with Thee in Thy all-prevailing intercession. And I thank Thee that Thou hast taken me into the school of prayer, to teach the blessedness and the power of a life that is all prayer. And most of all, that Thou hast taken me up into the fellowship of Thy life of intercession, that through me too Thy blessings may be dispensed to those around me.

Holy Spirit! with deep reverence I thank Thee for Thy work in me. It is through Thee I am lifted up into a share in the intercourse between the Son and the Father, and enter so into the fellowship of the life and love of the Holy Trinity Spirit of God! perfect Thy work in me; bring me into perfect union with Christ my Intercessor. Let Thine unceasing indwelling make my life one of unceasing intercession. And let so my life become one that is unceasingly to the glory of the Father and to the blessing of those around me. Amen.

32. George Muller, And The Secret Of His Power In Prayer

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HEN God wishes anew to teach His Church a truth that is not being understood or practised, He mostly does so by raising some man to be in word and deed a living witness to its blessedness. And so God has raised up in this nineteenth century, among others, George Muller to be His witness that He is indeed the Hearer of prayer. I know of no way in which the principal truths of God’s word in regard to prayer can be more effectually illustrated and established than a short review of his life and of what he tells of his prayer-experiences.

He was born in Prussia on 25th September 1805, and is thus now eighty years of age. His early life, even after having entered the University of Halle as a theological student, was wicked in the extreme. Led by a friend one evening, when just twenty years of age, to

a prayer meeting, he was deeply impressed, and soon after brought to know the Saviour. Not long after he began reading missionary papers, and in course of time offered himself to the London Society for promoting Christianity to the Jews. He was accepted as a student, but soon found that he could not in all things submit to the rules of the Society, as leaving too little liberty for the leading of the Holy Spirit. The connection was dissolved in 1830 by mutual consent, and he became the pastor of a small congregation at Teignmouth. In 1832 he was led to Bristol, and it was as pastor of Bethesda Chapel that he was led to the Orphan Home and other work, in connection with which God has so remarkably led him to trust His word and to experience how God fulfils that word.

A few extracts in regard to his spiritual life will prepare the way for what we specially wish to quote of his experiences in reference to prayer.

'In connection with this I would mention, that the Lord very graciously gave me, from the very commencement of my divine life, a measure of simplicity and of childlike disposition in spiritual things, so that whilst I was exceedingly ignorant of the Scriptures, and was still from time to time overcome even by outward sins, yet I was enabled to carry most minute matters to the *Lord in prayer.* And I have found "godliness profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Though very weak and ignorant, yet I had now, by the grace of God, some desire to benefit others, and he who so faithfully had once served Satan, sought now to win souls for Christ.'

It was at Teignmouth that he was led to know how to use God's word , and to trust the Holy Spirit as the Teacher given by God to make that word clear. He writes:—

'God then began to show me that the word of God alone is our standard of judgment in spiritual things; that it can be explained only by the Holy Spirit; and that in our day, as well as in former times. He is the Teacher of His people. The office of the Holy Spirit I had not experimentally understood before that time.

'It was my beginning to understand this latter point in particular, which had a great effect on me; for the Lord enabled me to put it to the test of experience, by laying aside commentaries, and almost every other book and simply reading the word of God and studying it.

'The result of this was, that the first evening that I shut myself into my room, to give myself to prayer and meditation over the Scriptures, I learned more in a few hours than I had done during a period of several months previously.

'*But the particular difference was that I received real strength for my soul in so doing*. I now began to try by the test of the Scriptures the things which I had learned and seen, and found that only those principles which stood the test were of real value.'

Of obedience to the word of God, he writes as follows, in connection with his being baptized:—

'It had pleased God, in His abundant mercy, to bring my mind into such a state, that I was willing to carry out into my life whatever I should find in the Scriptures. I could say, "I will do His will," and it was on that account, I believe, that I saw which "*doctrine is of God.*"—And I would observe here, by the way, that the passage to which I have just alluded (John vii. 17) has been a most remarkable comment to me on many doctrines and

precepts of our most holy faith. For instance: "Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt. v. 39-44). "Sell that ye have, and give alms"(Luke xii. 33). "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another"(Rom. xii. 8). It may be said, "Surely these passages cannot be taken literally, for how then would the people of God be able to pass through the world?" The state of mind enjoined in John vii. 17 will cause such objections to vanish. WHOSOEVER IS WILLING TO ACT OUT these commandments of the Lord LITERALLY, will, I believe, be led with me to see that to take them LITERALLY is the will of God.—Those who do *so* take them will doubtless often be brought into difficulties, hard to the flesh to bear, but these will have a tendency to make them constantly feel that they are strangers and pilgrims here, that this world is not their home, and thus to throw them more upon God, who will assuredly help us through any difficulty into which we may be brought by seeking to act in obedience to His word.'

This implicit surrender to God's word led him to certain views and conduct in regard to money, which mightily influenced his future life. They had their root in the conviction that money was a Divine stewardship, and that all money had therefore to be received and dispensed in direct fellowship with God Himself. This led him to the adoption of the following four great rules: 1. *Not to receive any fixed salary*, both because in the collecting of it there was often much that was at variance with the freewill offering with which God's service is to be maintained, and in the receiving of it a danger of placing more dependence on human sources of income than in the living God Himself. 2. *Never to ask any human being for help*, however great the need might be, but to make his wants known to the God who has promised to care for His servants and to hear their prayer. 3. To take this command (Luke xii. 33) literally, '*Sell that thou hast and give alms,'* and never to save up money, but to spend all God entrusted to him on God's poor, on the work of His kingdom. 4. Also to take Rom. xiii. 8, 'Owe no man anything,' literally, and never to buy on credit, or be in debt for anything, but to trust God to provide.

This mode of living was not easy at first. But Muller testifies it was most blessed in bringing the soul to rest in God, and drawing it into closer union with Himself when inclined to backslide. '*For it will not do, it is not possible, to live in sin, and at the same time, by communion with God, to draw down from heaven everything one needs for the life that now is.'*

Not long after his settlement at Bristol, 'THE SCRIPTURAL KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTION FOR HOME AND ABROAD' was established for aiding in Day, Sunday School, Mission and Bible work. Of this Institution the Orphan Home work, by which Mr. Muller is best known, became a branch. It was in 1834 that his heart was touched by the case of an orphan brought to Christ in one of the schools, but who had to go to a poorhouse where its spiritual wants would not be cared for. Meeting shortly after with a life of Franke, he writes (Nov, 20, 1835): 'Today I have had it very much laid on my heart no longer merely to *think* about the establishment of an Orphan Home, but actually to set about it, and I have been very much in prayer respecting it, in order to ascertain the Lord's

mind. May God make it plain.' And again, Nov. 25: 'I have been again much in prayer yesterday and today about the Orphan Home, and am more and more convinced that it is of God. May He in mercy guide me. The three chief reasons are—1. That God may be glorified, should He be pleased to furnish me with the means, in its being seen that it is not a vain thing to trust Him; and that thus the faith of His children may be strengthened. 2. The spiritual welfare of fatherless and motherless children. 3. Their temporal welfare.'

After some months of prayer and waiting on God, a house was rented, with room for thirty children , and in course of time three more, containing in all 120 children. The work was carried on it this way for ten years, the supplies for the needs of the orphans being asked and received of God alone. It was often a time of sore need and much prayer, but a trial of faith more precious than of gold was found unto praise and honour and glory of God. The Lord was preparing His servant for greater things. By His providence and His Holy Spirit, Mr. Muller was led to desire, and to wait upon God till he received from Him, the sure promise of £15,000 for a Home to contain 300 children. This first Home was opened in 1849. In 1858, a second and third Home, for 950 more orphans, was opened, costing £35,000. And in 1869 and 1870, a fourth and a fifth Home, for 850 more, at an expense of £50,000, making the total number of the orphans 2100.

In addition to this work, God has given him almost as much as for the building of the Orphan Homes, and the maintenance of the orphans, for other work, the support of schools and missions, Bible and tract circulation. In all he has received from God, to be spent in His work, during these fifty years, more than one million pounds sterling. How little he knew, let us carefully notice, that when he gave up his little salary of £35 a year in obedience to the leading of God's word and the Holy Spirit, what God was preparing to give him as the reward of obedience and faith; and how wonderfully the word was to be fulfilled to him: 'Thou hast been faithful over few things; I will set thee over many things.'

And these things have happened for an ensample to us. God calls us to be followers of George Muller, even as he is of Christ. His God is our God; the same promises are for us; the same service of love and faith in which he laboured is calling for us on every side. Let us in connection with our lessons in the school of prayer study the way in which God gave George Muller such power as a man of prayer: we shall find in it the most remarkable illustration of some of the lessons which we have been studying with the blessed Master in the word. We shall specially have impressed upon us His first great lesson, that if we will come to Him in the way He has pointed out, with definite petitions, made known to us by the Spirit through the word as being according to the will of God, we may most confidently believe that whatsoever we ask it shall be done.

PRAYER AND THE WORD OF GOD.

We have more than once seen that God's listening to our voice depends upon our listening to His voice. (See Lessons 22 and 23.) We must not only have a special promise to plead, when we make a special request, but our whole life must be under the supremacy

of the word: the word must be dwelling in us. The testimony of George Muller on this point is most instructive. He tells us how the discovery of the true place of the word of God, and the teaching of the Spirit with it, was the commencement of a new era in his spiritual life. Of it he writes:—

'Now the scriptural way of reasoning would have been: God Himself has condescended to become an author, and I am ignorant about that precious book which His Holy Spirit has caused to be written through the instrumentality of His servants, and it contains that which I ought to know, and the knowledge of which will lead me to true happiness; therefore I ought to read again and again this most precious book, this book of books, most earnestly, most prayerfully, and with much meditation; and in this practice I ought to continue all the days of my life. For I was aware, though I read it but little, that I knew scarcely anything of it. But instead of acting thus and being led by my ignorance of the word of God to study it more, my difficulty in understanding it, and the little enjoyment I had in it, made me careless of reading it (for much prayerful reading of the word gives not merely more knowledge, but increases the delight we have in reading it); and thus, like many believers, I practically preferred, for the first four years of my divine life, the works of uninspired men to the oracles of the living God. The consequence was that I remained a babe, both in knowledge and grace. In knowledge, I say; for all *true* knowledge must be derived, by the Spirit, from the word. And as I neglected the word, I was for nearly four years so ignorant, that I did not *clearly* know even the *fundamental* points of our holy faith. And this lack of knowledge most sadly kept me back from walking steadily in the ways of God. For when it pleased the Lord in August 1829 to bring me really to the Scriptures, my life and walk became very different. And though ever since that I have very much fallen short of what I might and ought to be, yet by the grace of God I have been enabled to live much nearer to Him than before. If any believers read this who practically prefer other books to the Holy Scriptures, and who enjoy the writings of men much more than the word of God, may they be warned by my loss. I shall consider this book to have been the means of doing much good, should it please the Lord, through its instrumentality, to lead some of His people no longer to neglect the Holy Scriptures, but to give them that preference which they have hitherto bestowed on the writings of men.

'Before I leave this subject, I would only add: If the reader understands very little of the word of God, he ought to read it very much; for the Spirit explains the word by the word. And if he enjoys the reading of the word little, that is just the reason why he should read it much; for the frequent reading of the Scriptures creates a delight in them, so that the more we read them, the more we desire to do so.

'Above all, he should seek to have it settled in his own mind that God alone by His Spirit can teach him, and that therefore, as God will be inquired of for blessings, it becomes him to seek God's blessing previous to reading, and also whilst reading.

'He should have it, moreover, settled in his mind that although the Holy Spirit is the *best* and *sufficient* Teacher, yet that this Teacher does not always teach immediately *when* we desire it, and that therefore we may have to entreat Him again and again for the explanation of certain passages; but that He will surely teach us at last, if indeed we are seeking for light prayerfully, patiently, and with a view to the glory of God.'[1]

We find in his journal frequent mention made of his spending two and three hours in prayer over the word for the feeding of his spiritual life. As the fruit of this, when he had need of strength and encouragement in prayer, the individual promises were not to him so many arguments from a book to be used with God, but living words which he had heard the Father's living voice speak to him, and which he could now bring to the Father in living faith.

PRAYER AND THE WILL OF GOD.

One of the greatest difficulties with young believers is to know how they can find out whether what they desire is according to God's will. I count it one of the most precious lessons God wants to teach through the experience of George Muller, that He is willing to make know, of things of which His word says nothing directly, that they are His will for us, and that we may ask them. The teaching of the Spirit, not without or against the word, but as something above and beyond it, in addition to it, without which we cannot see God's will, is the heritage of every believer. It is through THE WORD, AND THE WORD ALONE, that the Spirit teaches, applying the general principles or promises to our special need. And it is THE SPIRIT, AND THE SPIRIT ALONE, who can really make the word a light on our path, whether the path of duty in our daily walk, or the path of faith in our approach to God. Let us try and notice in what childlike simplicity and teachableness it was that the discovery of God's will was so surely and so clearly made known to His servant.

With regard to the building of the first Home and the assurance he had of its being God's will, he writes in May 1850, just after it had been opened, speaking of the great difficulties there were, and how little likely it appeared to nature that they would be removed: 'But while the prospect before me would have been overwhelming had I looked at it naturally, I was never even for once permitted to question how it would end. For as from the beginning I was sure *it was the will of God* that I should go to the work of building for Him this large Orphan Home, so also from the beginning I was as certain that the whole would be finished as if the Home had been already filled.'

The way in which he found out what was God's will, comes out with special clearness in his account of the building of the second Home; and I ask the reader to study with care the lesson the narrative conveys:—

'*Dec.* 5, 1850.—Under these circumstances I can only pray that the Lord in His tender mercy would not allow Satan to gain an advantage over me. By the grace of God my heart says: Lord, if I could be sure that it is Thy will that I should go forward in this matter, I would do so cheerfully; and, on the other hand, if I could be sure that these are vain, foolish, proud thoughts, that they are not from Thee, I would, by Thy grace, hate them, and entirely put them aside.

'My hope is in God: He will help and teach me. Judging, however, from His former dealings with me, it would not be a strange thing to me, nor surprising, if He called me to

labour yet still more largely in this way.

‘The thoughts about enlarging the Orphan work have not yet arisen on account of an abundance of money having lately come in; for I have had of late to wait for about seven weeks upon God, whilst little, very little comparatively, came in, *i.e.* about four times as much was going out as came in; and, had not the Lord previously sent me large sums, we should have been distressed indeed.

‘Lord! how can Thy servant know Thy will in this matter? Wilt Thou be pleased to teach him!

December 11.—During the last six days, since writing the above, I have been, day after day, waiting upon God concerning this matter. It has generally been more or less all the day on my heart. When I have been awake at night, it has not been far from my thoughts. Yet all this without the least excitement. I am perfectly calm and quiet respecting it. My soul would be rejoiced to go forward in this service, could I be sure that the Lord would have me to do so; for then, notwithstanding the numberless difficulties, all would be well; and His Name would be magnified.

‘On the other hand, were I assured that the Lord would have me to be satisfied with my present sphere of service, and that I should not pray about enlarging the work, by His grace I could, *without an effort*, cheerfully yield to it; for He has brought me into such a state of heart, that I only desire to please Him in this matter. Moreover, hitherto I have not spoken about this thing even to my beloved wife, the sharer of my joys, sorrows, and labours for more than twenty years; nor is it likely that I shall do so for some time to come: for I prefer quietly to wait on the Lord, without conversing on this subject, in order that thus I may be kept the more easily, by His blessing, from being influenced by things from without. The burden of my prayer concerning this matter is, that the Lord would not allow me to make a mistake, and that He would teach me to do His will.

‘*December* 26.—Fifteen days have elapsed since I wrote the preceding paragraph. Every day since then I have continued to pray about this matter, and that with a goodly measure of earnestness, by the help of God. There has passed scarcely an hour during these days, in which, whilst awake, this matter has not been more or less before me. But all without even a shadow of excitement. I converse with no one about it. Hitherto have I not even done so with my dear wife. For this I refrain still, and deal with God alone about the matter, in order that no outward influence and no outward excitement may keep me from attaining unto *a clear discovery of His will. I have the fullest and most peaceful assurance that He will clearly show me His will.* This evening I have had again an especial solemn season for prayer, to seek to know the will of God. But whilst I continue to entreat and beseech the Lord, that He would not allow me to be deluded in this business, I may say I have scarcely any doubt remaining on my mind as to what will be the issue, even that I should go forward in this matter. As this, however, is one of the most momentous steps that I have ever taken, I judge that I cannot go about this matter with too much caution, prayerfulness, and deliberation. I am in no hurry about it. I could wait for years, by God’s grace, were this His will, before even taking one single step toward this thing, or even speaking to anyone about it; and, on the other hand, I would set to work tomorrow, were the Lord to bid me do so. This calmness of mind, this having no will of my own in the matter, this only wishing to please my Heavenly Father in it, this only

seeking His and not my honour in it; this state of heart, I say, is the fullest assurance to me that my heart is not under a fleshly excitement, and that, if I am helped thus to go on, *I shall know the will of God to the full*. But, while I write this, I cannot but add at the same time, that I do crave the honour and the glorious privilege to be more and more used by the Lord.

'I desire to be allowed to provide scriptural instruction for a thousand orphans, instead of doing so for 300. I desire to expound the Holy Scriptures regularly to a thousand orphans, instead of doing so to 300. I desire that it may be yet more abundantly manifest that God is still the Hearer and Answerer of prayer, and that He is the living God now as He ever was and ever will be, when He shall simply, in answer to prayer, have condescended to provide me with a house for 700 orphans and with means to support them. This last consideration is the most important point in my mind. The Lord's honour is the principal point with me in this whole matter; and just because this is the case, if He would be more glorified by not going forward in this business, I should by His grace be perfectly content to give up all thoughts about another Orphan House. Surely in such a state of mind, obtained by the Holy Spirit, Thou, O my Heavenly Father, *wilt not suffer Thy child to be mistaken, much less deluded.* By the help of God I shall continue further day by day to wait upon Him in prayer, concerning this thing, till He shall bid me act.

'*Jan.* 2, 1851.—A week ago I wrote the preceding paragraph. During this week I have still been helped day by day, and more than once every day, to seek the guidance of the Lord about another Orphan House. The burden of my prayer has still been, that He in His great mercy would keep me from making a mistake. During the last week the book of Proverbs has come in the course of my Scripture reading, and my heart has been refreshed in reference to this subject by the following passages: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Prov. iii. 5, 6). By the grace of God I do acknowledge the Lord in all my ways, and in this thing in particular; I have therefore the comfortable assurance that He will direct my paths concerning this part of my service, as to whether I shall be occupied in it our not. Further: "The integrity of the upright shall preserve them" (Prov. xi. 3). By the grace of God I am upright in this business. My honest purpose is to get glory to God. Therefore I expect to be guided aright. Further: "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established" (Prov. xvi. 3). I do commit my works unto the Lord, and therefore expect that my thoughts will be established. My heart is more and more coming to a calm, quiet, and settled assurance, that the Lord will condescend to use me still further in the orphan work. Here Lord is Thy servant.'

When later he decided to build two additional houses, Nos. 4 and 5, he writes thus again:—

'Twelve days have passed away since I wrote the last paragraph. I have still day by day been enabled to wait upon the Lord with reference to enlarging the Orphan work, and have been during the whole of this period also in perfect peace, which is the result of seeking in this thing only the Lord's honour and the temporal and spiritual benefit of my fellow-men. Without an effort could I by His grace put aside all thoughts about this whole affair, if only assured that it is the will of God that I should do so; and, on the other hand,

would at once go forward, if He would have it be so. I have still kept this matter entirely to myself. Though it be now about seven weeks, since day by day, more or less, my mind has been exercised about it, and since I have been daily praying about it, yet not one human being knows of it. As yet I have not even mentioned it to my dear wife in order that thus, by quietly waiting upon God, I might not be influenced by what might be said to me on the subject. This evening has been particularly set apart for prayer, beseeching the Lord once more not to allow me to be mistaken in this thing, and much less to be deluded by the devil. I have also sought to let all the reasons *against* building another Orphan House, and all the reasons *for* doing so pass before my mind: and now for the clearness and definiteness, write them down… .

'Much, however, as the nine previous reasons weigh with me, yet they would not decide me were there not one more. It is this. After having for months pondered the matter, and having looked at it in all its bearings and with all its difficulties, and then having been finally led, after much prayer, to decide on this enlargement, my mind is at peace. The child who has again and again besought His Heavenly Father not to allow him to be deluded, nor even to make a mistake, is at peace, perfectly at peace concerning this decision; and has thus the assurance that the decision come to, after much prayer during weeks and months, is the leading of the Holy Spirit; and therefore purposes to go forward, assuredly believing that he will not be confounded, for he trusts in God. Many and great may be his difficulties; thousands and ten thousands of prayers may have ascended to God, before the full answer may be obtained; much exercise of faith and patience may be required; but in the end it will again be seen, that His servant, who trusts in Him, has not been confounded.'

PRAYER AND THE GLORY OF GOD.

We have sought more than once to enforce the truth, that while we ordinarily seek the reasons of our prayers not being heard in the thing we ask not being according to the will of God, Scripture warns us to find the cause in ourselves, in our not being in the right state or not asking in the right spirit. The thing may be in full accordance with His will, but the asking, the spirit of the supplicant, not; then we are not heard. As the great root of all sin is self and self-seeking, so there is nothing that even in our more spiritual desires so effectually hinders God in answering as this: we pray for our own pleasure or glory. Prayer to have power and prevail must ask for the glory of God; and he can only do this as he is living for God's glory.

In George Muller we have one of the most remarkable instances on record of God's Holy Spirit leading a man deliberately and systematically, at the outset of a course of prayer, to make the glorifying of God his first and only object. Let us ponder well what he says, and learn the lesson God would teach us through him:—

'I had constantly cases brought before me, which proved that one of the especial things which the children of God needed in our day, was *to have their faith strengthened.*

'I longed, therefore, to have something to point my brethren to, as a visible proof that our God and Father is the same faithful God as ever He was; as willing as ever to PROVE Himself to be the LIVING GOD in our day as formerly, *to all who put their trust in Him.*

‘My spirit longed to be instrumental in strengthening their faith, by giving them not only instances from the word of God, of His willingness and ability to help all who rely upon Him, but to *show* them *by proofs* that He is the same in our day. I knew that the word of God ought to be enough, and it was by grace enough for me; but still I considered I ought to lend a helping hand to my brethren.

‘I therefore judged myself bound to be the servant of the Church of Christ, in the particular point in which I had obtained mercy; namely, in being able to take God at His word and rely upon it. The first object of the work was, and is still: *that God might be magnified* by the fact that the orphans under my care are provided with all they need, *only by prayer and faith*, without any one being asked; thereby it may be seen that God is FAITHFUL STILL, AND HEARS PRAYER STILL.

‘I have again these last days prayed much about the Orphan House, and have frequently examined my heart; that if it were at all my desire to establish it for the sake of gratifying myself, I might find it out. For as I desire only the Lord’s glory, I shall be glad to be instructed by the instrumentality of my brother, if the matter be not of Him.

‘When I began the Orphan work in 1835, my chief object was the glory of God, by giving a practical demonstration as to what could be accomplished simply through the instrumentality of prayer and faith, in order thus to benefit the Church at large, and to lead a careless world to see the reality of the things of God, by showing them in this work, that the living God is still, as 4000 years ago, the living God. This my aim has been abundantly honoured. Multitudes of sinners have been thus converted, multitudes of the children of God in all parts of the world have been benefited by this work, even as I had anticipated. But the larger the work as grown, the greater has been the blessing, bestowed in the very way in which I looked for blessing: for the attention of hundreds of thousands has been drawn to the work; and many tens of thousands have come to see it. All this leads me to desire further and further to labour on in this way, in order to bring yet greater glory to the Name of the Lord. *That He may be looked at, magnified, admired, trusted in*, relied on at all times, is my aim in this service; and so particularly in this intended enlargement. That it may be seen how much one poor man, simply by trusting in God, can bring about by prayer; and that thus other children of God may be led to carry on the work of God in dependence upon Him; and that children of God may be led increasingly to trust in Him in their individual positions and circumstances, therefore I am led to this further enlargement.’

PRAYER AND TRUST IN GOD.

There are other points on which I would be glad to point out what is to be found in Mr. Muller’s narrative, but one more must suffice. It is the lesson of firm and unwavering trust in God’s promise as the secret of persevering prayer. If once we have, in submission to the teaching of the Spirit in the word, taken hold of God’s promise, and believed that the Father has heard us, we must not allow ourselves by any delay or unfavourable appearances be shaken in our faith.

‘The full answer to my daily prayers was far from being realized; yet there was abundant encouragement granted by the Lord, to continue in prayer. But suppose, even, that far less had come in than was received, still, after having come to the conclusion, upon scriptural grounds, after much prayer and self-examination, I ought to have gone on without wavering, in the exercise of faith and patience concerning this object; and thus all the children of God, when once satisfied that anything which they bring before God in prayer, is according to His will, ought to continue in believing, expecting, persevering prayer until the blessing is granted. Thus am I myself now waiting upon God for certain blessings, for which I have daily besought Him for ten years and six months without one day’s intermission. Still the full answer is not yet given concerning the conversion of certain individuals, though in the meantime I have received many thousands of answers to prayer. I have also prayed daily without intermission for the conversion of other individuals about ten years, for others six or seven years, for others from three or two years; and still the answer is not yet granted concerning those persons, while in the meantime many thousands of my prayers have been answered, and also souls converted, for whom I had been praying. I lay particular stress on this for the benefit of those who may suppose that I need only to ask of God, and receive at once; or that I might pray concerning anything, and the answer would surely come. One can only expect to obtain answers to prayers which are according to the mind of God; and even then, patience and faith may be exercised for many years, even as mine are exercised, in the matter to which I have referred; and yet am I daily continuing in prayer, and expecting the answer, and so surely expecting the answer, that I have often thanked God that He will surely give it, though now for nineteen years faith and patience have thus been exercised. Be encouraged, dear Christians, with fresh earnestness to give yourselves to prayer, if you can only be sure that you ask things which are for the glory of God.

‘But the most remarkable point is this, that £6, 6s. 6d. from Scotland supplied me, as far as can be known now, with all the means necessary for fitting up and promoting the New Orphan Houses. Six years and eight months I have been day by day, and generally several times daily, asking the Lord to give me the needed means for this enlargement of the Orphan work, which, according to calculations made in the spring of 1861, appeared to be about fifty thousand pounds: the total of this amount I had now received. I praise and magnify the Lord for putting this enlargement of the work into my heart, and for giving me courage and faith for it; and above all, for sustaining my faith day by day without wavering. When the last portion of the money was received, I was no more assured concerning the whole, that I was at the time I had not received one single donation towards this large sum. I was at the beginning, after once having ascertained His mind, through most patient and heart-searching waiting upon God, as fully assured that He would bring it about, as if the two houses, with their hundreds of orphans occupying them, had been already before me. I make a few remarks here for the sake of young believers in connection with this subject: 1. Be slow to take new steps in the Lord’s service, or in your business, or in your families: weigh everything well; weigh all in the light of the Holy Scriptures and in the fear of God. 2. Seek to have no will of your own, in order to ascertain the mind of God, regarding any steps you propose taking, so that you can honestly say you are willing to do the will of God, if He will only please to instruct you. 3. But when you have found out what the will of God is, seek for His help, and seek it earnestly, perseveringly, patiently, believingly, expectantly; and you will surely in His own

time and way obtain it.

'To suppose that we have difficulty about money only would be a mistake: there occur hundreds of other wants and of other difficulties. It is a rare thing that a day occurs without some difficulty or some want; but often there are many difficulties and many wants to be met and overcome the same day. All these are met by prayer and faith, our universal remedy; and we have never been confounded. Patient, persevering, believing prayer, offered up to God, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, has always, sooner or later, brought the blessing. I do not despair, by God's grace, of obtaining any blessing, provided I can be sure it would be for any real good, and for the glory of God.

[1]The extracts are from a work in four volumes, *The Lord's Dealings with George Muller*. J. Nisbet & Co., London.

3. PREVAILING PRAYER: WHAT HINDERS IT? – D. L. Moody

by DL Moody

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Prefatory Note

The two first and essential means of grace are the Word of God and Prayer.

By these comes conversion; for we are born again by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever; and whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

By these also we grow; for we are exhorted to desire the sincere milk of the Word that we may grow thereby, and we cannot grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ except we also speak to Him in Prayer.

It is by the Word that the Father sanctifies us; but we are also bidden to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation.

These two means of grace must be used in their right proportion. If we read the Word and do not pray, we may become puffed up with knowledge, without the love that buildeth up. If we pray without reading the Word, we shall be ignorant of the mind and will of God, and become mystical and fanatical, and liable to be blown about by every wind of doctrine.

The following chapters relate especially to Prayer; but in order that our prayers may be for such things as are according to the will of God, they must be based upon the revelation of His own will to us; for of Him, and through Him, and to him are all things; and it is only by hearing His Word, in which we learn His purposes toward us and towards the world, that we can pray acceptably, praying in the Holy Ghost, asking those things which are pleasing in His sight.

These Addresses are not to be regarded as exhaustive, but suggestive. This great subject has been the theme of Prophets and Apostles, and of all good men in all ages of the world; and my desire in sending forth this little volume is to encourage God’s children to seek by prayer “to move the Arm that moves the world.” PRAYER Prayer was appointed to convey The blessings God designs to give; Long as they live should Christians pray, For only while they pray they live.

And shall we in dead silence lie, When Christ stands waiting for our prayer? My soul, thou hast a Friend on high; Arise and try thy interest there.

If pain afflict, or wrongs oppress; If cares distract, or fears dismay; If guilt deject, if sin distress; The remedy’s before thee - Pray! Depend on Christ, thou canst not fail; Make all thy wants and wishes known.

Fear not; His merits must prevail; Ask what thou wilt; it shall be done! - Joseph Hart.

Chapter 1. The Prayers Of The Bible

Those who have left the deepest impression on this sin cursed earth have been men and women of prayer. You will find that, PRAYER has been the mighty power that has moved not only God, but man. Abraham was a man of prayer, and angels came down from heaven to converse with him.

Jacob's prayer was answered in the wonderful interview at Peniel, that resulted in his having such a mighty blessing, and in softening the heart of his brother Esau; the child Samuel was given in answer to Hannah's prayer; Elijah's prayer closed up the heavens for three years and six months, and he prayed again and the heavens gave rain.

The Apostle James tells us that the prophet Elijah was a man "subject to like passions as we are." I am thankful that those men and women who were so mighty in prayer were just like ourselves. We are apt to think that those prophets and mighty men and women of old time were different from what we are. To be sure they lived in a much darker age, but they were of like passions with ourselves.

We read that on another occasion Elijah brought down fire on Mount Carmel. The prophets of Baal cried long and loud, but no answer came. The God of Elijah heard and answered his prayer. Let us remember that the God of Elijah still lives. The prophet was translated and went up to heaven, but his God still lives, and we have the same access to Him that Elijah had.

We have the same warrant to go to God and ask the fire from heaven to come down and consume our lusts and passions - to burn up our dross, and let Christ shine through us.

Elisha prayed, and life came back to a dead child. Many of our children are dead in trespasses and sins. Let us do as Elisha did; let us entreat God to raise them up in answer to our prayers.

Manasseh, the king, was a wicked man, and had done everything he could against the God

of his father; yet in Babylon, when he cried to God, his cry was heard, and he was taken out of prison and put on the throne at Jerusalem. Surely if God gave heed to the prayer of wicked Manasseh, He will hear ours in the time of our distress. Is not this a time of distress with a great number of our fellowmen? Are there not many among us whose hearts are burdened? As we go to the throne of grace, let us remember that GOD ANSWERS PRAYER.

Look, again, at Samson. He prayed; and his strength came back, so that he slew more at his death than during his life. He was a restored blackslider and he had power with God. If those who have been backsliders will but return to God, they will see how quickly God will answer prayer.

Job prayed, and his captivity was turned. Light came in the place of darkness, and God lifted him up above the height of his former prosperity - in answer to prayer.

Daniel prayed to God, and Gabriel came to tell him that he was a man greatly beloved of God. Three times that message came to him from heaven in answer to prayer. The secrets of heaven were imparted to him, and he was told that God's Son was going to be cut off for the sins of His people. We find also that Cornelius prayed; and Peter was sent to tell him words whereby he and his should be saved. In answer to prayer this great blessing came upon him and his household. Peter had gone up to the housetop to pray in the afternoon, when he had that wonderful vision of the sheet let down from heaven. It was when prayer was made without ceasing unto God for Peter, that the angel was sent to deliver him.

So all through the Scriptures you will find that when believing prayer went up to God, the answer came down. I think it would be a very interesting study to go right through the Bible and see what has happened while God's people have been on their knees calling upon him. Certainly the study would greatly strengthen our faith - showing, as it would, how wonderfully God has heard and delivered, when the cry has gone up to Him for help.

Look at Paul and Silas in the prison at Philippi. As they prayed and sang praises, the place was shaken, and the jailer was converted. Probably that one conversion has done more than any other recorded in the Bible to bring people into the kingdom of God. How many have been blessed in seeking to answer the question - "What must I do to be saved?" It was the prayer of those two godly men that brought the jailer to his knees, and that brought blessing to him and his family.

You remember how Stephen, as he prayed and looked up, saw the heavens opened, and the Son of Man at the right hand of God; the light of heaven fell on his face so that it shone. Remember, too, how the face of Moses shone as he came down from the Mount; he had

been in communion with God. So when we get really into communion with God, He lifts up His countenance upon us; and instead of our having gloomy looks, our faces will shine, because God has heard and answered our prayers.

I want to call special attention to Christ as an example for us in all things; in nothing more than in prayer. We read that Christ prayed to His Father for everything. Every great crisis in His life was preceded by prayer. Let me quote a few passages. I never noticed till a few years ago that Christ was praying at His baptism. As He prayed, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended on Him. Another great event in His life was His Transfiguration. “As He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistering.” We read again: “It came to pass in those days that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.” This is the only place where it is recorded that the Savior spent a whole night in prayer.

What was about to take place? When He came down from the mountain He gathered His disciples around Him, and preached that great discourse known as the Sermon on the Mount - the most wonderful sermon that has ever been preached to mortal men. Probably no sermon has done so much good, and it was preceded by a night of prayer. If our sermons are going to reach the hearts and consciences of the people, we must be much in prayer to God, that there may be power with the word.

In the Gospel of John we read that Jesus at the grave of Lazarus lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me; and I know that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me.” Notice, that before He spoke the dead to life He spoke to His Father. If our spiritually dead ones are to be raised, we must first get power with God.

The reason we so often fail in moving our fellowmen is that we try to win them without first getting power with God. Jesus was in communion with His Father, and so He could be assured that His prayers were heard.

We read again, in the twelfth of John, that He prayed to the Father. I think this is one of the saddest chapters in the whole Bible. He was about to leave the Jewish nation and to make atonement for the sin of the world. Hear what He says: “Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour.” He was almost under the shadow of the Cross; the iniquities of mankind were about to be laid upon Him; one of His twelve disciples was going to deny Him and swear he never knew Him; another was to sell Him for thirty pieces of silver; all were to forsake Him and flee. His soul was exceeding sorrowful, and He prays; when His soul was troubled, God spake to Him. Then in the Garden of Gethsemane, while He prayed, an angel appeared to strengthen him. In answer to His cry, “Father, glorify Thy Name,” He hears a voice coming down from the glory - “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it

again." Another memorable prayer of our Lord was in the Garden of Gethsemane: "He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down and prayed" I would draw your attention to the recorded fact that four times the answer came right down from heaven while the Savior prayed to God. The first time was at His baptism, when the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended upon Him in answer to His prayer. Again, on the Mount of Transfiguration, God appeared and spoke to Him. Then when the Greeks came desiring to see Him, the voice of God was heard responding to His call; and again, when He cried to the Father in the midst of His agony, a direct response was given. These things are recorded, I doubt not, that we may be encouraged to pray.

We read that His disciples came to Him, and said, "Lord, teach us to pray." It is not recorded that He taught them how to preach. I have often said that I would rather know how to pray like Daniel than to preach like Gabriel. If you get love into your soul, so that the grace of God may come down in answer to prayer, there will be no trouble about reaching the people. It is not by eloquent sermons that perishing souls are going to be reached; we need the power of God in order that the blessing may come down.

The prayer our Lord taught his disciples is commonly called the Lord's Prayer. I think that the Lord's prayer, more properly, is that in the seventeenth of John. That is the longest prayer on record that Jesus made.

You can read it slowly and carefully in about four or five minutes. I think we may learn a lesson here. Our Master's prayers were short when offered in public; when He was alone with God that was a different thing, and He could spend the whole night in communion with His Father. My experience is that those who pray most in their closets generally make short prayers in public. Long prayers are too often not prayers at all, and they weary the people. How short the publican's prayer was: "God be merciful to me a sinner!" The Syrophenician woman's was shorter still: "Lord help me!" She went right to the mark, and she got what she wanted. The prayer of the thief on the cross was a short one: "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom!" Peter's prayer was, "Lord, save me, or I perish!" So, if you go through the Scriptures, you will find that the prayers that brought immediate answers were generally brief. Let our prayers be to the point, just telling God what we want.

In the prayer of our Lord, in John 17, we find that He made seven requests - one for Himself, four for His disciples around Him, and two for the disciples of succeeding ages. Six times in that one prayer He repeats that God had sent Him. The world looked upon Him as an impostor; and He wanted them to know that he was heaven-sent. He speaks of the world nine times, and makes mention of His disciples and those who believe on Him fifty times.

Christ's last prayer on the Cross was a short one: "Father, forgive them for they know not

what they do." I believe that prayer was answered. We find that right there in front of the Cross, a Roman centurion was converted. It was probably in answer to the Savior's prayer. The conversion of the thief, I believe, was in answer to that prayer of our blessed Lord. Saul of Tarsus may have heard it, and the words may have followed him as he traveled to Damascus; so that when the Lord spoke to him on the way, he may have recognized the voice. One thing we do know; that on the day of Pentecost some of the enemies of the Lord were converted. Surely that was in answer to the prayer, "Father, forgive them!" Hence we see that prayer holds a high place among the exercises of a spiritual life. All God's people have been praying people. Look, for instance, at Baxter! He stained his study walls with praying breath; and after he was anointed with the unction of the Holy Ghost, sent a river of living water over Kidderminster, and converted hundreds. Luther and his companions were men of such mighty pleading with God, that they broke the spell of ages, and laid nations subdued at the foot of the Cross. John Knox grasped all Scotland in his strong arms of faith; his prayers terrified tyrants. Whitefield, after much holy, faithful closet pleading, went to the Devil's fair, and took more than a thousand souls out of the paw of the lion in one day. See a praying Wesley turn more than ten thousand souls to the Lord! Look at the praying Finney, whose prayers, faith, sermons and writings, have shaken this whole country, and sent a wave of blessing through the churches on both sides of the sea.

Dr. Guthrie thus speaks of prayer and its necessity: "The first true sign of spiritual life, prayer, is also the means of maintaining it. Man can as well live physically without breathing, as spiritually without praying. There is a class of animals - the cetaceous, neither fish nor seafowl - that inhabit the deep. It is their home, they never leave it for the shore; yet, though swimming beneath its waves, and sounding its darkest depths, they have ever and anon to rise to the surface that they may breathe the air. Without that, these monarchs of the deep could not exist in the dense element in which they live, and move, and have their being. And something like what is imposed on them by a physical necessity, the Christian has to do by a spiritual one. It is by ever and anon ascending up to God, by rising through prayer into a loftier, purer region for supplies of Divine grace, that he maintains his spiritual life. Prevent these animals from rising to the surface, and they die for want of breath; prevent the Christian from rising to God, and he dies for want; of prayer. 'Give me children,' cried Rachel, 'or else I die.' 'Let me breathe,' says a man gasping, 'or else I die.' 'Let me pray,' says the Christian, 'or else I die.' "Since I began," said Dr. Payson when a student. "to beg God's blessing on my studies, I have done more in one week than in the whole year before." Luther, when most pressed with work, said, "I have so much to do that I cannot get on without three hours a day praying." And not only do theologians think and speak highly of prayer; men of all ranks and positions in life have felt the same.

General Havelock rose at four o'clock, if the hour for marching was six, rather than lose the precious privilege of communion with God before setting out. Sir Matthew Hale says: "If I omit praying and reading God's Word in the morning, nothing goes well all day." "A great part of my time," said McCheyne, "is spent in getting my heart in tune for prayer. It

is the link that connects earth with heaven." A comprehensive view of the subject will show that there are nine elements which are essential to true prayer. The first is Adoration; we cannot meet God on a level at the start. We must approach Him as One far beyond our reach or sight. The next is Confession; sin must be put out of the way. We cannot have any communion with God while there is any transgression between us. If there stands some wrong you have done a man, you cannot expect that man's favor until you go to him and confess the fault.

Restitution is another; we have to make good the wrong, wherever possible.

Thanksgiving is the next; we must be thankful for what God has done for us already. Then comes Forgiveness, and then Unity; and then for prayer, such as these things produce, there must be Faith. Thus influenced, we shall be ready to offer direct Petition. We hear a good deal of praying that is just exhorting, and if you did not see the man's eyes closed, you would suppose he was preaching. Then, much that is called prayer is simply finding fault.

There needs to be more petition in our prayers. After all these, there must come Submission. While praying, we must be ready to accept the will of God. We shall consider these nine elements in detail, closing our inquiries by giving incidents illustrative of the certainty of our receiving, under such conditions, Answers to Prayer.

"Lord, what a change within us one short hour Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make! What heavy burdens from our bosoms take; What parched grounds refresh as with a shower.

"We kneel - and all around us seems to lower, We rise - and all, the distant and the near, Stands forth in sunny outline brave and clear; We kneel: how weak! - we rise: how full of power! "Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong, Or others - that we are not always strong? That we are ever overborne with care; That we should ever weak or heartless be, Anxious or troubled, while with us is prayer, And joy, and strength, and courage, are with Thee?" -Trench.

Chapter 2. Adoration

This has been defined as the act of rendering Divine honor, including in it reverence, esteem and love. It literally signifies to apply the hand to the mouth, "to kiss the hand;" in Eastern countries this is one of the great marks of respect and submission. The importance

of coming before God in this spirit is great, therefore it is so often impressed upon us in the Word of God.

The Rev. Newman Hall, in his work on the Lord's Prayer, says "Man's worship, apart from revelation, has been uniformly characterized by selfishness. We come to God either to thank Him for benefits already received, or to implore still further benefits: food, raiment, health, safety, comfort. Like Jacob at Bethel, we are disposed to make the worship we render to God correlative with 'food to eat, and raiment to put on.' This style of petition, in which self generally precedes and predominates, if it does not altogether absorb, our supplications, is not only seen in the votaries of false systems, but in the majority of the prayers of professed Christians. Our prayers are like the Parthian horsemen, who ride one way while they look another; we seem to go toward God, but, indeed, reflect upon ourselves, And this may be the reason why many times our prayers are sent forth, like the raven out of Noah's ark, and never return. But when we make the glory of God the chief end of our devotion, they go forth like the dove, and return to us again with an olive branch." Let me refer you to a passage in the prophecies of Daniel. He was one of the men who knew how to pray; his prayer brought the blessing of heaven upon himself and upon his people. He says: "I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes; and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep His commandments!" The thought I want to call special attention to is conveyed in the words, "O Lord, the great and dreadful God!" Daniel took his right place before God - in the dust; he put God in His right place. It was when Abraham was on his face, prostrate before God, that God spoke to him. Holiness belongs to God; sinfulness belongs to us. Brooks, that grand old Puritan writer, says: "A person of real holiness is much affected and taken up in the admiration of the holiness of God.

Unholy persons may be somewhat affected and taken with the other excellences of God; it is only holy souls that are taken and affected with His holiness. The more holy any are, the more deeply are they affected by this.

To the holy angels, the holiness of God is the sparkling diamond in the ring of glory. But unholy persons are affected and taken with anything rather than with this. Nothing strikes the sinner into such a damp as a discourse on the holiness of God; it is as the handwriting on the wall; nothing makes the head and heart of a sinner to ache like a sermon upon the Holy One; nothing galls and gripes, nothing stings and terrifies unsanctified ones, like a lively setting forth of the holiness of God. But to holy souls there are no discourses that do more suit and satisfy them, that do more delight and content them, that do more please and profit them, than those that do most fully and powerfully discover God to be glorious in holiness." So, in coming before God, we must adore and reverence His name.

The same thing is brought out in Isaiah: "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the

Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said: Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory." When we see the holiness of God, we shall adore and magnify Him.

Moses had to learn the same lesson. God told him to take his shoes from off his feet, for the place whereon he stood was holy ground. When we hear men trying to make out that they are holy, and speaking about their holiness, they make light of the holiness of God. It is His holiness that we need to think and speak about; when we do that, we shall be prostrate in the dust. You remember, also, how it was with Peter. When Christ made Himself known to him, he said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" A sight of God is enough to show us how holy He is, and how unholy we are.

We find that Job too, had to be taught the same lesson. "Then Job answered the Lord, and said: Behold I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth." As you hear Job discussing with his friends you would think he was one of the holiest men who ever lived. He was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame; he fed the hungry, and clothed the naked. What a wonderfully good man he was! It was all I, I, I. At last God said to him, "Gird up your loins like a man, and I will put a few questions to you." The moment that God revealed Himself, Job changed his language. He saw his own vileness, and God's purity. He said, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." The same thing is seen in the cases of those who came to our Lord in the days of His flesh; those who came aright, seeking and obtaining the blessing, manifested a lively sense of His infinite superiority to themselves.

The centurion, of whom we read in the eighth of Matthew, said: "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof;" Jairus "worshipped Him," as he presented his request; the leper, in the Gospel of Mark, came "kneeling down to Him;" the Syrophenician woman "came and fell at His feet;" the man full of leprosy "seeing Jesus, fell on his face." So, too the beloved disciple, speaking of the feeling they had concerning Him when they were abiding with Him as their Lord, said: "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." However intimate their companionship, and tender their love, they reverenced as much as they communed, and adored as much as they loved.

We may say of every act of prayer as George Herbert says of public worship: "When once thy foot enters the church, be bare; God is more than thou; for thou art there Only by His permission. Then beware, And make thyself all reverence and fear.

Kneeling ne'er spoiled silk stocking; quit thy state.

All equal are within the Church's gate." The wise man says: "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools; for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth -therefore let thy words be few." If we are struggling to live a higher life, and to know something of God's holiness and purity, what we need is to be brought into contact with Him, that He may reveal Himself. Then we shall take our place before Him as those men of old were constrained to do. We shall hallow His Name - as the Master taught His disciples, when He said, "Hallowed be Thy Name." When I think of the irreverence of the present time, it seems to me that we have fallen on evil days. Let us, as Christians, when we draw near to God in prayer, give Him His right place. "Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and Godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire."

THE TRINITY

"Thou dear and great mysterious Three, For ever be adored, For all the endless grace we see In our Redeemer stored.

"The Father's ancient grace we sing, That chose us in our head; Ordaining Christ, our God and King, To suffer in our stead.

"The sacred Son, in equal strains, With reverence we address For all His grace, and dying pains, And splendid righteousness.

"With tuneful tongue the Holy Ghost For His great work we praise, Whose power inspires the blood bought host Their grateful voice to raise.

"Thus the Eternal Three in One We join to praise, for grace And endless glory through the Son, As shining from His face."

Chapter 3. Confession

Another element in true prayer is Confession. I do not want Christian friends to think that I am talking to the unsaved. I think we, as Christians, have a good many sins to confess.

If you go back to the Scripture records, you will find that the men who lived nearest to God, and had most power with Him, were those who confessed their sins and failures. Daniel, as we have seen, confessed his sins and those of his people. Yet there is nothing recorded against Daniel.

He was one of the best men then on the face of the earth, yet was his confession of sin one of the deepest and most humble on record. Brooks, referring to Daniel's confession, says: "In these words you have seven circumstances that Daniel useth in confessing of his and the people's sins; and all to heighten and aggravate them. First, 'We have sinned;' secondly, 'We have committed iniquity;' thirdly, 'We have done wickedly; fourthly, 'We have rebelled against thee;' fifthly, 'We have departed from Thy precepts;' sixthly, 'We have not hearkened unto Thy servants;' seventhly, 'Nor our princes, nor all the people of the land.' These seven aggravations which Daniel reckons up in his confession are worthy our most serious consideration." Job was no doubt a holy man, a mighty prince, yet he had to fall in the dust and confess his sins. So you will find it all through the Scriptures. When Isaiah saw the purity and holiness of God, he beheld himself in his true light, and he exclaimed, "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips!" I firmly believe that the Church of God will have to confess her own sins, before there can be any great work of grace.

There must be a deeper work among God's believing people. I sometimes think it is about time to give up preaching to the ungodly, and preach to those who profess to be Christians. If we had a higher standard of life in the Church of God, there would be thousands more flocking into the Kingdom. So it was in the past; when God's believing children turned away from their sins and their idols, the fear of God fell upon the people round about. Take up the history of Israel, and you will find that when they put away their strange gods, God visited the nation, and there came a mighty work of grace. What we want in these days is a true and deep revival in the Church of God. I have little sympathy with the idea that God is going to reach the masses by a cold and formal church. The judgment of God must begin with us. You notice that when Daniel got that wonderful answer to prayer recorded in the ninth chapter, he was confessing his sin. That is one of the best chapters on prayer in the whole Bible.

We read: "While I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, while I was speaking in my prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding." So also when Job was confessing his sin, God turned his captivity and heard his prayer. God will hear our prayer and turn our captivity when we take our true place before Him, and confess and forsake our transgressions.

It was when Isaiah cried out before the Lord, “I am undone,” that the blessing came; the live coal was taken from the altar and put upon his lips; and he went out to write one of the most wonderful books the world has ever seen. What a blessing it has been to the church! It was when David said, “I have sinned!” that God dealt in mercy with him. “I acknowledge my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.” Notice how David made a very similar confession to that of the prodigal in the fifteenth of Luke: “I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight!” There is no difference between the king and the beggar when the Spirit of God comes into the heart and convicts of sin.

Richard Sibbes quaintly says of confession: “This is the way to give glory to God: when we have laid open our souls to God, and laid as much against ourselves as the devil could do that way, for let us think what the devil would lay to our charge at the hour of death and the day of judgment. He would lay hard to our charge this and that - let us accuse ourselves as he would, and as he will ere long. The more we accuse and judge ourselves, and set up a tribunal in our hearts, certainly there will follow an incredible ease. Jonah was cast into the sea, and there was an ease in the ship; Achan was stoned, and the plague was stayed. Out with Jonah, out with Achan; and there will follow ease and quiet in the soul presently. Conscience will receive wonderful ease. “It must needs be so; for when God is honored, conscience is purified. God is honored by confession of sin every way. It honors His omniscience, that He is all seeing; that He sees our sins and searches our hearts - our secrets are not hid from Him. It honors His power. What makes us confess our sins, but that we are afraid of His power, lest He should execute it? And what makes us confess our sins, but that we know there is mercy with Him that He may be feared, and that there is pardon for sin? We would not confess our sins else. With men it is, Confess, and have execution; but with God, Confess, and have mercy. It is His own protestation.

We should never lay open our sins but for mercy. So it honors God; and when He is honored, He honors the soul with inward peace and tranquillity.” Old Thomas Fuller says: “Man’s owning his weakness is the only stock for God thereon to graft the grace of His assistance.” Confession implies humility, and this, in God’s sight, is of great price.

A farmer went with his son into a wheat field, to see if it was ready for the harvest. “See, father,” exclaimed the boy, “how straight these stems hold up their heads! They must be the best ones. Those that hang their heads down, I am sure cannot be good for much.” The farmer plucked a stalk of each kind and said: “See here, foolish child! This stalk that stood so straight is light-headed, and almost good for nothing; while this that hung its head, so modestly is full of the most beautiful grain.” Outspokenness is needful and powerful, both with God and man. We need to be honest and frank with ourselves. A soldier said in a revival meeting: “My fellow soldiers, I am not excited; I am convinced - that is all. I feel that I ought to be a Christian; that I ought to say so, to tell you so, and to ask you to come

with me; and now if there is a call for sinners seeking Christ to come forward, I for one shall go - not to make a show, for I have nothing but sin to show. I do not go because I want to - I would rather keep my seat; but going will be telling the truth. I ought to be a Christian, I want to be a Christian; and going forward for prayers is just telling the truth about it." More than a score went with him.

Speaking of Pharaoh's words, "Entreat the Lord that He may take away the frogs from me," Mr. Spurgeon says: "A fatal flaw is manifest in that prayer. It contains no confession of sin. He says not, 'I have rebelled against the Lord; entreat that I may find forgiveness!' Nothing of the kind; he loves sin as much as ever. A prayer without penitence is a prayer without acceptance. If no tear has fallen upon it, it is withered. Thou must come to God as a sinner through a Savior, but by no other way. He who comes to God like the Pharisee, with, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are,' never draws near to God at all; but he who cries, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' has come to God by the way which God has Himself appointed. There must be confession of sin before God, or our prayer is faulty." If this confession of sin is deep among believers, it will be so among the ungodly also. I never knew it to fail. I am now anxious that God should revive His work in the hearts of His children, so that we may see the exceeding sinfulness of sin. There are a great many fathers and mothers who are anxious for the conversion of their children. I have had as many as fifty messages from parents come to me within a single week, wondering why their children are not saved, and asking prayer for them. I venture to say that, as a rule, the fault lies at our own door. There may be something in our life that stands in the way. It may be there is some secret sin that keeps back the blessing. David lived in the awful sin into which he fell for many months before Nathan made his appearance. Let us pray God to come into our hearts, and make His power felt. If it is a right eye, let us pluck it out; if it is a right hand, let us cut it off; that we may have power with God and with man.

Why is it that so many of our children are wandering into the drinking saloons, and drifting away into infidelity - going down to a dishonored grave? There seems to be very little power in the Christianity of the present time. Many Godly parents find that their children are going astray. Does it arise from some secret sin clinging around the heart? There is a passage of God's Word that is often quoted, but in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred those who quote it stop at the wrong place. In the fifty-ninth of Isaiah we read: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear." There they stop. Of course God's hand is not shortened, and His ear is not heavy; but we ought to read the next verse: "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness." As Matthew Henry says, "It was owing to themselves - they stood in their own light, they shut their own door. God was coming toward them in the way of mercy, and they hindered Him. 'Your iniquities have kept good things from you.'" Bear in mind that if we are regarding iniquity in our hearts, or living on a mere empty profession, we have no claim to expect that our prayers will be answered.

There is not one solitary promise for us. I sometimes tremble when I hear people quote promises, and say that God is bound to fulfill those promises to them, when all the time there is something in their own lives which they are not willing to give up. It is well for us to search our hearts, and find out why it is that our prayers are not answered.

That is a very solemn passage in Isaiah: “Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to speak before Me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread My courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and Sabbaths the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with - it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.” “Even the solemn meeting!” - think of that. If God does not get our heart services, He will have none of it; it is an abomination to Him.

“Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth; they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide Mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Again we read in Proverbs: “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.” Think of that! It may shock some of us to think that our prayers are an abomination to God, yet if any are living in known sin, this is what God’s Word says about them. If we are not willing to turn from sin and obey God’s law, we have no right to expect that He will answer our prayers. Unconfessed sin is unforgiven sin, and unforgiveng sin is the darkest, foulest thing on this sin-cursed earth.

You cannot find a case in the Bible where a man has been honest in dealing with sin, but God has been honest with him and blessed him. The prayer of the humble and the contrite heart is a delight to God. There is no sound that goes up from this sin cursed earth so sweet to His ear as the prayer of the man who is walking uprightly.

Let me call attention to that prayer of David, in which he says: “Search me, O, God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” I wish all my readers would commit these verses to memory. If we should all honestly make this prayer once every day there would be a good deal of change in our lives. “Search ME:” - not my neighbor. It is so easy to pray for other people, but so hard to get home to ourselves. I am afraid that we who are busy in the Lord’s work, are very often in danger of neglecting our vineyard. In this Psalm, David got home to himself. There is a difference between God searching me and my searching myself. I may search my heart, and pronounce it all right, but when God searches me as

with a lighted candle, a good many things will come to light that perhaps I knew nothing about.

“Try me.” David was tried when he fell by taking his eye off from the God of his father Abraham. “Know my thoughts.” God looks at the thoughts.

Are our thoughts pure? Have we in our hearts thoughts against God or against His people - against any one in the world? If we have, we are not right in the sight of God. Oh, may God search us, every one! I do not know any better prayer that we can make than this prayer of David. One of the most solemn things in the Scripture history is that when holy men -better men than we are - were tested and tried, they were found to be as weak as water away from God. Let us be sure that we are right. Isaac Ambrose, in his work on “Self Trial,” has the following pithy words: “Now and then propose we to our hearts these two questions: 1. ‘Heart, how dost thou?’ - a few words, but a very serious question.

You know this is the first question and the first salute that we use to one another - How do you do? I would to God we sometimes thus spoke to our hearts: ‘Heart, how dost thou? How is it with thee for thy spiritual state?’ 2. ‘Heart, what wilt thou do?’ or, ‘Heart, what dost thou think will become of thee and me?’ - as that dying Roman once said: ‘Poor, wretched, miserable soul, whither art thou and I going - and what will become of thee, when thou and I shall part?’ “This very thing does Moses propose to Israel, though in other terms, ‘Oh that they would consider their latter end!’ - and oh that we would put this question constantly to our hearts, to consider and debate upon! ‘Commune with your own hearts,’ said David; that is debate the matter betwixt you and your hearts to the very utmost.

Let your hearts be so put to it in communing with them, as that they may speak their very bottom. Commune - or hold a serious communication and clear intelligence and acquaintance - with your own hearts. “It was the confession of a divine, sensible of his neglect, and especially of the difficulty of this duty: “I have lived,” said he, “forty years and somewhat more, and carried my heart in my bosom all this while, and yet my heart and I are as great strangers, and as utterly unacquainted, as if we had never come near one another. Nay, I know not my heart; I have forgotten my heart. Alas! alas! that I could be grieved at the very heart, that my poor heart and I have been so unacquainted! We are fallen into an Athenian age, spending our time in nothing more than in telling or hearing news.

How go things here? How there? How in one place? How in another? But who is there that is inquisitive? How are things with my poor heart? Weigh but in the balance of a serious consideration, what time we have spent in this duty, and what time otherwise; and for many scores and hundreds of hours or days that we owe to our hearts in this duty, can we write fifty? Or where there should have been fifty vessels full of this duty, can we find twenty, or ten? Oh, the days, months, years, we bestow upon sin, vanity, the affairs of this world, while we afford not a minute in converse with our own hearts concerning their case!” If there is anything in our lives that is wrong, let us ask God to show it to us. Have we been selfish? Have we been more jealous of our own reputation than of the honor of God? Elijah thought he was very jealous for the honor of God; but it turned out that it was his own honor after all -self was really at the bottom of it. One of the saddest things, I think, that Christ had to meet with in His disciples was this very thing; there was a constant struggle between them as to who should be the greatest, instead of each one taking the humblest place and being least in his own estimation.

We are told in proof of this, that “He came to Capernaum; and being in the house He asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace, for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. And He sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be the last of all, and servant of all. And He took a child, and set him in the midst of them; and when He had taken him in His arms, He said unto them,

Whosoever shall receive one of such children in My name, receiveth Me; and whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me." Soon after "James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto Him, saying, Master, we would that Thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And He said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto Him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left hand, in Thy glory. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask; can ye drink of the cup that I drink of and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptize with? And they said unto Him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized; but to sit on My right hand and on My left hand is not Mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared. And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to Him, - and saith unto them: Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you; but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." The latter words were spoken in the third year of His ministry. Three years the disciples had been with Him; they had listened to the words that fell from His lips; yet they had failed to learn this lesson of humility. The most humiliating thing that happened among the chosen twelve occurred on the night of our Lord's betrayal, when Judas sold Him, and Peter denied Him.

If there was any place where there should have been an absence of these thoughts, it was at the Supper table. Yet we find that when Christ instituted that blessed memorial there was a debate going on among His disciples who should be the greatest. Think of that - right under the Cross, when the Master was "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" was already tasting the bitterness of Calvary, and the horrors of that dark hour were gathering upon His soul.

I think if God searches us, we will find a good many things in our lives for us to confess. If we are tried and tested by God's law, there will be many, many things that will have to be changed. I ask again: Are we selfish or jealous? Are we willing to hear of others being used of God more than we are? Are our Methodist friends willing to hear of a great revival of God's work among the Baptists? Would it rejoice their souls to hear of such efforts being blessed? Are Baptists willing to hear of a reviving of God's work in the Methodist, Congregational, or other churches? If we are full of narrow, party and sectarian feelings, there will be many things to be laid aside. Let us pray to God to search us, and try us, and see if there be any evil way in us. If these holy and good men felt that they were faulty, should we not tremble, and endeavor to find out if there is anything in our lives that God would have us get rid of? Once again, let me call your attention to the prayer of David contained in the fifty-first Psalm. A friend of mine told me some years ago that he repeated this prayer as his own every week. I think it would be a good thing if we offered up these petitions frequently; let them go right up from our hearts.

If we have been proud, or irritable, or lacking in patience, shall we not at once confess it? Is it not time that we began at home, and got our lives straightened out? See how quickly the ungodly will then begin to inquire the way of life! Let those of us who are parents set our own houses in order, and be filled with Christ's Spirit; then it will not be long before our children will be inquiring what they must do to get the same Spirit. I believe that today, by its lukewarmness and formality, the Christian Church is making more infidels than all the books that infidels ever wrote. I do not fear infidel lectures half so much as the cold and dead formalism in the professing church at the present time. One prayer meeting like that the disciples had on the day of Pentecost, would shake the whole infidel fraternity.

What we want is to get hold of God in prayer. You are not going to reach the masses by great sermons. We want to "move the Arm that moves the world." To do that, we must be clear and right before God." For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things, Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have confidence toward God; and whatsoever we ask we receive of Him because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight."

CONFESSION

"No, not despairingly Come I to Thee; No, not distrustingly Bend I the knee; Sin hath gone over me, Yet is this still my plea, Jesus hath died.

"Ah, mine iniquity Crimson has been; Infinite, infinite, Sin upon sin; Sin of not loving Thee, Sin of not trusting Thee.

INFINITE SIN

"Lord, I confess to Thee Sadly my sin; All I am, tell I Thee, All I have been.

Purge Thou my sin away, Wash Thou my soul this day; Lord, make me clean!" - Dr. H. Bonar.

Chapter 4. Restitution

A third element of successful prayer is RESTITUTION. If I have at any time taken what does not belong to me, and am not willing to make restitution, my prayers will not go very far toward heaven. It is a singular thing, but I have never touched on this subject in my addresses, without hearing of immediate results. A man once told me that I would not need to dwell on this point at a meeting I was about to address, as probably there would be no one present that would need to make restitution. But I think if the Spirit of God searches our hearts, we shall most of us find a good many things have to be done that we never thought of before.

After Zaccheus met with Christ, things looked altogether different. I venture to say that the idea of making restitution never entered into his mind before. He thought, probably, that morning that he was a perfectly honest man. But when the Lord came and spoke to him, he saw himself in an altogether different light. Notice how short his speech was. The only thing put on record that he said was this: “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.” A short speech; but how the words have come ringing down through the ages! By making that remark he confessed his sin - that he had been dishonest.

Besides that, he showed that he knew the requirements of the law of Moses. If a man had taken what did not belong to him, he was not only to return it, but to multiply it by four. I think that men in this dispensation ought to be fully as honest as men under the Law. I am getting so tired and sick of your mere sentimentalism, that does not straighten out a man’s life.

We may sing our hymns and psalms, and offer prayers, but they will be an abomination to God, unless we are willing to be thoroughly straightforward in our daily life. Nothing will give Christianity such a hold upon the world as to have God’s believing people begin to act in this way. Zaccheus had probably more influence in Jericho after he made restitution than any other man in it.

Finney, in his lectures to professing Christians, says: “One reason for the requirement, ‘Be not conformed to this world,’ is the immense, salutary, and instantaneous influence it would have, if everybody would do business on the principles of the Gospel. Turn the tables over, and let Christians do business one year on Gospel principles. It would shake the world! It would ring louder than thunder. Let the ungodly see professing Christians in every bargain consulting the good of the person they are trading with - seeking not their own wealth, but every man another’s wealth - living above the world -setting no value on the world any further than it would be the means of glorifying God; what do you think would be the effect? It would cover the world with confusion of face, and overwhelm them with conviction of sin.”

Finney makes one grand mark of genuine repentance to be restitution. “The thief has not repented who keeps the money he stole. He may have conviction, but no repentance. If he had repentance, he would go and give back the money. If you have cheated anyone, and do not restore what you have taken unjustly; or if you have injured anyone, and do not set about to undo the wrong you have done, as far as in you lies, you have not truly repented.” In Exodus we read - “If a man steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.” And again: “If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man’s field; of

the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard shall he make restitution. If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field, be consumed therewith, he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution." Or turn to Leviticus, where the law of the trespass offering is laid down - the same point is there insisted on with equal clearness and force.

"If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the Lord, and lie unto his neighbor in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbor; or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein; then it shall be, because he hath sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering." The same thing is repeated in Numbers, where we read - "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the Lord, and that person be guilty; then they shall confess their sin which they have done; and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed. But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the Lord, even to the priest, beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made of him." These were the laws that God laid down for His people, and I believe their principle is as binding today as it was then. If we have taken anything from any man, if we have in any way defrauded a man, let us not only confess it, but do all we can to make restitution. If we have misrepresented any one - if we have started some slander, or some false report about him - let us do all in our power to undo the wrong.

It is in reference to a practical righteousness such as this that God says in Isaiah -"Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness; ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen - to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee, the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am."

Trapp in his comment on Zaccheus, says: "Sultan Selymus could tell his councilor Pyrrhus, who persuaded him to bestow the great wealth he had taken from the Persian merchants upon some notable hospital for relief of the poor, that God hates robbery for burnt offering. The dying Turk commanded it rather to be restored to the right owners, which was done accordingly, to the great shame of many Christians who mind nothing less

than restitution. When Henry III of England had sent the Friar Minors a load of frieze to clothe them, they returned the same with this message, ‘that he ought not to give alms of what he had rent from the poor; neither would they accept of that abominable gift.’ Master Latimer saith, “If ye make no restitution of goods detained, ye shall cough in hell, and the devils shall laugh at you.” Henry VII, in his last will and testament, after the disposition of his soul and body, devised and willed restitution should be made of all such moneys as had unjustly been levied by his officers. Queen Mary restored again all ecclesiastical livings assumed to the crown, saying that she set more by the salvation of her own soul, than she did by ten kingdoms. A bull came also from the Pope, at the same time, that others should do the like, but none did. Latimer tells us that the first day he preached about restitution, one came and gave him £20 to restore; the next day another brought him £30; another time another gave him £200.

“Mr. Bradford, hearing Latimer on that subject, was struck in the heart for one dash of the pen which he had made without the knowledge of his master, and could never be quiet till, by the advice of Mr. Latimer restitution was made, for which he did willingly forego all the private and certain patrimony which he had on earth.

“I, myself,” saith Mr. Barroughs, “knew one man who had wronged another but of five shillings, and fifty years after could not be quiet till he had restored it.” If there is true repentance it will bring forth fruit. If we have done wrong to some one, we should never ask God to forgive us until we are willing to make restitution. If I have done any man a great injustice and can make it good, I need not ask God to forgive me until I am willing to do so.

Suppose I have taken something that does not belong to me. I cannot expect forgiveness until I make restitution. I remember preaching in an Eastern city, and a fine looking man came up to me at the close. He was in great distress of mind. “The fact is,” he said, “I am a defaulter. I have taken money that belonged to my employers. How can I become a Christian without restoring it?” “Have you got the money?” He told me he had not got it all. He had taken about 1,500 dollars, and he still had about 900. He said, “Could I not take that money and go into business, and make enough to pay them back?” I told him that was a delusion of Satan, that he could not expect to prosper on stolen money; that he should restore all he had, and go and ask his employers to have mercy upon him, and forgive him. “But they will put me in prison,” he said. “Can you not give me any help?” “No; you must restore the money before you can expect to get any help from God. “It is pretty hard,” he said. “Yes, it is hard; but the great mistake was in doing the wrong at first.” His burden became so heavy that it was, in fact, unbearable. He handed me the money - 950 dollars and some cents - and asked me to take it back to his employers. I told them the story, and said that he wanted mercy from them, not justice. The tears trickled down the cheeks of these two men, and they said, “Forgive him! Yes, we will be glad to forgive him.” I went downstairs and brought him up. After he had1 confessed his guilt and been forgiven, we all fell down on our knees and had a blessed prayer meeting. God met us and blessed us there.

There was another friend of mine who had come to Christ and was trying to consecrate himself and his wealth to God. He had formerly had transactions with the Government and had taken advantage of them. This thing came to memory, and his conscience troubled

him. He had a terrible struggle; his conscience kept rising up and smiting him. At last he drew a check for 1,500 dollars, and sent it to the Treasury of the Government. He told me he received such a blessing after he had done it. That is bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. I believe a great many men are crying to God for light; and they are not getting it because they are not honest.

A man came to one of our meetings, when this subject was touched upon.

The memory of a dishonest transaction flashed into his mind. He saw at once how it was that his prayers were not answered, but “returned into his own bosom,” as the Scripture phrase puts it. He left the meeting, took the train, and went to a distant city, where he had defrauded his employer years before. He went straight to this man confessed the wrong, and offered to make restitution. Then he remembered another transaction, in which he had failed to meet the just demands upon him; he at once made arrangements to have a large amount repaid. He came back to the place where we were holding the meetings, and God blessed him wonderfully in his own soul. I have not met a man for a long time who seemed to have received such a blessing.

Some years ago, in the north of England, a woman came to one of the meetings, and appeared to be very anxious about her soul. For some time she did not seem to be able to get peace. The truth was, she was covering up one thing that she was not willing to confess. At last, the burden was too great; and she said to a worker; “I never go down on my knees to pray, but a few bottles of wine keep coming up before my mind.” It appeared that years before, when she was housekeeper, she had taken some bottles of wine belonging to her employer. The worker said: “Why do you not make restitution?” The woman replied that the man was dead; and besides, she did not know how much it was worth. “Are there any heirs living to whom you can make restitution?” She said there was a son living at some distance; but she thought it would be a very humiliating thing, so she kept back for some time. At last she felt as if she must have a clear conscience at any cost, so she took the train, and went to the place where the son of her employer resided. She took five pounds with her, she did not exactly know what the wine was worth, but that would cover it at any rate. The man said he did not want the money, but she replied, “I do not want it; it has burnt my pocket long enough.” So he agreed to take the half of it, and give it to some charitable object. Then she came back; and I think she was one of the happiest mortals I have ever met with. She said she could not tell whether she was in the body or out of it - such a blessing had come to her soul.

It may be that there is something in our lives that needs straightening out; something that happened perhaps twenty years ago, and that has been forgotten till the Spirit of God brought it to our remembrance. If we are not willing to make restitution, we cannot expect God to give us great blessing.

Perhaps that is the reason so many of our prayers are not answered.

PERFECT CLEANSING

“Who would be cleansed from every sin, Must to God’s holy altar bring The whole of life - its joys, its tears, Its hopes, its loves, its powers, its years, The will, and every cherished thing! “Must make this sweeping sacrifice - Choose God, and dare reproach and shame, And boldly stand in storm or flame For Him who paid redemption’s price; Then trust (not

struggle to believe), And trusting wait, nor doubt, but pray That in His own good time He'll say, 'Thy faith hath saved thee; now receive.' "His time is when the soul brings all, Is all upon His altar lain; When pride and self-conceit are slain, And crucified with Christ, we fall Helpless upon His word, and lie; When, faithful to His word, we feel The cleansing touch, the Spirit's seal, And know that He does sanctify." - A. T. Allis.

Chapter 5. Thanksgiving

The next thing I would mention as an element of prayer is THANKSGIVING.

We ought to be more thankful for what we get from God. Perhaps some of you mothers have a child in your family who is constantly complaining - never thankful. You know that there is not much pleasure in doing anything for a child like that. If you meet with a beggar who is always grumbling, and never seems to be thankful for what you give, you very soon shut the door in his face altogether. Ingratitude is about the hardest thing we have to meet with. The great English poet says: "Blow, blow, thou winter wind - Thou art not so unkind As man's ingratitude; Thy tooth is not so keen, Because thou art not seen, Although thy breath be rude." We cannot speak too plainly of this evil, which so demeans those who are guilty of it. Even in Christians there is but too much of it to be seen. Here we are, getting blessings from God day after day; yet how little praise and thanksgiving there is in the Church of God! Gurnall, in his Christian Armor, referring to the words, "In everything give thanks," says: "Praise is comely for the upright." 'An unthankful saint' carries a contradiction with it. Evil and Unthankful are twins that live and die together; as any one ceaseth to be evil, he begins to be thankful. It is that which God expects at your hands; He made you for this end. When the vote passed in heaven for your being - yea, happy being in Christ! - it was upon this account, that you should be a name and a praise to Him on earth in time, and in heaven to eternity. Should God miss this, He would fail of one main part of His design. What prompts Him to bestow every mercy, but to afford you matter to compose a song for His praise? 'They are My people, children that will not lie; so He was their Savior.' "He looks for fair dealing at your hands. Whom may a father trust with his reputation, if not his child? Where can a prince expect honor, if not among his favorites? Your state is such that the least mercy you have is more than all the world besides. Thou, Christian, and thy few brethren, divide heaven and earth among you! What hath God that He withholds from you? Sun, moon and stars are set up to give you light; sea and land have their treasures for your use; others are encroachers upon them; you are the rightful heirs to them; they groan that any others should be served by them. The angels, bad and good, minister unto you; the evil, against their will, are forced like scullions when they tempt you, to scour and brighten your graces, and make way for your greater comforts; the good angels are servants to your heavenly Father, and disdain not to carry you in their arms. Your God withholds not Himself from you; He is your portion - Father, Husband, Friend. God is His own happiness, and admits you to enjoy Him. Oh,

what honor is this, for the subject to drink in his prince's cup! 'Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures.' And all this is not the purchase of your sweat and blood; the feast is paid for by Another, only He expects your thanks to the Founder. No sin offering is imposed under the Gospel; thank offerings are all He looks for." Charnock, in discoursing on Spiritual Worship, says: "The praise of God is the choicest sacrifice and worship, under a dispensation of redeeming grace.

This is the prime and eternal part of worship under the Gospel. The Psalmist, speaking of the gospel times, spurs on to this kind of worship: 'Sing unto the Lord a new song; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King; let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds; let the high praises of God be in their mouth.' He begins and ends both Psalms with Praise ye the Lord! That cannot be a spiritual and evangelical worship that hath nothing of the praise of God in the heart. The consideration of God's adorable perfections discovered in the Gospel will make us come to Him with more seriousness, beg blessings of Him with more confidence, fly to Him with a winged faith and love, and more spiritually glorify Him in our attendances upon Him." There is a great deal more said in the Bible about praise than prayer; yet how few praise meetings there are! David, in his Psalms, always mixes praise with prayer. Solomon prevailed much with God in prayer at the dedication of the temple; but it was the voice of praise which brought down the glory that filled the house; for we read: "And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place (for all the priests that were present were sanctified, and did not then wait by course; also the Levites, which were the singers, all of them of Asapht of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals, and psalteries, and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them a hundred and twenty priests, sounding with trumpets); it came even to pass,5 as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets, and cymbals, and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, 'For He is good; for His mercy endureth forever;' that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." We read, too, of Jehosaphat, that he gained the victory over the hosts of Ammon and Moab through praise, which was excited by faith and thankfulness to God.

And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went forth, Jehosaphat stood and said, 'Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper;' and when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for His mercy endureth for ever,' And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir which were come against Judah; and they were smitten." It is said that in a time of great despondency among the first settlers in New England, it was proposed in one of their public assemblies to proclaim a fast. An old farmer arose; spoke of their provoking heaven with their complaints, reviewed their measures, showed that they had much to be thankful for, and moved that instead of appointing a day of fasting, they should appoint a day of thanksgiving. This was done; and the custom has been continued ever

since.

However great our difficulties, or deep even our sorrows, there is room for thankfulness. Thomas Adams has said: “Lay up in the ark of thy memory not only the pot of manna, the bread of life; but even Aaron’s rod, the very scourge of correction, wherewith thou hast been bettered. Blessed be the Lord, not only giving, but taking away, saith Job. God who sees there is no walking upon roses to heaven, puts His children into the way of discipline; and by the fire of correction eats out the rust of corruption. God sends trouble, then bids us call upon Him; promiseth our deliverance; and lastly, the all He requires of us is to glorify Him. “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.” Like the nightingale we can sing in the night, and say with John Newton - 6 “Since all that I meet shall work for my good, The bitter is sweet, the medicine food; Though painful at present, ‘twill cease before long, And then - oh, how pleasant! - the conquerors song.” Among all the apostles none suffered so much as Paul; but none of them do we find so often giving thanks as he. Take his letter to the Philippians.

Remember what he suffered at Philippi; how they laid many stripes upon him, and cast him into prison. Yet every chapter in that Epistle speaks of rejoicing and giving thanks. There is that well known passage: “Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” As someone has said, there are here three precious ideas: “Careful for nothing; prayerful for everything; and thankful for anything.” We always get more by being thankful for what God has done for us. Paul says again: “We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.” So he was constantly giving thanks. Take up any one of his Epistles, and you will find them full of praise to God.

Even if nothing else called for thankfulness, it would always be an ample cause for it that Jesus Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us. A farmer was once found kneeling at a soldier’s grave near Nashville. Someone came to him and said: “Why do you pay so much attention to this grave? Was your son buried here?” “No,” he said. “During the war my family were all sick, I knew not how to leave them. I was drafted. One of my neighbors came over and said: ‘I will go for you; I have no family.’ He went off. He was wounded at Chickamauga. He was carried to the hospital, and there died. And, sir, I have come a great many miles, that I might write over his grave these words, ‘He died for me.’” This the believer can always say of his blessed Savior, and in the fact may well rejoice. “By Him therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”

THE PRAISE OF GOD

“Speak, lips of mine! And tell abroad The praises of my God, Speak, stammering tongue! In gladdest tone, Make His high praises known.

“Speak, sea and earth! Heaven’s utmost star, Speak from your realms afar! Take up the note, And send it round Creation’s farthest bound.

“Speak, heaven of heavens! Wherein our God Has made His bright abode.

Speak, angels, speak! In songs proclaim His everlasting name.

“Speak, son of dust! Thy flesh He took And heaven for thee forsook.

Speak child of death! Thy death He died, Bless thou the crucified." - Dr. Bonar.

Chapter 6. Forgiveness

The next thing is perhaps the most difficult of all to deal with - FORGIVENESS. I believe this is keeping more people from having power with God than any other thing - they are not willing to cultivate the spirit of forgiveness. If we allow the root of bitterness to spring up in our hearts against someone, our prayer will not be answered. It may not be an easy thing to live in sweet fellowship with all those with whom we come in contact; but that is what the grace of God is given to us for.

The disciples' prayer is a test of sonship; if we can pray it all from the heart we have good reason to think that we have been born of God. No man can call God Father but by the Spirit. Though this prayer has been such a blessing to the world, I believe it has been a great snare; many stumble over it into perdition. They do not weigh its meaning, nor take its facts right into their hearts. I have no sympathy with the idea of universal sonship - that all men are the sons of God. The Bible teaches very plainly that we are adopted into the family of God. If all were sons God would not need to adopt any. We are all God's by creation; but when people teach that any man can say, "Our Father which art in heaven." whether he is born of God or not, I think that is contrary to Scripture. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Sonship in the family is the privilege of the believer. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil," says the Apostle. If we are doing the will of God, that is a very good sign that we are born of God. If we have no desire to do that will, how can we call God "Our Father?"

Another thing. We cannot really pray for God's kingdom to come until we are in it. If we should pray for the coming of God's kingdom while we are rebelling against Him, we are only seeking for our own condemnation. No unrenewed man really wants God's will to be done on the earth. You might write over the door of every unsaved man's house, and over his place of business, "God's will is not done here." If the nations were really to put up this prayer, all their armies could be discharged. They tell us there are some twelve millions of men in the standing armies of Europe alone. But men do not want God's will done on earth as it is in heaven; that is the trouble. Now let us come to the part I want to dwell upon: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." This is the only part of the prayer that Christ explained. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Notice that when you go into the door of God's kingdom, you go in through the door of forgiveness. I never knew of a man getting a blessing in his own soul if he was not willing to forgive others. If we are unwilling to

forgive others, God cannot forgive us. I do not know how language could be more plain than it is in these words of our Lord. I firmly believe a great many prayers are not answered because we are not willing to forgive someone. Let your mind go back over the past, and through the circle of your acquaintance; are there any against whom you are cherishing hard feelings? Is there any root of bitterness springing up against some one who has perhaps injured you? It may be that for months or years you have been nursing this unforgiveng spirit; how can you ask God to forgive you? If I am not willing to forgive those who may have committed some single offense against me, what a mean, contemptible thing it would be for me to ask God to forgive the ten thousand sins of which I have been guilty! But Christ goes still further. He says: “If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” It may be that you are saying: “I do not know that I have anything against anyone.” Has anyone anything against you? Is there someone who thinks you have done them wrong? Perhaps you have not; but it may be they think you have. I will tell you what I would do before I go to sleep tonight; I would go and see them, and have the question settled. You will find that you will be greatly blessed in the very act.

Supposing you are in the right and they are in the wrong; you may win your brother or sister. May God root out of all our hearts this unforgiveng spirit.

A gentleman came to me some time ago, and wanted me to talk to his wife about her soul. That woman seemed as anxious as any person I ever met, and I thought it would not take long to lead her into the light; but it seemed that the longer I talked with her, the more her darkness increased. I went to see her again the next day, and found her in still greater darkness of soul. I thought there must be something in the way that I had not discovered, and I asked her to repeat with me this disciples’ prayer. I thought if she could say this prayer from the heart, the Lord would meet her in peace. I began to repeat it sentence after sentence, and she repeated it after me until I came to this petition: “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.” There she stopped. I repeated it the second time, and waited for her to say it after me; she said she could not do it. “What is the trouble?” She replied, “There is one woman I never will forgive.” “Oh,” I said, “I have got at your difficulty; it is no use my going on to pray, for your prayers will not go higher than my head. God says He will not forgive you unless you forgive others. If you do not forgive this woman, God will never forgive you. That is the decree of heaven.” She said “Do you mean to say that I cannot be forgiven until I have forgiven her?” “No, I do not say it; the Lord says it, and that is far better authority.” Said she, “Then I will never be forgiven.” I left the house without having made any impression on her. A few years after, I heard that this woman was in an asylum for the insane. I believe this spirit of unforgiveness drove her mad.

If there is someone who has aught against you, go at once, and be reconciled. If you have aught against anyone, write to them a letter, telling them that you forgive them, and so have this thing off your conscience. I remember being in the inquiry room some years ago; I was in one corner of the room, talking to a young lady. There seemed to be something in the way, but I could not find out what it was. At last I said, “Is there not someone you do not forgive?” She looked up at me, and said, “What made you ask that? Has anyone told you about me?” “No,” I said; “but I thought perhaps that might be the case, as you have

not received forgiveness yourself." "Well," she said, pointing to another corner of the room, where there was a young lady sitting, "I have had trouble with that young lady; we have not spoken to each other for a long time." "Oh," I said, "It is all plain to me now; you cannot be forgiven until you are willing to forgive her." It was a great struggle. But then you know, the greater the cross the greater the blessing. It is human to err, but it is Christlike to forgive and be forgiven. At last this young lady said: "I will go and forgive her." Strange to say, the same conflict was going on in the mind of the lady in the other part of the room. They both came to their right mind about the same time.

They met each other in the middle of the floor. The one tried to say that she forgave the other, but they could not finish; so they rushed into each other's arms. Then the four of us - the two seekers and the two workers -got down on our knees together, and we had a grand meeting. These two went away rejoicing.

Dear friend, is this the reason why your prayers are not answered? Is there some friend, some member of your family, someone in the church, you have not forgiven? We sometimes hear of members of the same church who have not spoken to each other for years. How can we expect God to forgive when this is the case? I remember one town that Mr. Sankey and myself visited. For a week it seemed as if we were beating the air; there was no power in the meetings.

At last I said one day that perhaps there was someone cultivating this unforgiveng spirit. The Chairman of our committee, who was sitting next to me, got up and left the meeting right in view of the audience. The arrow had hit the mark, and gone home to the heart of the Chairman of the committee. He had had trouble with someone for about six months. He at once hunted up this man and asked him to forgive him. He came to me with tears in his eyes, and said: "I thank God you ever came here." That night the inquiry room was thronged. The Chairman became one of the best workers I have ever known, and he has been active in Christian service ever since.

Several years ago the Church of England sent a devoted missionary to New Zealand. After a few years of toil and success, he was one Sabbath holding a communion service in a district where the converts had not long since been savages. As the missionary was conducting the service, he observed one of the men, just as he was about to kneel at the rail, suddenly start to his feet and hastily go to the opposite end of the church. By and by he returned, and calmly took his place. After service the clergyman took him on one side, and asked the reason for his strange behavior. He replied: "As I was about to kneel I recognized in the man next to me the chief of a neighboring tribe, who had murdered my father, and drunk his blood; and I had sworn by all the gods that I would slay that man at the first opportunity. The impulse to have my revenge, at the first almost overpowered me, and I rushed away, as you saw me, to escape the power of it. As I stood at the other end of the room and considered the object of our meeting, I thought of Him who prayed for His own murderers: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' And I felt that I could forgive the murderer of my father, and came and knelt down at his side." As one has said: "There is an ugly kind of forgiveness in the world - a kind of hedgehog forgiveness, shot out like quills. Men take one who has offended, and set him down before the blowpipe of their indignation, and scorch him, and burn his fault into him; and when they have kneaded him sufficiently with their fists, then they forgive him." The father of

Frederick the Great, on his deathbed, was warned by M. Roloff, his spiritual adviser, that he was bound to forgive his enemies. He was quite troubled, and after a moment's pause said to the Queen: "You, Feekin, may write to your brother (the King of England) after I am dead,2 and tell him that I forgave him, and died at peace with him." "It would be better," M. Roloff mildly suggested, "that your majesty should write at once." "No," was the stern reply. "Write after I am dead. That will be safer." Another story tells of a man who, supposing he was about to die, expressed his forgiveness to one who had injured him, but added: "Now you mind, if I get well, the old grudge holds good." My friends, that is not forgiveness at all. I believe true forgiveness includes forgetting the offense - putting it entirely away out of our hearts and memories.

As Matthew Henry says: "We do not forgive our offending brother aright nor acceptably, if we do not forgive Him from the heart, for it is that God looks at. No malice must be harbored there, nor ill-will to any; no projects of revenge must be hatched there, nor desires of it, as there are in many who outwardly appear peaceful and reconciled. We must from the heart desire and seek the welfare of those who have offended us." If God's forgiveness were like that often shown by us, it would not be worth much. Supposing God said: "I will forgive you, but I will never forget it; all through eternity I will keep reminding you of it;" we should not feel that to be forgiveness at all. Notice what God says: "I will remember their sin no more." In a passage in Ezekiel it is said that not one of our sins shall be mentioned; is not that like God? I do like to preach this forgiveness - the sweet truth that sin is blotted out for time and eternity, and shall never once be mentioned against us. In another Scripture we read: "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Then when you turn to the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews, and read God's roll of honor, you find that not one of the sins of any of those men of faith is mentioned. Abraham is spoken of as the man of faith; but it is not told how he denied his wife down in Egypt; all that had been forgiven. Moses was kept out of the Promised Land because he lost patience; but this is not mentioned in the New Testament, though his name appears in the Apostle's roll of honor.

Samson, too, is named, but his sins are not brought up again. Why, we even read of "righteous Lot;" he did not look much like a righteous man in the Old Testament story, but he has been forgiven, and God has made him "righteous." If we are once forgiven by God, our sins will be remembered against us no more. This is God's eternal decree.

Brooks says of God's pardon granted to His people: "When God pardons sin, He takes it sheer away; that if it should be sought for, yet it could not be found; as the prophet Jeremiah speaks: 'In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve.' As David, when he saw in Mephibosheth the features of his friend Jonathan, took no notice of his lameness, or any other defect or deformity; so God, beholding in His people the glorious image of His Son, winks at all their faults and deformities, which made Luther say, 'Do with me what thou wilt, since Thou hast pardoned my sin.' And what is it to pardon sin, but not to mention sin?" We read in the Gospel of Matthew: "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." Then a little further on we read that Peter comes to Christ and says: "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?" Jesus replied, "I say

not unto thee, until seven times; but until seventy times seven." Peter did not seem to think that he was in danger of falling into sin; his question was, How often should I forgive my brother? But very soon we hear that Peter has fallen. I can imagine that when he did fall, the sweet thought came to him of what the Master had said about forgiving until seventy times seven. The voice of sin may be loud, but the voice of forgiveness is louder.

Let us enter into David's experience, when he said: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." David could look below, above, behind and before; to the past, present, and future; and know that all was well. Let us make up our mind, that we will not rest until this question of sin is forever settled, so that we can look up and claim God as our forgiving Father. Let us be willing to forgive others, that we may be able to claim forgiveness from God, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

PARDON

"Now, oh joy! my sins are pardoned! Now I can and do believe! All I have; and am, and shall be, To my precious Lord I give;4 He roused my deathly slumbers, He dispersed my soul's dark night; Whispered peace, and drew me to Him Made Himself my chief delight.

"Let the babe forget its mother, Let the bridegroom slight his bride; "True to him, I'll love none other, Cleaving alley to His side.

Jesus, hear my soul's confession; Weak am I, but strength is Thine; On Thine arms for strength and succor, Calmly may my soul recline!" - Albert Midlane.

Chapter 7. Unity

The next thing we need to have, if we would get our prayers answered, is - UNITY. If we do not love one another we certainly shall not have much power with God in Prayer. One of the saddest things in the present day is the division in God's Church. You notice that when the power of God came upon the early church, it was when they were all of one accord. I believe the blessing of Pentecost never would have been given but for that spirit of unity. If they had been divided and quarreling among themselves, do you think the Holy

Ghost would have come, and those thousands been converted? I have noticed in our work, that if we have gone to a town where three churches were united in it, we have had greater blessing than if only one church was in sympathy. And if there have been twelve churches united, the blessing has multiplied fourfold; it has always been in proportion to the spirit of unity that has been manifested. Where there are bickerings and divisions, and where the spirit of unity is absent, there is very little blessing and praise.

Dr. Guthrie thus illustrates this fact; he says: “Separate the atoms which make the hammer, and each would fall on the stone as a snowflake; but welded into one, and wielded by the firm arm of the quarryman, it will break the massive rocks asunder. Divide the waters of Niagara into distinct and individual drops, and they would be no more than the falling rain, but in their united body they would quench the fires of Vesuvius, and have some to spare for the volcanoes of other mountains.” History tells us that it was agreed upon by both armies of the Romans and the Albans to put the trial of all to the issue of a battle betwixt six brethren - three on the one side, the sons of Curatius, and three on the other, the sons of Horatius. While the Curatii were united, though all three sorely wounded, they killed two of the Heratii. The third began to take to his heels, though not hurt at all; and when he saw them follow slowly, one after another, because of wounds and heavy armor, he fell upon them singly, and slew all three. It is the cunning sleight of the devil to divide us that he may destroy us.

We ought to endure much and sacrifice much, rather than permit discord and division to prevail in our hearts. Martin Luther says: “When two goats meet upon a narrow bridge over deep water, how do they behave? Neither of them can turn back again, neither can pass the other, because the bridge is too narrow; if they should thrust one another they might both fall into the water and be drowned. Nature, then, has taught them that if the one lays himself down and permits the other to go over him, both remain unhurt.

Even so people should rather endure to be trod upon than to fall into debate and discord one with another.” Cawdray says: “As in music, if the harmony of tones be not complete they are offensive to the cultivated ear; so if Christians disagree among themselves they are unacceptable to God.” There are diversities of gifts - that is clearly taught -but there is one Spirit. If we have all been redeemed with the same blood, we ought to see eye to eye in spiritual things. Paul writes: “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.” Where there is union I do not believe any power, earthly or infernal, can stand before the work. When the church, the pulpit, and the pew, get united, and God’s people are all of one mind, Christianity is like a red hot ball rolling over the earth, and all the hosts of death and hell cannot stand before it. I believe that men will then come flocking into the Kingdom by hundreds and thousands. “By this,” says Christ, “shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.” If only we love one another, and pray for one another, there will be success. God will not disappoint us.

There can be no real separation or division in the true Church of Christ; they are redeemed by one price, and indwelt by one Spirit. If I belong to the family of God, I have been bought with the same blood, though I may not belong to the same sect or party as another. What we want to do is to get these miserable sectarian walls taken away. Our weakness has been in our division; and what we need is that there should be no schism or division

among those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians we read of the first symptoms of sectarianism coming into the early church - “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” Notice how one said, “I am of Paul;” and another, “I am of Apollos;” and another, “I am of Cephas.” Apollos was a young orator, and the people had been carried away by his eloquence. Some said Cephas, or Peter, was of the regular Apostolic line, because he had been with the Lord, and Paul had not.

So they were divided, and Paul wrote this letter in order to settle the question.

Jenkyn, in his commentary on the Epistle of Jude, says: “The partakers of a ‘common salvation,’ who here agree in one way to heaven, and who expect to be hereafter in one heaven, should be of one heart. It is the Apostle’s inference in Ephesians. What an amazing misery is it, that they who agree in common faith should disagree like common foes! That Christians should live as if faith had banished love! This common faith should allay and temper our spirits in all our differences. This should moderate our minds, though there is inequality in earthly relations. What a powerful motive was that of Joseph’s brethren to him to forgive their sin, they being both his brethren, and the servants of the God of his fathers! Though our own breath cannot blow out the taper of contention, oh, yet let the blood of Christ extinguish it!” What a strange state of things Paul, Cephas, and Apollos would find if they would come to the world today! The little tree that sprang up at Corinth has grown up into a tree like Nebuchadnezzar’s, with many of the fowls of heaven gathered into it. Suppose Paul and Cephas were to come down to us now, they would hear at once about our Churchmen and Dissenters. “A Dissenter!” says Paul, “what is that?” “We have a Church of England, and there are those who dissent from the Church.” “Oh, indeed! Are there two classes of Christians here, then?” “I am sorry to say there are a good many more divisions. The Dissenters themselves are split up. There are Wesleyans, Baptists, Presbyterians, Independents, and so on; even these are all divided up.” “Is it possible,” says Paul, “that there are so many divisions?” “Yes; the Church of England is pretty well divided itself. There is the Broad Church, the High Church, the Low Church, and the High-Lows. Then there is the Lutheran Church; and away in Russia they have the Greek Church, and so on.” I declare I do not know what Paul and Cephas would think if they came back to the world; they would find a strange state of things. It is one of the most humiliating things in the present day to see how God’s family is divided up. If we love the Lord Jesus Christ the burden of our hearts will be that God may bring us closer together, so that we may love one another and rise above all party feeling. In repairing a church in one of the Boston wards, the inscription upon the wall behind the pulpit was covered up. Upon the first Sabbath after repairs, “little five-year-old” whispered to her mother: “I know why God told the paint men to cover that pretty verse up. It was because the people did not love one another.” The inscription was; “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.” A Boston minister says he once preached on “The Recognition of Friends in the Future,” and was told after service by a hearer, that it would be more to

the point to preach about the recognition of friends here, as he had been in the church twenty years, and did not know any of its members.

I was in a little town some time ago, when one night as I came out of the meeting, I saw another building where the people were coming out. I said to a friend, “Have you got two churches here?” “Oh yes.” “How do you get on?” “Oh, we get on very well.” “I am glad to hear that. Was your brother minister at the meeting?” “Oh no, we don’t have anything to do with each other. We find that is the best way.” And they called that “getting on very well.” Oh, may God make us of one heart and of one mind! Let our hearts be like drops of water flowing together. Unity among the people of God is a sort of foretaste of heaven. There we shall not find any Baptists, or Methodists, or Congregationalists, or Episcopalians; we shall all be one in Christ. We leave all our party names behind us when we leave this earth.

Oh that the Spirit of God may speedily sweep away all these miserable walls that we have been building up! Did you ever notice that the last prayer Jesus Christ made on earth, before they led Him away to Calvary, was that His disciples might all be one? He could look down the stream of time, and see that divisions would come - how Satan would try to divide the flock of God. Nothing will silence infidels so quickly as Christians everywhere being united. Then our testimony will have weight with the ungodly and the careless. But when they see how Christians are divided, they will not believe their testimony.

The Holy Spirit is grieved; and there is little power where there is no unity.

If I thought I had one drop of sectarian blood in my veins, I would let it out before I went to bed; if I had one sectarian hair in my head, I would pull it out. Let us get right to the heart of Jesus Christ; then our prayers will be acceptable to God, and showers of blessings will descend.

UNION

“Let party names no more be known Among the ransomed throng; For Jesus claims them for His own; To Him they all belong.

“One in their covenant Head and King, They should be one in heart; Of one salvation all should sing, Each claiming his own part.

One bread, one family, one rock, One building, formed by love, One fold, one Shepherd, yea, one flock, They shall be one above.” - Joseph Irons.

Chapter 8. Faith

Another element is FAITH. It is as important for us to know how to pray as it is to know

how to work. We are not told that Jesus ever taught His disciples how to preach, but He taught them how to pray. He wanted them to have power with God; then He knew they would have power with man.

In James we read, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God… and it shall be given him; but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.” So faith is the golden key that unlocks the treasures of heaven. It was the shield that David took when he met Goliath on the field; he believed that God was going to deliver the Philistine into his hands. Someone has said that faith could lead Christ about anywhere; wherever He found it He honored it.

Unbelief sees something in God’s hand, and says, “I cannot get it.” Faith sees it, and says, “I will have it.” The new life begins with faith; then we have only to go on building on that foundation. “I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” But bear in mind, we must be in earnest when we go to God.

I do not know of a more vivid illustration of the cry of distress for help going up to God, in all the earnestness of deeply realized need, than the following story supplies: Carl Steinman, who visited Mount Hecla, Iceland, just before the great eruption, in 1845, after a repose of eighty years, narrowly escaped death by venturing into the smoking crater against the earnest entreaty of his guide.

On the brink of the yawning gulf he was prostrated by a convulsion of the summit, and held there by blocks of lava upon his feet. He graphically writes: “Oh, the horrors of that awful realization! There, over the mouth of a black and heated abyss, I was held suspended, a helpless and conscious prisoner, to be hurled downward by the next great throe of trembling Nature! “‘Help! help! help! - for the love of God, help!’ I shrieked, in the very agony of my despair. “I had nothing to rely upon but the mercy of heaven; and I prayed to God as I had never prayed before, for the forgiveness of my sins, that they might not follow me to judgment.

“All at once I heard a shout, and, looking around, I beheld, with feelings that cannot be described, my faithful guide hastening down the sides of the crater to my relief.

“‘I warned you!’ said he.

“‘You did!’ cried I, ‘but forgive me, and save me, for I am perishing!’ “‘I will save you, or perish with you!’ “The earth trembled, and the rocks parted -one of them rolling down the chasm with a dull, booming sound. I sprang forward; I seized a hand of the guide, and the next moment we had both fallen, locked in each other’s arms, upon the solid earth above. I was free, but still upon the verge of the pit.” Bishop Hall, in a well-known extract, thus puts the point of earnestness in its relation to the prayer of faith.

“An arrow, if it be drawn up but a little way, goes not far; but, if it be pulled up to the head, dies swiftly and pierces deep. Thus prayer, if it be only dribbled forth from careless lips, falls at our feet. It is the strength of ejaculation and strong desire which sends it to heaven, and makes it pierce the clouds. It is not the arithmetic of our prayers, how many they are; nor the rhetoric of our prayers, how eloquent they be; nor the geometry of our prayers, how long they be; nor the music of our prayers, how sweet our voice may be; nor the logic of our prayers, how argumentative they may be; nor the method of our prayers, how orderly they may be; nor even the divinity of our prayers, how good the doctrine may

be; - which God cares for. He looks not for the horny knees which James is said to have had through the assiduity of prayer. We might be like Bartholomew, who is said to have had a hundred prayers for the morning, and as many for the evening, and all might be of no avail.

Fervency of spirit is that which availeth much." Archbishop Leighton says: "It is not the gilded paper and good writing of a petition that prevails with a king, but the moving sense of it. And to that King who discerns the heart, heart-sense is the sense of all, and that which He only regards. He listens to hear what that speaks, and takes all as nothing where that is silent. All other excellence in prayer is but the outside and fashion of it. This is the life of it." Brooks says: "As a painted fire is no fire, a dead man no man, so a cold prayer is no prayer. In a painted fire there is no heat, in a dead man there is no life; so in a cold prayer there is no omnipotency, no devotion, no blessing. Cold prayers are as arrows without heads, as swords without edges, as birds without wings; they pierce not, they cut not, they fly not up to heaven. Cold prayers do always freeze before they get to heaven. Oh that Christians would chide themselves out of their cold prayers, and chide themselves into a better and warmer frame of spirit, when they make their supplications to the Lord!" Take the case of the Syrophenician woman. When she called to the Master, it seemed for a time as if He were deaf to her request. The disciples wanted her to be sent away. Although they were with Christ for three years, and sat at His feet, yet they did not know how full of grace His heart was. Think of Christ sending away a poor sinner who had come to Him for mercy! Can you conceive such a thing? Never once did it occur. This poor woman put herself in the place of her child. "Lord, help me!" she said. I think when we get so far as that in the earnest desire to have our friends blessed - when we put ourselves in their place - God will soon hear our prayer.

I remember, a number of years ago at a meeting, I asked all those who wished to be prayed for to come forward and kneel or take seats in front.

Among those who come was a woman, I thought by her look that she must be a Christian, but she knelt down with the others. I said: "You are a Christian, are you not?" She said she had been one for so many years. "Did you understand the invitation? I asked those only who wanted to become Christians." I shall never forget the look on her face as she replied, "I have a son who has gone far away; I thought I would take his place today, and see if God would not bless him." Thank God for such a mother as that! The Syrophenician woman did the same thing - "Lord help me!" It was a short prayer, but it went right to the heart of the Son of God. He tried her faith, however. He said: "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs." She replied: "True, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." "O woman, great is thy faith!" What a eulogy He paid to her! Her story will never be forgotten as long as the church is on the earth. He honored her faith, and gave her all she asked for.

Everyone can say, "Lord, help me!" We all need help. As Christians, we need more grace, more love, more purity of life, more righteousness? Then let us make this prayer today. I want God to help me to preach better and to live better, to be more like the Son of God. The golden chains of faith link us right to the throne of God, and the grace of heaven flows down into our souls.

I do not know but that woman was a great sinner; still, the Lord heard her cry. It may be

that up to this hour you have been living in sin; but if you will cry, “Lord help me!” He will answer your prayer, if it is an honest one.

Very often when we cry to God we do not really mean anything. You mothers understand that. Your children have two voices. When they ask you for anything, you can soon tell if the cry is a make believe one or not. If it is, you do not give any heed to it; but if it is a real cry for help, how quickly you respond! The cry of distress always brings relief. Your child is playing around, and it says, “Mamma, I want some bread;” but it goes on playing. You know that it is not very hungry; so you let it alone. But, by and by, the child drops the toys, and comes tugging at your dress.

“Mamma, I am so hungry!” Then you know that the cry is a real one; you soon go to the pantry, and get some bread. When we are in earnest for the bread of heaven, we will get it. This woman was terribly in earnest; therefore her petition was answered.

I remember hearing of a boy brought up in an English almshouse. He had never learned to read or write, except that he could read the letters of the alphabet. One day a man of God came there, and told the children that if they prayed to God in their trouble, He would send them help. After a time, this boy was apprenticed to a farmer. One day he was sent out into the fields to look after some sheep. He was having rather a hard time; so he remembered what the preacher had said, and he thought he would pray to God about it. Someone going by the field heard a voice behind the hedge.

They looked to see whose it was, and saw the little fellow on his knees, saying, “A, B, C, D,” and so on. The man said, “My boy, what are you doing?” He looked up, and said he was praying. “Why? that is not praying; it is only saying the alphabet.” He said he did not know just how to pray, but a man once came to the poorhouse, who told them that if they called upon God, He would help them. So he thought that if he named over the letters of the alphabet, God would take them and put together into a prayer, and give him what he wanted. The little fellow was really praying.

Sometimes, when your child talks, your friends cannot understand what he says; but the mother understands very well. So if our prayer comes right from the heart, God understands our language. It is a delusion of the devil to think we cannot pray; we can, if we really want anything. It is not the most beautiful or the most eloquent language that brings down the answer; it is the cry that goes up from a burdened heart. When this poor Gentile woman cried out, “Lord, help me!” the cry flashed over the divine wires and the blessing came. So you can pray if you will; it is the desire, the wish of the heart, that God delights to hear and to answer.

Then we must expect to receive a blessing. When the centurion wanted Christ to heal his servant, he thought he was not worthy to go and ask the Lord himself, so he sent his friends to make the petition. He sent out messengers to meet the Master, and say, “Do not trouble yourself to come; all you have to do is to speak the word, and the disease will go.” Jesus said to the Jews, “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” He marveled at the faith of this centurion; it pleased Him, so that he healed the servant then and there. Faith brought the answer.

In John we read of a nobleman whose child was sick. The father fell on his knees before the Master, and said, “Come down, ere my child die.” Here you have both earnestness and

faith; and the Lord answered the prayer at once. The nobleman's son began to amend that very hour. Christ honored the man's faith.

In his case there was nothing to rest upon but the bare word of Christ, but this was enough. It is well to bear always in mind, that the object of faith is not the creature, but the Creator; not the instrument, but the Hand that wields it.

Richard Sibbes puts it for us thus: "The object in believing is God, and Christ as Mediator. We must have both to found our faith upon. We cannot believe in God, except we believe in Christ. For God must be satisfied by God; and by Him that is God must that satisfaction be applied - the Spirit of God - by working faith in the heart, and for raising it up when it is dejected. All is supernatural in faith. The things we believe are above nature; the promises are above nature; the worker of it, the Holy Ghost, is above nature; and everything in faith is above nature. There must be a God in whom we believe, and a God through whom we may know that Christ is God - not only by that which Christ hath done, the miracles, which none could do but God, but also by what is done to Him. And two things are done to Him, which show that He is God - that is, faith and prayer. We must believe only in God, and pray only to God; but Christ is the object of both these. Here He is set forth as the object of faith, and of prayer in that of Saint Stephen, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' And, therefore, His God; for that is done unto Him which is proper and peculiar only to God. Oh, what a strong foundation, what bottom and basis our faith hath! There is God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and Christ the Mediator. That our faith may be supported, we have Him to believe on who supports heaven and earth.

"There is nothing that can lie in the way of the accomplishment of any of God's promises, but it is conquerable by faith." As Samuel Rutherford says, commenting on the case of the Syrophenician woman: "See the sweet use of faith under a sad temptation; faith trafficketh with Christ and heaven in the dark, upon plain trust and credit, without seeing any surety of dawn: Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. And the reason is because faith is sinewed and boned with spiritual courage; so as to keep a barred city against hell, yea, and to stand under impossibilities; and here is a weak woman, though not as a woman, yet as a believer, standing out against Him who is 'the Mighty God, the Father of Ages, the Prince of Peace.' Faith only standeth out, and overcometh the sword, the world, and all afflictions. This is our victory, whereby one man overcometh the great and vast world." Bishop Ryle has said of Christ's intercession as the ground and sureness of our faith: "The bank note without a signature at the bottom is nothing but a worthless piece of paper. The stroke of a pen confers on it all its value. The prayer of a poor child of Adam is a feeble thing in itself, but once endorsed by the hand of the Lord Jesus, it availeth much. There was an officer in the city of Rome who was appointed to have his doors always open, in order to receive any Roman citizen who applied to him for help. Just so the ear of the Lord Jesus is ever open to the cry of all who want mercy and grace. It is His office to help them. Their prayer is His delight. Reader, think of this. Is not this encouragement?

Let us close this chapter by referring to some of our Lord's own words concerning faith in its relation to prayer: "And when He saw a fig tree in the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it: Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever. And presently the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they

marveled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away! Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea it shall be done. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." So again our Lord says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." And further: "If ye abide in Me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." HAVE FAITH IN GOD "Have faith in God, for He who reigns on high Hath borne thy grief, and hears the suppliant's sigh; Still to His arms, thine only refuge, fly, Have faith in God! "Fear not to call on Him, O soul distressed! Thy sorrow's whisper woos thee to His breast; He who is oftenest there is oftenest blest.

Have faith in God! "Lean not on Egypt's reeds; slake not thy thirst At earthly cisterns. Seek the kingdom first.

Though man and Satan fright thee with their worst, Have faith in God! "Go, tell Him all! The sigh thy bosom heaves Is heard in heaven. Strength and peace He gives, Who gave Himself for thee. Our Jesus lives; Have faith in God!" -Anna Shipton.

Chapter 9. Petition

The next element in prayer that I notice is PETITION. How often we go to prayer meetings without really asking for anything! Our prayers go all round the world, without anything definite being asked for. We do not expect anything. Many people would be greatly surprised if God did answer their prayers. I remember hearing of a very eloquent man who was leading a meeting in prayer. There was not a single definite petition in the whole. A poor, earnest woman shouted out: "Ask Him summat, man." How often you hear what is called prayer without any asking! "Ask, and ye shall receive." I believe if we put all the stumbling blocks out of the way, God will answer our petitions. If we put away sin and come into His presence with pure hands, as He has commanded us to come, our prayers will have power with Him. In Luke's Gospel we have as a grand supplement to the Disciples' Prayer, "Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Some people think God does not like to be troubled with our constant coming and asking. The only way to trouble God is not to come at all. He encourages us to come to Him repeatedly, and press our claims.

I believe you will find three kinds of Christians in the church today. The first are those

who ask; the second those who seek; and the third those who knock.

“Teacher,” said a bright, earnest-faced boy, “why is it that so many prayers are unanswered? I do not understand. The Bible says, ‘Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you;’ but it seems to me a great many knock and are not admitted.” “Did you never sit by your cheerful parlor fire,” said the teacher, “on some dark evening, and hear a loud knocking at the door? Going to answer the summons, have you not sometimes looked out into the darkness, seeing nothing, but hearing the pattering feet of some mischievous boy, who knocked but did not wish to enter, and therefore ran away? Thus is it often with us. We ask for blessings, but do not really expect them; we knock, but do not mean to enter; we fear that Jesus will not hear us, will not fulfill His promises, will not admit us; and so we go away.” “Ah, I see,” said the earnest-faced boy, his eyes shining with the new light dawning in his soul: “Jesus cannot be expected to answer runaway knocks. He has never promised it. I mean to keep knocking, knocking, until He cannot help opening the door.” Too often we knock at mercy’s door, and then run away, instead of waiting for an entrance and an answer. Thus we act as if we were afraid of having our prayers answered.

A great many people pray in that way; they do not wait for the answer. Our Lord teaches us here that we are not only to ask, but we are to wait for the answer; if it does not come, we must seek to find out the reason. I believe that we get a good many blessings just by asking; others we do not get, because there may be something in our life that needs to be brought to light.

When Daniel began to pray in Babylon for the deliverance of his people, he sought to find out what the trouble was, and why God had turned away His face from them. So there may be something in our life that is keeping back the blessing; if there is, we want to find it out. Someone, speaking on this subject, has said: “We are to ask with a beggar’s humility, to seek with a servant’s carefulness, and to knock with the confidence of a friend.” How often people become discouraged, and say they do not know whether or not God does answer prayer! In the parable of the importunate widow, Christ teaches us how we are not only to pray and seek, but to find. If the unjust judge heard the petition of the poor woman who pushed her claims, how much more will our Heavenly Father hear our cry! A good many years ago an Irishman in the State of New Jersey was condemned to be hung. Every possible influence was brought to bear upon the Governor to have the man reprieved; but he stood firm, and refused to alter the sentence.

One morning the wife of the condemned man, with her ten children, went to see the Governor. When he came to his office, they all fell on their faces before him, and besought him to have mercy on the husband - the father.

The Governor’s heart was moved; and he at once wrote out a reprieve. The importunity of the wife and children saved the life of the man, just as the woman in the parable, who, pressing her claims, induced the unjust judge to grant her request.

It was this that brought the answer to the prayer of blind Bartimeus. The people, and even the disciples, tried to hush him into silence; but he only cried out the louder, “Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!“9 Prayer is hardly ever mentioned in the Bible alone; it is prayer and earnestness; prayer and watchfulness; prayer and thanksgiving. It is an

instructive fact that throughout Scripture prayer is always linked with something else. Bartimeus was in earnest, and the Lord heard his cry.

Then the highest type of Christian is the one who has got clear beyond asking and seeking, and keeps knocking till the answer comes. If we knock, God has promised to open the door and grant our request. It may be years before the answer comes; He may keep us knocking; but He has promised that the answer will come.

I will tell you what I think it means to knock. A number of years ago, when we were having meetings in a certain city, it came to a point where there seemed to be very little power. We called together all the mothers, and asked them to meet and pray for their children. About fifteen hundred mothers came together, and poured out their hearts to God in prayer. One mother said: “I wish you would pray for my two boys. They have gone off on a drunken spree; and it seems as if my heart would break.” She was a widowed mother. A few mothers gathered together, and said, “Let us have a prayer meeting for these boys.” They cried to God for these two wandering boys; and now see how God answered their prayer.

That day these two brothers had planned to meet at the corner of the street where our meetings were being held. They were going to spend the night in debauchery and sin. About seven o’clock the first one came to the appointed place; he saw the people going into the meeting. As it was a stormy night, he thought the would go in for a little while. The word of God reached him, and he went into the inquiry room, where he gave his heart to the Savior.

The other brother waited at the corner until the meeting broke up, expecting his brother to come; he did not know that he had been in the meeting. There was a young men’s meeting in the church near by, and this brother thought he would like to see what was going on; so he followed the crowd into the meeting. He also was impressed with what he heard, and was the first one to go into the inquiry room, where he found peace. While this was happening, the first one had gone home to cheer his mother’s heart with the good news. He found her on her knees. She had been knocking at the mercy seat. While she was doing so her boy came in and told her that her prayers had been answered; his soul was saved. It was not long before the other brother came in and told his story - how he, too, had been blessed.

On the following Monday night, the first to get up at the young converts’ meeting was one of these brothers, who told the story of their conversion.

No sooner had he taken his seat, than the other jumped up and said: “All that my brother has told you is true, for I am his brother. The Lord has indeed met us and blessed us.” I heard of a wife in England who had an unconverted husband. She resolved that she would pray every day for twelve months for his conversion. Every day at twelve o’clock she went to her room alone and cried to God. Her husband would not allow her to speak to him on the subject; but she could speak to God on his behalf. It may be that you have a friend who does not wish to be spoken with about his salvation; you can do as this woman did - go and pray to God about it. The twelve months passed away, and there was no sign of his yielding. She resolved to pray for six months longer; so every day she went alone and prayed for the conversion of her husband. The six months passed, and still there was

no sign, no answer. The question arose in her mind, could she give him up? “No,” she said; “I will pray for him as long as God gives me breath.” That very day, when he came home to dinner, instead of going into the dining room he went upstairs. She waited, and waited, and waited; but he did not come down to dinner. Finally she went to his room, and found him on his knees crying to God to have mercy upon him. God convicted him of sin; he not only became a Christian, but the Word of God had free course, and was glorified in him. God used him mightily. That was God answering the prayers of this Christian wife; she knocked, and knocked, till the answer came.

I heard something the other day that cheered me greatly. Prayer had been made for a man for about forty years, but, there was no sign of any answer.

It seemed as though he was going down to his grave one of the most self-righteous men on the face of the earth. Conviction came in one night.

In the morning he sent for the members of his family, and said to his daughter: “I want you to pray for me. Pray that God would forgive my sins; my whole life has been nothing but sin - sin.” And all this conviction came in one night. What we want is to press our case right up to the throne of God. I have often known cases of men who came to our meetings, and although they could not hear a word that was said, it seemed as though some unseen power laid hold of them, so that they were convicted and converted then and there.

I remember at one place where we were holding meetings, a wife came to the first meeting and asked me to talk with her husband. “He is not interested,” she said, “but I am in hopes he will become so.” I talked with him, and I think I hardly ever spoke to a man who seemed to be so self-righteous. It looked as though I might as well have talked to an iron post, he seemed to be so encased in self-righteousness. I said to his wife that he was not at all interested. She said, “I told you that, but I am interested for him.” All the thirty days we were there that wife never gave him up. I must confess she had ten times more faith for him than I had. I had spoken to him several times, but I could see no ray of hope. The last night but two the man came to me and said: “Would you see me in another room?” I went aside with him, and asked him what was the trouble. He said, “I am the greatest sinner in the State of Vermont.” “How is that?” I said, “Is there any particular sin you have been guilty of?” I must confess I thought he had committed some awful crime, which he was covering up, and that he now wanted to make confession. “My whole life,” he said, “has been nothing but sin. God has shown it to me today.” He asked the Lord to have mercy on him, and he went home rejoicing in the assurance of sins forgiven. There was a man convicted and converted in answer to prayer. So if you are anxious about the conversion of some relative, or some friend, make up your mind that you will give God no rest, day or night, till He grants your petition. He can reach them, wherever they are - at their places of business, in their homes, or anywhere - and bring them to His feet.

Dr. Austin Phelps, in his “Still Hour,” says: “The prospect of gaining an object will always affect thus the expression of intense desire. The feeling which will become spontaneous with a Christian under the influence of such a trust is this: ‘I come to my devotions this morning on an errand of real life. This is no romance, and no farce. I do not come here to go through a form of words; I have no hopeless desires to express. I have an object to gain; I have an end to accomplish. This is a business in which I am about to engage. An astronomer does not turn his telescope to the skies with a more reasonable hope of

penetrating those distant heavens, than I have of reaching the mind of God by lifting up my heart at the throne of grace. This is the privilege of my calling of God in Christ Jesus. Even my faltering voice is now to be heard in heaven; and it is to put forth a new power there, the results of which only God can know, and only eternity can develop.

Therefore, O Lord, Thy servant findeth it in his heart to pray this prayer unto Thee!'" Jeremy Taylor says: "Easiness of desire is a great enemy to the success of a good man's prayer. It must be an intent, zealous, busy, operative prayer; for consider what a huge indecency it is that a man should speak to God for a thing that he values not! Our prayers upbraid our spirits when we beg tamely for those things for which we ought to die, which are more precious than imperial scepters, richer than the spoils of the sea, or the treasures of Indian hills." Dr. Patton, in his work on "Remarkable Answers to Prayer," says: "Jesus bids us seek. Imagine a mother seeking a lost child. She looks through the house, and along the streets, then searches the fields and woods, and examines the riverbanks. A wise neighbor meets her and says: 'Seek on, look everywhere; search every accessible place. You will not find, indeed; but then seeking is a good thing. It put the mind on the stretch; it fixes the attention; it aids observation; it makes the idea of the child very real. And then, after a while, you will cease to want your child.' The words of Christ are, 'knock, and it shall be opened unto you.' Imagine a man knocking at the door of a house, long and loud. After he has done this for an hour, a window opens, and the occupant of the house puts out his head and says: 'That is right my friend; I shall not open the door, but keep on knocking - it is excellent exercise, and you will be the healthier for it.

Knock away till sundown; and then come again, and knock all tomorrow.

After some days thus spent you will attain to a state of mind in which you will no longer care to come in.' Is this what Jesus intended us to understand, when He said - 'Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you?' No doubt one would thus soon cease to ask, to seek, and to knock; but would it not be from disgust?" Nothing is more pleasing to our Father in heaven than direct, importunate, and persevering prayer. Two Christian ladies, whose husbands were unconverted, feeling their great danger, agreed to spend one hour each day in united prayer for their salvation. This was continued for seven years, when they debated whether they should pray longer, so useless did their prayers appear. They decided to persevere till death, and, if their husbands went to destruction, it should be laden with prayers. In renewed strength, they prayed three years longer, when one of them was awakened in the night by her husband, who was in great distress for sin. As soon as the day dawned, she hastened, with joy, to tell her praying companion that God was about to answer their prayers. What was her surprise to meet her friend coming to her on the same errand! Thus ten years of united and persevering prayer was crowned with the conversion of both husbands on the same day.

We cannot be too frequent in our requests; God will not weary of His children's prayers. Sir Walter Raleigh asked a favor of Queen Elizabeth, to which she replied, "Raleigh, when will you leave off begging?" "When your Majesty leaves off giving," he replied. So long must we continue praying.

Mr. George Muller, in a recent address given by him in Calcutta, said that in 1844 five individuals were laid on his heart, and he began to pray for them. Eighteen months passed away before one of them was converted. He prayed on for five years more, and another

was converted. At the end of twelve years and a half, a third was converted. And now for forty years he had been praying for the other two, without missing one single day on any account whatever; but they were not yet converted. He felt encouraged, however, to continue in prayer; and he was sure of receiving an answer in relation to the two who were still resisting the Spirit.

“TO SEE HIS FACE”

“Sweet is the precious gift of prayer, To bow before a throne of grace; To leave our every burden there, And gain new strength to run our race; To gird our heavenly armor on, Depending on the Lord alone.

“And sweet the whisper of His love, When conscience sinks beneath its load, That bids our guilty fears remove, And points to Christ’s atoning blood; Oh, then ‘tis sweet indeed to know God can be just and gracious too.

“But oh, to see our Savior’s face! From sin and sorrow to be freed! To dwell in His divine embrace - This will be sweeter far indeed! The fairest form of earthly bliss Is less than nought compared with this.”

Chapter 10. Submission

Another essential element in prayer is SUBMISSION. All true prayer must be offered in full submission to God. After we have made our requests known to Him, our language should be, “Thy will be done.” I would a thousand times rather that God’s will should be done than my own. I cannot see into the future as God can; therefore, it is a good deal better to let Him choose for me than to choose for myself. I know His mind about spiritual things.

His will is that I should be sanctified; so I can with confidence pray to God for that, and expect an answer to my prayers. But when it comes to temporal matters, it is different; what I ask for may not be God’s purpose concerning me.

As one has well put it: “Depend upon it, prayer does not mean that I am to bring God down to my thoughts and my purposes, and bend His government according to my foolish, silly, and sometimes sinful notions.

Prayer means that I am to be raised up into feeling, into union and design with Him; that I am to enter into His counsel, and carry out His purpose fully. I am afraid sometimes we think of prayer as altogether of an opposite character, as if thereby we persuaded or influenced our Father in heaven to do whatever comes into our own minds, and whatever would accomplish our foolish, weak-sighted purposes. I am quite convinced of this, that God knows better what is best for me and for the world than I can possibly know; and even though it were in my power to say, ‘My will be done,’ I would rather say to Him,

‘Thy will be done.’ It is reported of a woman, who, being sick, was asked whether she was willing to live or die, that she answered, “Which God pleases.” “But,” said one, “if God should refer it to you, which would you choose?” “Truly,” replied she, “I would refer it to Him again.” Thus that man obtains his will of God, whose will is subjected to God.

Mr. Spurgeon remarks on this subject, “The believing man resorts to God at all times, that he may keep up his fellowship with the Divine mind.

Prayer is not a soliloquy, but a dialogue; not an introspection, but a looking toward the hills, whence cometh our help. There is a relief in unburdening the mind to a sympathetic friend, and faith feels this abundantly; but there is more than this in prayer. When an obedient activity has gone to the full length of its line, and yet the needful thing is not reached, then the hand of God is trusted in to go beyond us, just as before it was relied upon to go with us. Faith has no desire to have its own will, when that will is not in accordance with the mind of God; for such a desire would at bottom be the impulse of an unbelief which did not rely upon God’s judgment as our best guide. Faith knows that God’s will is the highest good, and that anything which is beneficial to us will be granted to our petitions.” History informs us that the Tusculani, a people of Italy, having offended the Romans, whose power was infinitely superior to theirs, Camillus, at the head of a considerable army, was on his march to subdue them. Conscious of their inability to cope with such an enemy they took the following method to appease him: They declined all thoughts of resistance, set open their gates, and every man applied himself to his proper business, resolving to submit where they knew it was in vain to contend. Camillus, entering their city, was struck with the wisdom and candor of their conduct, and addressed himself to them in these words: “You only, of all people, have found out the true method of abating the Roman fury; and your submission has proved your best defense. Upon these terms, we can no more find in our heart to injure you than upon other terms you could have found power to oppose us.” The chief magistrate replied: “We have so sincerely repented of our former folly, that in confidence of that satisfaction to a generous enemy, we are not afraid to acknowledge our fault.”

In view of the difficulty of bringing our hearts to this complete submission to the Divine will, we may well adopt Fenelon’s prayer: “O God, take my heart for I cannot give it; and when Thou hast it, keep it for I cannot keep it for Thee; and save me in spite of myself.” Some of the best men the world has ever seen have made great mistakes on this point. Moses could pray for Israel, and could prevail with God; but God did not answer his petition for himself. He asked that God would take him over Jordan, that he might see Lebanon; and after the forty years’ wandering in the wilderness, he desired to go into the Promised Land; but the Lord did not grant his desire. Was that a sign that God did not love him? By no means. He was a man greatly beloved of God, like Daniel; and yet God did not answer this prayer of his. Your child says, “I want this or that,” but you do not grant the request, because you know that it will be the ruin of the child to give him everything he wants. Moses wished to enter the Promised Land; but the Lord had something else in store for him. As someone has said, “God kissed away his soul, and took him home to Himself. “God buried him” - the greatest honor ever paid to mortal man. Fifteen hundred years afterward God answered the prayer of Moses; He allowed him to go into the Promised Land, and to get a glimpse of the coming glory. On the Mount of Transfiguration, with Elijah, the great prophet, and with Peter, James, and John, he heard

the voice come from the throne of God, “This is My beloved Son; hear ye Him.” That was better than to have gone over Jordan, as Joshua did, and to sojourn for thirty years in the land of Canaan. So when our prayers for earthly things are not answered, let us submit to the will of God, and know that it is all right.

When one inquired of a deaf and dumb boy why he thought he was born deaf and dumb, taking the chalk he wrote upon the board, “Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight.” John Brown, of Haddington, once said. “No doubt I have met with trials like others; but yet so kind has God been to me, that I think if He were to give me as many years as I have lived in the world, I would not desire one single circumstance in my lot changed, except that I wish there had been less sin. It might be written on my coffin, ‘Here lies one of the cares of Providence, who early lost both father and mother, and yet never wanted for the care of either.’” Elijah was mighty in prayer; he brought fire down from heaven on his sacrifice, and his petitions brought rain on the thirsty land. He stood fearlessly before King Ahab in the power of prayer. Yet we find him sitting under a juniper tree like a coward, asking God that He would let him die.

The Lord loved him too well for that; He was going to take him up to heaven in a chariot of fire. So we must not allow the devil to take advantage of us, and make us believe that God does not love us because He does not grant all our petitions in the time and way we would have Him do.

As Moses takes up more room in the Old Testament than any other character, so it is with Paul in the New Testament, except, perhaps, the Lord Himself. Yet Paul did not know how to pray for himself. He besought the Lord to take away “the thorn in the flesh.” His request was not granted; but the Lord bestowed upon him a greater blessing. He gave him more grace. It may be we have some trial - some thorn in the flesh. If it is not God’s will to take it away, let us ask Him to give us more grace, in order to bear it.

We find that Paul gloried in his reverses and his infirmities, because all the more the power of God rested upon him. It may be there are some of us who feel as if everything is against us. May God give us grace to take Paul’s platform and say: “All things work together for good to them that love God.” So when we pray to God we must be submissive, and say “Thy will be done.” In the Gospel of John we read: “If ye” (that “if” is a mountain to begin with), “If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” The latter part is often quoted, but not the first. Why, there is very little abiding in Christ now-a-days! You go and visit Him once in a while; but that is all. If Christ is in my heart, of course I will not ask anything that is against His will. And how many of us have God’s Word abiding in us? We must have a warrant for our prayers. If we have some great desire, we must search the Scriptures to find if it be right to ask it. There are many things we want that are not good for us; and many other things we desire to avoid are really our best blessings. A friend of mine was shaving one morning, and his little boy, not four years old, asked him for his razor, and said he wanted to whittle with it. When he found he could not get it, he began to cry as if his heart would break. I am afraid that there are a great many of us who are praying for razors. John Bunyan blessed God for that Bedford jail more than for anything else that happened to him in this life. We never pray for affliction; and yet it is often the best thing we could ask.

Dyer says: “Afflictions are blessings to us when we can bless God for afflictions. Suffering has kept many from sinning. God had one Son without sin; but He never had any without sorrow. Fiery trials make golden Christians; sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotions.” Rutherford beautifully writes, in reference to the value of sanctified trial, and the wisdom of submitting in it to God’s will: “Oh, what owe I to the file, to the hammer, to the furnace of my Lord Jesus, who hath now let me see how good the wheat of Christ is that goeth through His mill and His oven, to be made bread for His own table! Grace tried is better than grace; and it is more than grace; it is glory in its infancy. I now see that Godliness is more than the outside, and this world’s passments and their bushings.

Who knoweth the truth of grace without a trial? Oh, how little getteth Christ of us, but that which He winneth (to speak so) with much toil and pains! And how soon would faith freeze without a cross! How many dumb crosses have been laid upon my back, that had never a tongue to speak the sweetness of Christ, as this hath! When Christ blesseth His own crosses with a tongue, they breathe out Christ’s love, wisdom, kindness, and care for us. Why should I start at the plough of my Lord, that maketh deep furrows on my soul? I know that He is no idle husbandman; He purposeth a crop. Oh that this white withered lea-ground were made fertile to bear a crop for Him, by whom it is so painfully drest, and that this fallow ground were broken up! Why was I (a fool!) grieved that He put His garland and His rose upon my head - the glory and honor of His faithful witnesses? I desire now to make no more pleas with Christ. Verily He hath not put me to a loss by what I suffer; He oweth me nothing; for in my bonds how sweet and comfortable have the thoughts of Him been to me, wherein I find a sufficient recompense of reward! How blind are my adversaries who sent me to a banqueting house, to a house of wine, to the lovely feasts of my lovely Lord Jesus, and not to a prison, or place of exile!” We may close our remarks on this subject by a reference to the words of the Prophet Jeremiah, in Lamentations, where he says: “The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence; because he hath borne upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him; he is filled full with reproach. For the Lord will not cast off forever; but though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men… Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not? Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good? Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.”

SUBMISSION

“Hear me, my God, and if my lip hath dared To murmur ‘neath Thy Hand, oh, teach me now To feel each inmost thought before Thee bared, And this rebellious will in faith to bow.

Though I wept wildly o’er the ruined shrine, Where earthly idols held Thy place alone, Now purify and make this temple Thine, And teach me, Lord, to say, ‘Thy will be done! “What can I bring to offer that is mine? A youth of sorrow, and a life of sin.

What can I lay upon Thy hallowed shrine, One hope of pardon for the past to win? While thus a suppliant at Thy feet I bow, Still dare I lift to Thee my tearful eyes, I plead the promise of Thy word, that Thou A broken, contrite heart will not despise. “What shall I bring? A bruised spirit, Lord, Worn with the contest, pining now for rest, And yearning for Thy peace, as some poor bird, ‘Mid the wild tempest, seeks its mother’s breast, My sacrifice, the Lamb who died for me; I plead the merits of Thy sinless Son; I bring Thy promises; I trust in Thee; In love Thou smitest; Lord,’ Thy will be done!’”

Chapter 11. Answered Prayers

In the fifteenth chapter of John and the seventh verse, we find who have their prayers answered -“If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” Now in the fourth chapter of James, in the third verse, we find some spoken of whose prayers were not answered: “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss.” There are a great many prayers not answered because there is not the right motive; we have not complied with the Word of God; we ask amiss. It is a good thing that our prayers are not answered when we ask amiss.

If our prayers are not answered, it may be that we have prayed without the right motive; or that we have not prayed according to the Scriptures. So let us not be discouraged, or give up praying, although our prayers are not answered in the way we want them.

A man once went to George Muller and said he wanted him to pray for a certain thing. The man stated that he had asked God a great many times to grant him his request, but He had not seen fit to do it. Mr. Muller took out his notebook, and showed the man the name of a person for whom, he said, he had prayed for twenty-four years. The prayer, Mr. Muller added, was not answered yet; but the Lord had given him assurance that that person was going to be converted, and his faith rested there.

We sometimes find that our prayers are answered right away while we are praying; at other times the answer is delayed. But especially when men pray for mercy, how quickly the answer comes! Look at Paul, when he cried, “O Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” The answer came at once. Then the publican who went up to the temple to pray - he got an immediate answer. The thief on the cross prayed, “Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom!” and the answer came immediately - then and there. There are many cases of a similar kind in the Bible, but there are also others who prayed long and often. The Lord delights in hearing His children make their requests known unto Him - telling their troubles all out to Him; and then we. should wait for His time. We do not know when that is. There was a mother in Connecticut who had a son in the army, and it almost broke her heart when he left, because he was not a Christian. Day after day she lifted up her voice in prayer for her boy. She afterward learned that he had been taken to the hospital, and there died. but she could not find out anything about how he had died. Years passed, and one day a friend came to see some member of the family on business. There was a

picture of the soldier boy upon the wall. He looked at it, and said, “Did you know that young man?” The mother said, “That young man was my son. He died in the late war.” The man replied, “I knew him very well; he was in my company.” The mother then asked, “Do you know anything about his end?” The man said, “I was in the hospital, and he died a most peaceful death, triumphant in the faith.” The mother had given up hope of ever hearing of her boy; but before she went hence she had the satisfaction of knowing that her prayers had prevailed with God.

I think we shall find a great many of our prayers that we thought unanswered answered when we get to heaven. If it is the true prayer of faith, God will not disappoint us. Let us not doubt God. On one occasion, at a meeting I attended, a gentleman pointed out an individual and said, “Do you see that man over there? That is one of the leaders of an infidel club.” I sat down beside him, when the infidel said, “I am not a Christian. You have been humbugging these people long enough, and making some of these old women believe that you get answers to prayer. Try it on me.” I prayed, and when I got up, the infidel said with a good deal of sarcasm, “I am not converted; God has not answered your prayer!” I said, “But you may be converted yet.” Some time afterwards I received a letter from a friend, stating that he had been converted and was at work in the meetings.

Jeremiah prayed, and said: “Ah, Lord God! Behold Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched out Arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee.” Nothing is too hard for God; that is a good thing to take for a motto. I believe this is a time of great blessing in the world, and we may expect great things. While the blessing is falling all around, let us arise and share in it. God has said, “Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not.” Now let us call on the Lord; and let us pray that it may be done for Christ’s sake - not our own.

At a Christian convention a number of years ago, a leading man got up and spoke - his subject being “For Christ’s Sake” - and he threw new light upon that passage. I had never seen it in that way before. When the war broke out the gentleman’s only son had enlisted, and he never saw a company of soldiers but his heart went right out after them. They started a Soldiers’ Home in the city where that gentleman lived, and he gladly went on the committee, and acted as President. Some time afterward he said to his wife, “I have given so much time to these soldiers that I have neglected my business,” and he went down to his office with the fixed determination that he would not be disturbed by any soldiers that day. The door opened soon after, and he saw a soldier entering. He never minded him, but kept on writing; and the poor fellow stood for some time. At last the soldier put down an old soiled piece of paper on which there was writing. The gentleman observed that it was the handwriting of his son, and he seized the letter at once and read it. It was something to this effect: “Dear father, this young man belongs to my company. He has lost his health in defense of his country, and he is on his way home to his mother to die. Treat him kindly for Charlie’s sake.” The gentleman at once dropped his work and took the soldier to his house, where he was kindly cared for until he was able to be sent home to his mother; then he took him to the station, and sent him home with a “God bless you, for Charlie’s sake!” Let our prayers, then, be for Christ’s sake. If we want our sons and daughters converted, let us pray that it be done for Christ’s sake. If that is the motive, our prayers will be answered. If God gave up Christ for the world, what will He not give us? If He gave Christ to the murderers and blasphemers, and the rebels of a world lying in wickedness

and sin, what would He not give to those who go to Him for Christ's sake? Let our prayer be that God may advance His work, not for our glory - not for our sake - but for the sake of His beloved Son whom He hath sent.

So let us remember that when we pray we ought to expect an answer. Let us be looking for it. I remember at the close of a meeting in one of our Southern cities near the close of the war, a man came up to me weeping and trembling. I thought something I had said had aroused him, and I began to question him as to what it was. I found, however, that he could not tell a word of what I had said. "My friend," said I, "what is the trouble?" He put his hand into his pocket, and brought out a letter, all soiled, as if his tears had fallen on it. "I got that letter," he said, "from my sister last night. She tells me that every night she goes on her knees and prays to God for me. I think I am the worst man in all the Army of the Cumberland. I have been perfectly wretched today." That sister was six hundred miles away, but she had brought her brother to his knees in answer to her earnest, believing prayer. It was a hard case, but God heard and answered the prayer of this Godly sister, so that the man was as clay in the hands of the potter. He was soon brought into the Kingdom of God - all through his sister's prayers.

I went off some thirty miles to another place, where I told this story. A young man, a lieutenant in the army, sprang to his feet and said, "That reminds me of the last letter I got from my mother. She told me that every night as the sun went down she prayed for me. She begged of me, when I got her letter, to go away alone, and yield myself to God. I put the letter in my pocket, thinking there would be plenty of time." He went on to say that the next news that came from home was that that mother was gone. He went out into the woods alone, and cried to his mother's God to have mercy upon him. As he stood in the meeting with his face shining, that lieutenant said: "My mother's prayers are answered; and my only regret is that she did not live to know it; but I will meet her by-and-by." So, though we may not live to see the answer to our prayers, if we cry mightily to God, the answer will come.

In Scotland, a good many years ago, there lived a man with his wife and three children - two girls and a boy. He was in the habit of getting drunk, and thus losing his situation. At last, he said he would take Johnnie, and go off to America, where he would be away from his old associates, and where he could commence life over again. He took the little fellow, seven years old, and went away. Soon after he arrived in America, he went into a saloon and got drunk. He got separated from his boy in the streets, and he has never been seen by his friends since. The little fellow was placed in an institution, and afterward apprenticed in Massachusetts. After he had been there some time he became discontented, and went off to sea; finally, he came to Chicago to work on the lakes. He had been a roving spirit, had gone over sea and land, and now he was in Chicago. When the vessel came into port, one time, he was invited to a Gospel meeting. The joyful sound of the Gospel reached him, and he became a Christian.

After he had been a Christian a little while, he became very anxious to find his mother. He wrote to different places in Scotland, but could not find out where she was. One day he read in the Psalms - "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." He closed his Bible, got down on his knees, and said: "O God, I have been trying to walk uprightly for months past; help me to find my mother." It came into his mind to write back

to the place in Massachusetts from which he had run away years before. It turned out that a letter from Scotland had been waiting for him there for seven years. He wrote at once to the place in Scotland, and found that his mother was still living; the answer came back immediately. I would like you to have seen him when he got that letter. He brought it to me; and the tears flowed so that he could scarcely read it. His sister had written on behalf of the mother; she had been so overcome by the tidings of her long lost boy that she could not write.

The sister said that all the nineteen years he had been away, his mother had prayed to God day and night that he might be saved, and that she might live to know what had become of him, and see him - once more. Now, said the sister, she was so overjoyed, not only that he was alive, but that he had become a Christian. It was not long before the mother and sisters came out to Chicago to meet him.

I mention this incident to show how God answers prayer. This mother cried to God for nineteen long years. It must have seemed to her sometimes as though God did not mean to give her the desire of her heart; but she kept praying, and at last the answer came. The following personal testimony was publicly given at one of our meetings lately held in London, and may serve to help and encourage readers of these pages.

A PRAYER MEETING TESTIMONY

“I want you to understand, my friends, that what I state is not what I did, but what God did. God only could have done it! I had given it up as a bad job long before. But it is of God’s great mercy that I am standing here tonight, to tell you that Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God through Him.

“The reading of those ‘requests’ (for the salvation of inebriates) touched me very deeply indeed. They seemed to be an echo of many a request for prayer which has been made for me. And, from my knowledge of society generally, and of human nature, I know that in a very great number of families there is need of some such request.

“Therefore if what I may tell you will cheer any Christian heart, encourage any Godly father and mother to go on praying for their sons, or assist any man or woman who has felt himself or herself beyond the reach of hope, I shall thank God for it.

“I had very good opportunities. My parents loved the Lord Jesus, and did their best to train me up in the right path; and for some time I thought myself that I should be a Christian. But I got away from Christ, and turned further and further away from God and all good influences.

“It was at a public school where I first learned to drink. Many a time at seventeen I drank to excess, but I had an amount of self-respect that kept me from going thoroughly to the bad till I was about twenty-three; but from then till I was twenty-six, I went steadily down hill. At Cambridge I went on further and further in drinking, until I lost all self-respect, and voluntarily chose the worst of companions. “I strayed further and further from God, until my friends, those who were Christians and those who were not, considered, and told me that there was very little hope for me. I had been pleaded with by all sorts of people, but I ‘hated reproof.’ I hated everything that savored of religion, and I sneered at every bit of good advice, or any kind word offered me in that way.

“My father and mother both died without seeing me brought to the Lord. They prayed for me all the time they lived, and at the very last my mother asked me if I would not follow her to be with her in heaven. To quiet and soothe her, I said I would. But I did not mean it; and I thought, when she had passed away, that she knew now my real feelings. After her death I went from bad to worse, and plunged deeper and deeper into vice. Drink got a stronger hold of me, and I went lower and lower down. I was never ‘in the gutter,’ in the acceptation in which that term is generally understood; but I was as low in my soul as any man who lives in one of the common lodging houses.

“I went from Cambridge first to a town in the north, where I was articled to a solicitor; and then to London. While I was in the north, Messrs. Moody and Sankey came to the town I lived in; and an aunt of mine who was still praying for me after my mother’s death, came and said to me, ‘I have a favor to ask of you.’ She had been very kind to me, and I knew what she wanted. She said, ‘It is to go and hear Messrs. Moody and Sankey.’ ‘Very good,’ I said; ‘it is a bargain. I will go and hear the men; but you are never to ask me again. You will promise that?’ ‘Yes,’ she said, ‘I do.’ I went, and kept, as I thought, most religiously my share of the bargain.

“I waited until the sermon was over, and I saw Mr. Moody coming down from the pulpit. Earnest prayer had been offered for me, and there had been an understanding between my aunt and him that the sermon should apply to me, and that he would come and speak to me immediately afterward. We met Mr. Moody in the aisle, and I thought that I had done a very clever thing when I walked round my aunt, before Mr. Moody could address me, and out of the building.

“I wandered further from God after that; and I do not think that I bent my knees in prayer for between two and three years. I went to London, and things grew worse and worse. At times I tried to pull up. I made any number of resolutions. I promised myself and my friends not to touch the drink. I kept my resolutions for some days, and, on one occasion, for six months; but the temptation came with stronger force than ever, and swept me further and further from the pathway of virtue. When in London I neglected my business and everything I ought to have done, and sank deeper into sin.

“One of my boon companions said to me, ‘If you don’t pull up, you will kill yourself.’ ‘How is that?’ I asked. ‘You are killing yourself, for you can’t drink so much as you used to.” Well,’ I replied, ‘I can’t help it, then.’ I got to such a state that I did not think there was any possible help for me.

“The recital of these things pains me; and as I relate them, God forbid that I should feel anything but shame. I am telling you these things because we have a Savior; and if the Lord Jesus Christ saved even me, He is able also to save you.

“Affairs went on in this manner until, at last, I lost all control over myself.

“I had been drinking and playing billiards one day, and in the evening I returned to my lodgings. I thought that I would sit there awhile, and then go out again, as usual. Before going out, I began to think, and the thought struck me, ‘How will all this end?’ ‘Oh,’ I thought to myself, ‘what is the use of that? I know how it will end - in my eternal destruction, body and soul!’ I felt I was killing myself - my body; and I knew too well what would be the result to my soul. I thought it impossible for me to be saved. But the

thought came to me very strongly, ‘Is there any way of escape?’ ‘No,’ I said; ‘I have made any number of resolutions. I have done all I could to keep clear of drink, but I can’t. It is impossible.’ “Just at that moment the words came into my mind, from God’s own Word - words that I had not remembered since I was a boy: ‘With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.’ And then I saw, in a flash, that what I had just admitted, as I had done hundreds of times before, to be an impossibility, was the one thing that God had pledged Himself to do, if I would go to Him. All the difficulties came up in my way - my companions, my surroundings of all sorts, and my temptations; but I just looked up and thought, ‘It is possible with God.’ “I went down on my knees there and then, in my room, and began to ask God to do the impossible. As soon as I prayed to Him, with very stammering utterance - I had not prayed for nearly three years - I thought, ‘Now then, God will help me.’ I took hold of His truth, I don’t know how. It was nine days before I knew how,7 and before I had any assurance, or peace and rest, to my soul. I got up, there and then, with the hope that God would save me. I took it to be the truth, and I ultimately proved it; for which I praise God.

“I thought the best thing I could do would be to go and get somebody to talk to me about my soul, and tell me how to be saved; for I was a perfect heathen, though I had been brought up so well. I went out and hunted about London; and it shows how little I knew of religious people and places of worship, that I could not find a Wesleyan chapel. My mother and father were Wesleyans, and I thought I would find a place belonging to their denomination; but I could not. I searched an hour and a half; and that night I was in the most utter, abject misery of body and soul any man can think of or conceive.

“I came home to my lodgings and went upstairs, and thought to myself, ‘I will not go to bed till I am saved.’ But I was so ill from drinking - I had not had my usual amount of food in the evening; and the reaction was so tremendous, that I felt I must go to bed (although I dared not), or I should be in a very serious condition in the morning.

“I knew how I should be in the morning, thinking, ‘what a fool I was last night!’ when I would wake up moderately fresh, and go off to drink again, as I had often done. But again I thought, ‘God can do the impossible. He will do that which I cannot do myself.’ And I prayed to the Lord to let me wake up in much the same condition as that in which I went to bed, feeling the weight of my sins and my misery. Then I went to sleep. The first thing in the morning, as soon as I remembered where I was, I thought, ‘Has the conviction left me?’ No; I was more miserable than before, and - it seemed strange, though it was natural - I got up, and thanked the Lord because He had kept me anxious about my soul.

“Have you ever felt like that? Perhaps after some meeting or conversation with some Christian, or reading the Word of God, you have gone to your room miserable and ‘almost persuaded.’ I went on for eight or nine days seeking the Lord. On the Saturday morning I had to go and tell the clerks. That was hard. I did it with the tears running down my cheeks. A man does not like to cry before other men. Anyway, I told them I wanted to become, and meant to become, a Christian. The Lord helped me with that promise, ‘With God all things are possible.’ “A skeptic dropped his head, and said nothing. Another fellow, with whom I played billiards, said, ‘I wish I had the pluck to say so myself!’ My words were received in a different way from what I thought they would be. But the very man who had told me that I was killing myself with drink, spent an hour and a half trying

to get me to drink, saying, that I ‘had the blues, and was out of sorts; and that a glass of brandy or whisky would do me good.’ He tried to get me to drink; and I turned upon him at last, and said, ‘You remember what you said to me; I am trying to get away from drink, and not to touch it again.’ When I think of that I am reminded of the words of God Himself: ‘The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.’ “And now the Lord drew me on until the little thread became a cable, by which my soul could swing. He drew me nearer; until I found that He was my Savior. Truly He is ‘able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.’ “I must not forget to tell you that I went down before God in my misery, my helplessness, and my sin, and owned to Him that it was impossible that I should be saved; that it was impossible for me to keep clear of drink; but from that night to this moment, I have never had the slightest desire for drink.

“It was a hard struggle indeed to give up smoking. But God in His great wisdom, knew that I must have come to grief if I had to fight single-handed against the overwhelming desire I had for drink; and He took that desire, too, clean away. From that day to this the Lord has kept me away from drink, and made me hate it most bitterly. I simply said that I had not any strength; nor have I now; but it is the Lord Jesus who ‘is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.’ “If there is any one hearing me who has given up all hope, come to the Savior! That is His name, for ‘He shall save His people from their sins.’ Wherever I have gone, since then, I have found Him to be my Savior. God forbid that I should glory! It would be glorying in my shame. It is to my shame that I speak thus of myself; but oh, the Savior is able to save, and He will save! “Christian friends, continue to pray. You may go to heaven before your sons are brought home. My parents did; and my sisters prayed for me for years and years. But now I can help others on their way to Zion. Praise the Lord for all His mercy to me!9 “Remember, ‘with God all things are possible.’ And then you may say like St. Paul, ‘I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.’”

4. HOW I KNOW GOD ANSWERS PRAYER – Rosalind Goforth

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HOW I KNOW GOD ANSWERS PRAYER
The Personal Testimony of One Life-Time

By

Rosalind Goforth

(Mrs. Jonathan Goforth)
Missionary in China since 1888

"They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness."—Psalm 145:7.
"Go . . . and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee."—Mark 5:19.

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Forward

IT seems fitting that this little book of personal testimonies to answered prayer should have a brief introductory word as to how they came to be written. The question has been asked by some who read many of these testimonies as they appeared in the pages of The Sunday School Times: "How could you write such personal and sacred incidents in your life?" I could not have written them but for a very clear, God-given leading.

The story is as follows: When in Canada on our first furloughs I was frequently amazed at the incredulity expressed when definite testimony was given to an answer to prayer.

Sometimes this was shown by an expressive shrug of the shoulders, sometimes by a sudden silence or turning of the topic of conversation, and sometimes more openly by the query: “How do you know that it might not have happened so, anyway?”

Gradually the impression deepened: “If they will not believe one, two, or a dozen testimonies, will they believe the combined testimonies of one whole life?”

The more I thought of what it would mean to record the sacred incidents connected with answers to prayer the more I shrank from the publicity, and from undertaking the task. There were dozens of answers far too sacred for the public eye, which were known only to a few, others known only to God. But if the record were to carry weight with those who did not believe in the supernatural element in prayer, many personal and scarcely less sacred incidents must of necessity be made public.

Again and again I laid the matter aside as impossible. But I know now that the thing was of God. As months, even years, passed, the impelling sense that the record of answers to prayer *must* be written gave me no rest.

It was at the close of the 1908-10 furlough—during which, as a family, we had been blessed with many and, to our weak faith, wonderful answers to prayer—that my oldest son urged me to put down in some definite form the answers to prayer of my life, and extracted from me a solemn promise that I would do so.

But months passed after returning to China, and the record had not been touched. Then came a sudden and serious illness which threatened my life, when the doctor told me I must not delay in getting my affairs in order.

It was then that an overwhelming sense of regret took possession of me that I had not set down the prayer testimonies, and solemnly I covenanted with the Lord that if he would raise me up they should be written.

There was no more question of what others might think; the one thought was to obey. The Lord raised me up; and although he had to deal with me very sternly once more before I really set myself to the task, the testimonies that are given here were written at last—most of them in odd moments of time during strenuous missionary journeys among the heathen.

Thus it will be seen that these incidents of answered prayer are not given as being more wonderful, or more worthy of record, than multitudes the world over could testify to; but they are written and sent out simply and only because *I had to write them or disobey God.*

Rosalind Goforth.

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The simplicity of petition

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Chapter 1: "GETTING THINGS FROM GOD"

"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? . . . Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows."—*The Lord Jesus Christ.*

THE pages of this little book deal almost wholly with just one phase of prayer—petition. The record is almost entirely a personal testimony of what petition to my Heavenly Father has meant in meeting the everyday crises of my life.

A prominent Christian worker, who read some of these testimonies in The Sunday School Times, said to the writer: "To emphasize getting things from God, as you do, is to make prayer too material."

To me this seems far from true. God is my Father, I am his child. As truly as I delight to be sought for by my child when he is cold or hungry, ill, or in need of protection, so is it with my Heavenly Father.

Prayer has been hedged about with too many man-made rules. I am convinced that God has intended prayer to be as simple and natural, and as constant a part of our spiritual life, as the intercourse between a child and his parent in the home. And as a large part of that intercourse between child and parent is simply asking and receiving, just so is it with us and our Heavenly Parent.

Perhaps, however, the most blessed element in this asking and getting from God lies in the strengthening of faith which comes when a definite request has been granted. What more helpful and inspiring than a ringing testimony of *what God has done*?

As I have recalled the past in writing these incidents, one of the most precious memories is that of an evening when a number of friends had gathered in our home. The conversation turned on answered prayer. For more than two hours we vied with one another in recounting personal incidents of God's wonderful work; and the inspiration of that evening still abides.

A Christian minister once said to me: “Is it possible that the great God of the universe, the Maker and Ruler of mankind, could or would, as you would make out, take interest in such a trifle as the trimming of a hat! To me it is preposterous!”

Yet did not our Lord Jesus Christ say: “The very hairs of your head are all numbered”; and “not one sparrow is forgotten before God”; and again, “Your heavenly Father knoweth what ye have need of *before* ye ask him”?

It is true that “There is nothing too great for God’s power”; and it is just as true that “There is nothing too small for his love!”

If we believe God’s Word we must believe, as Dan Crawford has tersely and beautifully expressed it, that “The God of the infinite is the God of the infinitesimal.” Yes, he

“Who clears the grounding berg
And guides the grinding floe,
He hears the cry of the little kit fox
And the lemming of the snow!”

No more wonderful testimony, perhaps, has ever been given of God’s willingness to help in every emergency of life, than that which Mary Slessor gave, when asked to tell what prayer had meant to her. “My life,” she wrote, “is one long daily, hourly record of answered prayer. For physical health, for mental overstrain, for guidance given marvelously, for errors and dangers everted, for enmity to the Gospel subdued, for food provided at the exact hour needed, for everything that goes to make up life and my poor service. I can testify, with a full and often wonder-stricken awe, that I believe God answers prayer. *I know God answers prayer!*”

I have been asked the question: “Has God *always* given you just what you have asked for?”

Oh, no! For him to have done so would have been great unkindness. For instance: when I was a young woman I prayed for three years that God would grant me a certain petition. Sometimes I pleaded for this as for life itself, so intensely did I want it. Then God showed me very clearly that I was praying against his will. I resigned my will to his in the matter, and a few months later God gave what was infinitely better. I have often praised him for denying my prayer; for had he granted it I could never have come to China.

Then, too, we must remember that many of our prayers, though always heard, are not granted because of some sin harbored in the life, or because of unbelief, or of failure to meet some other Bible-recorded condition governing prevailing prayer. (See Bible Study on pages 129, 130.)

The following incidents of answered prayer are by no means a complete record. How could they be, when no record of prayer has been kept all these fifty years? Had there been, I doubt not that volumes could have been written to the glory of God’s grace and power in answering prayer. But even from what is recorded here I, too, can say from a full heart, *I know God answers prayer*.

“He answered prayer: so sweetly that I stand
Amid the blessing of his wondrous hand
And marvel at the miracle I see,

The favours that his love hath wrought for me.
Pray on for the impossible, and dare
Upon thy banner this brave motto bear,
‘My Father answers prayer.’”

Chapter 2: EARLY LESSONS IN THE LIFE OF FAITH

“I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.”—*Psalm 116:1.*

WHEN a very little child, so young I can remember nothing earlier, a severe thunderstorm passed over our home. Terrified, I ran to my mother, who placed my hands together, and pointing upward repeated over and over again the one word “Jesus.”

More than fifty years have passed since that day, but the impression left upon my child-mind, of a Being invisible but able to hear and help, has never been effaced.

The most precious recollections of early childhood are associated with stories told us by our mother, many of which illustrated the power of prayer.

One that made a specially deep impression upon me was about our grandfather, who as a little boy went to visit cousins in the south of England, their home being situated close to a dense forest. One day the children, lured by the beautiful wild flowers, became hopelessly lost in the woods. After trying in vain to find a way out, the eldest, a young girl, called the frightened, crying little ones around her and said: “When mother died she told us to always tell Jesus if we were in any trouble. Let us kneel down, and ask him to take us home.”

They knelt, and as she prayed one of the little ones opened his eyes, to find a bird so close to his hand that he reached out for it. The bird hopped away, but kept so close to the child as to lead him on. Soon all were joining in the chase after the bird, which flew or hopped in front or just above, and sometimes on the ground almost within reach. Then suddenly it flew into the air and away. The children looked up to find themselves on the edge of the woods and in sight of home.

With such influences bearing upon one at an impressionable age, it is not surprising that I came even as a very little child to just “tell Jesus” when in trouble.

Through the mists of memory one incident comes out clearly, which occurred when I was six or seven years of age. While playing one day in the garden, I was seized with what we then called “jumping” toothache. I ran to my mother for comfort, but nothing she could do seemed to ease the pain.

The nerve must have become exposed, for the pain was acute. Suddenly I thought, “Jesus can help me,” and just as I was, with my face pressed against my mother’s breast, I said in my heart:

“Lord Jesus, if you will take away this toothache right now, *now*, I will be your little girl for three years.”

Before the prayer was well uttered the pain was entirely gone. I believed that Jesus had taken it away; and the result was that for years, when tempted to be naughty, I was afraid to do what I knew was wrong lest, if I broke my side of what I felt to be a compact, the toothache would return. This little incident had a real influence over my early life, gave me a constant sense of the reality of a divine presence, and so helped to prepare me for the public confession of Christ as my Saviour a few years later, at the age of eleven.

About a year after my confession of Christ an incident occurred which greatly strengthened my faith, and led me to look to God as a Father in a new way.

When Easter Sunday morning came it was so warm only spring clothes could be worn. My sister and I decided at breakfast that we would not go to church, as we had only our old winter dresses. Going to my room, I turned to my Bible to study it, when it opened at the sixth chapter of Matthew, and my eye rested on these words: “Why take ye thought for raiment . . . seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.”

It was as if God spoke the words directly to me. I determined to go to church, even if I had to humiliate myself by going in my old winter dress. The Lord was true to his promise; I can still feel the power the resurrection messages had upon my heart that day so long ago. And further, on the following day a box came from a distant aunt, containing not only new dresses but much else that might well be included in the “all these things.”

An unforgetable proof of God’s loving care came to us as a family about this time, when my parents were face to face with a serious financial crisis. Isaiah 65:24 was literally fulfilled: “Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.”

At that time, it is necessary to state, we depended on a quarterly income, which came through my mother’s lawyer in England. Unusual circumstances had so drained our resources that we found ourselves, in the middle of the quarter, with barely sufficient to meet a week’s needs. My dear mother assured us that the Lord would provide; that he would not forsake those who put their trust in him. That very day a letter came from the lawyer in England, enclosing a draft for a sum ample to meet our needs till the regular remittance should arrive. This unexpected and timely draft proved to be a bonus, which did not occur again.

Some years later, having moved to a strange city, a great longing came to do some definite service for my Master. One day there came to the Bible class I attended a call for teachers, to aid in a Sunday-school near by. When I presented myself before the superintendent of this Sunday-school the following Sunday, and offered my services, it is not much wonder I received a rebuff, for I was young and quite unknown. I was told that if I wished a class, it would be well for me to find my own scholars. I can remember how a lump seemed choking me all the way home that day.

At last, determining not to be baffled, I prayed the Lord to help me get some scholars. I went forth praying every step of the way, the following Saturday afternoon; and canvassing just one short street near our home, I received the promise of nineteen children for Sunday-school. The next day a rather victorious young woman walked up to the Sunday-school superintendent with seventeen children following. Needless to say I was given a class.

In the autumn of 1885 the Toronto Mission Union, a faith mission, decided to establish a branch mission in the East End slums of that city. Three others with myself were deputed to open this work. Everything connected with it was entirely new to me; but most helpful and inspiring I found it. For in face of tremendous difficulties, that seemed to my inexperienced eyes insurmountable, I learned that prayer was the secret which overcame every obstacle, the key that unlocked every closed door.

I felt like a child learning a new and wonderful lesson—as I saw benches, tables, chairs, stove, fuel, lamps, oil, even an organ, coming in answer to definite prayer for these things. But best sight of all was when men and women, deep in sin, were converted and changed into workers for God, in answer to prayer. Praise God for the lessons then learned, which were invaluable later when facing the heathen.

The time came when two diverse paths lay before me—one to England, as an artist; one to China, as a missionary. Circumstances made a definite decision most difficult. I thought I had tried every means to find out God’s will for me, and no light had come.

But in a day of great trouble, when my precious mother’s very life seemed to hang in the balance, I shut myself up with God’s Word, praying definitely for him to guide me to some passage by which I might know his will for my life. My Bible opening at the fifteenth chapter of John’s Gospel, the sixteenth verse seemed to come as a message to me: “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit.” Going to my dear mother and telling her of the message God had given me, she said: “I dare not fight against God.”

From that time the last hindrance from going to China was removed. Surely the wonderful way God has kept his child for more than thirty years in China is proof that this “call” was not a mistaken one. “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will make plain thy paths” (Prov. 3: 6, marg.).

During the summer of 1887 a book written by Dr. Hudson Taylor came into my hands. In “China’s Spiritual Needs and Claims” the writer told many instances of God’s gracious provision in answer to prayer. The incidents related impressed me deeply. A little later, a

few weeks before my marriage, when I found I was short fifty dollars of what I would need to be married free of debt, I resolved not to let others know of my need, but to just trust God to send it to me. The thought came—if you cannot trust God for this, when Hudson Taylor could trust for so much more, are you worthy to be a missionary?

It was my first experience of trusting quite alone for money. I was sorely tempted to give others just a hint of my need. But I was kept back from doing so; and though I had a week or more of severe testing, peace of mind and the assurance that God would supply my need, came at length. The answer, however, did not come till the very last night before the wedding.

That evening a number of my fellow-workers from the East End Mission called, and presented me with a beautifully illuminated address and a purse. After these friends had left I returned to my home circle assembled in the back parlor, and showed them the address and the purse unopened! Not for a moment did I think there was anything in the purse till my brother said: “You foolish girl, why don’t you open it?” I opened the purse, and found it contained a check for fifty dollars!

This incident has ever remained peculiarly precious; for it seemed to us a seal of God upon the new life opening before us.

Chapter 3: “GO FORWARD ON YOUR KNEES” (1887-1894)

“I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron” (Isa. 45:2).

IN ATTEMPTING to record what prayer meant in our early pioneer days, other than purely personal testimonies must be given; for we were, as a little band of missionaries, bound together in our common needs and dangers by a very close bond.

In October, 1887, my husband was appointed by the Canadian Presbyterian Church to open a new field, in the northern section of the Province of Honan, China. We left Canada the following January, reaching China in March, 1888. Not till then did we realize the tremendous difficulties of the task before us.

Dr. Hudson Taylor, of the China Inland Mission, writing to us at this time, said: “We understand North Honan is to be your field; we, as a mission, have tried for ten years to enter that province from the south, and have only just succeeded. It is one of the most anti-foreign provinces in China. . . . Brother, if you would enter that province, *you must go forward on your knees*.”

These words gave the key-note to our early pioneer years. Would that a faithful record had

been kept of God's faithfulness in answering prayer! Our strength as a mission and as individuals, during those years so fraught with dangers and difficulties, lay in the fact that we did realize the hopelessness of our task apart from divine aid.

The following incident occurred while we were still outside Honan, studying the language at a sister mission. It illustrates the importance of prayer from the home base for those on the field.

My husband was finding great difficulty in acquiring the language; he studied faithfully many hours daily, but made painfully slow progress. He and his colleague went regularly together to the street chapel, to practise preaching in Chinese to the people; but, though Mr. Goforth had come to China almost a year before the other missionary, the people would ask the latter to speak instead of Mr. Goforth, saying they understood him better.

One day, just before starting as usual for the chapel, my husband said: "If the Lord does not give me very special help in this language I fear I shall be a failure as a missionary."

Some hours later he returned, his face beaming with joy. He told me that he realized most unusual help when his turn came to speak; sentences came to his mind as never before; and not only had he made himself understood, but some had appeared much moved, coming up afterward to have further conversation with him. So delighted and encouraged was he with this experience that he made a careful note of it in his diary.

Some two months and a half later a letter came from a student in Knox College, saying that on a certain evening a number of students had met specially to pray for Mr. Goforth. The power of prayer was such, and the presence of God so manifestly felt, that they decided to write and ask Mr. Goforth if any special help had come to him at that time. Looking in his diary, he found that the time of their meeting corresponded with that time of special help in the language.

"I cannot tell why there should come to me
A thought of some one miles and years away,
In swift insistence on the memory,
Unless there is a need that I should pray.
We are too busy to spare thought
For days together of some friends away;
Perhaps God does it for us—and we ought
To read his signal as a sign to pray.
Perhaps just then my friend has fiercer fight,
A more appalling weakness, a decay
Of courage, darkness, some lost sense of right;
And so, in case he needs my prayers—I pray."

At last the joyful news reached us women, waiting outside of Honan, that our brethren had secured property in two centers. It would be difficult for those in the homeland to understand what the years of waiting had meant to some of us. The danger to those dear to us, touring in Honan, was very great. For years they never left us to go on a tour without our being filled with dread lest they should never return; yet the Lord, in his mercy, heard our prayers for them; and though often in grave danger, none received serious injury. This

is not a history of the mission, but I cannot forbear giving here one incident illustrating how they were kept during those early days.

Two of our brethren, after renting property at a town just within the boundary of Honan, and near the Wei River, moved in, intending to spend the winter there; but a sudden and bitter persecution arose, just as they had become settled. The mission premises were attacked by a mob, and everything was looted. The two men were roughly handled, one being dragged about the courtyard. They found themselves at last left alone, their lives spared, but everything gone.

Their position was serious in the extreme—several days' journey away from friends, with no money, no bedding, and no clothes but those upon them, and the cold winter begun.

In their extremity, they knelt down and committed themselves to the Lord. And according to his promise he delivered them out of their distresses; for even while they prayed a brother missionary from a distant station was at hand. He arrived unexpectedly, without knowing what had occurred, a few hours after the looting had taken place. His coming at such an opportune moment filled the hearts of their heathen enemies with fear. Money and goods were returned, and from that time the violent opposition of the people ceased.

A few months after the above incident several families moved into Honan, and a permanent occupation was effected; but the hearts of the people seemed as adamant against us. They hated and distrusted us as if we were their worst enemies. The district in which we settled was known for its turbulent and anti-foreign spirit, and as a band of missionaries we were frequently in the gravest danger.

Many times we realized that we, as well as our fellow-workers at the other stations, were kept from serious harm only by the over-ruling, protecting power of God in answer to the many prayers which were going up for us all at this critical juncture in the history of our mission. The following are concrete examples of how God heard our prayers at this time.

We had for our station doctor a man of splendid gifts. He was a gold medalist, with years of special training and hospital experience, and was looked upon as one of the rising physicians in the city from which he came. Imagine his disappointment, therefore, when month after month passed and scarcely a good case came to the hospital. The people did not know what he could do, and moreover they were afraid to trust themselves into his hands. We, as a little band of missionaries, began to pray definitely that the Lord would send cases to the hospital which would open the hearts of the people toward us and our message.

It was not long before we saw this prayer answered beyond all expectation. Several very important cases came almost together, one so serious that the doctor hesitated for days before operating. When at last the operation did take place the doctor's hands were strengthened by our prayers, the patient came through safely, and a few days later was going around a living wonder to the people.

Very much depended upon the outcome of this and other serious operations. Had the patients died under the doctor's hands, it would have been quite sufficient to have caused the destruction of the mission premises and the life of every missionary. Three years later the hospital records showed that there had been twenty-eight thousand treatments in one year.

Again, we kept praying that the Lord would give us converts from the very beginning. We had heard of missionaries in India, China, and elsewhere, who had worked for many years without gaining converts; but we did not believe that this was God's will for us. We believed that it was his pleasure and purpose to save men and women through his human channels, and why not from the beginning? So we kept praying and working and expecting converts, and God gave them to us. The experience of thirty years has confirmed this belief.

Space permits the mention of but two of these earliest converts.

The first was Wang Feng-ao, who came with us into Honan as Mr. Goforth's personal teacher. He was a man of high degree, equal to the Western M. A., and was one of the proudest and most overbearing of Confucian scholars. He despised the missionaries and their teaching, and so great was his opposition that he would beat his wife every time she came to see us or listen to our message. But Mr. Goforth kept praying for this man, and using all his influence to win him for Christ.

Before many months passed a great change had come over Mr. Wang; his proud, overbearing manner had changed, and he became a humble, devout follower of the lowly Nazarene. God used a dream to awaken this man's conscience—as is not uncommon in China. One night he dreamed he was struggling in a deep, miry pit; but try as he would he could find no way of escape. When about to give up in despair, he looked up and saw Mr. Goforth and another missionary on the bank above him, with their hands stretched out to save him. Again he sought for some other way of escape; but finding none, he allowed them to draw him up.

This man, later on, became Mr. Goforth's most valued evangelist. For many years his splendid gifts were used to the glory of his Master in the work among the scholar class in the Changtefu district. He has long since passed to his reward, dying as he had lived, trusting only in the merit of Jesus Christ for salvation.

Another of the bright glints, in the darkness of those earliest days in Honan, was the remarkable conversion of Wang Fu-Lin. For many years his business had been that of a public story-teller; but when Mr. Goforth came across him he was reduced to an utter wreck through opium smoking. He accepted the Gospel, but for a long time seemed too weak to break off the opium habit. Again and again he tried to do so, but failed hopelessly each time.

The poor fellow seemed almost past hope, when one day Mr. Goforth brought him to the mission in his cart. The ten days that followed can never be forgotten by those who watched Wang Fu-Lin struggle for physical and spiritual life. I verily believe nothing but prayer could have brought him through. At the end of the ten days the power of opium was broken, and Wang Fu-Lin came out of the struggle a new man in Christ Jesus.

I shall have occasion to speak of this man again.

In all the cases of divine healing cited in this record it will be noted that God healed in answer to prayer either when the doctors had done all in their power and hope had been abandoned, or when we were out of reach of medical aid.

Soon after coming to China the Rev. Hunter Corbett, one of the most devoted and saintly of God's missionaries, gave a testimony which later was used of God to save the writer from giving up service in China and returning home to Canada.

Dr. Corbett said that for fifteen years he had been laid aside every year with that terrible scourge of the East—dysentery; and the doctors at last gave a definite decision that he must return at once to the homeland and forsake China. But, said the grand old man: "I knew God had called me to China, and I also knew that God did not change. So what could I do? I dared not go back on my call; so I determined that if I could not live in China I could die there; and from that time the disease lost its hold on me."

This testimony was given over twenty-five years ago, when he had been almost thirty years in China! In January, 1920, when well-nigh ninety years of age, this beloved and honored saint of God passed to higher service.

For several years I had been affected just as Dr. Corbett had been, and each year the terrible disease seemed to be getting a firmer hold upon me. At last, one day my husband brought me the decision of the doctors, that I should return home. And as I lay there ill and weak, the temptation came to yield. But, as I remembered Dr. Corbett's testimony, and my own clear call, I felt that to go back would be to go against my own conscience. I therefore determined to do as Dr. Corbett had done—leave myself in the Lord's hands—whether for life or for death. This happened more than twenty years ago, and since then I have had very little trouble from that dread disease.

Yes, the deeper the need, and the more bitter the extremity, the greater the opportunity for God to show forth his mighty power in our lives, if we but give him a chance by unswerving obedience at any cost. "In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul" (Psa. 138:3).

During our fourth year in China, when we were spending the hot season at the coast, our little son, eighteen months old, was taken very ill with dysentery. After several days' fight for the child's life came the realization, one evening, that the angel of death was at hand.

My whole soul rebelled; I actually seemed to hate God; I could see nothing but cruel injustice in it all; and the child seemed to be fast going. My husband and I knelt down beside the little one's bedside, and he pleaded earnestly with me to yield my will and my child to God. After a long and bitter struggle God gained the victory, and I told my husband I would give my child to the Lord. Then my husband prayed, committing the precious soul into the Lord's keeping.

While he was praying I noticed that the rapid, hard breathing of the child had ceased. Thinking my darling was gone, I hastened for a light, for it was dark; but on examining the child's face I found that he had sunk into a deep, sound, natural sleep, which lasted most of the night. The following day he was practically well of the dysentery.

To me it has always seemed that the Lord tested me to almost the last moment; then, when I yielded my dearest treasure to him and put my Lord first, he gave back the child.

While writing the above I came across an extract from the Christian of March 12, 1914, in which the editor said:

“Speaking at the annual meeting of the Huntingdon County Hospital, Lord Sandwich referred to the power of spiritual healing, and premising that the finite mind cannot measure the power of the infinite, said he ‘looked forward to the day when the spiritual doctrine of healing and the physical discoveries of science will blend in harmonious combination, to the glory of God and the benefit of humanity.’”

Chapter 4: A GOD-GIVEN FIELD (1894-1900)

“Lord, there is none beside thee to help, between the mighty and him that hath no strength; help us, O Lord our God; for we rely on thee, and in thy name are come against this multitude” (2 Chron. 14:11).

THE story of the opening of Changte is so connected by a chain of prayer that to give isolated instances of prayer would be to break the chain.

A few months after our arrival in China an old, experienced missionary kindly volunteered to conduct Mr. Goforth and his colleague, who had just arrived, through North Honan, that they might see the field for themselves.

Traveling southward by cart, they crossed the border into Honan early one morning. As my husband walked beside the carts, that morning, he felt led to pray that the Lord would give that section of Honan to him as his field. The assurance came that his prayer was granted. Opening his daily textbook, he found the passage for that morning was from Isaiah 55:8-13. Like a precious promise of future blessing for that field came the words: “As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void.”

For six years, however, our faith was sorely tested.

Of all places, Changte seemed most determined to keep out the missionary. And there were other difficulties in the way. A presbytery had been formed as others joined us, and all matters had to be decided by that body. Two stations that had been opened, where a foothold could first be gained, required all, and more than all, the force we then had. So for six years the door to Changte remained fast closed. But during all those years Mr. Goforth never once lost sight of God’s promise to him, nor failed to believe it.

Again and again, when Mr. Goforth and his colleague visited the city, they were mobbed and threatened, the people showing the utmost hostility. But the day came, at last, when the long-prayed-for permission from the presbytery to open Changte was granted. The

very next morning found Mr. Goforth *en route* for Changte, to secure property for a mission site. Often has he told how, all the way over that day to Changte, he prayed the Lord to open the hearts of the people, and make them willing to give him the property most suitable for the work. Within three days of his reaching Changte he had thirty-five offers of property, and was able to secure the very piece of land he had earlier chosen as most ideal for the mission.

Thus the Lord did break in pieces the gates of brass which had kept us so long from our promised land.

A year later I joined my husband there, with our three little children. It was arranged that our colleague should take charge of the outside evangelism, while we opened work at the main station.

To understand what it meant for us to have our need supplied, there should be some knowledge of what that need was.

We decided, from the first, that no one should be turned from our doors. Mr. Goforth received the men in the front guest room, while the women and children came to our private quarters. During those first weeks and months hundreds, nay thousands, crowded to see us. Day by day we were literally besieged. Even at meal-time our windows were banked with faces.

The questions ever before us those days were—how to make the most of this wonderful opportunity, which would never come again after the period of curiosity was past; how to win the friendship of this people, who showed in a hundred ways their hatred and distrust of us; how to reach their hearts with our wonderful message of a Saviour's love?

All that was in our power was to do, day by day, what we could with the strength that was given us. From early morning till dark, sometimes nine or ten hours a day, the strain of receiving and preaching to these crowds was kept up. My husband had numbers of workmen to oversee, material for building to purchase, and to see to all the hundred and one things so necessary in building up a new station. Besides all this he had to receive, and preach to, the crowds that came. He had no evangelist, Mr. Wang being then loaned to Mr. MacG——. I had my three little children, and no nurse or Bible-woman. When too exhausted to speak longer to the courtyard of women, I would send for my husband, who though tired out would speak in my stead. Then we would rest ourselves, and entertain the crowd, by singing a hymn.

So the days passed. But we soon realized that help must come, or we would both break down.

One day Mr. Goforth came to me with his Bible open at the promise, "My God shall supply all your need," and asked: "Do we believe this? If we do, then God can and will supply us with some one to help preach to these crowds, if we ask in faith."

He prayed very definitely for a man to preach. With my doubt-blinded heart, I thought it was as if he were asking for rain from a clear sky. Yet, even while he prayed, God was moving one to come to us. A day or two later there appeared at the mission the converted opium fiend, Wang Fu-Lin, whose conversion has been already recorded.

No one could have looked less like the answer to our prayers than he did. Fearfully emaciated from long years of excessive opium smoking, racked with a cough which three years later ended his life, dressed in such filthy rags as only a beggar would wear, he presented a pitiable sight. Yet the Lord seeth not as man seeth.

After consulting together Mr. Goforth decided to try him for a few days, believing that he could at least testify to the power of God to save a man from his opium. Soon he was reclothed in some of my husband's Chinese garments; and within an hour or two of his entering the mission gate, practically a beggar, he was seated in charge of the men's

chapel, so changed one could scarcely have recognized him.

From the first day of his ministry at Changte there was no doubt in the minds of any who heard him that he had indeed been sent to us by our gracious God, for he had in a remarkable degree the unction and power of the Holy Ghost. His gifts as a speaker were all consecrated to one object—the winning of souls to Jesus Christ. He seemed conscious that his days were few, and always spoke as a dying man to dying men. Little wonder is it, therefore, that from the very beginning of his ministry in our chapel men were won to Christ. God spared him to us for the foundation laying of the church at Changte, then called him higher.

Mr. Goforth's need was relieved by the coming of Wang Fu-Lin, but not mine. The remarkable way God had sent him, however, gave me courage and faith to trust God to give me a Bible-woman. Those who know anything of mission work in China will agree with me that it is far more difficult to find women than men who are able to preach the Gospel; or if able, who are free for the work. But I was beginning to learn that God is limited only from the human side; and that he is always willing to give beyond our asking, if the human conditions he has so plainly laid down in his Word are fulfilled.

A short time after I had begun to ask my Heavenly Father definitely for a Bible-woman, Mr. Mac G—— came in from a tour, and his first words were:

"Well, Mrs. Goforth, I believe we have a ready-made Bible-woman for you!"

Then he told me how he had come across a widow and her son in a mountain village, who had heard the Gospel from a recent convert out of one of the other stations. This man had been a member of the same religious sect as the widow and her son. When he found Christ he at once thought of his friends, and went over the mountain to tell them. Mrs. Chang received the Gospel gladly. She had been a preacher in that heathen sect, and had gained the fluency in speaking, and power in holding audiences, so necessary in the preaching of the Gospel.

The way was soon opened for her to come to me, and she became my constant companion and valuable assistant in the women's work during those early years. She witnessed a good confession in 1900—being strung up by her thumbs when refusing to deny her Lord. Faithfully she served the Lord as a Bible-woman, until the time of her death in 1903.

During the first two or three years at Chang Te Fu we lived in unhealthy Chinese houses, which were low and damp. It was therefore thought best that we should have a good semi-foreign house built for us. The work at this time was so encouraging—converts being added weekly, and sometimes almost daily—that we feared lest the new house would hinder the work, and become a separating barrier between ourselves and the people. We therefore prayed that God would make the new house a means of reaching the people—a blessing, and not a hindrance. The answer to this prayer, as is often the case, depended largely upon ourselves. We had to be made willing to pay the price that the answer demanded.

In other words, we came to see that in order that our prayer could be answered we would have to keep open house every day and all day, which was by no means easy. Some assured us it was wrong, because it would make us cheap in the eyes of the Chinese;

others said it was wrong because of the danger of infection to the children. But time proved these objections to be unfounded. The very highest as well as the lowest were received, and their friendship won by this means. And, so far as I can remember, our children never met any contagion because of this way of receiving the people into our house.

The climax in numbers was reached in the spring of 1899, when eighteen hundred and thirty-five men and several hundred women were received by us in one day. These were first preached to in large bands, and then led through the house. We have seen evidences of the good of this plan in all parts of our field. It opened the hearts of the people toward us, and helped us to live down suspicion and distrust as nothing else could have done.

In May of 1898 we started down to Tientsin by houseboat, with our children, for a much-needed rest and change. Cold, wet weather soon set in. Twelve days later, as we came in sight of Tientsin, with a bitter north wind blowing, our eldest child went on deck without his overcoat, in disobedience to my orders. Shortly after the child came in with a violent chill. That afternoon, when we arrived in Tientsin, the doctors pronounced the verdict—pneumonia.

The following day, shortly after noon, a second doctor, who had been called in consultation, met a friend on his way from our boy's bedside and told her he did not think the child could live till morning. I had taken his temperature, and found it to be 106. He was extremely restless, tossing in the burning fever. Sitting down beside him, with a cry to the Lord to help me, I said distinctly: "P——, you disobeyed me, and have thus brought this illness upon yourself. I forgive you; ask Jesus to forgive you, and give yourself to him."

The child looked at me for a moment steadily, then closed his eyes. I saw his lips move for a moment; then quietly he sank into a sound sleep. When he awoke, about dusk, I took his temperature, and found it 101. By the time the doctor returned it was normal, and did not rise again. Although he had been having hemorrhage from the lungs, this ceased.

Is not Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and forever? Why should we wonder, therefore, at his healing touch in this age? "According to your faith be it unto you."

During those early pioneer years, when laying the foundation of the Changte Church, my own weak faith was often rebuked when I saw the results of the simple, child-like faith of our Chinese Christians. Some of those answers to prayer were of such an extraordinary character that, when told in the homeland, even ministers expressed doubts as to their genuineness. But, praise God, I know they are true. Here are two concrete examples.

Li-ming, a warm-hearted, earnest evangelist, owned land some miles north of Chang Te Fu. On one occasion, when visiting the place, he found the neighbors all busy placing around their fields little sticks with tiny flags. They believed this would keep the locusts from eating their grain. All urged Li-ming to do the same, and to worship the locust god, or his grain would be destroyed. Li-ming replied: "I worship the one only true God, and I will pray him to keep my grain, that you may know that he only is God."

The locusts came and ate on all sides of Li-ming's grain, but did not touch his. When Mr.

Goforth heard this story he determined to get further proof, so he visited the place for himself, and inquired of Li-ming's heathen neighbors what they knew of the matter. One and all testified that, when the locusts came, their grain was eaten and Li-ming's was not.

The Lord Jesus once said, after a conflict with unbelief and hypocrisy: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

Our little Gracie became ill with a terribly fatal disease, so common in malarious districts —enlarged spleen. The doctors pronounced her condition quite hopeless. One day a Chinese Christian woman came in with her little child, of about the same age as our Gracie, and very ill with the same disease. The poor mother was in great distress, for the doctor had told her also that there was no hope. She thought that if we would plead with the doctor he could save her child. At last Mr. Goforth pointed to our little Gracie, saying: "Surely, if the doctor cannot save our child, neither can he save yours; your only hope and ours is in the Lord himself."

The mother was a poor, hard-working, ignorant woman, but she had the simple faith of a little child. Some few weeks later she called again, and told me the following story:

"When the pastor told me my only hope was in the Lord, I believed him. When I reached home I called my husband, and together we had committed our child into the Lord's hands. I felt perfectly sure the child would get well, so I did not take more care of him than of a well child. In about two weeks he seemed so perfectly well that I took him to the doctor again, and the doctor said that he could discover nothing the matter with him."

That Chinese child is now a grown-up, healthy man. And *our child died*. Yet we had prayed for her as few, perhaps, have prayed for any child. Why, then, was she not spared? I do not know. But I do know that there was in my life, at that time, the sin of bitterness toward another, and an unwillingness to forgive a wrong. This was quite sufficient to hinder any prayer, and did hinder for years, until it was set right.

Does this case of unanswered prayer shake my faith in God's willingness and power to answer prayer? No, no! My own child might just as reasonably decide never again to come to me with a request because I have, in my superior wisdom, denied a petition. Is it not true, in our human relationships with our children, that we see best to grant at one time what we withhold at another? "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

And one of the most precious experiences of God's loving mercy came to me in connection with our little Gracie's death. We had been warned that the end would probably come in convulsions; two of our dear children had been so taken. Only a mother who has gone through such an experience can fully understand the horror of the possibility that such might come again at any time.

One evening I was watching beside our little one, Miss P—— being with me, when suddenly the child said very decidedly: "Call Papa; I want to see Papa." I hesitated to rouse her father, as it was his time to rest; so I tried to put her off with some excuse; but again she repeated her request, and so I called her father, asking him to walk up and down with her until I returned.

Going into the next room I cried in an agony to the Lord not to let Gracie suffer; but, if it was indeed his will to take the child, then to do so without her suffering. As I prayed a wonderful peace came over me, and the promise came so clearly it was as if spoken: “Before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear.” Rising, I was met at the door by Miss P—— who said: “Gracie is with Jesus.” While I was on my knees our beloved child, after resting a few moments in her father’s arms, had looked into his face with one of her loveliest smiles, and then quietly closed her eyes and had ceased to breathe. No struggle, no pain, but a “falling on sleep.”

“Like as a father pitieth, . . . so the Lord pitieth.”

Ever-darkening clouds gathered about us during the months following Gracie’s death; and while the storm did not burst in all its fury till the early summer of 1900, yet the preceding winter was full of forebodings and constant alarms.

On one occasion thousands gathered inside and outside our mission, evidently bent on serious mischief. My husband and his colleagues moved in and out all that day among the dense crowd which filled the front courtyards; while we women remained shut within closed houses, not knowing what moment the mob would break loose and destroy us all. What kept them back that day? What but trustful prayer! And the Lord heard that day, and wonderfully restrained the violence of our enemies.

We did not know then, but those experiences were preparing us for the greater trials and perils awaiting us all.

Chapter 5: OUR DELIVERANCE FROM THE BOXERS (1900)

“God is unto us a God of deliverances” (Psa. 68:20, R. V.).

“Who delivered us out of so great a death, and will deliver: on whom we have set our hope that he will also still deliver” (2 Cor. 1:10, R. V.).

MANY times we were asked in the homeland to tell the story of our escape during the Boxer uprising, and often the question was put, “If it was really God’s power that saved you and others on that journey, then why did he not save those of his children who were so cruelly done to death?”

For a time this question troubled me. Why indeed? One day when seeking for light on the matter I was directed to the twelfth chapter of Acts. There I found the only answer that can be given. We are told in the second verse that James was put to death by the sword; then the rest of the chapter is given to the detailed record of Peter’s wonderful deliverance in answer to prayer (vs. 5, 12). In that day when all things shall be revealed I am convinced

we shall see that *prayer* had much to do in the working out of our deliverance. When the first cable was received in Canada informing the home church of our party starting on that perilous journey, we are told a great wave of prayer went up for us from Christians of all denominations. The Presbyterian Assembly of Canada was meeting at the time, and one session was given up entirely to prayer on behalf of the missionaries in China. Never had that body witnessed such a season of intense, united intercession.

Later when giving the story of our escape in the homeland, repeatedly we have had people come to us telling how, during the weeks which elapsed between the first cable informing the home church of our danger, and the second cable, which told of our safe arrival at the coast, they had never ceased to cry to God to save us. Then, too, after all is said, we must believe God was glorified and God's purposes were fulfilled in the death of some as in the saved lives of others. The blood of the martyrs is still the seed of the Church.

It was in the month of June, 1895, that an incident occurred which has ever been linked in my mind with the events of 1900. I was about to leave Toronto with my four children to join my husband in China, when a cable was received telling of the cruel massacre of Mr. and Mrs. Stewart and others. Deep and widespread sympathy was expressed and much anxiety felt for missionaries generally in China. Many urged me to delay our return; but I felt it best to keep to our original plans, and a few days later found us bidding farewell to friends at the Union Station, Toronto.

Just as the train was leaving a lady stepped forward quickly to the window and said, "You do not know me, but I have prayed the Lord to give me a promise for you; it is this, take it as from Him," and handed me a slip of paper. I opened the paper and read, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper" (Isa. 54:17). Then and there I raised my heart to God in prayer that he would fulfil this promise to me and those dear to me; and as I prayed there came the clear assurance that the Lord heard.

Never can we forget that winter of 1899-1900. The clouds had begun to gather, and the mutterings of the coming storm were heard on all sides of us. Repeatedly we were as a mission in gravest danger, and at such times were literally "shut up to God." The temper of the people was such that any little thing angering them would have been as a spark to gunpowder.

From the time of the government crisis of the autumn of 1899, we, in company with all other foreigners in China, realized that conditions were becoming serious, yet never did we expect or prepare for such a cataclysm as took place when the storm clouds suddenly burst in the early summer of 1900.

The first indication we had of coming danger was when our mail carriers running to and from Tientsin were stopped and our mails returned. Thus, cut off from the outside world, we had to depend solely upon the wild rumors afloat among the Chinese for information. The country around us became daily more disturbed; day by day we could hear the beating of drums and the cries of the people for rain. The darkness and horror of those days, in the midst of which sickness and death entered our home, can never be forgotten. On the nineteenth of June our eldest daughter, Florence, after a week of intense suffering, was released from pain. It was while her life was still hanging in the balance that we received the first communication from the American Consul in Chefoo urging us to flee. This

message was quickly followed by another still more urgent.

The question was, where could we flee? Our usual route was by river boat two weeks to Tientsin, but this way was blocked, the whole region being infested with Boxers, and Tientsin even then in a state of siege. The only possible route left open to us was southward by cart,—fourteen days to Fan-cheng,—then ten or more days by houseboat to Hankow. We faced such a journey at that time of the year with fear and trembling because of the children, the danger from heat and sun being very great. Gladly would we have stayed, but the Chinese Christians urged us to go, saying they could escape more easily were we not there.

We had with us our four remaining children: Paul, nine; Helen, six; Ruth, under three; and baby Wallace, eight months. Their faithful Chinese nurse, though weeping bitterly at parting from her old mother of almost eighty, decided to come with us. There were altogether in the party five men, six women, and five children, besides the servants and carters.

Many were the difficulties in the way of getting carts and other necessary things for the journey, but one by one all things needed were provided as we besought the Lord to open the way. There were many indications on that journey that God's purpose was to save us; one of the most striking of these happened just as we were about to leave.

The day previous to our departure a message passed through the city of Chang Te Ho, the messenger riding at breakneck speed. This messenger, we learned later, was en-route for the Provincial Capital with the sealed message from the Empress Dowager commanding the death of all foreigners. We had planned first to take the direct route south, which would, as far as we can now see, have led us to our death, for this route would have taken us through the capital. Almost at the last moment, and quite unaware of the danger on the direct route, we were led to change our plans and take a route farther west, though it made a considerably longer journey.

We left Chang Te, June 28, 1900, at daybreak. At Wei Hwei Fu, the first large city to which we came, an attempt was made to break into our inn, but as we prayed the mob dispersed and we were left in peace. On July first we reached the north bank of the Yellow River, and there for a short time (it was Sunday afternoon) we rested under the trees. Little did we dream that even then many, very many, of our fellow-missionaries and personal friends were being done to death by the merciless Boxers. At sunset the ferry which carried us across the river reached the south bank, and here we found several missionaries and a party of engineers waiting for us. These latter were fully armed and had a fair escort. After some difficulty it was decided that we should all keep together, but in reality this party kept by themselves, except that we stayed in the same towns at night. Each day that passed seemed harder than the last, the heat was intense, and the ten or twelve hours of bumping over rough roads in springless carts made even a bed spread on the ground a welcome resting-place.

Once, when Mr. Goforth had jumped off our cart to get fresh water for our head cloths, a crowd gathered round him and became very threatening, raising the cry, "Kill, kill." All the other carts were ahead, and the carter would not wait for Mr. Goforth, as he was afraid. During the few moments that elapsed before my husband was allowed to join us even the

carter turned pale with suspense,—and oh, how I prayed!

Except for a few similar passing dangers, nothing special occurred until the evening of July seventh, when we reached the small town of Hsintien. We had heard during the day that the whole country ahead of us was in a state of ferment against the Roman Catholics. Scarcely had we reached the inn when the engineers and the missionaries with them who had become increasingly alarmed at the condition of the country, informed us that they were going on to the large city of Nan Yang Fu that night, but would leave us two soldiers and two of their carts. Mr. Goforth did not wish them to go, for he felt it would greatly increase our danger.

Shortly after they left us the mob began to gather outside our inn. The gate was barricaded with carts. For hours stones were thrown against the gate and demand was made for our money. A messenger was at once sent after the engineers' party, asking them to return. All that night was spent in sleepless suspense.

Early in the morning the messenger returned with the reply that they had failed to get help from the Nan Yang Fu official and were obliged to push on. As soon as the carters heard we were thus left helpless a panic seized them, and it was with great difficulty they could be persuaded to harness their animals. All this time the crowd had been becoming more dense, as we could see through the cracks of the gate, and were ominously quiet. Hints had been given us of coming danger, but that was all; none spoke of what all felt,—that we were probably going to our death.

Suddenly, without the slightest warning, I was seized with an overwhelming fear of what might be awaiting us. It was not the fear of *after* death, but of probable torture, that took such awful hold of me. I thought, "Can this be the Christian courage I have looked for?" I went by myself and prayed for victory, but no help came. Just then some one called us to a room for prayer before getting into our carts. Scarcely able to walk for trembling, and utterly ashamed that others should see my state of panic,—for such it undoubtedly was,—I managed to reach a bench beside which my husband stood. He drew from his pocket a little book, "Clarke's Scripture Promises," and read the verses his eye first fell upon. They were the following:

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them."

"The God of Jacob is our refuge."

"Thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God."

"I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. . . . The Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee."

"If God be for us, who can be against us?"

"We may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

The effect of these words at such a time was remarkable. All realized that God was speaking to us. Never was there a message more directly given to mortal man from his

God than that message to us. From almost the first verse my whole soul seemed flooded with a great peace; all trace of panic vanished; and I felt God's presence was with us. Indeed, his presence was so real it could scarcely have been more so had we seen a visible form.

After prayer we all got on our carts, and one by one passed out into the densely crowded street. As we approached the city gate we could see that the road was black with crowds awaiting us. I had just remarked to my husband on how well we were getting through the crowds, when our carts passed through the gates. My husband turned pale as he pointed to a group of several hundred men, fully armed, awaiting us. They waited till all the carts had passed through the gate, then hurled down upon us a shower of stones, at the same time rushing forward and maiming or killing some of the animals. Mr. Goforth jumped down from our cart and cried to them, "Take everything, but don't kill." His only answer was a blow. The confusion that followed was so great it would be impossible to describe the escape of each one in detail. Each one later had his or her own testimony of that mighty and merciful deliverance. But I must give the details of Mr. Goforth's experience.

One man struck him a blow on the neck with a great sword wielded with two hands. "Somehow" the blunt edge of the sword struck his neck; the blow left a wide mark almost around his neck, but did no further harm. Had the sharp edge struck his neck he would certainly have been beheaded!

His thick helmet was cut almost to pieces, one blow cutting through the leather lining *just over the temple*, but without even scratching the skin!

Again he was felled to the ground, with a fearful sword cut, which entered the bone of the skull behind and almost cleft it in two. As he fell he seemed to hear distinctly a voice saying, "Fear not, they are praying for you." Rising from this blow, he was again struck down by a club. As he was falling almost unconscious to the ground he saw a horse coming at full speed toward him; when he became conscious again he found the horse had tripped and fallen (on level ground) so near that its tail almost touched him. The animal, kicking furiously, had served as a barrier between him and his assailants. While dazed and not knowing what to do a man came up as if to strike, but whispered, "Leave the carts." By that time the onlookers began to rush forward to get the loot, but the attacking party felt the things were theirs, so desisted in their attack upon us in order to secure their booty.

A word as to myself and the children. Several fierce men with swords jumped on my cart. One struck at the baby, but I parried the blow with a pillow, and the little fellow only received a slight scratch on the forehead. Then they dropped their swords and began tearing at our goods at the back of the cart. Heavy boxes were dragged over us, and everything was taken. Just then a dreadful looking man tried to reach us from the back of the cart with his sword, missing by an inch. I thought he would come to the front and continue his attack, but he did not. I had seen Mr. Goforth sink to the ground covered with blood twice, and had given him up for dead. Just then Paul, who had been in the last cart, jumped in, wild with delight at what he seemed to think was great fun, for he had run through the thick of the fight, dodging sword thrusts from all sides, and had succeeded in reaching me without a scratch. A moment later my husband came to the edge of the cart scarcely able to stand, saying, "Get down quickly; we must not delay in getting away." As I was getting down one man snatched away my hat, another my shoes; but we were

allowed to go.

Ruth was nowhere to be seen, and we hoped she was with the missionaries who had charge of her at the time of attack. I saw that Mr. Goforth's strength was failing fast, for he could scarcely walk, and as men began to follow I urged him forward with the baby and the other two children, and turning faced the men, begging them to have mercy on my children, for they had begun to stone us. Some of us were black for days from the blows received then. They stopped and listened, then the leader said, "We've killed her husband, let her go." With this they ran back to the carts.

I knew Mr. Goforth could not go far. We could see a small village not far distant, and to this we hastened, praying as we went that the Lord would open the hearts of the people to receive us. Here again Paul seemed to feel no fear, but said, "Mother, what does this put you in mind of? It puts me in mind of the Henty books!"

As we neared the village men came out to drive us away, but I begged them to help us. By this time Mr. Goforth had sunk to the ground. Putting the baby in an old woman's arms, I knelt down beside my husband. The children were crying bitterly. Mr. Goforth looked as if he were dying. The women standing round us were weeping now. This was too much for the men, who came forward saying, "We will save you." One ran and got some stuff to put in the wounds, assuring us it would stop the flow of blood, and it did. This man helped me to bandage up the wounds with bandages made from garments taken from myself and the children. They helped my husband, and we followed them into a little hut, where they laid him on a straw bed and locked us in. Hot water for bathing our bruises, food and drink were handed us through a small window, and we could hear them planning how they would save us. We told them how anxious we were to hear of our friends and little Ruth, so they sent a man to inquire.

We found that these people—the whole village—were Mohammedans, and had taken no part in the attack. We felt that God had wonderfully directed our steps to that village.

All that day Mr. Goforth lay still, but looked at times so very white that I feared the worst. Never for one moment, I believe, during that day did I cease to pray for his life. And when Mr. ——, one of our party, arrived about four o'clock looking for us, Mr. Goforth at once got up as if perfectly well, insisting on walking to the cart. To me, knowing how he had looked that day, it seemed only a miracle. His only answer to my protest was, "Only pray; the Lord will give me strength, as long as he has work for me to do."

As we were leaving, the kind friends of the village gathered round insisting on my taking some old clothes to put round the children, who were almost naked, saying, "It will be chilly at night." As we went forward to join the others, Mr. —— told us how one by one all had escaped. Dr. —— was the only one beside Mr. Goforth seriously injured, the poor fellow having had his kneecap severed and the tendons of his right wrist badly cut, besides many other wounds.

All that day our friends had been waiting by the roadside, unable to proceed without carts, owing to the doctor's condition. They had joined in one petition, that God would move the carters to come. Those who know China and heathen carters will readily acknowledge that it was nothing short of a miracle—the miracle of answered prayer—that made these heathen carters come, after all they had already gone through. For come they did, five of

them, all that were needed, now that our luggage was gone. We learned too, that our faithful Chinese nurse, who had charge of Ruth, had saved the child at the risk of her own life, lying upon the child and taking many cruel blows, till greed for loot drew the men off.

We soon joined the rest of the party, and by six o'clock that evening we reached the large city of Nang Yang Fu. The city wall was black with people, and as we entered the gate the wild crowds crushed against our carts. Sometimes the animals staggered, and it seemed as if nothing could save the carts from being overturned. Every moment or two a brick or stone would be hurled against the carts, and that cry, "Kill, kill," which can never be forgotten when once heard, was shouted by perhaps hundreds of voices. Yet the Lord brought us through, and "no weapon prospered."

When we reached the inn a wild mob of over a thousand men filled the inn yard; and as we alighted from the cart these men literally drove us before them into one room, which in a few moments was packed to suffocation. For probably an hour the crowd kept crushing us into one corner; then those outside became impatient at not being able to get in, and demanded that we be brought out. We managed to keep some of the ladies from going out; but the rest of us—men, women, and children—stood facing that seething multitude until relief came in the darkness. Why did they not kill us then? Why, indeed? None but an Almighty God kept that crowd back.

As soon as we had reached the city a servant was sent to the official demanding protection. It was dark when this man returned, in a state of great agitation; his story was that as he was waiting for an answer from the official he overheard a conversation between two soldiers, and gathered from what they said that the official had sent a party of fifty soldiers along the road that we would have to take, with the order that every one of us must be put to death. The official was afraid to have us killed in the city lest he should afterward be blamed; but by this plan he could say brigands had done the deed. So sure was this servant that we were all to be massacred that he would remain with us no longer, but returned that night to Honan with the report that we were all killed.

A consultation was held, and the question was, should we stay in the city and again demand protection, or should we go on and trust God to open our way? The latter course was decided upon. But for a long time the carters utterly refused to go farther with us. Again prayer opened up our way, and by two o'clock in the morning all were ready to start.

The official had sent a few foot-soldiers to guide us to *the right road*! (to the waylaying party). The night was very dark, and as we were passing through the gate of the city we noticed what seemed to be signal lights put out and drawn in. We all felt these to be signals to the waylaying party ahead. A short distance from the city, probably about one hundred yards, our carts suddenly stopped. Some one ran up and whispered to Mr. Goforth, "Paul and Mr. —— are missing." Search was made for them, but without success.

A veil must be drawn over those terrible hours of suspense; my faith seemed to fail me, and I could only cry in my agony, "If Paul is gone, can I ever trust God again?" Then I remembered how marvelously God had given me back my dear husband's life, and I just committed Paul into his hands and waited to see what he would do.

When all hope was given up of finding the missing ones, a cart was left behind with a trusted servant, and we went on. Then we saw God's wonderful plan for us. While we were waiting the soldiers had fallen asleep in the carts, and were not aware that the carters were taking a side road until we had gotten miles from the city and beyond the reach of our would-be murderers! The soldiers were infuriated at this discovery; but after some threatening they left us and returned to the city. Thus again we saw that God was indeed unto us a "God of deliverances."

Again and again that day we were surrounded by mobs. Many times I held up the poor, dirty clothes which the Mohammedans had given us, and the story of how these had been given quieted the people perhaps more than anything. Once the cry was raised to drag our children's nurse out of the cart; but as we cried to God for her the people let us alone, and we passed on. At another time a man snatched the remains of Mr. Goforth's helmet away from us, and tore it to pieces. I had hoped to keep it as a trophy should we ever get out safely.

We were at this time in a pitiable condition. Most of the men had head or arms bandaged; Dr. —— was unable to raise his head. What we suffered in those carts with nothing but the boards under us cannot be told. Nine persons were packed in our cart, which under ordinary circumstances would have held four or five. At noon we reached a large city, where the animals had to rest and feed. Then again we saw an evidence of the Lord's loving kindness over us.

Just as we were getting down from our carts the crowd became very threatening, and it looked now as if our hour had indeed come; but at this critical juncture two well-dressed young men of official class came through the crowd, greeting Mr. Goforth in great surprise. They had been received by him in our home at Chang Te Ho. A few words of explanation were spoken, then they turned quickly to the crowd and told them who we were and of the work at Chang Te Ho. The attitude of the people changed instantly, and they made way for us, giving us good rooms, and food was brought which was greatly needed.

That noon, as one after another came up to express their sympathy at Paul's loss, I could say nothing—I was waiting to see what God would do. When Mr. Goforth told the young officials about Paul and Mr. ——, they were greatly concerned, and promised to send men at once to search for them. These friends in need sent with us a man of the district to guide and help us, and also wrote an urgent letter to the official of the city we were to stay in that night, asking him to give us an escort and help us in every way he could.

About four o'clock that afternoon a man came running after us with the joyful news that Paul and Mr. —— were safe, and would reach us that night. As I heard this news my unbelief and faithlessness in the hour of testing came over me with overwhelming force, and I could only bow my head and weep. Oh, the goodness and mercy of God! Never had the love of God seemed so wonderful as in that hour.

"Could we with ink the ocean fill,
Were the whole sky of parchment made,
Were every blade of grass a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade;

To write the love of God above
Would drain that ocean dry,
Nor could the scroll contain the whole
Though stretched from sky to sky."

That night we reached our destination about nine o'clock, having traveled seventeen hours over those roads, with but a short break at noon. It was marvelous how Mr. Goforth was sustained, for he was obliged to start at once for the official's residence with the note I have already referred to. On the way through the street the mob about succeeded, several times, in getting him down under their feet; but God was with him, and he reached the Yamen in safety, being courteously received by the official, who promised us protection, and sent him back to the inn under escort.

When Paul and Mr. —— arrived that night, they tried in vain to wake me, but nature had to have her way. I knew nothing till I wakened with a start at about two A.M. Jumping up, I started to look for Paul, and never can I forget the scene! The whole party was lying on the bare earthen floor, practically without bedding or mattresses.

A word concerning the experiences of Mr. —— and Paul. The two had got down from their cart and were walking behind. In some way they missed the road in the dark, and became separated from us. During that day they were repeatedly in the gravest danger.

On one occasion, when surrounded by a violent mob, and one man had raised a club above Paul's head to strike him down, Mr. —— felt impelled by some unseen power to shout out, "We are not Roman Catholics, but Protestants." At this the man lowered his club, exclaiming, "Why, these are not the bad foreign devils, but the good foreign devils, like those missionaries at Chow Chia K'eo" (China Inland Mission). At this same place the hearts of the people seemed turned toward them in a wonderful way. One man gave Paul one hundred *cash* (five cents) to buy some food; another man carried the lad on his back for miles to give his feet a rest, they were so sore. This same man, when he could carry Paul no longer, ran ahead to try and find us. When they reached the inn where we had been so helped by the two Chinese gentlemen, they found that these friends had food prepared and a barrow waiting, also a guide ready to lead them to us!

Less than an hour from the time I awakened we were on the road again. The official was true to his promise, and a large mounted escort accompanied us. That day we were on the road twenty hours, reaching Fan Cheng at midnight. Here we found the engineers' party waiting for us with boats hired, but we were obliged to remain twenty-four hours in the most loathsome inn we ever had the misfortune to be in in China. It was an unspeakable relief to get into the houseboats, even though we only had bare boards to lie on, and the boat people's food to eat.

We were ten days going down stream to Hankow. One after the other became ill. When still a day from Hankow, a steam tug met us with provisions. Our children cried at the sight of bread and milk! We were not allowed to stop long enough at Hankow, as we had hoped, to get clothes and other necessaries, but were obliged to hasten on by the first steamer, which left the following morning. I was obliged to borrow garments for myself and the children from our fellow-passengers.

At Shanghai the streets were being paraded, and every preparation was being made for an

attack. We learned with deep sorrow of the death of many dear friends at the hands of the Boxers. Ordered home by the first steamer, without anything left to us but the old clothes we had on at the time of the attack, how could we get ready in such a short time for the long home voyage? There was no lack of money, for our Board had cabled all we needed. The question that faced us was how could I get clothes made for six of us in such a short time, with Chinese tailors too busy to help, no machine to be had, and no ready-made clothes to be bought except for Mr. Goforth and Paul.

Again I found that man's extremity was but God's opportunity. He was true to his promise, "God shall supply all your need." Even as I knelt in an agony of prayer, beseeching God's help, and asking definitely that some one should be sent to me to help with the sewing, two ladies were at the door asking for me! These were perfect strangers, but had seen our names among the recent refugees, and God had moved them to come and offer their assistance! They worked for me night and day until we had to get on board the steamer. Never shall I forget their Christian fellowship and practical help at that time.

But in the rush to get the older children ready, baby Wallace's clothes were neglected. There was nothing for it but to take materials and make things for him on the voyage. In this connection came a most wonderful and precious evidence of God's power to answer prayer. For the first few days of the journey I worked early and late trying to make something for the little one, who had scarcely anything to wear; but as we were nearing Yokohama I realized I had almost reached the end of my strength. My needle refused to work; try as I would I could not even see where to put the needle.

Folding up my work I went down to the stateroom, and kneeling down I spread the work before the Lord. Too far gone to agonize in prayer, I could only quietly, almost mutely, just tell him how the poor child had no clothes. Rising with a great sense of the burden having been lifted, I put the work away, locking it in a trunk, then went up on deck and lay down almost insensible from exhaustion. How long a time passed I do not know, but it could not have been more than half an hour when some one came and touched me, saying, "We have dropped anchor in Yokohama Bay, and a large bundle has been thrown up on deck from the lighter for you."

"For me!" I cried. "Surely not; I know no one in Japan." Then I thought, "It is the answer come!"

Going down I found a letter from Mrs. O. E., of the China Inland Mission. She said that her little son, the same age as baby Wallace, had died four months before, and the Lord had pressed her to send his complete outfit to me for my child! Opening the parcel, I found not only everything the child could possibly need for a year or more, but much else. Had some one stood beside that dear sister and told her what I most needed, she could not have done differently. Yes, surely Some One did direct her loving hands, and Some One just used her as one of his channels; for she lived near to him, and was an open channel.

Three days later my own collapse came; but praise his great name, he was with me in the darkness and brought me through.

Chapter 6: PROVING GOD'S FAITHFULNESS (1902-1908)

"The safest place . . . is the path of duty."

ONE of the results of our gracious and merciful deliverance from the hands of the Boxers was an increased desire to make our lives tell in the service of God—to spend and be spent for him. Our Heavenly Father saw this and just took us at our word, and led us out into the path which meant absolute surrender as I had never known it before.

It is so true that "God will be no man's debtor." When he asks for and receives our all, he gives in return that which is above price—his own presence. The price is not great when compared with what he gives in return; it is our blindness and our unwillingness to yield that make it seem great.

The following story has been asked for many times. Believing that it has a lesson for others, I give it, though to do so means lifting the veil from a very sacred part of my life.

After the Boxer experience, my husband returned to China in 1901; and, with my children, I left for China in the summer of 1902, leaving the two eldest children at the Chefoo schools, *en route* to Honan. Mr. Goforth met me at Tientsin, and together we traveled by river-boat inland a journey of about twenty-four days. During those long, quiet days on the river-boat my husband unfolded to me a carefully thought out plan for future mission work.

He reminded me that six missionaries, from a mission-station which had been destroyed by the Boxers, were now permanently stationed at Changte; and that the main station, now fully equipped, no longer needed us as before. He felt that the time had come when we should give ourselves to the evangelization of the great regions north and northeast of Changte—regions which up to that time had been scarcely touched by the Gospel, because of lack of workers. His plan was that we—husband and wife, with our children—should go and live and work among the people.

To make this possible a native compound would be rented in the center, where we would stay a month for our first visit, leaving behind an evangelist to carry on the work; and we would revisit this and other places so opened as many times as possible in the year.

What this proposition meant to me can scarcely be understood by those unfamiliar with China and Chinese life. Smallpox, diphtheria, scarlet fever, and other contagious diseases are chronic epidemics; and China, outside the parts ruled by foreigners, is absolutely devoid of sanitation.

Four of our children had died. To take the three little ones, then with me, into such conditions and danger seemed literally like stepping with them over a precipice in the dark and expecting to be kept. But, on the other hand, I had the language and experience for just such work, the need was truly appalling, and there was no other woman to do it. In my

innermost soul I knew the call had come from God, but I would not pay the price. My one plea in refusing to enter that life was the risk to the children.

Again and again my husband urged that “the safest place” for myself and the children “was the path of duty”; that I could not keep them in our comfortable home at Changte, but “God could keep them anywhere.” Still I refused. Just before reaching our station he begged me to reconsider my decision. When I gave a final refusal, his only answer was: “I fear for the children.”

The very day after reaching home our dear Wallace was taken ill. For weeks we fought for his life; at last the crisis passed and he began to recover. Then my husband started off alone on his first trip! He had been gone only a day or two when our precious baby Constance, a year old, was taken down with the same disease that Wallace had. From the first there seemed little or no hope. The doctors, a nurse, and all the little mission circle joined in the fight for her life. Her father was sent for, but arrived just as she was losing consciousness. A few hours later, when we were kneeling round her bedside waiting for the end, my eyes seemed suddenly opened to what I had been doing—*I had dared to fight against Almighty God*.

In the moments that followed God revealed himself to me in such love and majesty and glory that I gave myself up to him with unspeakable joy. Then I knew that I had been making an awful mistake, and that I could indeed safely trust my children to him wherever he might lead. One thing only seemed plain, that I must follow where God should lead. I saw at last that God must come first. Before the precious body was laid away preparations for our first trip were begun.

Was God faithful to the vision he had given me? Or did he allow the children to suffer in the years that followed, when months each year were spent with them right out among the people? As I write this, eighteen years have passed since we started on that first trip, and none of our children have died. Never had we as little sickness as during that life. Never had we so much evidence of God’s favor and blessing in a hundred ways—as may be gathered from the definite testimonies which follow.

Without one exception, every place in which we stayed for a month, and opened as my husband had planned, became in time a growing church.

And I found, to my surprise, that I was able to give more time to the children, that I was able to guard them better when on those trips than when in the Changte Station. For the mission compound was large, and often the children were out of my sight for hours at a time; whereas the outside native compounds we lived in were so small the children were always within sight and reach. Even when groups of women were listening to the Gospel, I was able to direct the children’s lessons. As I look back on that time, my heart is filled with overflowing gratitude to God for the wonderful grace and strength he gave for that life.

My great regret is that I did not keep a record of answers to prayer. I find it most difficult to record just what “asking and getting things from God” meant at that time, but it now seems to me to have been the very foundation of the whole life. The instances of answers to prayer, here recorded, are simply the ones connected with that life which stand out most clearly in my memory of those years.

The first answer came the morning after our dear Constance died, and was the one that had the greatest, most far-reaching effect on the new life and its work.

As I thought of facing the crowds of heathen women day by day, and what it would mean to carry on aggressive evangelism outside, there was one need I felt must be met—that of a Bible-woman. As I prayed for direction, a Mrs. Wang Hsieh-sheng came to mind as the one I should ask.

But when I laid my request before her, that she come with me, she burst into tears, saying: "I dare not. I have only one child left, and it would risk her life too much."

Seeing how she felt, I did not urge her, but told her to go and pray about it for a day, and bring me her answer after the funeral that night. When she came that evening her face was shining through tears, as she said: "O my Shepherd Mother, I will go. If you are willing to risk your children for the sake of my sisters, how much more should I!"

Eighteen years have passed since that day. I would need to write a volume to record all that Mrs. Wang meant to me in those years; yes, and to the work. As the years passed she became my beloved companion, sharing in all the responsibilities and hardships of that life, and also in its joys. I realized more and more that she was indeed a God-given co-worker. Though circumstances have led me away from that life, she still remains and works for her sisters in the Changte Church.

One of the hardest words a missionary can get from his Home Board is the word "retrench." My husband and I were on one of our evangelistic tours north of Changte. Every door seemed wide open before us, and the time ripe for a specially aggressive campaign of evangelism for the heathen. But, just as we were planning for this, word reached us from our station treasurer of a message received from the Home Board that funds were low, and retrenchment must be carried out along all lines.

To us this meant dismissing helpers, and a general curtailing of our work. We faced the question squarely. Our own tithe had been long overdrawn. How then could we support the men we had, and go on with the work which was opening so gloriously before us after years of hard pioneer preparation?

But we decided to go on as we had planned, and to trust God for the necessary funds; believing that, though for the time being the home church had disappointed us, God would not fail us.

The following Friday a home mail reached us, in which was a letter from a lady in New Zealand. The writer said she had read a letter of ours in The Life of Faith, and wished to support an evangelist under us. This relieved us of the support of one man, but there were many other needs as yet unmet.

The following Monday, when our next mail was forwarded to us, a letter came from a lady in Australia, enclosing a draft ample to meet every special need in the work for a year to come. She stated very plainly that she did not wish the money put into the general funds of the mission, but to be used by ourselves in any way we thought best. Indeed, had she known the special circumstances in which the letter would find us, she could scarcely have written more exactly to fit our case.

Again, a year after this experience of God's faithfulness to meet all our needs, we began to feel the need of special funds for the work. My husband, as usual, seemed quite sure that we should keep on as we had been doing, and that the money needed would be sent. In spite of all the blessed lessons of the past, my faith seemed to fail me; and I spoke decidedly against using our salary, when we needed it all for ourselves and our children's education. We were traveling homeward by cart at the time and the matter was dropped; though I felt my husband was hurt by my lack of faith.

When we reached home, that evening, a letter from a lady in Canada was awaiting my husband. He read it first; and I cannot forget the look on his face as he handed it to me, with the words "I told you so."

As near as I can recall it the letter said: "My mother and I are strangers to you, never having seen or heard either you or your wife. But my mother, who is an invalid, has for some time been restless because of a conviction that has come over her that she should send you some money. So to quiet my mother I am sending you fifty dollars."

As I read the letter, I certainly did feel ashamed of my lack of faith. In writing our acknowledgment, I told how wonderfully opportune the gift had been. A couple of months or so later came a reply, telling us that the invalid mother passed away soon after my letter reached them; and that the story of how God had used her in this matter greatly strengthened her faith, blessing and helping her during the closing days of her life.

On one occasion, when we were traveling from Wuanhsien to Pengcheng, we reached the town of Hotsun late in the afternoon, expecting to stay over night. But on our arrival we found that the Christian whom we had sent to arrange for our accommodation had failed to get us a place, every one absolutely refusing to take us in. While the animals were feeding, and we were trying to eat our dinner of Chinese dough-strings in the midst of a curious crowd, my husband told the Christian to go out again and look for a place while we prayed.

We dared not close our eyes, lest the superstitious heathen crowd crushing against us on all sides would take fright, thinking we were mesmerizing them. So we just lifted up our hearts silently to our Father; and before many minutes had passed, indeed before we had finished our meal, the Christian returned greatly rejoiced, saying: "A wealthy man has offered you a fine empty place which has just been fixed over. And you can have it as long as you like, free of rent."

For three days we preached in that place—morning, noon, and night—to great crowds; and a work was begun which has gone on ever since.

There were times when my faith was severely tested, and I fear too often I did not stand the test; but oh, how patient God is with us in our human weakness. "Like as a father pitieth, . . . so the Lord pitieth." The Chinese have often said to me, "Your children seem made for this life." But I know it was God's great goodness. He knew how hard the life was, and how difficult it would have been for me to continue that work had the children been peevish or hard to manage. Time and time again we had to get the little ones up before daybreak to start on a cart journey, but I do not remember that they ever even cried. They would just wake up enough to get dressed and ask sleepily, "Are we going again,

Mama?” and then go off to sleep as soon as we were settled in our carts.

On one occasion, arriving at a certain town, we found the place in which we were to stay unfit for the children. It was simply horrible. On either side of us, almost reaching to our door, were two great pigstys—Chinese pigstys! In front of the door were eight or ten great vessels, filled with fermenting stuff which had been there all summer, and which added to the other varied and oppressive odors. I greatly feared for the children, and wanted to leave at once, but my husband seemed calmly certain of the Lord’s power to keep them from all harm.

On the second evening the youngest child became very feverish. Mr. Goforth was holding a meeting with the men. I was almost overwhelmed with fear lest the child had diphtheria. Kneeling down beside him, I cried to the Lord as only a mother under like circumstances could pray. At last, tired out, I fell asleep on my knees. Awakened by the entrance of my husband, I felt the child’s head again and it seemed cooler, and the child quieter. The following day he was quite well. Is it much wonder I can say I know God answers prayer?

Returning from our summer holiday the first of September, 1912, we hoped to find a place rented at a certain large center where we had planned to begin work; but to our disappointment learned that the evangelists had secured premises in a small market village, where there was just one Christian. There was nothing to do but to go there, though it seemed almost useless, for it was the busiest season for those farming people.

On our way to this place we prayed much that the Lord would prepare the people, and open their hearts to the Gospel. We had not been there many days when we became convinced that we had been led there, and that the Lord was opening the hearts of the people in a most unusual way. Crowds of men and women heard the preaching every day. Our evening Gospel meetings, with organ and hymn scroll, were crowded out on to the street.

Everywhere we met with the utmost friendliness, and before our month’s visit was ended we had the joy of seeing some of the leading people in the village and district come out boldly for Christ. One was the chief doctor; another was the head man in the market. In the store, through which we women had to pass to get to the evening meeting, there were three men and a young lad of fifteen; all of these were brought to Christ. The men were opium users, gamblers, men of evil lives. Two of them are now preachers of the Gospel, and one is the leading man in the little growing church there.

Had I time and space I could go on multiplying cases where the same results have followed when the cross of Christ has been the pivot of all Christian teaching, and prayer has been the source of power.

On one of the early visits to the city of Linchang, a woman came with a little child whose foot was terribly burned. The whole foot was badly swollen, the inflammation reaching some distance up the leg. The child was feverish, and seemed in a serious condition. It happened that on that trip I had forgotten to bring the simple remedies which I was accustomed to take out with me, so the woman was told nothing could be done. But she begged so piteously that I could not turn away; and lifting up my heart in prayer I asked

the Lord to guide me, if there was anything I could do.

Even while I prayed the thought of a bread poultice came to mind. This remedy seemed almost absurd. I had never heard of such a thing being used before under like circumstances, but I resolved to try it. Twice a day the foot was cleansed and put in the poultice, and it was really wonderful to see how it healed. We were there ten days, and when we left the foot was almost completely well. The mother, father, the child herself, and indeed the whole family, became Christians. On a later visit I examined the foot, and found not even the sign of a scar remaining.

I told this incident not long ago to a medical doctor, and he said: “Why, there is no miracle in *that*! It was just up-to-date hygiene—giving nature a chance by cleanliness!”

I replied: “Doctor, to me the miracle lay, not in the poultice, but in God’s telling me what to use; and now it is to me all the more a miracle of prayer, since you say it was up-to-date hygienic treatment.”

At the same place, some years later, we were conducting special tent meetings for Christians in the day time, and for the heathen at night. Just after our meetings began the weather turned bitterly cold, with wind and sleety rain. The tent was like a drafty ice-house. My husband caught a severe cold, which became worse each day. He had fever and severe pains in head and chest, but would not give up his meetings. One noon he came from the meeting looking very ill, and lay down to rest till the afternoon meeting.

I determined to take the Christians into my confidence, and tell them of my anxiety for Mr. Goforth. So, some time before the afternoon meeting I slipped out and called them into the tent, telling them of my husband’s condition and asking them to pray for him. Oh, what a wave of earnest, heart-overflow of prayer went up without a moment’s pause! The tears came to my eyes as I thought, “Surely God will answer such prayers!”

Then, fearing my husband might arrive, I gave out a hymn. A few moments later he walked into the tent in his old brisk way, looking quite well. At the close of the meeting he told me that shortly after he heard me go out the pain in his head and chest ceased, the fever seemed to leave him, and when he started for the tent he felt quite well. The symptoms did not return.

When on a visit to a certain out-station, after being there two whole days, scarcely any women had come to see us. We were so circumstanced that I could not leave the children. The third day I became so burdened in prayer that I could only shut myself up in an empty room and cry to the Lord to send women to us, as he knew I could not leave the children. From that day we always had plenty of visitors to keep us busy, either Christian women studying or heathen women listening to the Gospel.

At Tzuchow, the first place we opened together, the people seemed much set against us. After the first period of curiosity was over, no one came to hear the Gospel. As we had a nice place for the children to play in with their faithful nurse,—the one who saved Ruth's life in 1900,—Mrs. Wang and I determined to go out each afternoon and try to reach the heathen women with the Gospel. Before going out we always prayed the Lord to open a door to us for preaching. And as I now recall that time, never once did we return home without being invited into some home to preach, or at least being asked to sit on a doorstep and tell of a Saviour from sin.

One of the most outstanding evidences of God's favor and blessing was seen, at this time, in the way he provided my husband with native helpers. To carry on the plan of work we had adopted required a good force of trusty evangelists. Time and again we looked to the Lord for men and women to help us, and the answer always came.

As my husband always seemed to have plenty of men to help him, he was frequently asked for evangelists by his fellow-missionaries of both our own and other missions. I was at first opposed to his giving away his best men, but he would answer, "The Lord has been good to me; should I be less generous with my brethren?" And it certainly was remarkable how, whenever he gave a really valuable evangelist, another man, even better, was raised up shortly after. The secret of his getting men may be seen best through words of his own, taken from a letter to a friend in Canada about the time of which I am now writing:

"We came to this little market town in September of last year. My wife had two women workers. I had Mr. Tung, the old evangelist, and a young high school graduate without experience, and the only Christian man in the district, very ignorant but with this to recommend him, that he was converted or quickened by the Holy Spirit in the Changte revival, and was intensely in earnest. We were here only about twenty days when dozens began to inquire, among whom were robbers, opium sots, and gamblers. The work went on all day and well on till midnight. We were all tiring out. We had not enough workers. It was like a very heavy burden that forced me to my knees. I told the Lord that he was the Lord of the harvest, and that he must send more harvesters. There was a time of intense looking to God, almost amounting to agony, and then the burden lifted, and I knew that God had answered. I told my wife that I was sure that God was going to send me workers.

"Now what is the result? Since then he has sent me two Chinese B.A.'s, both excellent speakers. He moved an excellent elder to give up his business, and he has been appointed an evangelist. At this center a scholar, who was an opium user and gambler, got converted last year. His progress has been most remarkable, and it looks as if he is going to make one of the front-rank preachers. Also two brothers here, who were among the first converts last year, help to preach, their father—also a convert of last year—providing their

food.”

Another gracious evidence of God’s over-ruling providence was seen in the way we, especially the children, were kept from contracting contagious diseases. The Chinese carry their children about everywhere in their arms, even when sick with all sorts of contagious diseases.

I give the following instance to show how impossible it was to know when one would run into danger. Going to a certain village for a day’s preaching, I took with me little Mary, then three years of age. We were waited on by a Christian woman who was most kind and attentive, bringing water and food for both Mary and myself. Being much taken up with preaching to the women, it did not occur to me to ask why she kept her baby’s face covered, for the child was always in her arms. Just as we were leaving I asked her; then she uncovered the baby’s face, and to my horror I found that the child was suffering from smallpox! For weeks I watched Mary’s temperature, but nothing developed.

Through repeated instances of this kind I came to see that Mr. Goforth was right when he said, “The safest place for yourself and the children is in the path of duty.”

As I recall those years of touring life with our children, words fail me to tell of all the Lord’s goodness to them and to me. Though there were many hard, hard places, these were but opportunities for special grace and help. Many times, when discouraged almost to the point of never going out again with the children, there would come evidence that the Lord was using our family life, lived among the people, to win them to Christ. Then I would take new courage, and go again. Oh, it is so true that

“We may trust him fully
All for us to do;
Those who trust him wholly
Find him wholly true.”

Chapter 7: THE STORY OF ONE FURLOUGH (1908-1910)

“Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me” (Psa. 50:15).

IN THE summer of 1908 I was obliged to return to Canada with five of our children, leaving Mr. Goforth in China for the revival work.

Reaching Toronto, I learned that my eldest son was at death’s door from repeated attacks of rheumatic fever. He was then almost a day’s journey away. On my way there, as I recalled the times in which he had been given back to us from the very gates of death, my

faith was strengthened to believe for his recovery again. But, as I prayed, it became very clear that the answer to my petition depended on myself; in other words, that I must yield myself and my will to God.

I had been planning to take no meetings during that furlough, but to devote myself wholly to my children. I confessed the sin of planning my own life, and definitely covenanted with the Lord that if he would raise my son for his service I would take meetings, or do anything, as he opened the way for the care of the children.

There were six difficult doors, however, that would have to be opened—not one, but all—before I could possibly go out and speak for Christ and China, as God seemed to be asking. First, the Lord would need to restore my son to complete health, as I could never feel justified in leaving a sick child. Second, he would need to restore my own health, for I had been ordered to the hospital for an operation. Third, he would need to keep all the other children well. Fourth, a servant must be sent to take care of the house—though my income was so small that a servant seemed out of the question, and only the strictest economy was making both ends meet. Fifth, a Christian lady would need to be willing to take care of the children, and act as my housekeeper in my absence from home. Sixth, sufficient money would need to be sent to meet the extra expenses incurred by my leaving home.

Yet, as I laid these difficulties before the Lord, I received the definite assurance that he would open the way.

My son was brought back to Toronto on a stretcher, the doctor not allowing him to raise his head; but on arrival he would not obey orders, declaring that he was so well he could not and would not remain still. Fearing the consequences of his disobeying orders, I telephoned for the doctor to come at once. On his arrival he gave the lad a thorough examination, and then said: “Well, I cannot make him out; all I can say is, let him do as he pleases.”

Within a month the boy was going back to his high school, apparently quite well. Some months later he applied for a position as forester under the government. He had to pass through the hands of the official doctor. My son told him of his recent illness, and of what the doctor had said concerning his heart; but this physician replied: “In spite of all you have told me I can discover nothing whatever the matter with you, and will therefore give you a clear bill of health.”

As for myself, I did not go to the hospital; for all the symptoms that had seemed to require it left me, and I became perfectly well. A servant was sent to me who did her work sympathetically, as helping me to do the Lord’s work. A married niece, living near, offered to stay in the home whenever I needed to be absent.

And so there remained but one condition unfulfilled—the money. But I believed this would come as I went forward; and it did. Each month that followed, as I made up my accounts, I found that my receipts exceeded my expenditures sufficiently to enable me to spend money for work in China, and to purchase things which I needed for China, including an organ. All these accounts were laid before our beloved Mission Board secretary, who approved them.

Under these circumstances I dared not refuse invitations to speak. Yet, so weak was my

faith, for months I never left home for a few days without dreading lest something should happen to the children during my absence. I even accepted meetings with the proviso that if the children needed me I must fail to keep my appointment. But as the days and weeks and months passed, and all went well, I learned to trust.

"'Be still; be strong to-day.'
But, Lord, to-morrow?
What of to-morrow, Lord?
Shall there be rest from toil,
Be truce from sorrow?
'Did I not die for thee?
Do I not live for thee?
Leave me to-morrow.'"

In giving the following I wish to make clear that, had I been living a life of ease or self-indulgence, I could not have been justified in expecting God to undertake for me in such matters as are here recorded. It must be remembered that I had stepped out into a life which meant *trusting for everything*.

Before leaving China for Canada my husband had said to me: "Do not stint the children with apples; give them all they want." But when I began housekeeping I found this was not very easy to do. Apples were expensive, and the appetites of my six children for them seemed insatiable. However, I began by buying a few small baskets; and then I did not need to buy more, for apples came in a most wonderful way. First in baskets; then, as the season advanced, in barrels. These came from many different sources; and in some cases long distances, express paid to the door. On one occasion a barrel of large, hard "Greenings" came just as we had finished the last barrel. The children complained that they were too hard to eat, and begged me to buy them some "Snows"—very expensive, but delicious apples for eating. I had only purchased one small basket of "Snows" when a large supply, almost a barrelful, came from a distant friend.

I feel that the Lord saw that I had given up all for him, so just showed how he could provide, thus evidencing his love and care for my dear children. We had set up housekeeping at the end of the fruit season, and so I had not been able to do canning for winter use. That winter, again and again, gifts of canned fruit came, sometimes from unknown sources. Altogether, seventy jars of the finest fruit were sent to us. I will give the details of just one of these gifts.

Shortly before leaving home for ten days, the servant informed me that the canned fruit was finished. Accordingly, I went down and ordered enough dried fruit to last till I should return. On reaching home I was greeted at the door by a rush from the children, all trying at once to tell me that a lovely valentine had just arrived. Leading me back to the kitchen, they showed me the table covered with twenty jars of the most delicious looking fruit, and a large can of maple syrup. On a card accompanying the gift was written: "A valentine for our dear 'substitute in China,' from her sisters in Renfrew."

Early in the winter it became evident that a telephone was a necessity, with my numerous calls and engagements. I hesitated about going into this expense, not being quite sure that it was right to use in that way the money given me. At last, I prayed that the Lord would

show me his will in the matter by sending me half the amount needed for the telephone within a certain time, if it was right for me to get it. Before the time expired the money had come; so I got the telephone.

As the weather became cold I began to suffer on the long drives in the country to appointments, and was soon longing for a fur coat. I consulted our mission secretary as to whether, if sufficient money were given me, I could put it into a fur coat. The answer was a decided “Yes.” There was no doubt that the coat was a necessity in the Lord’s work. So I began to pray the Lord to send the money quickly, for the cold was severe. In less than two weeks I received the money needed, and of course got the coat.

The ladies of the Winnipeg Presbyterial had arranged a series of meetings for me in Winnipeg, Brandon, and other places in that vicinity, about ten in all. The collections from the meetings were to defray my traveling expenses, which would amount to over one hundred dollars. On my way by train from Toronto to Winnipeg I caught a severe cold, which settled in my throat and chest. I did not want the women to be disappointed, and also put to all the expense, if I failed them. Just before reaching Winnipeg I was enabled to commit myself definitely into the Lord’s hands, for strength and voice for the meetings. The days that followed can never be forgotten, for the bodily weakness, fever, and throat trouble were removed only while I was giving my addresses. In each case, though so hoarse before and after speaking as to be scarcely able to make myself heard above a whisper, my voice cleared for the address.

For example: while at Dr. and Mrs. C. W. Gordon’s home the Sunday I was to speak in Winnipeg, I was advertised to speak that night in Dr. Gordon’s church. At the supper table I asked Dr. Gordon if he would be ready to speak should I fail. Just before my time came to speak I slipped up on to the platform behind Dr. Gordon, who was praying; and oh, how I cried to the Lord for help and courage! For the church was packed, and even the Sunday-school room partitions were opened to accommodate the crowd. My throat was as if in a vise, and I felt weak and ill. But, as Dr. Gordon introduced me, I stepped forward possessed by a feeling of wonderful calm and absolute confidence. It seemed I could just *feel* One like unto the Son of man beside me, and never had I felt so completely and only a channel. For more than an hour I spoke so that every one heard distinctly; but when I sat down my throat tightened as before. Dr. Gordon told me later that he had a man sit in the most difficult place in which to hear, and that he had heard every word.

So it was till the end of my appointments. On the homeward journey I asked the Lord either to heal my throat, or to provide a way for me to get a needed rest from speaking, for I had many appointments awaiting me in Ontario. A few days after reaching home four of my children were taken down with measles. During the weeks I was in quarantine with them my throat received the rest it needed, and became quite restored.

One day the following early summer, in looking over the children’s clothes, I found there was so much to be done I was fairly overwhelmed. I saw it was quite impossible to do the necessary sewing and keep my appointments too. The question that weighed heavily was, “Should I cancel the meetings for which I had given my word?” My husband urged me to buy ready-made clothes, but I knew how expensive they would be, and could not bring

myself to do so. I went alone and laid my burden before the Lord, praying that, if he wanted me to speak further for China, he would show his will by sending me some gift that would enable me to get ready-made clothes for the children.

A few days later I was speaking at a Presbyterial gathering in western Ontario. At the close of the evening meeting an old gentleman put into my hands some money. I asked him what he wished me to use it for, and he replied, “For your children. Use it in a way that will help you to be free for God’s work.” My heart rose in thanksgiving, and I decided to accept it as the token I had asked of the Lord. On my return to Toronto I spent this gift in buying ready-made clothes for the children, to save my time and strength for the Lord’s work.

When busy in my home one day, the thought of two dear friends of the China Inland Mission kept coming constantly to mind, and I began to wonder if I should not send them some money. Looking into my purse, I found I had only fifty cents on hand. I put the matter out of my mind, with the thought that if the Lord wanted me to send them anything he would provide a way. That afternoon’s mail brought a letter from a distant place in Ontario where, a year before, I had visited and spoken for a friend. The letter was from the treasurer of the Christian Endeavor Society for which I had spoken. He enclosed five dollars, and said the money was to have been given me at the time I spoke for them, but had been overlooked.

My first thought was to return it, as it would be dishonoring my friend to accept money for such a service; and then I remembered my friends for whom I wanted money, and I decided to send the five dollars to them. My husband, returning the following morning, handed me another five to put with it, and the ten dollars was sent off.

In due course a reply came from my friends, saying that the very morning my letter arrived they both had been given assurance that a certain sum would come, for which they had been praying. This was to meet a need which they did not wish to bring before their Board. My letter brought the ten dollars; and another letter in the afternoon’s mail contained a sum which, with mine, exactly made the amount they had been asking the Lord for.

“Say not my soul, ‘Can God relieve my care?’
Remember that Omnipotence hath servants everywhere!”

On one occasion, when about to leave home on a ten days’ trip to Montreal and other places, word came that the children’s Sunday-school treat was to take place during my absence.

Little Mary had no “best” dress for the occasion. I had planned to make her a white woolen dress, but now there was no time; and I knew I could not make it while away, with so many meetings ahead. But, that very day, a lady from our church called and said she had wanted for a long time to help me, and asked if she could do any sewing for me. With dim eyes and a grateful heart I accepted her offer. On my return, Mary told me of her wearing a pretty white cloth dress for the Sunday-school treat.

Once more we planned to leave Canada for China, and a serious problem faced me. Our

eldest son could be left to face the world alone, but not our daughter of sixteen. It was necessary that a suitable guardian be found for her. I called on three different ones whom I thought would feel some responsibility toward the missionary's daughter, but all three declined to accept the responsibility. I then saw that it was not for me to try to open doors, but for this also I must look to the Lord. I prayed that, if he wished me to return to China, he would send me one to whom I could commit her.

A short time passed; then a lady called, whose life had been devoted to the training of young women. Her beautiful Christian character made her the one above all others in whose care I could gladly leave my daughter. This lady told me that in her early years she had hoped to give her life for service in China, but the way had been closed. She now felt that the Lord had laid it upon her heart to offer to take charge of my child. Years have passed since then, and she has fulfilled my highest expectations of her. Rarely has a more definite answer come from a loving Father, nor one that brought greater relief and help; for this offer, coming as it did in answer to my prayers, seemed to be unmistakable proof that the Lord would keep my child as I gave her up.

The time had almost arrived for beginning the last preparations for the long journey to China, when one day Ruth came in from her play with her heavy coat almost in shreds, she having in some way torn it on a barbed wire fence. The coat was the only heavy one she had, and I had planned to make it do for the ocean voyage, intending to get a new one in England. I tried to find a new one in the stores, but the season was past and I could not; and I had no time to make another. I just took the need to the Lord and left it there, believing that in some way he would provide. A few days later a friend telephoned me that her mother had recently returned from a visit to Chicago, and wished me to come over to see a parcel she had brought for me. Oh, the relief that came when I found that the parcel contained, among other things, a handsome red cloth ulster, which fitted Ruth perfectly. This fresh evidence of the Lord's overshadowing care touched me deeply. Those who have never known such tokens of the Lord's loving care in the little things of life can scarcely understand the blessedness that such experiences bring.

"Whether it be so heavy that others cannot bear
To know the heavy burden they cannot come and share;
Whether it be so tiny that others cannot see
Why it should be a burden, and seem so real to me,
Either and both I lay them down at the Master's feet
And find them alone with Jesus mysteriously sweet."

As I attempt to recall the answers to prayer on this furlough, so many come to mind it is impossible to record them all—help in keeping my appointments, courage and power for public speaking, physical strength, and guidance in facing many difficult problems.

It was at this time I formed a habit of getting a message for a meeting on my knees. It often seemed to me very wonderful how, as in a flash, sometimes, an outline for a talk on China would come. Never having kept notes, nor even outlines of addresses, I have frequently been placed in circumstances when I have felt utterly cast on the Lord. And I can testify that he never failed to give the needed help, and the realized divine power. Yet sad, sad is it that often at just such times, no sooner would the address be ended than the

Satan-whispered thought would come, “I have done well to-day.”

Oh, is not the goodness and forbearance of our God wonderful; wonderful that he ever again would deign to give help when asked for it?

A short time since I asked a dear friend whose writings have reached and inspired multitudes throughout the Christian world: “How did you do it?”

Softly, with deep reverence in look and tone, she replied: “It has been done all in and through prayer!”

With deepest gratitude and praise to our ever faithful God, I too can testify that any little service I have been able to do has been done by his grace in answer to prayer.

“I stood amazed and whispered, ‘Can it be
That he hath granted all the boon I sought,
How wonderful that he for me hath wrought!’

* * * * * *

Oh, faithless heart! *he said* that he would hear,
And proved his promise, wherefore didst thou fear?
How wonderful if he should fail to bless
Expectant prayer with good success!”

Chapter 8: OUR GOD OF THE IMPOSSIBLE

“Behold I am the Lord, . . . is there *anything* too hard for ME?” (Jer. 32:27.)

“Ah, Lord God! there is *nothing* too wonderful for thee” (Jer. 32:17, margin).

THE following illustration of the truth, “What is impossible with man is possible with God,” occurred while we were attending the Keswick Convention in England, in 1910.

One evening my husband returned from an evening meeting, which I had not attended, and told me of a woman who had come to him in great distress. She had been an earnest Christian worker, but love for light, trashy fiction had so grown upon her as to work havoc in her Christian life. She had come to Keswick three years in succession, hoping to get victory, but had failed.

My whole soul went out to the poor woman; I longed to help her. But Mr. Goforth did not know her name, and the tent had been so dark he could not recognize her again; besides, there were about four thousand people attending the convention. That night I lay awake asking the Lord, if he knew I could help her, to bring us together, for I, too, had at one time been almost wrecked on the same rock.

Three evenings later the tent was so crowded that I found difficulty in getting a seat. Just as the meeting was about to begin, I noticed a woman change her seat twice, and then rise a third time and come to where I was, asking me to make room for her. I crowded the others in the seat and made room for her—I fear not too graciously. While Mr. F. B. Meyer was speaking I noticed she was in great distress, her tears falling fast. I laid my hand on hers, and she grasped it convulsively. At the close of the meeting I said, “Can I help you?”

“Oh, no,” she replied, “there is no hope for me; it is those cursed novels that have been my ruin.”

I looked at her in amazement, and almost gasped: “Are you the one who spoke to Mr. Goforth Saturday night?”

“Yes; but who are you?”

Scarcely able to speak for emotion, I told her, and also of my prayer. For the next few moments we could only weep together. Then the Lord used me to lead the poor crushed and broken soul back to himself. As we parted, a few days later, her face was beaming with the joy of the Lord.

While addressing a gathering of Christians in Glasgow I was giving a certain incident, the point of which depended upon a verse of a certain hymn. When I came to quote the verse, it had utterly slipped my memory. In some confusion I turned to the leader, hoping that he could help me out; but he said he had no idea what the hymn was. Turning again to the people, I had to acknowledge that my memory had failed me, and, feeling embarrassed, I closed my message somewhat hurriedly.

Sitting down, I lifted my heart in a cry to the Lord to lead me to the verse I wanted, if it was in the hymn-book used there. I took up a hymn-book and opened it, and the very first lines my eyes fell on were those of the verse I wanted, though it was the last verse of a long hymn. Rising again, I told the people of my prayer and the answer, and gave them the verse. The solemn stillness which prevailed indicated that a deep impression had been made. Some two years after, a newly arrived missionary in China told me he had been present at that meeting, and how this little incident had been a great blessing to him.

“They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded” (Psa. 22:5).

Before leaving Canada we had written to the China Inland School at Chefoo, China, hoping to get our children admitted there; but, shortly before we left England for China, word reached us that both the boys’ and girls’ schools were overflowing, with long lists of waiting applicants. This was a great blow to me, for I had been looking forward to engaging once more in the aggressive out-station work.

But the children could not be left, and were too old to be taken away from their studies. It seemed necessary, therefore, that a good Christian governess should be found, who would teach the children and take charge of the home in my absence. All the way across the Siberian route this matter was before us. Earnestly did I pray that the Lord would direct the right one to us; for I knew that to get a young woman, who could fill the position we wanted her for, would be very difficult in China.

We had planned to go direct to our station, but illness forced us to break the journey at

Peitaiho, where we met a young lady, the daughter of a missionary. Many difficulties appeared in the way of her coming on with us, but one by one these were removed; and when we continued our journey this young woman was one of our party.

Time proved her to be truly God-given. Not only was she all and more than I could have hoped for, but the Lord answered my prayers that her young life might be consecrated to the Lord's service in China. She later went through her training in England as a nurse, and is now in China as a missionary of the China Inland Mission.

The summer holidays at Peitaiho were drawing to a close. Heavy rains had fallen, making the roads to the station, six miles distant, almost impassable. Word had come that our two children, Ruth and Wallace, must leave by the Monday morning train in order to reach the steamer at Tientsin, which was to take them to Chefoo, where they were attending the China Inland Mission schools. All day Saturday and Sunday torrents of rain continued to fall, with a fierce wind from the north.

I rose before daybreak Monday morning, to find the rain still pouring down in torrents. I roused the servant, and sent him off to make sure about the chair, cart, and donkeys. A little later he returned to say that the chair had been blown over, and the chair-bearers had refused to come. The carters also refused, saying the roads were impassable; and even the donkey boys said they would not go.

I was truly at "wit's end corner." I went alone, and did not take time even to kneel down, but just lifted up my heart to my Father to stop the rain and open a way for the children to get to the station. I felt a sudden, strong confidence that the Lord would help, and going out again I ordered the servant to run fast to the village near by and get fresh donkeys. He was unwilling, saying it was useless, no one would venture; but I said: "Go at once, I know they will come."

While he was gone the children had their breakfast, boxes were closed and taken out, and the children put on their wraps. Then the rain stopped! Just then the servant returned with several donkeys. Within five minutes, children and baggage were on donkeys, and started for the station. A few hours later one of the donkey boys returned with a hastily written note from Ruth, saying they had reached the station without any mishap, and quite dry; for it had not rained on the way over, but had started to pour again just after they had got on the train. The rain continued for days after.

At the close of our four months of meetings in Great Britain, in 1910, I felt a strong desire to send a gift of five dollars to five different objects in Britain, to show in a practical way our sympathy with the workers in these various branches of the Lord's work.

My husband was in the midst of his accounts when I asked him to give me five pounds for this purpose. He told me it was impossible, as we had barely enough for the journey to China. As I left him I wondered why I seemed to have these gifts so definitely laid upon me to send away, when there was no money. Reasoning that if the thing were really of the Lord he could himself give me what he wished me to send, I put the matter from my mind.

That evening's mail brought a letter from a stranger living some distance away, judging from the postmark; for the letter had no address, and was not signed. The letter said:

“I do not know you, nor have I met you, but the Lord seems to have laid it on my heart to send you this five-pound note as a farewell gift, to do what you think best with.”

It was with a joyful heart I sent off the gifts to the five Christian workers in Britain. Had the giver said it was “for work in China,” as was usually the case, I could not have used it for any other purpose.

How to get the sewing done for my family and yet meet the pressing calls made upon me as the wife of a pioneer missionary, for almost thirty years has been perhaps the most difficult and constant problem of my missionary life. In connection with the solving of this problem, I have seen some of the most precious evidences of God’s willingness to undertake in the daily details of life.

The following story must be given in detail to be really understood, as one of the striking instances of how God, in his own wonderful way, can work out the seemingly impossible.

Returning home to our station from an unusually strenuous autumn’s touring, I planned as usual to give the month of December to the children’s sewing, so as to leave January largely free for a Bible-women’s training class. But my health broke down, and I could make scarcely any headway with the thirty-five or forty garments which had to be made or fixed over, before the children returned to their school in Chefoo. By the eighteenth of December we decided to cancel the class on account of my ill-health; and to all the women, except one whom I entirely forgot, I sent word not to come.

As the days passed, the burden of the almost untouched sewing became very great. At last I cried to the Lord to undertake for me. And how wonderfully he did! On December twenty-eighth, when I was conducting the Chinese women’s prayer-meeting, I noticed in the audience Mrs. Lu, the very woman to whom I had forgotten to send word. She had come a long distance, with her little child, over rough mountainous roads, so I felt very sorry for my thoughtlessness. Mrs. Lu accompanied me home, and I gave her money for a barrow on which to return the next day. I then sat down to the sewing machine. The woman stood beside me for a little, and then said:

“You are looking very tired, Mrs. Goforth; let me run the machine for you.”

“You!” I exclaimed, astonished, “why, you don’t know how.”

“Yes, I do,” she replied.

She was so insistent that at last, in fear and trembling, I ventured to let her try—for I had only one needle. It took but a few moments to convince me she was a real expert at the machine. When I urged her to stay and help me, she replied that, since the class was given up, she would return home on the morrow.

That night I was puzzled. Why should the Lord lead this woman to me—the only one, so far as we knew, who could do the machine work—and then permit her to leave? I could only lay the whole matter before the Lord, and trust him to undertake. And again he answered. That night a fierce storm came on, lasting several days and making the roads quite impassable. Mrs. Lu, finding herself storm-tied, gladly gave all her time to me. The roads remained impassable for a whole month, during which time I did not once need to sit down at the machine.

While in Tientsin with my children during the revolution in 1912, I had occasion to go into the Chinese city with my servant. We visited three stores. On our way home by the tramway I discovered I had lost a five-dollar bill and one of my gloves. I had foolishly put the bill inside the glove. Ashamed to let the Chinese servant know of my carelessness, I sent him home when we reached the end of the tram line. As soon as he was out of sight I took the tram back to the city. On the way I confessed to the Lord my carelessness, and asked him to keep the glove and money, and lead me to where they were. I retraced my steps back to two of the stores where we had been. As I entered the second, which was a shoe store, a number of men were in the shop; but there, right in sight of all, on the floor lay my glove, and I knew of course with the five dollars inside. It was with a heart full of gratitude to my loving Heavenly Father, and an enlarged vision of his love, that I picked up the glove and returned home that day.

On one occasion when on furlough with several little children, and my husband in China, I had no settled home. When the time came to do the sewing for the long journey back to China, I had simply no way to get it done. I just had to look to the Lord; and, as so often before, he was again faithful, and opened the way. When shopping down town, one day, I met a minister's wife from a distant country charge, who said: "I want you to come with all your children, and get your sewing done with me. A number of the ladies of our congregation sew well, and will be delighted to help you."

I gratefully accepted her invitation, and while staying with her a sewing-bee was held in the church. In one week the sewing was finished, which would have taken me many weeks of hard, constant labor to accomplish alone.

The winter of our return from China, after the Boxer tragedies, I felt keenly the need of a good sewing machine, as I could not possibly do the children's sewing by hand and still get time for meetings. One day, as my husband was leaving on a deputation tour, I asked him for money for a machine. He assured me it was impossible; that we had only sufficient for bare necessities. I knew well he would gladly give me money for the machine if he had it. So I laid my need before my Father, confident that he knew it was a real need, and that according to his promise he could and would supply it.

I was so sure that somehow the money would come, that I went down town especially to choose a suitable machine. I found it would cost thirty-six dollars. A few days later I received a letter from a band of ladies in Mount Forest, Ontario, enclosing twenty-three dollars and some odd cents, and saying: "Please accept the enclosed to buy something you have lost as our substitute in China." Only a day or two later another letter came, from quite another part of Ontario, enclosing twelve dollars and some cents. The two amounts came to exactly the sum I needed to purchase the machine.

The second letter stated that the money was sent to help me buy a sewing machine. It has always been a puzzle to me how they came to send the money in that way, for I had not spoken to any one but my husband about wanting a machine. When Mr. Goforth returned I was able to show him what the Lord could give me, though he could not.

I had been holding a class for women at an out-station, staying in the home of the elder, Dr. Fan. The day before I was to return home, Mrs. Fan asked me to go with her to visit a very sick boy whom the missionary doctor had sent home from the boys' school, Wei Hwei, because of his having tuberculosis of the lungs. Mrs. Fan told me the mother was in great distress, and begged me to come and pray with her. I found the lad in a truly pitiable condition. His mouth was swollen, his face a ghastly hue, and every moment a cough racked his frame. He seemed to me quite beyond hope, and looked as if he could not live long.

On our way home to Mrs. Fan's, the message of James 5:14, 15, kept coming persistently to me, as if spoken by a voice: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, . . . and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up."

I simply could not get away from those words. On reaching Dr. Fan's home, I sent for him,

and asked if he and the other elders would be willing to pray with me over the lad. He consented, though at first he seemed rather dubious. There were quite a number of Christians gathered around as we placed the boy in our midst. All knelt down, and I read the words from James. I told them plainly that I could not say that it was indeed the Lord's will to heal the boy; all that was clear to me was that we must obey as far as we had light, and leave the rest in God's hands for life or death. Several prayed, and we then dispersed.

Early the following morning I left for home. Circumstances prevented my return to that place, and in time we moved to another field. More than two years later, while visiting Wei Hwei, I met Mrs. Fan, who told me that the lad had completely recovered and was then working with his father. Still a year later I met Dr. Fan, and upon inquiring about the lad, the doctor told me he was perfectly well, and was in business in Wei Hwei City.

The power of intercession is shown in the following two incidents:

In the winter of 1905 a call came for my husband to hold special meetings in Manchuria. On reaching Liao Yang for these meetings, one of the missionaries showed him a letter from Mr. Moffat, of Korea, which said: "I have a thousand Christians here who have promised to pray for Mr. Goforth, and I know their prayers will prevail with God." Can we doubt that their prayers had something to do with the marvelous revival movement which followed?

When in England, in 1909, my husband was the guest of a lady in London who was noted for her power in intercession. He was telling her of the great revival movements he had been through, which took place in different provinces of China; and she asked him to look at her diary, in which were notes of times when she had been led out in special intercession for Mr. Goforth. These dates exactly corresponded to the times of greatest revival power.

A few months after we returned to China from a furlough, I invited a certain missionary and his wife and children to pay us a visit. Peculiarly touching circumstances had led me to give this invitation. Both husband and wife were in ill health, and greatly needed a change. They resided in a far inland station, quite cut off from other missionaries. They were not connected with any Society, and were looking only to the Lord for their support. Just as these friends had started toward us, on their five-days' journey, smallpox broke out at our station, and one of the missionaries died. A telegram was sent, hoping to catch them before they left, but it did not reach them until they were a short distance from our station. Then the whole family had to turn around, and once more take the long, trying journey, homeward. As the weather was very cold at the time, one could imagine what a terrible trial to faith the whole experience meant to them. I felt so deeply for them that I planned to send sufficient to cover at least the expense of the journey. But, on getting out of quarantine, I found I could not draw on our treasurer for the fifty dollars needed, as Mr. Goforth was not at home. However, the Lord had seen the need long before I felt it, and had the exact amount ready. Three days after I got out of quarantine I received a letter from Mr. Horace Goven, of the Faith Mission, Glasgow, enclosing a draft for five pounds which, at the rate of exchange at that time, came to fifty dollars Mexican. The gift came from the workers of the mission, and he stated that they wished me to accept it as a personal gift. Needless to say, the draft was sent off that same day to the needy friends in

the far-off station.

On one occasion, while we were temporarily stationed at Wei Hwei, Honan, I was called to nurse a fellow missionary who had contracted black smallpox. This missionary died; and it was while shut away from every one during the time of quarantine that I had the following experience:

I awoke suddenly one night feeling greatly troubled for one in Canada. So strong was the impression that this friend needed my prayers, that I felt compelled to rise and spend a long time wrestling with God on this one's behalf; then peace came, and I again slept.

As soon as I was out of quarantine I wrote to my friend and told of this experience, giving the date. In time the answer came, which said that—though no date could be given, as no note had been made of it—as far as could be judged, it was about the same time that I had had the burden of prayer that my friend was passing through a time of such temptation as seemed almost overwhelming. But the letter said: "I was brought through victoriously; I know that it was your prayers that helped me."

The following incident may seem trifling to some; but to me no answer in my life ever brought more intense relief. For this reason I have reserved it, as the final testimony of the original prayer record.

My husband had gone to hold revival meetings in a distant province, and while he was away I went with my Bible-woman to a certain out-station at the urgent request of the Christians, to preach at a four-days' "theatrical," which brought great crowds. The four days there were enough to wear out the strongest; for many hours daily we had to face unruly crowds coming and going; and at the end of our stay I turned my face homeward utterly worn out. My one thought was to get to Wei Hwei, our next station, for a few days' rest with my youngest children, who were attending school there. A sight of them, I knew, would recover my energies better than anything else.

But in getting home I in some way lost the key of the money-drawer. It was Friday, and the train for Wei Hwei left on Saturday at ten o'clock. Different persons came for money, but I had to put them off with some excuse. There was too much money in the drawer for me to leave with the key lying around somewhere; besides, I myself could not go without money.

As soon as I had my supper I started searching everywhere. Drawers, pigeonholes, shelves, were all searched in vain. After hunting for two hours, until I was too exhausted to hunt any more, I suddenly thought, "I have never prayed about it." Stopping still just where I stood by the dining-table, I lifted my heart to the Lord. "O Lord, you know how much I need a rest; you know how much I long to see the children; pity me, and lead me to the key."

Then, without wasting a step, I walked through the dining-room, hall, and women's guest room into Mr. Goforth's study, to the book-case (which covers one side of the room), opened the door, slipped two books aside, and there was the key. So near did the Lord seem at that moment that I could almost feel his bodily presence. It was not that I remembered putting the key there, but he led me there.

Yes, I *know* God answers prayer.

Chapter 9: TO HIS PRAISE!

“They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness.”

THIS chapter is written more than seven years later than the foregoing, in further testimony and praise.

Returning to Canada at the time of the Great War, we came face to face with a serious financial crisis. Only two ways seemed open to us. One was to lay our affairs frankly before the Board, showing that our salary was quite insufficient, with war conditions and prices, to meet our requirements. The other course was to just go forward, get a suitable home and whatever we required, and trust our Father to supply what was needed above our income. We decided on the latter course.

A dear daughter felt indignant that we should have a salary insufficient for our needs; but we assured her that to trust God for what was lacking was not begging. The day came when this child and myself took possession of our new home. As we entered the dining-room we found a large mail from China on the table.

One letter was forwarded from the lady in Australia whose gifts, in the past, seemed always to have met some felt need. Her letter enclosed fifty pounds, with the expressed wish that thirty pounds should be used for work in China, but twenty pounds was to be used to meet some personal need. I handed the letter to my daughter, saying: “Shall we not believe that God will undertake for us? It seems to me as if our Father were beside us saying, ‘My child, take this hundred dollars as an earnest of what I am going to do for you.’”

Tears stood in her eyes as my daughter gave the letter back, saying: “Mother, we don’t trust God half enough!”

Were I to attempt to write the history of the months that followed, a long chapter would be required; but my testimony along this line is surely sufficient.

It was on this same furlough that I came to have an enlarged vision of my Heavenly Father’s willingness to undertake in what some might term the minor details of everyday life. Missionaries, especially we missionary women, know only too well how we are criticized in the matter of dress, when in the homeland and when traveling. I have had, through the years, not only many amusing but trying experiences in this connection, and I resolved to make the question of dress a definite matter of prayer. And I rejoice to testify that the result of this decision became a constant source of wonder and praise. Yes, I found the Lord could guide me even in trimming my hat to his glory! That is, so that I could stand up before an audience and not bring discredit to my Master. Praise his name!

“There is nothing too great for his power,

And nothing too small for his love!”

At the time of the Great War a son had gone to England with the first Canadian contingent. When this news reached us in China, I began to pray definitely that the Lord would use my son’s gifts in the best way for his country’s good, but would keep him back from the trenches and from actual warfare. My boy did not know of this prayer.

Some weeks after reaching England he was looking forward to leaving for the trenches in France, when orders came that he was needed in the Orderly Room, and his unit left without him. Months later a call came for volunteers, to fill the great gaps made at the time of the first use of gas. My boy resigned his position, and joined the company of volunteers to be sent to France. Just before they were to leave he was again sent for from Headquarters, and told he was to go to the Canadian Base in France as adjutant. His duties in this capacity kept him at the Forwarding Base. A year later he again planned to resign, in order to get to the trenches. He had begun making arrangements for this step, when he had a fall from his horse, which caused him to be invalided home to Canada, where he was kept till the close of the war.

It would indeed be difficult to persuade his mother that all this happened by chance; for one day, when in great distress, expecting any day a cable to say he had left for the trenches, I received a most clear assurance from the Lord that he had the boy in his keeping.

After our return to China, when in great trouble, I prayed the Lord to grant me a clear sign of his favor by giving me a certain petition, which affected a child in the homeland. The request was a complicated one, including several definite details. A little more than a month later, a letter reached me from the one for whom I had asked the Lord's favor. She wrote joyously, telling that she had received just what I had asked for, and in every detail as I had prayed.

When my husband resigned the regular field work of Changte, Honan, it became necessary for us to find a home elsewhere. The only suitable place, meeting all our requirements, was on the hills at Kikungshan, South Honan. On going there to get a site for our home, though we looked for more than a week, we could find no place. As we started down the hill, one morning soon after midnight, I was feeling our failure very keenly, for we had given up our old home. When my husband saw how bad I felt, as he told me later, he began to cry earnestly to the Lord to give us a site. And before we reached the station the assurance had come that we would get a place. A friend on the train, traveling third class, saw us getting on the second class, and came in for a few words before getting off the train. When he heard we had failed to get a site, he said:

"I know of a beautiful site which our Mission is reserving for a future missionary. I'll ask them to give it to you."

A few days later the treasurer of this Mission wrote us that they had unanimously and gladly voted to give us the site.

I am now writing these closing words in our God-given home, built on this beautiful site, one of the most lovely spots to be found in China. So from this quiet mountain retreat, a monument of what God can give in answer to prayer, this little book of Prayer Testimonies is sent forth.

As the past has been reviewed, and God's wonderful faithfulness recalled, there has come a great sense of regret that I have not trusted God more, and asked more of him, both for my family and the Chinese. Yes, it is truly wonderful! But the wonder is not that God *can* answer prayer, *but that he does*, when we so imperfectly meet the conditions clearly laid down in his Word.

In recent years I have often tested myself by these conditions, when weeks, and perhaps months, have passed without some answer to prayer, and there has come a conscious spiritual sagging. As the discerning soul can plainly see, all the conditions mentioned in the list below may be included in the one word "Abide."

- Conditions of Prevailing Prayer

1. Contrite humility before God and forsaking of sin.—2 Chron. 7:14.

2. Seeking God with the whole heart.—Jer. 29:12, 13.

3. Faith in God.—Mark 11:23, 24.

4. Obedience.—1 John 3:22.

5. Dependence on the Holy Spirit.—Rom. 8:26.

6. Importunity.—Mark 7:24-30; Luke 11:5-10.

7. Must ask in accordance with God's will.—1 John 5:14.

8. In Christ's Name.—John 14:13, 14, and many other passages.

9. Must be willing to make amends for wrongs to others.—Matt. 5:23, 24.

- Causes of Failure in Prayer

1. Sin in the heart and life.—Psa. 66:18; Isa. 59:1, 2.

2. Persistent refusal to obey God.—Prov. 1:24-28; Zech. 7:11, 13.

3. Formalism and hypocrisy.—Isa. 1:2-15.

4. Unwillingness to forgive others.—Mark 11:25, 26.

5. Wrong motives.—James 4:2, 3.

6. Despising God's law.—Amos 2:4.

7. Lack of love and mercy.—Prov. 21:13.

Chapter 10: VICTORY FOUND

AT THE close of this little volume it seems fitting to recount again a wonderful personal experience, narrated in The Sunday School Times of December 7, 1918.

I do not remember the time when I did not have in some degree a love for the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour. When not quite twelve years of age, at a revival meeting, I publicly accepted and confessed Christ as my Lord and Master.

From that time there grew up in my heart a deep yearning to know Christ in a more real way, for he seemed so unreal, so far away and visionary. One night when still quite young I remember going out under the trees in my parents' garden and, looking up into the starlit heavens, I longed with intense longing to feel Christ near me. As I knelt down there on the grass, alone with God, Job's cry became mine, "Oh, that I knew where I might find him!" Could I have borne it had I known then that almost forty years would pass before that yearning would be satisfied?

With the longing to know Christ, literally to "find" him, came a passionate desire to *serve* him. But, oh, what a terrible nature I had! Passionate, proud, self-willed, indeed just full

was I of those things that I knew were unlike Christ.

The following years of half-hearted conflict with sinful self must be passed over till about the fifth year of our missionary work in China. I grieve to say that the new life in a foreign land with its trying climate, provoking servants, and altogether irritating conditions, seemed to have developed rather than subdued my natural disposition.

One day (I can never forget it), as I sat inside the house by a paper window at dusk, two Chinese Christian women sat down on the other side. They began talking about me, and (wrongly, no doubt) I listened. One said, "Yes, she is a hard worker, a zealous preacher, and—yes, she nearly loves us; but, oh, what a temper she has! *If she would only live more as she preaches!*"

Then followed a full and true delineation of my life and character. So true, indeed, was it, as to crush out all sense of annoyance and leave me humbled to the dust. I saw then how useless, how worse than useless, was it for me to come to China to preach Christ and not *live* Christ. But how could I live Christ? I knew some (including my dear husband) who had a peace and a power,—yes, and a something I could not define, that I had not; and often I longed to know the secret.

Was it possible, with such a nature as mine, ever to become patient and gentle?

Was it possible that I could ever really stop worrying?

Could I, in a word, ever hope to be able to live Christ as well as preach him?

I knew I loved Christ; and again and again I had proved my willingness to give up all for his sake. But I knew, too, that one hot flash of temper with the Chinese, or with the children before the Chinese, would largely undo weeks, perhaps months, of self-sacrificing service.

The years that followed led often through the furnace. The Lord knew that nothing but fire could destroy the dross and subdue my stubborn will. Those years may be summed up in one line: "Fighting (not finding), following, keeping, *struggling*." Yes, and failing! Sometimes in the depths of despair over these failures; then going on determined to do *my* best,—and what a poor best it was!

In the year 1905, and later, as I witnessed the wonderful way the Lord was leading my husband, and saw the Holy Spirit's power in his life and message, I came to seek very definitely for the fulness of the Holy Spirit. It was a time of deep heart-searching. The heinousness of sin was revealed as never before. Many, many things had to be set right toward man and God. I learned then what "paying the price" meant. Those were times of wonderful mountain-top experiences, and I came to honor the Holy Spirit and seek his power for the overcoming of sin in a new way. But Christ still remained, as before, distant, afar off, and I longed increasingly to know—to *find* him. Although I had much more power over besetting sins, yet there were times of great darkness and defeat.

It was during one of these latter times that we were forced to return to Canada, in June of 1916. My husband's health prevented him from public speaking, and it seemed that this duty for us both was to fall on me. But I dreaded facing the Home Church without some spiritual uplift,—a fresh vision for myself. The Lord saw this heart-hunger, and in his own glorious way he fulfilled literally the promise, "He satisfieth the longing soul, and *filleth*

the hungry soul with goodness" (Psa. 107:9, A. V.).

A spiritual conference was to be held the latter part of June at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, and to this I was led. One day I went to the meeting rather against my inclination, for it was so lovely under the trees by the beautiful lake. The speaker was a stranger to me, but from almost the first his message gripped me. Victory over Sin! Why, this was what I had fought for, had hungered for, all my life! Was it possible?

The speaker went on to describe very simply an ordinary Christian life experience—sometimes on the mountain-top, with visions of God; then again would come the sagging, and dimming of vision, coldness, discouragement, and perhaps definite disobedience and a time of down-grade experience. Then perhaps a sorrow, or even some special mercy, would bring the wanderer back to his Lord.

The speaker asked for all those who felt this to be a picture of their experience to raise the hand. I was sitting in the front seat, and shame only kept me from raising my hand at once. But I did so want to get all God had for me, and I determined to be true; and after a struggle I raised my hand. Wondering if others were like myself, I ventured to glance back and saw many hands were raised, though the audience was composed almost entirely of Christian workers, ministers, and missionaries.

The leader then went on to say *that* life which he had described was *not* the life God planned or wished for His children. He described the higher life of peace, rest in the Lord, of power and freedom from struggle, worry, care. As I listened I could scarcely believe it could be true, yet my whole soul was moved so that it was with the greatest difficulty I could control my emotion. I saw then, though dimly, that I was nearing the goal for which I had been aiming all my life.

Early the next morning, soon after daybreak, I went over on my knees carefully and prayerfully all the passages on the Victorious Life that were given in a little yellow leaflet that the speaker had distributed. What a comfort and strength it was to see how clear God's Word was that victory, not defeat, was his will for his children, and to see what wonderful provision he had made! Later, during the days that followed, clearer light came. I did what I was asked to do—I quietly but definitely accepted Christ as my Saviour from the *power* of sin as I had so long before accepted him as my Saviour from the *penalty* of sin. And on this I rested.

I left Niagara, realizing, however, there was still something I had not got. I felt much as the blind man must have felt when he said, "I see men as trees, walking" (A. V.). I had begun to see light, but dimly.

The day after reaching home I picked up a little booklet, "The Life That Wins," which I had not read before, and going to my son's bedside I told him it was the personal testimony of one whom God had used to bring great blessing into my life. I then read it aloud till I came to the words, "At last I realized that Jesus Christ was actually and literally within me." I stopped amazed. The sun seemed suddenly to come from under a cloud and flood my whole soul with light. How blind I'd been! I saw at last the secret of victory—it was simply Jesus Christ himself—his own life lived out in the believer. But the thought of victory was for the moment lost sight of in the inexpressible joy of realizing

Christ's Indwelling Presence! Like a tired, worn-out wanderer finding home at last I just *rested* in him. Rested in his love—in himself. And, oh, the peace and joy that came flooding my life! A restfulness and quietness of spirit I never thought could be mine took possession of me so naturally. Literally a new life began for me, or rather *in* me. It was just "the Life that is Christ."

The first step I took in this new life was to get standing on God's own Word, and not merely on man's teaching or even on a personal experience. And as I studied especially the truth of Christ's indwelling, victory over sin, and God's bountiful provision, the Word was fairly illumined with new light.

The years that have passed have been years of blessed fellowship with Christ and of joy in his service. A friend asked me not long ago if I could give in a sentence the after result in my life of what I said had come to me in 1916, and I replied, "Yes, it can be all summed up in one word, 'Resting.'"

Some have asked, "But have you never sinned?" Yes, I grieve to say I have. Sin is the one thing I abhor—for it is the one thing that can, if unrepented of, separate us, not from Christ, but from the consciousness of his presence. But I have learned that there is instantaneous forgiveness and restoration to be had *always*. That there need be no times of despair.

One of the blessed results of this life is not only the consciousness of Christ's presence, but the *reality* of his presence as manifested in definite results when, in the daily details of life, matters are left with him and he has undertaken.

My own thought of him is beautifully expressed in Spurgeon's words:

"What the hand is to the lute,
What the breath is to the flute,
What's the mother to the child,
What the guide in pathless wild,
What is oil to troubled wave,
What is ransom to a slave,
What is flower to the bee,
That is Jesus Christ to me."

The special Bible-study which I made at that time was embodied in a leaflet which proved helpful to others.

God's Presence

The secret of Victory is simply Christ himself in the heart of the believer. This truth, of Christ's indwelling, is, and always has been, a *mystery*.

Romans 16:25.
Ephesians 3:9 with Colossians 1:26, 27.
Ephesians 5:30, 32 (R. V.).
Colossians 4:3.

Christ himself taught this truth.

John 14:20, 23; 15:1-7; 17:21-23.

Matthew 28:20.
Revelation 3:20. (See also Mark 16:20).

It was a vital reality to the Apostle Paul.

Romans 8:10.
1 Corinthians 6:15.
1 Corinthians 12:27 (R. V.).
2 Corinthians 5:17.
2 Corinthians 13:5.
Galatians 2:20.
Galatians 3:27.
Galatians 4:19.
Ephesians 3:17.
Philippians 1:21
1 Thessalonians 5:10.
Hebrews 3:6.

The words “in Christ,” which recur in many other passages, will have a new literalness when read in the light of the above.

The Apostle John had a like conception of Christ’s indwelling presence.

1 John 2:28 to 3:6, 24.
1 John 4:4, 12, 13, 16.
1 John 5:20.

God’s Purpose

As Victory is the result of Christ’s Life lived out in the believer, it is important that we see clearly that *Victory*, and not *defeat*, is God’s Purpose for his Children. The Scriptures are very decided upon this truth.

Luke 1:74, 75.
Romans 5:2.
Romans, chaps. 6 and 8.
1 Corinthians 15:57.
2 Corinthians 2:14.
2 Corinthians 10:5.
Ephesians 1:3, 4.
Colossians 4:12.
1 Thessalonians 5:23.
2 Thessalonians 3:3 (R.V.).
2 Timothy 2:19.
Titus 2:12.
Hebrews 7:25.
1 Peter 1:15.
2 Peter 3:14.

1 John 2:1.
1 John 3:6, 9.
And many other passages.

That Christ came as the Saviour from the *power* as well as the *penalty* of sin we see in Matthew 1:21, with John 8:34, 36, and Titus 2:14.

God's Provision

God knew the frailty of man, that his heart was "desperately wicked," that even his righteousness was "as filthy rags," that man's only hope for victory over sin must come from the God-ward side. He, therefore, made kingly provision so rich, so sufficient, so exceeding abundant, that as we study it, we feel we have tapped a mine of wealth, too deep to fathom. Just a few suggestions of its riches:

God's *greatest* provision is the gift of a part of His Own Being in the person of the Holy Spirit. The following are but some of the many things the Holy Spirit does for us, as recorded in the Word:

He begets us into the family of God.—John 3:6.
He seals or marks us as God's.—Eph. 1:13.
He dwells in us.—1 Cor. 3:16.
He unites us to Christ.—1 Cor. 12:13, 27.
He changes us into the likeness of Christ.—2 Cor. 3:18.
He helps in prayer.—Rom. 8:26.
He comforts.—John 14:16.
He guides.—Rom. 8:14.
He strengthens with power.—Eph. 3:16.
He is the source of power and fruitfulness.—John 7:38, 39.

Some of the victorious *results* in our life, as Christ has His way in us, are shown in:

Romans 8:32, 27.
Romans 15:13.
2 Corinthians 9:8, 11.
2 Corinthians 2:14.
Ephesians 1:19.
Ephesians 3:16, 20.
Philippians 4:7, 13, 19.
Colossians 1:11.
1 Peter 1:5.
2 Timothy 3:17.
Jude 24.
John 15:7.

To the seeker for further Scripture help the writer would suggest a plan that has proved a great blessing to herself.

Read the Psalms through, making careful record of all the statements of what the Lord was to the writers of the Psalms. The list will surprise you. Then on your knees go over them one by one, with the prayer that Christ may be to you what he was to David and the others.

Take a Cruden's, or better still a Young's, concordance and look up the texts under such headings as Love, Fulness, Power, Riches, Grace, etc., grouping them into usable Bible studies. As a sample, taking this last word, "grace"; the more one studies it the more wonderful does it become. Here are some of these headings:

Grace for grace.—John 1:16.
Sufficient grace.—2 Cor. 12:9.
More Grace.—James 4:6.
All Grace.—2 Cor. 9:8.
Abundant grace.—Rom. 5:17.
Exceeding abundant grace.—1 Tim. 1:14.
Exceeding riches of His grace.—Eph. 2:17.

But let us remember that to simply know of riches will never materially benefit us. We must make them our own. All fulness dwells in Christ. It is only as we "apprehend" (which means take hold or take in) Christ through the Holy Spirit can it be possible for these spiritual riches to become ours. The slogan of this glorious life in Christ is just "Let go and let God."

5. ANSWERS TO PRAYER – From George Müller's Narratives

COMPILED BY A. E. C. BROOKS.

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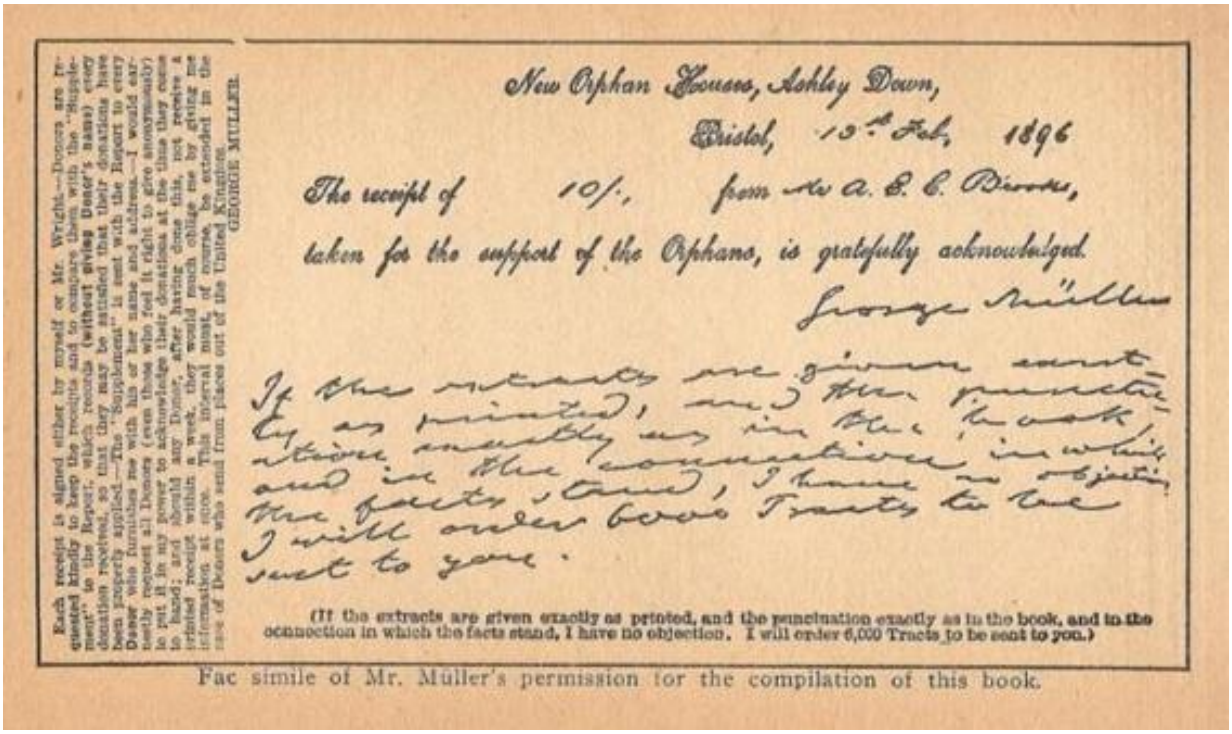
“I never remember, in all my Christian course, a period now (in March, 1895) of sixty-nine years and four months, that I ever SINCERELY and PATIENTLY sought to know the will of God by *the teaching of the Holy Ghost*, through the instrumentality of the *Word of God*, but I have been ALWAYS directed rightly. But if *honesty of heart* and *uprightness before God* were lacking, or if I did not *patiently* wait upon God for instruction, or if I preferred *the counsel of my fellow men* to the declarations of *the Word of the living God*, I made great mistakes.”

GEORGE MÜLLER.

Printed in United States of America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GEORGE MULLER.

New Orphan Houses, Ashley Down,

Bristol, 10th Feb, 1896

The receipt of 10/. from Mr A. E. C. Brooks,

taken for the support of the Orphans, is gratefully acknowledged.

George Müller

If the extracts are given exactly as printed, and the punctuation exactly as in the book, and in the connection in which the facts stand, I have no objection. I will order 6,000 Tracts to be sent to you.

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Fac simile of Mr. Müller's permission for the compilation of this book.

Illustration: Facsimile of Mr. Müller’s permission for the compilation of this book.

Preface

Mr. Brooks, in this compilation, has endeavored to select those incidents and practical remarks from Mr. Müller's Narratives, that show in an unmistakeable way, both to believers and unbelievers, the secret of believing prayer, the manifest hand of a living God, and His unfailing response, in His own time and way, to every petition which is according to His will.

The careful perusal of these extracts will thus further the great object which Mr. Müller had in view, without the necessity of reading through the various details of his "Narratives," details which Mr. Müller felt bound to give when writing periodically the account of God's dealings with him.

For those who have the opportunity, an examination of the "Autobiography of George Müller, or, a Million and a Half in Answer to Prayer" will richly repay the time spent upon it.

Mr. Müller's permission for the compilation of this volume is shown in the accompanying facsimile, (see p. 2), in the following words:

"If the extracts are given exactly as printed, and the punctuation exactly as in the book and in the connection in which the facts stand, I have no objection."

How To Ascertain The Will Of God

I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter. Nine-tenths of the trouble with people generally is just here. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord's will, whatever it may be. When one is truly in this state, it is usually but a little way to the knowledge of what His will is.

2.—Having done this, I do not leave the result to feeling or simple impression. If so, I make myself liable to great delusions.

3.—I seek the Will of the Spirit of God through, or in connection with, the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word, I lay myself open to great delusions also. If the Holy Ghost guides us at all, He will do it according to the Scriptures and never contrary to them.

4.—Next I take into account providential circumstances. These often plainly indicate God's Will in connection with His Word and Spirit.

5.—I ask God in prayer to reveal His Will to me aright.

6.—Thus, through prayer to God, the study of the Word, and reflection, I come to a deliberate judgment according to the best of my ability and knowledge, and if my mind is

thus at peace, and continues so after two or three more petitions, I proceed accordingly. In trivial matters, and in transactions involving most important issues, I have found this method always effective.

GEORGE MÜLLER.

Chapter I: Beginning And Early Days Of The Orphan Work.

“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”—1 Peter, i. 7.

Mr. George Müller, the founder of the New Orphan-Houses, Ashley Down, Bristol (institutions that have been for many years the greatest monuments of modern times to a prayer-answering God), gives in that most valuable and instructive book, “A Narrative of Some of the Lord’s Dealings with George Müller,” Vol. I., among other reasons for establishing an Orphan-House, the following:—

“Sometimes I found children of God tried in mind by the prospect of old age, when they might be unable to work any longer, and therefore were harassed by the fear of having to go into the poor-*house. If in such a case I pointed out to them, how their Heavenly Father has always helped those who put their trust in Him, they might not, perhaps, always say, that times have changed; but yet it was evident enough, that God was not looked upon by them as the Living God. My spirit was oftentimes bowed down by this, and I longed to set something before the children of God, whereby they might see, that He does not forsake, even in our day, those who rely upon Him.

“Another class of persons were brethren in business, who suffered in their souls, and brought guilt on their consciences, by carrying on their business, almost in the same way as unconverted persons do. The competition in trade, the bad times, the over-peopled country, were given as reasons why, if the business were carried on simply according to the word of God, it could not be expected to do well. Such a brother, perhaps, would express the wish, that he might be differently situated; but very rarely did I see *that there was a stand made for God, that there was the holy determination to trust in the living God, and to depend on Him, in order that a good conscience might be maintained*. To this class likewise I desired to show, by a visible proof, that God is unchangeably the same.

“Then there was another class of persons, individuals who were in professions in which they could not continue with a good conscience, or persons who were in an unscriptural position with reference to spiritual things; but both classes feared, on account of the consequences, to give up the profession in which they could not abide with God, or to

leave their position, lest they should be thrown out of employment. My spirit longed to be instrumental in strengthening their faith, by giving them not only instances from the word of God, of His willingness and ability to help all those who rely upon Him, but *to show them by proofs*, that He is the same in our day. I well knew *that the Word of God ought to be enough*, and it was, by grace, enough, to me; but still, I considered that I ought to lend a helping hand to my brethren, if by any means, by this visible proof to the unchangeable faithfulness of the Lord, I might strengthen their hands in God; for I remembered what a great blessing my own soul had received through the Lord's dealings with His servant A. H. Franke, who in dependence upon the living God alone, established an immense Orphan-House, which I had seen many times with my own eyes. I, therefore, judged myself bound to be the servant of the Church of God, in the particular point on which I had obtained mercy: namely, *in being able to take God by His word and to rely upon it*. All these exercises of my soul, which resulted from the fact that so many believers, with whom I became acquainted, were harassed and distressed in mind, or brought guilt on their consciences, on account of not trusting in the Lord; were used by God to awaken in my heart the desire of setting before the church at large, and before the world, a proof that He has not in the least changed; and this seemed to me best done, by the establishing of an Orphan-House. It needed to be something which could be seen, even by the natural eye. Now, if I, a poor man, simply by prayer and faith, obtained *without asking any individual*, the means for establishing and carrying on an Orphan-House, there would be something which, with the Lord's blessing, might be instrumental in strengthening the faith of the children of God, besides being a testimony to the consciences of the unconverted, of the reality of the things of God. This, then, was the primary reason for establishing the Orphan-House. I certainly did from my heart desire to be used by God to benefit the bodies of poor children, bereaved of both parents, and seek in other respects, with the help of God, to do them good for this life;—I also particularly longed to be used by God in getting the dear orphans trained up in the fear of God;—but still, the first and primary object of the work was (and still is:) that God might be magnified by the fact, that the orphans under my care are provided with all they need, only by *prayer and faith* without anyone being asked by me or my fellow-laborers whereby it may be seen, that God is FAITHFUL STILL, and HEARS PRAYER STILL. That I was not mistaken, has been abundantly proved since November, 1835, both by the conversion of many sinners who have read the accounts, which have been published in connection with this work, and also by the abundance of fruit that has followed in the hearts of the saints, for which from my inmost soul, I desire to be grateful to God, and the honor and glory of which not only is due to Him alone, but, which I, by His help, am enabled to ascribe to Him."

"OPEN THY MOUTH WIDE."

In the account written by Mr. Müller dated Jan. 16, 1836, respecting the Orphan-House intended to be established in Bristol in connection with the Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad, we read:—

"When, of late, the thoughts of establishing an Orphan-House, in dependence upon the Lord, revived in my mind, during the first two weeks I only prayed that if it were of the Lord, he would bring it about, but if not that He graciously would be pleased to take all

thoughts about it out of my mind. My uncertainty about knowing the Lord's mind did not arise from questioning whether it would be pleasing in His sight, that there should be an abode and Scriptural education provided for destitute fatherless and motherless children; but whether it were His will that I should be the instrument of setting such an object on foot, as my hands were already more than filled. My comfort, however, was, that, if it were His will, He would provide not merely the means, but also suitable individuals to take care of the children, so that my part of the work would take only such a portion of my time, as, considering the importance of the matter, I might give, notwithstanding my many other engagements. The whole of those two weeks I never asked the Lord for money or for persons to engage in the work.

"On December 5th, however, the subject of my prayer all at once became different. I was reading Psalm lxxxi., and was particularly struck, more than at any time before, with verse 10: "*Open thy month wide, and I will fill it.*" I thought a few moments about these words, and then was led to apply them to the case of the Orphan-House. It struck me that I had never asked the Lord for anything concerning it, except to know His will, respecting its being established or not; and I then fell on my knees and opened my mouth wide, asking Him for much. I asked in submission to His will, and without fixing a time when He should answer my petition. I prayed that He would give me a house, *i. e.*, either as a loan, or that someone might be led to pay the rent for one, or that one might be given permanently for this object; further, I asked Him for £1000; and likewise for suitable individuals to take care of the children. Besides this, I have been since led to ask the Lord, to put into the hearts of His people to send me articles of furniture for the house, and some clothes for the children. When I was asking the petition, I was fully aware what I was doing, *i. e.*, that I was asking for something which I had no natural prospect of obtaining from the brethren whom I know, but which was not too much for the Lord to grant."

"December 10, 1835.—This morning I received a letter, in which a brother and sister wrote thus:—"We propose ourselves for the service of the intended Orphan-House, if you think us qualified for it; also to give up all the furniture, &c., which the Lord has given us, for its use; and to do this without receiving any salary whatever; believing that if it be the will of the Lord to employ us, He will supply all our needs, &c."

"Dec. 13.—A brother was influenced this day to give 4s. per week, or £10 8s. yearly, as long as the Lord gives the means; 8s. was given by him as two weeks' subscriptions. To-day a brother and sister offered themselves, with all their furniture, and all the provisions which they have in the house, if they can be usefully employed in the concerns of the Orphan-House."

A GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT.

"Dec. 17.—I was rather cast down last evening and this morning about the matter, questioning whether I ought to be engaged in this way, and was led to ask the Lord to give me some further encouragement. Soon after were sent by a brother two pieces of print, the one seven and the other 23¾ yards, 6¾ yards of calico, four pieces of lining, about four yards altogether, a sheet, and a yard measure. This evening another brother brought a clothes horse, three frocks, four pinafores, six handkerchiefs, three counterpanes, one

blanket, two pewter salt cellars, six tin cups, and six metal tea spoons; he also brought 3s. 6d. given to him by three different individuals. At the same time he told me that it had been put into the heart of an individual to send to-morrow £100."

ONE THOUSAND POUNDS.

"June 15, 1837.—To-day I gave myself once more earnestly to prayer respecting the remainder of the £1000. This evening £5 was given, so that now the whole sum is made up. To the Glory of the Lord, whose I am, and whom I serve, I would state again, that every shilling of this money, and all the articles of clothing and furniture, which have been mentioned in the foregoing pages, have been given to me, *without one single individual having been asked by me for anything*."

ORPHANS FOR THE BUILDING.

In a third statement, containing the announcement of the opening of the Orphan-House, for destitute female children, and a proposal for the establishment of an Infant Orphan-House, which was sent to the press on May 18, 1836, Mr. Müller wrote:—

"So far as I remember, I brought even the most minute circumstances concerning the Orphan-House before the Lord in my petitions, being conscious of my own weakness and ignorance. There was, however, one point I never had prayed about, namely that the Lord would send children; for I naturally took it for granted that there would be plenty of applications. The nearer, however, the day came which had been appointed for receiving applications, the more I had a secret consciousness, that the Lord might disappoint my natural expectations, and show me that I could not prosper in one single thing without Him. The appointed time came, and not even one application was made. I had before this been repeatedly tried, whether I might not, after all, against the Lord's mind, have engaged in the work. This circumstance now led me to lie low before my God in prayer the whole of the evening, February 3, and to examine my heart once more as to all the motives concerning it; and being able, as formerly, to say, that His glory was my *chief aim*, *i. e.*, that it might be seen that it is not a vain thing to trust in the living God,—and that my *second aim* was the spiritual welfare of the orphan-children,—and the *third* their bodily welfare; and still continuing in prayer, I was at last brought to this state, that I could say *from my heart*, that I should rejoice in God being glorified in this matter, though it were by *bringing the whole to nothing*. But as still, after all, it seemed to me more tending to the glory of God, to establish and prosper the Orphan-House, I could then ask Him heartily, to send applications. I enjoyed now a peaceful state of heart concerning the subject, and was also more assured than ever that God would establish it. *The very next day*, February 4, the first application was made, and since then 42 more have been made."

"JUST FOR TO-DAY."

Later on, when there were nearly 100 persons to be maintained, and the funds were reduced to about £20, Mr. Müller writes:—

“July 22 [1838].—This evening I was walking in our little garden, meditating on Heb. xiii. 8, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.” Whilst meditating on His unchangeable love, power, wisdom, &c.—and turning all, as I went on, into prayer respecting myself; and whilst applying likewise His unchangeable love, and power and wisdom, &c., both to my present spiritual and temporal circumstances:—all at once the present need of the Orphan-House was brought to my mind. Immediately I was led to say to myself, Jesus in His love and power has hitherto supplied me with what I have needed for the Orphans, and in the same unchangeable love and power He will provide me with what I may need for the future. A flow of joy came into my soul whilst realising thus the unchangeableness of our adorable Lord. About one minute after, a letter was brought me, enclosing a bill for £20. In it was written: “Will you apply the amount of the enclosed bill to the furtherance of the objects of your Scriptural Knowledge Society, or of your Orphan Establishment, or in the work and cause of our Master in any way that He Himself, on your application to Him, may point out to you. It is not a great sum, but it is a sufficient provision for the exigency of to-day; and it is for *to-day’s* exigencies, that, ordinarily, the Lord provides. To-morrow, as it brings its demands, will find its supply, etc.”

“[Of this £20 I took £10 for the Orphan fund, and £10 for trip other objects, and was thus enabled to meet the expenses of about £34 which, in connection with the Orphan-Houses, came upon me within four days afterwards, and which I knew beforehand would come.]”

WAITING FOR HELP.

“Nov. 21, 1838.—Never were we so reduced in funds as to-day. There was not a single halfpenny in hand between the matrons of the three houses. Nevertheless there was a good dinner, and by managing so as to help one another with bread, etc., there was a prospect of getting over this day also; but for none of the houses had we the prospect of being able to take in bread. When I left the brethren and sisters at one o’clock, after prayer, I told them that we must wait for help, and see how the Lord would deliver us this time. I was sure of help, but we were indeed straitened. When I came to Kingsdown, I felt that I needed more exercise, being very cold; wherefore I went not the nearest way home, but round by Clarence Place. About twenty yards from my house, I met a brother who walked back with me, and after a little conversation gave me £10 to be handed over to the brethren, the deacons, towards providing the poor saints with coals, blankets and warm clothing; also £5 for the Orphans, and £5 for the other objects of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution. The brother had called twice while I was gone to the Orphan-Houses, and had I now been *one half minute* later, I should have missed him. But the Lord knew our need, and therefore allowed me to meet him. I sent off the £5 immediately to the matrons.”

BEYOND DISAPPOINTMENT.

“Sept. 21 [1840], Monday. By what was in hand for the Orphans, and by what had come in yesterday, the need of to-day is more than supplied, as there is enough for to-morrow also. To-day a brother from the neighbourhood of London gave me £10, to be laid out as it might be most needed. As we have been praying many days for the School,—Bible,—and Missionary Funds, I took it all for them. This brother knew nothing about our work, when

he came three days since to Bristol. Thus the Lord, to show His continued care over us, raises up new helpers. They that trust in the Lord shall never be confounded! Some who helped for a while may fall asleep in Jesus; others may grow cold in the service of the Lord; others may be as desirous as ever to help, but have no longer the means; others may have both a willing heart to help, and have also the means, but may see it the Lord's will to lay them out in another way;—and thus, from one cause or another, were we to lean upon man, we should surely be confounded; but, in leaning upon the living God alone, we are *BEYOND disappointment, and BEYOND being forsaken because of death*, or *want of means*, or *want of love*, or *because of the claims of other work*. How precious to have learned in any measure to stand with God alone in the world, and yet to be happy, and to know that surely no good thing shall be withheld from us whilst we walk uprightly!"

A GREAT SINNER CONVERTED.

In his REVIEW OF THE YEAR 1841, Mr. Müller writes:—

"During this year I was informed about the conversion of one of the very greatest sinners, that I ever heard of in all my service for the Lord. Repeatedly I fell on my knees with his wife, and asked the Lord for his conversion, when she came to me in the deepest distress of soul, on account of the most barbarous and cruel treatment that she received from him, in his bitter enmity against her for the Lord's sake, and because he could not provoke her to be in a passion, and *she would not* strike him again, and the like. At the time when it was at its worst I pleaded especially on his behalf the promise in Matthew xviii. 19: 'Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my father which is in heaven.' And now this awful persecutor is converted."

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL BLESSING AMONG THE SAINTS.

"On May 25th, I began to ask the Lord for greater real spiritual prosperity among the saints, among whom I labour in Bristol, than there ever yet had been among them; and now I have to record to the praise of the Lord that truly He has answered this request; for, considering all things, at no period has there been more manifestation of grace and truth, and spiritual power among us, than there is now while I am writing this for the press (1845). Not that we have attained to what we might; we are far, very far from it; but the Lord has been very, very good to us, and we have most abundant cause for thanksgiving."

WITHHOLDING THE REPORT.

"Dec. 9 [1841].—To-day came in for the Orphans by the sale of stockings 10s. 10d.—We are now brought to the close of the sixth year of this part of the work, *having only in hand the money which has been put by for the rent*; but during the whole of this year we have been supplied with all that was needed.

"During the last three years we had closed the accounts on this day, and had, a few days after, some public meetings, at which, for the benefit of the hearers, we stated how the

Lord had dealt with us during the year, and the substance of what had been stated at these meetings was afterwards printed for the benefit of the church at large. This time, however, it appeared to us better to delay for a while both the public meetings and the publishing of the Report. Through grace we had learned to lean upon the Lord only, being assured, that, if we were never to speak or write one single word more about this work, yet should we be supplied with means, as long as He should enable us to depend on Himself alone. But whilst we neither had had those public meetings for the purpose of exposing our necessity, nor had had the account of the Lord's dealings with us published for the sake of working thereby upon the feelings of the readers, and thus inducing them to give money, but only that we might by our experience benefit other saints; yet it might have appeared to some that, in making known our circumstances, we were actuated by some such motives. What better proof, therefore, could we give of our depending upon the living God alone, and not upon public meetings or printed Reports, than that, *in the midst of our deep poverty*, instead of being glad for the time to have come when we could make known our circumstances, we still went on quietly for some time longer, without saying anything. We therefore determined, as we sought and still seek in this work to act for the profit of the saints generally, to delay both the public meetings and the Report for a few months. *Naturally* we should have been, of course, as glad as anyone to have exposed our poverty at that time; but *spiritually* we were unable to delight even then in the prospect of the increased benefit that might be derived by the church at large from our acting as we did.

* * * * *

"Dec. 18. Saturday morning. There is now the greatest need, and only 4d. in hand, which I found in the box at my house; yet I fully believe the Lord will supply us this day also with all that is required.—Pause a few moments, dear reader! Observe two things! We acted *for God* in delaying the public meetings and the publishing of the Report; but *God's way leads always into trial, so far as sight and sense are concerned*. *Nature* always will be tried *in God's ways*. The Lord was saying by this poverty, 'I will now see whether you truly lean upon me, and whether you truly look to me.' Of all the seasons that I had ever passed through since I had been living in this way, *up to that time*, I never knew any period in which my faith was tried so sharply, as during the four months from Dec. 12, 1841, to April 12, 1842. But observe further: We might even now have altered our minds with respect to the public meetings and publishing the Report; *for no one knew our determination, at this time*, concerning the point. Nay, on the contrary, we knew with what delight very many children of God were looking forward to receive further accounts. But the Lord kept us steadfast to the conclusion, at which we had arrived under His guidance."

"HE ABIDETH FAITHFUL."

Under the date Jan. 25, 1842, Mr. Müller writes:—

"Perhaps, dear reader, you have said in your heart before you have read thus far: 'How would it be, suppose the funds for the Orphans were reduced to nothing, and those who are engaged in the work had nothing of their own to give, and a meal time were come, and you had no food for the children.'

"Thus indeed it may be, for our hearts are desperately wicked. If ever we should be so left

to ourselves, as that either we depend no more upon the living God, or that ‘we regard iniquity in our hearts,’ then such a state of things, we have reason to believe, would occur. But so long as we shall be enabled to trust in the living God, and so long as, though falling short in every way of what we might be, and ought to be, we are at least kept from living in sin, such a state of things cannot occur. Therefore, dear reader, if you yourself walk with God, and if, on that account, His glory is dear to you, I affectionately and earnestly entreat you to beseech Him to uphold us; for how awful would be the disgrace brought upon His holy name if we, who have so publicly made our boast in Him, and have spoken well of Him, should be left to disgrace Him, either by unbelief in the hour of trial, or by a life of sin in other respects.”

DELAYED BUT SURE.

“March 9 [1842].—At a time of the greatest need, both with regard to the Day-Schools and the Orphans, so much so that we could not have gone on any longer without help, I received this day £10 from a brother who lives near Dublin. The money was divided between the Day-Schools and the Orphan-Houses. The following little circumstance is to be noticed respecting this donation:—As our need was so great, and my soul was, through grace, truly waiting upon the Lord, I looked out for supplies in the course of this morning. The post, however, was out, and no supplies had come. This did not in the least discourage me. I said to myself, the Lord can send means without the post, or even now, though the post is out, by this very delivery of letters He may have sent means, though the money is not yet in my hands. It was not long after I had thus spoken to myself, when, according to my hope in God, we were helped; for the brother who sent us the £10, had this time directed his letter to the Boys’ Orphan-House, whence it was sent to me.”

“LIKE AS A FATHER.”

“March 17.—From the 12th to the 16th had come in £4 5s. 11½d. for the Orphans. This morning our poverty, which now has lasted more or less for several months, had become exceedingly great. I left my house a few minutes after seven to go to the Orphan-Houses, to see whether there was money enough to take in the milk, which is brought about eight o’clock. On my way it was specially my request that the Lord would be pleased to pity us, even as a father pities his children, and that He would not lay more upon us than He would enable us to bear, I especially entreated Him that He would now be pleased to refresh our hearts by sending us help. I likewise reminded Him of the consequences that would result, both in reference to believers and unbelievers, if we should have to give up the work because of want of means, and that He therefore would not permit of its coming to nought. I moreover again confessed before the Lord that I deserved not that He should continue to use me in this work any longer. While I was thus in prayer, about two minutes’ walk from the Orphan-Houses, I met a brother who was going at this early hour to his business. After having exchanged a few words with him, I went on; but he presently ran after me, and gave me £1 for the Orphans. Thus the Lord speedily answered my prayer. Truly, it is worth being poor and greatly tried in faith, for the sake of having day by day such precious proofs of the loving interest which our kind Father takes in everything that

concerns us. And how should our Father do otherwise? He that has given us the greatest possible proof of His love which He could have done, in giving us His own Son, surely He will with Him also freely give us all things."

TRUST IN THE LORD BETTER THAN MAN'S PROMISES.

"May 6 [1845].—About six weeks ago intimation was kindly given by a brother that he expected a certain considerable sum of money, and that, if he obtained it, a certain portion of it should be given to the Lord, so that £100 of it should be used for the work in my hands, and the other part for Brother Craik's and my own personal expenses. However, day after day passed away, and the money did not come. I did not trust in this money, yet, as during all this time, with scarcely any exception, we were more or less needy, I thought again and again about this brother's promise; though I did not, by the grace of God, trust in the brother who had made it, but in the Lord. Thus week after week passed away, and the money did not come. Now this morning it came to my mind, that such promises ought to be valued, in a certain sense, as nothing, *i. e.*, that the mind ought never for a moment to be directed to them, but to
the living God, and to the living God only. I saw that such promises ought not to be of the value of one farthing, so far as it regards thinking about them for help. I therefore asked the Lord, when, as usual, I was praying with my beloved wife about the work in my hands that He would be pleased to take this whole matter, about that promise, completely out of my mind, and to help me, not to value it in the least, yea, to treat it as if not worth one farthing, but to keep my eye directed only to Himself. I was enabled to do so. We had not yet finished praying when I received the following letter:

——May 5, 1845

Beloved Brother,

Are your bankers still Messrs. Stuckey and Co. of Bristol, and are their bankers still Messrs. Robarts and Co. of London? Please to instruct me on this; and if the case should be so, please to regard this as a letter of advice that £70 are paid to Messrs. Robarts and Co., for Messrs. Stuckey and Co., for you. This sum apply as the Lord may give you wisdom. I shall not send to Robarts and Co. until I hear from you.

Ever affectionately yours,

* * * *

"Thus the Lord rewarded at once this determination to endeavour not to look in the least to that promise from a brother, but only to Himself. But this was not all. About two o'clock this afternoon I received from the brother, who had more than forty days ago, made that promise, £166 18s., as he this day received the money, on the strength of which he had made that promise. Of this sum £100 are to be used for the work in my hands, and the remainder for brother Craik's and my own personal expenses."

Under date 1842 Mr. Müller writes:—

“I desire that all the children of God, who may read these details, may thereby be lead to increased and more simple confidence in God for everything which they may need under any circumstances, and that these many answers to prayer may encourage them to pray, particularly as it regards the conversion of their friends and relatives, their own progress in grace and knowledge, the state of the saints whom they may know personally, the state of the church of God at large, and the success of the preaching of the Gospel. Especially I affectionately warn them against being led away by the device of Satan, to think that these things are peculiar to me, and cannot be enjoyed by all the children of God; for though, as has been stated before, every believer is not called upon to establish Orphan-Houses, Charity Schools, etc., and trust in the Lord for means; yet all believers are called upon, in the simple confidence of faith, to cast all their burdens upon Him, to trust in Him for everything, and not only to make every thing a subject of prayer, but to expect answers to their petitions which they have asked according to His will, and in the name of the Lord Jesus.—Think not, dear reader, that I have *the gift of faith*, that is, that gift of which we read in 1 Cor. xii. 9, and which is mentioned along with ‘the gifts of healing,’ ‘the working of miracles,’ ‘prophecy,’ and that on that account I am able to trust in the Lord. *It is true* that the faith, which I am enabled to exercise, is altogether God’s own gift; it is true that He alone supports it, and that He alone can increase it; it is true that, moment by moment, I depend upon Him for it, and that, if I were only one moment left to myself, my faith would utterly fail; but *it is not true* that my faith is that gift of faith which is spoken of in 1 Cor. xii. 9 for the following reasons:—

“1. The faith which I am enabled to exercise with reference to the Orphan-Houses and my own temporal necessities, is not that ‘faith’ of which it is said in 1 Cor. xiii. 2 (evidently in allusion to the faith spoken of in 1 Cor. xii. 9), ‘Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity (love), I am nothing’; but it is the self-same faith which is found in *every believer*, and the growth of which I am most sensible of to myself; for, by little and little, it has been increasing for the last sixty-nine years.

“2. This faith which is exercised respecting the Orphan-Houses and my own temporal necessities, shows itself in the same measure, for instance concerning the following points: I have never been permitted to doubt during the last sixty-nine years that my sins are forgiven, that I am a child of God, that I am beloved of God, and that I shall be finally saved; because I am enabled, by the grace of God, to exercise faith upon the word of God, and believe what God says in those passages which settle these matters (1 John v. 1—Gal. iii. 26—Acts x. 43—Romans x. 9, 10—John iii. 16, etc.)…. Further, when sometimes all has been dark, exceedingly dark, with reference to my service among the saints, judging from natural appearances; yea, when I should have been overwhelmed indeed in grief and despair, had I looked at things after the outward appearance; at such times I have sought to encourage myself in God, by laying hold in faith on His mighty power, His unchangeable love, and His infinite wisdom, and I have said to myself: God is able and willing to deliver me, if it be good for me; for it is written: “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Rom. viii. 32. This, this it was which, being believed by me through grace, kept my soul in peace.—Further, when in connection with the Orphan-Houses, Day Schools, etc., trials have come upon me which were far heavier than the want of means when lying reports were spread that the Orphans had not enough to eat, or that they were cruelly treated in other respects,

and the like; or when other trials, still greater, but which I cannot mention, have befallen me in connexion with this work, and that at a time when I was nearly a thousand miles absent from Bristol, and had to remain absent week after week: at such times my soul was stayed upon God; I believed His word of promise which was applicable to such cases; I poured out my soul before God, and arose from my knees in peace, because the trouble that was in the soul was in believing prayer cast upon God, and thus I was kept in peace, though I saw it to be the will of God to remain far away from the work.—Further, when I needed houses, fellow-labourers, masters and mistresses for the Orphans or for the Day Schools, I have been enabled to look for all to the Lord and trust in Him for help.—Dear reader, I may seem to boast; but, by the grace of God, I do not boast in thus speaking. From my inmost soul I do ascribe it to God alone that He has enabled me to trust in Him, and that hitherto He has not suffered my confidence in Him to fail. But I thought it needful to make these remarks, lest anyone should think that my depending upon God was a particular gift given to me, which other saints have no right to look for; or lest it should be thought that this my depending upon Him had *only to do with the obtaining of MONEY by prayer and faith*. By the grace of God I desire that my faith in God should extend towards EVERY thing, the smallest of my own temporal and spiritual concerns, and the smallest of the temporal and spiritual concerns of my family, towards the saints among whom I labour, the church at large, everything that has to do with the temporal and spiritual prosperity of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution, etc. Dear reader, do not think that I have attained in faith (and how much less in other respects!) to that degree to which I might and ought to attain; but thank God for the faith which He has given me, and ask Him to uphold and increase it. And lastly, once more, let not Satan deceive you in making you think that you could not have the same faith but that it is only for persons who are situated as I am. When I lose such a thing as a key, I ask the Lord to direct me to it, and I look for an answer to my prayer; when a person with whom I have made an appointment does not come, according to the fixed time, and I begin to be inconvenienced by it, I ask the Lord to be pleased to hasten him to me and I look for an answer; when I do not understand a passage of the word of God, I lift up my heart to the Lord, that He would be pleased, by His Holy Spirit to instruct me, and I expect to be taught, though I do not fix the time when, and the manner how it should be; when I am going to minister in the Word, I seek help from the Lord, and while I, in the consciousness of natural inability as well as utter unworthiness begin this His service, I am not cast down, but of good cheer, because I look for His assistance, and believe that He, for His dear Son’s sake will help me. And thus in other of my temporal and spiritual concerns I pray to the Lord, and expect an answer to my requests; and may not *you* do the same, dear believing reader? Oh! I beseech you, do not think me an extraordinary believer, having privileges above other of God’s dear children, which they cannot have; nor look on my way of acting as something that would not do for other believers. Make but trial! Do but stand still in the hour of trial, and you will see the help of God, if you trust in Him. But there is so often a forsaking the ways of the Lord in the hour of trial, and thus the *food of faith*, the means whereby our faith may be increased, is lost. This leads me to the following important point. You ask, How may I, a true believer, have my faith strengthened? The answer is this:—

“I.—Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” James i. 17. As the increase of faith is a good gift, it must come from God, and therefore He ought to be

asked for this blessing.

“II.—The following means, however, ought to be used:—1, *The careful reading of the word of God, combined with meditation on it.* Through reading of the word of God, and especially through meditation on the word of God, the believer becomes more and more acquainted with the nature and character of God, and thus sees more and more, besides His holiness and justice, what a kind, loving, gracious, merciful, mighty, wise, and faithful Being He is, and, therefore, in poverty, affliction of body, bereavement in his family, difficulty in his service, want of a situation or employment, he will repose upon the *ability* of God to help him, because he has not only learned from His word that He is of almighty power and infinite wisdom, but he has also seen instance upon instance in the Holy Scriptures in which His almighty power and infinite wisdom have been actually exercised in helping and delivering His people; and he will repose upon the *willingness* of God to help him, because he has not only learned from the Scriptures what a kind, good, merciful, gracious, and faithful being God is, but because he has also seen in the word of God how, in a great variety of instances He has proved Himself to be so. And the consideration of this, if *God has become known to us through prayer and meditation on His own word*, will lead us, in general at least, with a measure of confidence to rely upon Him: and thus the reading of the word of God, together with meditation on it, will be one especial means to strengthen our faith. 2, As with reference to the growth of every grace of the Spirit, it is of the utmost importance that we seek to maintain an upright heart and a good conscience, and, therefore, do not knowingly and habitually indulge in those things which are contrary to the mind of God, so it is also particularly the case with reference to the *growth in faith*. How can I possibly continue to act faith upon God, concerning anything, if I am habitually grieving Him, and seek to detract from the glory and honour of Him in whom I profess to trust, upon whom I profess to depend? All my confidence towards God, all my leaning upon Him in the hour of trial will be gone, if I have a guilty conscience, and do not seek to put away this guilty conscience, but still continue to do the things which are contrary to the mind of God. And if, in any particular instance, I cannot trust in God, because of the guilty conscience, then my faith is weakened by that instance of distrust; for faith with every fresh trial of it either increases by trusting God, and thus getting help, or it decreases by not trusting Him; and then there is less and less power of looking simply and directly to Him, and a habit of self-dependence is begotten or encouraged. One or the other of these will always be the case in each particular instance. Either we trust in God, and in that case we neither trust in ourselves, nor in our fellow-men, nor in circumstances, nor in anything besides; or we DO trust in one or more of these, and in that case do NOT trust in God. 3, If we, indeed, desire our faith to be strengthened, we should not shrink from opportunities where our faith may be tried, and, therefore, through the trial, be strengthened. In our natural state we dislike dealing with God alone. Through our natural alienation from God we shrink from Him, and from eternal realities. This cleaves to us more or less, even after our regeneration. Hence it is, that more or less, even as believers, we have the same shrinking from standing with God alone,—from depending upon Him alone,—from looking to Him alone:—and yet this is the very position in which we ought to be, if we wish our faith to be strengthened. The more I am in a position to be tried in faith with reference to my body, my family, my service for the Lord, my business, etc., the more shall I have opportunity of seeing God’s help and deliverance; and every fresh instance, in which He helps and delivers me, will tend towards the increase of my faith. On this

account, therefore, the believer should not shrink from situations, positions, circumstances, in which his faith may be tried; but should cheerfully embrace them as opportunities where he may see the hand of God stretched out on his behalf, to help and deliver him, and whereby he may thus have his faith strengthened. 4, The last important point for the strengthening of our faith is, that we let God work for us, when the hour of the trial of our faith comes, and do not work a deliverance of our own. Wherever God has given faith, it is given, among other reasons, for the very purpose of being tried.

"Yea, however weak our faith may be, God will try it; only with this restriction, that as in every way, He leads on gently, gradually, patiently, so also with reference to the trial of our faith. At first our faith will be tried very little in comparison with what it may be afterwards; for God never lays more upon us that He is willing to enable us to bear. Now when the trial of faith comes, we are naturally inclined to distrust God, and to trust rather in ourselves, or in our friends, or in circumstances.

"We will rather work a deliverance of our own somehow or other, than simply look to God and wait for His help. But if we do not patiently wait for God's help, if we work a deliverance of our own, then at the next trial of our faith it will be thus again, we shall be again inclined to deliver ourselves; and thus with every fresh instance of that kind, our faith will decrease; whilst on the contrary, were we to stand still, in order to see the salvation of God, to see His hand stretched out on our behalf, trusting in Him alone, then our faith would be increased, and with every fresh case in which the hand of God is stretched out on our behalf in the hour of the trial of our faith, our faith would be increased yet more.

"Would the believer, therefore, have his faith strengthened, he must especially, *give time to God*, who tries his faith in order to prove to His child, in the end, how willing He is to help and deliver him, the moment it is good for him."

In the early years of the Institution Mr. Müller and his fellow labourers had to endure many severe trials of faith, as some of these instances show.

Mr. Müller when writing of this period says:—

"Though now (July, 1845) for about seven years our funds have been so exhausted, that it has been a *rare* case that there have been means in hand to meet the necessities of more than 100 persons for *three days* together; yet I have been only once tried in spirit, and that was on September 18, 1838, when, for the first time the Lord seemed not to regard our prayer. But when He did send help at that time, and I saw that it was only for the trial of our faith, and not because He had forsaken the work, that we were brought so low, my soul was so strengthened and encouraged, that I have not only not been allowed to distrust the Lord, but *I have not been even cast down when in the deepest poverty* since that time."

A GIFT OF £12.

"Aug. 20 [1838].—The £5 which I had received on the 18th. had been given for house-keeping, so that to-day I was again penniless. But my eyes were up to the Lord. I gave myself to prayer this morning, knowing that I should want again this week at least £13, if not above £20. To-day I received £12 in answer to prayer, from a lady who is staying at

Clifton, whom I had never seen before. Adorable Lord, grant that this may be a fresh encouragement to me!”

A SOLEMN CRISIS.

Regarding one of the sharpest times of trial Mr. Müller writes:—

“Sept. 10 [1838]. Monday morning. Neither Saturday nor yesterday had any money come in. It appeared to me now needful to take some steps on account of our need, *i. e.*, to go to the Orphan-Houses, call the brethren and sisters together, (who, except brother T——, had never been informed about the state of the funds), state the case to them, see how much money was needed for the present, tell them that amidst all this trial of faith I still believed that God would help, and to pray with them. Especially, also, I meant to go for the sake of telling them that no more articles must be purchased than we have the means to pay for, but to let there be nothing lacking in any way to the children as it regards nourishing food and needful clothing; for I would rather at once send them away than that they should lack. I meant to go for the sake also of seeing whether there were still articles remaining which had been sent for the purpose of being sold, or whether there were any articles really needless, that we might turn them into money. I felt that the matter was now come to a solemn crisis. About half-past nine sixpence came in, which had been put anonymously into the box at Gideon Chapel. This money seemed to me like an earnest, that God would have compassion and send more. About ten, after I had returned from brother Craik, to whom I had unbosomed my heart again, whilst once more in prayer for help, a sister called who gave two sovereigns to my wife for the Orphans, stating that she had felt herself stirred up to come and that she had delayed coming already too long. A few minutes after, when I went into the room where she was, she gave me two sovereigns more, and all this without knowing the least about our need. Thus the Lord most mercifully has sent us a little help, to the great encouragement of my faith. A few minutes after I was called on for money from the Infant Orphan-House, to which I sent £2, and £1 0s. 6d. to the Boys’ Orphan-House, and £1 to the Girls’ Orphan-House.”

A PRECIOUS DELIVERANCE.

“Sept. 17 [1838].—The trial still continues. It is now more and more trying, even to faith, as each day comes. Truly, the Lord has wise purposes in allowing us to call so long upon Him for help. But I am sure God will send help, if we can but wait. One of the labourers had had a little money come in of which he gave 12s. 6d.; another labourer gave 11s. 8d., being all the money she had left; this, with 17s. 6d., which, partly, had come in, and, partly was in hand, enabled us to pay what needed to be paid, and to purchase provisions, so that nothing yet, in any way, has been lacking. This evening I was rather tired respecting the long delay of larger sums coming; but being led to go to the Scriptures for comfort, my soul was greatly refreshed, and my faith again strengthened, by the 34th Psalm, so that I went very cheerfully to meet with my dear fellow-labourers for prayer. I read to them the Psalm, and sought to cheer their hearts through the precious promises contained in it.”

“Sept. 18.—Brother T. had 25s. in hand, and I had 3s. This £1 8s. enabled us to buy the meat and bread, which was needed; a little tea for one of the houses, and milk for all; no

more than this is needed. Thus the Lord has provided not only for this day; for there is bread for two days in hand. Now, however, we are come to an extremity. The funds are exhausted. The labourers, who had a little money, have given as long as they had any left. Now observe how the Lord helped us! A lady from the neighbourhood of London who brought a parcel with money from her daughter, arrived four or five days since in Bristol, and took lodgings next door to the Boys' Orphan-House. This afternoon she herself kindly brought me the money, amounting to £3 2s. 6d. We had been reduced so low as to be on the point of selling those things which could be spared; but this morning I had asked the Lord, if it might be, to prevent the necessity, of our doing so. That the money had been so near the Orphan-Houses for several days without being given, is a plain proof that it was from the beginning in the heart of God to help us; but because He delights in the prayers of His children, He had allowed us to pray so long; also to try our faith, and to make the answer so much the sweeter. It is indeed a precious deliverance. I burst out into loud praises and thanks the first moment I was alone, after I had received the money. I met with my fellow-labourers again this evening for prayer and praise; their hearts were not a little cheered. This money was this evening divided, and will comfortably provide for all that will be needed to-morrow."

Chapter II: The New Orphan Houses, Ashley Down.

A complaint having been received from a gentleman in October, 1845, that some of the inhabitants of Wilson Street were inconvenienced by the Orphan-Houses being in that street, Mr. Müller ultimately decided for that and other reasons, after much prayerful meditation, to build an Orphan-House elsewhere to accommodate 300 children, and commenced to ask the Lord for means for so doing:—

"Jan. 31 [1846].—It is now 89 days since I have been daily waiting upon God about the building of an Orphan-House. The time seems to me now near when the Lord will give us a piece of ground, and I told the brethren and sisters so this evening, after our usual Saturday evening prayer meeting at the Orphan-Houses.

"Feb. 1.—A poor widow sent to-day 10s.

"Feb. 2.—To-day I heard of suitable and cheap land on Ashley Down.

"Feb. 3.—Saw the land. It is the most desirable of all I have seen.—There was anonymously put in an Orphan-box at my house a sovereign, in a piece of paper, on which was written, 'The New Orphan-House.'

"Feb. 4.—This evening I called on the owner of the land on Ashley Down, about which I had heard on the 2nd, but he was not at home. As I, however, had been informed that I should find him at his house of business, I went there, but did not find him there either, as he had *just before* left. I might have called again at his residence, at a later hour having been informed by one of the servants that he would be sure to be at home about eight

o’clock; but I did not do so, judging that there was the hand of God in my not finding him at either place: and I judged it best therefore not to force the matter, but to ‘let patience have her perfect work.’

“Feb. 5.—Saw this morning the owner of the land. He told me that he awoke at three o’clock this morning and could not sleep again till five. While he was thus lying awake, his mind was all the time occupied about the piece of land, respecting which inquiry had been made of him for the building of an Orphan-House, at my request; and he determined that if I should apply for it, he would not only let me have it, but for £120 per acre, instead of £200; the price which he had previously asked for it. How good is the Lord! The agreement was made this morning, and I purchased a field of nearly seven acres, at £120 per acre.

“Observe the hand of God in my not finding the owner at home last evening! The Lord meant to speak to His servant first about this matter, during a sleepless night, and to lead him *fully* to decide, before I had seen him.”

“BECAUSE OF HIS IMPORTUNITY.”

“Nov. 19 [1846].—I am now led more and more to importune the Lord to send me the means, which are requisite in order that I may be able to commence the building. Because (1) it has been for some time past publicly stated in print, that I allow it is not without ground that some of the inhabitants of Wilson Street consider themselves inconvenienced by the Orphan-Houses being in that street, and I long therefore to be able to remove the Orphans from thence as soon as possible. (2) I become more and more convinced, that it would be greatly for the benefit of the children, both physically and morally, with God’s blessing, to be in such a position as they are intended to occupy, when the New Orphan-House shall have been built. And (3) because the number of very poor and destitute Orphans, that are waiting for admission, is so great, and there are constantly fresh applications made. Now whilst, by God’s grace, I would not wish the building to be begun one single day sooner than is His will; and whilst I firmly believe, that He will give me, in His own time every shilling which I need; yet I also know, that He delights in being earnestly entreated, and that He takes pleasure in the continuance in prayer, and in the importuning Him, which so clearly is to be seen from the parable of the widow and the unjust judge, Luke xviii. 1-8. For these reasons I gave myself again particularly to prayer last evening, that the Lord would send further means, being also especially led to do so, in addition to the above reasons, because there had come in but little comparatively, since the 29th of last month. This morning, between five and six o’clock I prayed again, among other points, about the Building Fund, and then had a long season for the reading of the word of God. In the course of my reading I came to Mark xi. 24, ‘What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.’ The importance of the truth contained in this portion I have often felt and spoken about; but this morning I felt it again most particularly, and, applying it to the New Orphan-House, said to the Lord: ‘Lord I believe that Thou wilt give me all I need for this work. I am sure that I shall have all, because I believe that I receive in answer to my prayer.’ Thus, with

the heart full of peace concerning this work, I went on to the other part of the chapter, and to the next chapter. After family prayer I had again my usual season for prayer with regard to all the many parts of the work, and the various necessities thereof, asking also blessings upon my fellow-labourers, upon the circulation of Bibles and Tracts, and upon the precious souls in the Adult School, the Sunday Schools, the Six Day Schools, and the four Orphan-Houses. Amidst all the many things I again made my requests about means for the Building. And now observe: About five minutes, after I had risen from my knees, there was given to me a registered letter, containing a cheque for £300, of which £280 are for the Building Fund, £10 for my own personal expenses, and £10 for Brother Craik. The Lord's holy name be praised for this precious encouragement, by which the Building Fund is now increased to more than six thousand pounds."

MR. MÜLLER'S FIRST ORPHAN-HOUSE.

"Jan. 25 [1847].—The season of the year is now approaching, when building may be begun. Therefore with increased earnestness I have given myself unto prayer, importuning the Lord that He would be pleased to appear on our behalf, and speedily send the remainder of the amount which is required, and I have increasingly, of late, felt that the time is drawing near, when the Lord will give me all that which is requisite for commencing the building. All the various arguments which I have often brought before God, I brought also again this morning before Him. It is now 14 months and 3 weeks since day by day I have uttered my petitions to God on behalf of this work. I rose from my knees this morning in full confidence, not only that God *could*, but also *would*, send the means, and that soon. Never, during all these 14 months and 3 weeks, have I had the least doubt, that I should have all that which is requisite.—And now, dear believing reader, rejoice and praise with me. About an hour, after I had prayed thus, there was given to me the sum of Two Thousand Pounds for the Building Fund. Thus I have received altogether £9,285 3s. 9½d. towards this work.—I cannot describe the joy I had in God when I received this donation. It must be known from experience, in order to be felt. 447 days I have had day by day to wait upon God, before the sum reached the above amount. How great is the blessing which the soul obtains by *trusting in God*, and *by waiting patiently*. Is it not manifest how precious it is to carry on God's work in this way, even with regard to the obtaining of means?"

The total amount which came in for the Building Fund was £15,784 18s. 10d.

ORPHAN-HOUSES NOS. 2 & 3.

"March 12, 1862.—It was in November, 1850, that my mind became exercised about enlarging the Orphan Work from 300 Orphans to 1000, and subsequently to 1150; and it was in June, 1851, that this my purpose became known, having kept it secret for more than seven months, whilst day by day praying about it. From the end of November, 1850, to this day, March 12, 1862, not one single day has been allowed to pass, without this contemplated enlargement being brought before God in prayer, and generally more than once a day. But only now, this day, the New Orphan-House No. 3 was so far advanced, that it could be opened. Observe then, first, esteemed Reader, how long it may be, before a

full answer to our prayers, even to thousands and tens of thousands of prayers, is granted; yea, though those prayers may be believing prayers, earnest prayers, and offered up in the name of the Lord Jesus, and though we may only for the sake of the honour of our Lord desire the answer: for I did, by the grace of God, without the least doubt and wavering look for more than eleven years for the full answer; * * * and I sought only in this matter the glory of God."

PRAYING THREE TIMES DAILY FOR HELPERS.

"As in the case of No. 2, so also in the case of the New Orphan-House No. 3, I had daily prayed for the needed helpers and assistants for the various departments. Before a stone was laid, I began to pray for this; and, as the building progressed, I continued day by day to bring this matter before God, feeling assured, that, as in everything else, so in this particular also, He would graciously be pleased to appear on our behalf and help us, as the whole work is intended for His honour and glory.

"At last the time was near when the house could be opened, and the time therefore near when the applications, which had been made in writing during more than two years previously, should be considered, for the filling up of the various posts. It now, however, was found that, whilst there had been about 50 applications made for the various situations, some places could not be filled up, because either the individuals, who had applied for them, were married, or were, on examination, found unsuitable. This was no small trial of faith; for day by day, for years, had I asked God to help me in this particular, even as He had done in the case of the New Orphan-House No. 2; I had also expected help, confidently expected help: and yet now, when help *seemed* needed, it was wanting. What was now to be done, dear Reader? Would it have been right to charge God with unfaithfulness? Would it have been right to distrust Him? Would it have been right to say, it is useless to pray? By no means. This, on the contrary, I did; I thanked God for all the help, He had given me in connection with the whole of the enlargement; I thanked Him for enabling me to overcome so many and such great difficulties; I thanked Him for the helpers He had given me for No. 2; I thanked Him, also, for the helpers He had given me already for No. 3; and instead of distrusting God, I looked upon this delay of the full answer to prayer, only as a trial of faith, and therefore resolved, that, instead of praying *once* a day with my dear wife about this matter, as we had been doing day by day for years, we should now meet daily *three* times, to bring this before God. I also brought the matter before the whole staff of my helpers in the work requesting their prayers. Thus I have now continued for about four months longer in prayer, day by day calling upon God three times on account of this need, and the result has been, that one helper after the other has been given, without the help coming *too* late, or the work getting into confusion; or the reception of the children being hindered; and I am fully assured, that the few who are yet needed will also be found, when they are *really* required."

DIFFICULTIES REMOVED AFTER PRAYER AND PATIENCE.

Mr. Müller relates the following incidents in connection with the purchase of the land for the Fourth and Fifth Orphan-Houses, after receiving five thousand pounds for the Building

Fund:

“I had now, through all that had come in since May 26th, 1864, including this last-mentioned donation, above Twenty-Seven Thousand Pounds in hand. I had patiently waited God’s time. I had determined to do nothing, until I had the full half of the sum needed for the two houses. But now, having above Two Thousand Pounds beyond the half, I felt, after again seeking counsel from God, quite happy, in taking steps for the purchase of land.

“My eyes had been for years directed to a beautiful piece of land, only separated by the turnpike road from the ground on which the New Orphan-House No. 3 is erected. The land is about 18 acres, with a small house and outhouses built on one end thereof. Hundreds of times had I prayed, within the last years, that God for Jesus’ sake would count me worthy, to be allowed to erect on this ground two more Orphan-Houses; and hundreds of times I had with a prayerful eye looked on this land, yea, as it were, bedewed it with my prayers. I might have bought it years ago; but that would have been going before the Lord. I had money enough in hand to have paid for it years ago; but I desired patiently, submissively, to wait God’s own time, and for Him to mark it clearly and distinctly that His time was come, and that I took the step according to His will; for whatever I might apparently accomplish, if the work were mine, and not the Lord’s, I could expect no blessing. But now the Lord’s mind was clearly and distinctly made manifest. I had enough money in hand to pay for the land and to build one house, and therefore I went forward, after having still asked the Lord for guidance, and being assured that it was His will I should take active steps. The first thing I did was, to see the agent who acted for the owner of the land, and to ask him, whether the land was for sale. He replied that it was, but that it was let till March 25th, 1867. He said that he would write for the price. Here a great difficulty at once presented itself, that the land was let for two years and four months longer, whilst it appeared desirable that I should be able to take possession of it in about six months, viz., as soon as the conveyance could be made out, and the plans be ready for the New Orphan-House No. 4, and arrangements be made with contractors. But I was not discouraged by this difficulty; for I expected, through prayer, to make happy and satisfactory arrangements with the tenant, being willing to give him a fair compensation for leaving before his time had expired. But, before I had time to see about this, two other great difficulties presented themselves: the one was, that the owner asked £7,000 for the land, which I judged to be considerably more than its value; and the other, that I heard that the Bristol Waterworks Company intended to make an additional reservoir for their water, on this very land, and to get an Act of Parliament passed to that effect.

“Pause here for a few moments, esteemed Reader. You have seen, how the Lord brought me so far, with regard to pecuniary means, that I felt now warranted to go forward; and I may further add, that I was brought to this point as the result of thousands of times praying regarding this object; and that there were, also, many hundreds of children waiting for admission; and yet, after the Lord Himself so manifestly had appeared on our behalf, by the donation of £5,000, He allows this apparent death-blow to come upon the whole. But thus I have found it hundreds of times since I have known the Lord. The difficulties, which He is pleased to allow to arise, are only allowed, under such circumstances, for the exercise of our faith and patience; and more prayer, more patience, and the exercise of faith, will remove the difficulties. Now, as I knew the Lord, these difficulties were no

insurmountable difficulties to me, for I put my trust in Him, according to that word: “The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee: for Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee.” (Psalm ix. 9, 10). I gave myself, therefore, earnestly to prayer concerning all these three especial difficulties which had arisen regarding the land. I prayed several times daily about the matter, and used the following means: 1. I saw the Acting Committee of the Directors of the Bristol Waterworks Company regarding their intended reservoir on the land, which I was about to purchase, and stated to them, what I had seen in print concerning their intentions. They courteously stated to me, that only a small portion of the land would be required, not enough to interfere with my purpose; and that, if it could be avoided, even this small portion should not be taken. 2. This being settled, I now saw the tenant, after many prayers; for I desired, as a Christian, that if this land were bought, it should be done under amicable circumstances with regard to him. At the first interview, I stated my intentions to him, at the same time expressing my desire that the matter should be settled pleasantly with regard to himself. He said that he would consider the matter, and desired a few days for that purpose. After a week I saw him again, and he then kindly stated, that, as the land was wanted for such an object, he would not stand in the way; but that, as he had laid out a good deal on the house and land, he expected a compensation for leaving it before his time was up. As I, of course, was quite willing to give a *fair* and *reasonable* compensation, I considered this a very precious answer to prayer. 3. I now entered upon the third difficulty, the price of the land. I knew well how much the land was worth to the Orphan Institution; but its value to the Institution was not the market value. I gave myself, therefore, day by day to prayer, that the Lord would constrain the owner to accept a considerably lower sum than he had asked; I also pointed out to him why it was not worth as much as he asked. At last he consented to take £5,500 instead of £7,000, and I accepted the offer; for I knew that by the level character of the land we should save a considerable sum for the two houses, and that by the new sewer, which only a few months before had been completed, running along under the turnpike road near the field, we should be considerably benefited. In addition to these two points I had to take into the account, that we can have gas from Bristol, as in the three houses already in operation. And lastly, the most important point of all, the nearness of this piece of land to the other three houses, so that all could easily be under the same direction and superintendence. In fact, no other piece of land, near or far off, would present so much advantage to us, as this spot, which the Lord thus so very kindly had given to us. All being now settled, I proceeded to have the land conveyed to the same trustees who stood trustees for the New Orphan-Houses No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3.—I have thus minutely dwelt on these various matters for the encouragement of the reader, that he may not be discouraged by difficulties, however great and many and varied, but give himself to prayer, trusting in the Lord for help, yea, expecting help, which, in His own time and way, He will surely grant.”

ORPHAN-HOUSES NOS. 4 & 5.

“March 5, 1874.—Both houses, No. 4 and No. 5, have now been for years in operation, No. 4 since Nov. 1868 and No. 5 since the beginning of the year 1870, and above 1,200 Orphans have been already received into them, and month after month more are received, as the Orphans are sent out from them as apprentices or servants. Moreover all the

expenses in connection with their being built, fitted up and furnished were met to the full, as the demands arose, and, after all had been paid, there was left a balance of several thousand pounds, which is being used for keeping the houses in repair. See, esteemed Reader, how abundantly God answered our prayers, and how plain it is, that we were not mistaken, after we had patiently and prayerfully sought to ascertain His will. Be encouraged, therefore, yet further and further to confide in the Living God.”

Chapter III: Precious Answers To Prayer

In remarkable ways God helped Mr. Müller as “The Narratives” show:—

THE ARTIST’S FIRST RETURN.

“April 30 [1859].—Received the following letter from a considerable distance: ‘My dear Christian Brother, I am the husband of Mrs. —— who sends you by this post the two Sovereign piece. How can we better dispose of this relic of affectionate remembrance, than by depositing it in the bank of Christ, who always pays the best interest, and never fails.—Now, my best and spiritual counsellor, I cannot express to you the exceeding great joy I feel, in relating what follows. I am an artist, a *poor* artist, a landscape painter. About two weeks ago I sent a picture to Bristol for exhibition, just as I finished your book that was lent us. I most humbly and earnestly prayed to God to enable me, by the sale of my Bristol picture, to have the blessed privilege of sending you *half the proceeds*. The price of the picture is £20. Now mark. Immediately the exhibition is open, God, in His mercy, mindful of my prayer, sends me a purchaser. I have exhibited in Bristol before, *but never sold* a picture. Oh! my dear friend, my very heart leaps for joy. I have never been so near God before. Through your instrumentality I have been enabled to draw nearer to God, with more earnestness, more faith, more holy desires.—This is the *first return* God has blessed me with for the whole of my last year’s labours. What a blessing to have it so returned!—Oh, with what joy I read your book!—The picture I speak of is now being exhibited in the academy of arts at Clifton, numbered in the Catalogue ——, the title is ——. I cannot pay you till the close of the exhibition, as I shall not be paid till then, &c.’ Of such letters I have had thousands during the last 40 years.”

THE NORTH WIND CHANGED INTO A SOUTH WIND.

“It was towards the end of November of 1857, when I was most unexpectedly informed that the boiler of our heating apparatus at No. 1 leaked very considerably, so that it was impossible to go through the winter with such a leak.—Our heating apparatus consists of a large cylinder boiler, inside of which the fire is kept, and with which boiler the water pipes, that warm the rooms, are connected. Hot air is also connected with this apparatus. The boiler had been considered suited for the work of the winter. To suspect that it was worn out, and not to do anything towards replacing it by a new one, and to have said, I will trust in God regarding it, would be careless presumption, but not faith in God. It would be the counterfeit of faith.

“The boiler is entirely surrounded by brickwork; its state, therefore, could not be known

without taking down the brickwork; this, if needless, would be rather injurious to the boiler, than otherwise; and as for eight winters we had had no difficulty in this way, we had not anticipated it now. But suddenly, and most unexpectedly, at the commencement of the winter, this difficulty occurred. What then was to be done? For the children, especially the younger infants, I felt deeply concerned, that they might not suffer, through want of warmth. But how were we to obtain warmth? The introduction of a *new* boiler would, in all probability, take many weeks. The *repairing* of the boiler was a questionable matter, on account of the greatness of the leak; but, if not, nothing could be said of it, till the brick-chamber in which it is enclosed, was, at least in part, removed; but that would, at least, as far as we could judge, take days; and what was to be done in the meantime, to find warm rooms for 300 children? It naturally occurred to me, to introduce temporary gas-stoves; but on further weighing the matter, it was found, that we should be unable to heat our very large rooms with gas, except we had many stoves, which we could not introduce, as we had not a sufficient quantity of gas to spare from our lighting apparatus. Moreover, for each of these stoves we needed a small chimney, to carry off the impure air. This mode of heating, therefore, though applicable to a hall, a staircase, or a shop, would not suit our purpose. I also thought of the temporary introduction of Arnott's stoves; but they would have been unsuitable, requiring long chimneys (as they would have been of a temporary kind) to go out of the windows. On this account, the uncertainty of their answering in our case, and the disfigurement of the rooms, led me to give up this plan also. But what was to be done? Gladly would I have paid £100, if thereby the difficulty could have been overcome, and the children not be exposed to suffer for many days from being in cold rooms. At last I determined on falling entirely into the hands of God, who is very merciful and of tender compassion, and I decided on having the brick-chamber opened, to see the extent of the damage, and whether the boiler might be repaired, so as to carry us through the winter.

"The day was fixed, when the workmen were to come, and all the necessary arrangements were made. The fire, of course, had to be let out while the repairs were going on. But now see. After the day was fixed for the repairs a bleak North wind set in. It began to blow either on Thursday or Friday before the Wednesday afternoon, when the fire was to be let out. Now came the first really cold weather, which we had in the beginning of that winter, during the first days of December. What was to be done? The repairs could not be put off. I now asked the Lord for two things, viz., that He would be pleased to change the north wind into a south wind, and that He would give to the workmen 'a mind to work'; for I remembered how much Nehemiah accomplished in 52 days, whilst building the walls of Jerusalem, because 'the people had a mind to work.' Well, the memorable day came. The evening before, the bleak north wind blew still: but, on the Wednesday, the south wind blew: exactly as I had prayed. The weather was so mild that no fire was needed. The brickwork is removed, the leak is found out very soon, the boiler makers begin to repair in good earnest. About half-past eight in the evening, when I was going home, I was informed at the lodge, that the acting principal of the firm, whence the boiler makers came, had arrived to see how the work was going on, and whether he could in any way speed the matter. I went immediately, therefore, into the cellar, to see him with the men, to seek to expedite the business. In speaking to the principal of this, he said in their hearing, 'the men will work late this evening, and come very early again to-morrow.'

"'We would rather, Sir,' said the leader, 'work all night.' Then remembered I the second part of my prayer, that God would give the men 'a mind to work.' Thus it was: by the morning the repair was accomplished, the leak was stopped, though with great difficulty, and within about 30 hours the brickwork was up again, and the fire in the boiler; and all the time the south wind blew so mildly, that there was not the least need of a fire.

"Here, then, is one of our difficulties which was overcome by prayer and faith."

CONVERSION OF THE ORPHANS.

"May 26, 1860.—Day after day, and year after year, by the help of God, we labour in prayer for the spiritual benefit of the Orphans under our care. These our supplications, which have been for 24 years brought before the Lord concerning them, have been abundantly answered, in former years, in the conversion of hundreds from among them. We have, also, had repeated seasons in which, within a short time, or even all at once, *many* of the Orphans were converted. Such a season we had about three years since, when, within a few days, about 60 were brought to believe in the Lord Jesus; and such seasons we have had again twice during the first year. The first was in July, 1859, when the Spirit of God wrought so mightily in one school of 120 girls, as that very many, yea more than one-half, were brought under deep concern about the salvation of their souls. This work, moreover, was not a mere momentary excitement; but, after more than eleven months have elapsed, there are 31 concerning whom there is *full* confidence as to their conversion, and 32 concerning whom there is like-*wise a goodly measure of confidence, though not to the same amount, as regarding the 31. There are therefore 63 out of the 120 Orphans in that one School who are considered to have been converted in July, 1859. This blessed and mighty work of the Holy Spirit cannot be traced to any particular cause. It was however, a most precious answer to prayer. As such we look upon it, and are encouraged by it to further waiting upon God. The second season of the mighty working of the Holy Spirit among the Orphans, during the past year, was at the end of January and the beginning of February, 1860. The particulars of it are of the deepest interest; but I must content myself by stating, that this great work of the Spirit of God in January and February, 1860, began among the younger class of the children under our care, little girls of about 6, 7, 8 and 9 years old; then extended to the older girls; and then to the boys, so that within about 10 days above 200 of the Orphans were stirred up to be anxious about their souls, and in *many* instances found peace *immediately*, through faith in our Lord Jesus. They at once requested to be allowed to hold prayer-meetings among themselves, and have had these meetings ever since. Many of them also manifested a concern about the salvation of their companions and relations, and spoke or wrote to them, about the way to be saved."

APPRENTICING THE ORPHANS.

"In the early part of the summer, 1862, it was found that we had several boys ready to be apprenticed; but there were no applications made by masters for apprentices. As all our boys are invariably sent out as indoor apprentices, this was no small difficulty; for we not only look for Christian masters, but consider their business, and examine into their position, to see whether they are suitable; and the master must also be willing to receive

the apprentice into his own family. Under these circumstances, we again gave ourselves to prayer, as we had done for more than twenty years before, concerning this thing, instead of advertising, which, in all probability, would only bring before us masters who desire apprentices for the sake of the premium. We remembered how good the Lord had been to us, in having helped us hundreds of times before, in this very matter. Some weeks passed, but the difficulty remained. We continued, however, in prayer, and then one application was made, and then another; and since we first began to pray about this matter, last summer, we have been able to send out altogether 18 boys up to May 26, 1863; the difficulty was thus again entirely overcome by prayer, as every one of the boys, whom it was desirable to send out, has been sent out."

SICKNESS AT THE ORPHANAGE.

Sickness at times visited the houses.

"During the summer and autumn of 1866 we had also the measles at all the three Orphan-Houses. After they had made their appearance, our especial prayer was: 1. That there might not be too many children ill at one time in this disease, so that our accommodation in the Infirmary rooms or otherwise might be sufficient. This prayer was answered to the full; for though we had at the New Orphan-House No. 1 not less than 83 cases, in No. 2 altogether 111, and in No. 3 altogether 68; yet God so graciously was pleased to listen to our supplications, as that when our spare rooms were filled with the invalids, He so long stayed the spreading of the measles till a sufficient number were restored, so as to make room for others, who were taken ill. 2. Further we prayed, that the children, who were taken ill in the measles, might be safely brought through and not die. Thus it was. We had the full answer to our prayers; for though 262 children altogether had the measles, not one of them died. 3. Lastly we prayed, that no evil physical consequences might follow this disease, as is so often the case; this was also granted. All the 262 children not only recovered, but did well afterwards. I gratefully record this signal mercy and blessing of God, and this full and precious answer to prayer, to the honour of His name."

HELP FOR NEEDY BRETHREN.

1863.—"The end of the year was now at hand, and, in winding up the accounts, it was my earnest desire, to do once more all I could, in sending help to needy labourers in the gospel. I went therefore through the list, writing against the various names of those to whom I had not already recently sent, what amount it appeared desirable to send; and I found, when these sums were added together, the total was £476, but £280 was all I had in hand. I wrote therefore a cheque for £280, though I would have gladly sent £476, yet felt thankful, at the same time, that I had this amount in hand for these brethren. Having written the cheque, as the last occupation of the day, then came my usual season for prayer, for the many things which I daily, by the help of God, bring before Him; and then again, I brought also the case of these preachers of the Gospel before the Lord, and besought Him that He would even now be pleased to give me yet a goodly sum for them, though there remained but three days to the close of our year. This being done, I went home about nine o'clock in the evening, and found there had arrived from a great distance

£100 for Missions, with £100 left at my disposal, and £5 for myself. I took, therefore, the whole £200 for Missions, and thus had £480 in hand to meet the £476 which I desired for this object. Those who know the blessedness of really trusting in God, and getting help from Him, as in this case, in answer to prayer, will be able to enter into the spiritual enjoyment I had in the reception of that donation, in which both the answer to prayer was granted, and with it the great enjoyment of gladdening the hearts of many devoted servants of Christ."

THE HEART'S DESIRE GIVEN TO HELP MISSION WORK IN CHINA.

"Sept. 30 [1869].—From Yorkshire £50.—Received also One Thousand Pounds to-day for the Lord's work in China. About this donation it is especially to be noticed, that for months it had been my earnest desire to do more than ever for Mission Work in China, and I had already taken steps to carry out this desire, when this donation of One Thousand Pounds came to hand. This precious answer to prayer for means should be a particular encouragement to all who are engaged in the Lord's work, and who may need means for it. It proves afresh, that, if our work is His work, and we honour Him, by waiting upon and looking to Him for means, He will surely, in His own time and way, supply them."

THE JOY OF ANSWERS TO PRAYER.

"The joy which answers to prayer give, cannot be described; and the impetus which they afford to the spiritual life is exceedingly great. The experience of this happiness I desire for all my Christian readers. If you believe indeed in the Lord Jesus for the salvation of your soul, if you walk uprightly and do not regard iniquity in your heart, if you continue to wait patiently, and believingly upon God; then answers will surely be given to your prayers. You may not be called upon to serve the Lord in the way the writer does, and therefore may never have answers to prayer respecting such things as are recorded here; but, in your various circumstances, your family, your business, your profession, your church position, your labour for the Lord, etc., you may have answers as distinct as any here recorded."

THE GREAT NEED OF BEING SAVED BY FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS.

"Should this, however, be read by any who are not believers in the Lord Jesus, but who are going on in the carelessness or self-righteousness of their unrenewed hearts, then I would affectionately and solemnly beseech such, first of all to be reconciled to God by faith in the Lord Jesus. You are sinners. You deserve punishment. If you do not see this, ask God to show it unto you. Let this now be your first and especial prayer. Ask God also to enlighten you not merely concerning your state by nature, but especially to reveal the Lord Jesus to your heart. God sent Him, that He might bear the punishment, due to us guilty sinners. God accepts the obedience and sufferings of the Lord Jesus, in the room of those who depend upon Him for the salvation of their souls; and the moment a sinner believes in the Lord Jesus, he obtains the forgiveness of all his sins. When thus he is reconciled to

God, by faith in the Lord Jesus, and has obtained the forgiveness of his sins, he has boldness to enter into the presence of God, to make known his requests unto Him; and the more he is enabled to realize that his sins are forgiven, and that God, for Christ's sake, is well pleased with those who believe on Him, the more ready he will be to come with all his wants, both temporal and spiritual, to his Heavenly Father, that He may supply them. But as long as the consciousness of unpardoned guilt remains, so long shall we be kept at a distance from God, especially as it regards prayer. Therefore, dear reader, if you are an unforgiven sinner, let your first and especial prayer be, that God would be pleased to reveal to your heart the Lord Jesus, His beloved Son."

A DOUBLE ANSWER.

"July 25 [1865].—From the neighbourhood of London £100, with the following letter: 'My dear Sir, I believe that it is through the Lord's actings upon me, that I enclose you a cheque on the Bank of England, Western Branch, for £100. I hope that your affairs are going on well. Yours in the Lord * * * *.' This Christian gentleman, whom I have never seen, and who is engaged in a very large business in London, had sent me several times before a similar sum. A day or two before I received this last kind donation, I had asked the Lord, that He would be pleased to influence the heart of this donor to help me again, which I had never done before regarding him; and thus I had the double answer to prayer, in that not only money came in, but money from *him*. The reader will now see the meaning in the donor's letter, when he wrote 'I believe that it is through the Lord's actings upon me that I enclose you a cheque, &c.' Verily it was the Lord who acted upon this gentleman, to send me this sum. Perhaps the reader may think, that in acknowledging the receipt of the donation, I wrote to the donor what I have here stated. I did not. My reason for not doing so was, lest he should have thought I was in especial need, and might have been thus influenced to send more. In truly knowing the Lord, in really relying upon Him and upon Him alone, there is no need of giving hints directly or indirectly, whereby individuals may be induced further to help. I might have written to the donor (as was indeed the case), I need a considerable sum day by day for the current expenses of the various objects of the Institution, and also might have with truth told him, at that time, that I yet needed about Twenty Thousand Pounds, to enable me to meet all the expenses connected with the contemplated enlargement of the Orphan work. But my practice is, never to allude to any of these things in my correspondence with donors. When the Report is published, every one can see, who has a desire to see, how matters stand; and thus I leave things in the hands of God, to speak for us to the hearts of His stewards. And this He does. Verily we do not wait upon God in vain!"

CHRISTIANS IN BUSINESS.

"Jan. 1 [1869].—From Scotland £50 for Missions, £25 for the circulation of the Holy Scriptures and £25 for the circulation of Tracts. Received also from a considerable distance £10 for these objects, with £10 for the Orphans. About this latter donation I make a few remarks. At the early part of the year 1868, a Christian business man wrote to me for advice in his peculiar difficult business affairs. His letter showed that he had a desire to

walk in the ways of the Lord, and to carry on his business to the glory of God; but his circumstances were of the most trying character. I therefore wrote to him to come to Bristol, that I might be able to advise him. Accordingly he undertook the long journey, and I had an interview with him, through which I saw his most trying position in business. Having fully conversed with him, I gave him the following counsel: 1, That he should day by day, expressly for the purpose, retire with his Christian wife, that they might unitedly spread their business difficulties before God in prayer, and do this, if possible, twice a day. 2, That he should look out for answers to his prayers, and expect that God would help him. 3, That he should avoid all business trickeries, such as exposing for sale two or three articles, marked below cost price, for the sake of attracting customers, because of its being unbecoming a disciple of the Lord Jesus to use such artifices; and that, if he did so, he could not reckon on the blessing of God. 4, I advised him further, to set apart; out of his profits, week by week, a certain proportion for the work of God, whether his income was much or little, and use this income faithfully for the Lord. 5, Lastly, I asked him, to let me know, month after month, how the Lord dealt with him.—The reader will feel interested to learn, that from that time the Lord was pleased to prosper the business of this dear Christian brother, so that his returns from the 1st of March, 1868, up to March 1, 1869, were £9,138 13s. 5d., while during the same period the previous year they had been only £6,609 18s. 3d., therefore £2,528 15s. 2d. more than the year before. When he sent me the donation above referred to, he also writes, that he had been enabled to put aside during the previous year £123 13s. 3d. for the work of God or the need of the poor.—I have so fully dwelt on this, because Christians in business may be benefited by it."

REVIVAL IN THE ORPHAN-HOUSES.

"In giving the statistics of the previous year [1871-72], I referred already to the great spiritual blessing, which it pleased the Lord to grant to the Orphan Work at the end of that year and the beginning of this; but, as this is so deeply important a subject, I enter somewhat further and more fully into it here. It was stated before, that the spiritual condition of the Orphans generally gave to us great sorrow of heart, because there were so few, comparatively, among them, who were in earnest about their souls, and resting on the atoning death of the Lord Jesus for salvation. This our sorrow led us to lay it on the whole staff of assistants, matrons and teachers, to seek earnestly the Lord's blessing on the souls of the children. This was done in our united prayer meetings, and, I have reason to believe, in secret also; and in answer to these our secret and united prayers, in the year 1872, there were, as the result of this, more believers by far among the Orphans than ever. On Jan. 8, 1872, the Lord began to work among them, and this work was going on more or less afterwards. In the New Orphan-House No. 3, it showed itself least, till it pleased the Lord to lay His hand heavily on that house, by the small-pox; and, from that time the working of the Holy Spirit was felt in that house also, particularly in one department. At the end of July, 1872, I received the statements of all the matrons and teachers in the five houses, who reported to me, that, after careful observation and conversation, they had good reason to believe that 729 of the Orphans then under our care, were believers in the Lord Jesus. This number of believing Orphans is by far greater than ever we had, for which we adore and praise the Lord! See how the Lord overruled the great trial, occasioned by the small-pox, and turned it into a great blessing! See, also, how, after so low a state, comparatively,

which led us to prayer, earnest prayer, the working of the Holy Spirit was more manifest than ever!”

MR. MÜLLER’S MISSION TOURS.

In the year 1875, when seventy years of age, Mr. Müller was led to start on his Missionary Tours, and during the next twenty years preached to more than three million people, in forty-two countries of the world.

“On August 8th, 1882,” Mr. Müller says, “we began our ninth Missionary Tour. The first place at which I preached was Weymouth, where I spoke in public four times. From Weymouth we went, by way of Calais and Brussels, to Düsseldorf on the Rhine, where I preached many times six years before. During this visit, I spoke there in public eight times. Regarding my stay at Düsseldorf, for the encouragement of the reader, I relate the following circumstance. During our first visit to that city, in the year 1876, a godly City Missionary came to me one day, greatly tried, because he had six sons, for whose conversion he had been praying many years, and yet they remained unconcerned about their souls, and he desired me to tell him what to do. My reply was, ‘*Continue* to pray for your sons, and *expect* an answer to your prayer, and you will have to praise God.’ Now, when after six years I was again in the same city, this dear man came to me and said he was surprised he had not seen before himself what he ought to do, and that he had resolved to take my advice and more earnestly than ever give himself to prayer. Two months after he saw me, five of his six sons were converted within eight days, and have for six years now walked in the ways of the Lord, and he had hope that the sixth son also was beginning to be concerned about his state before God. May the Christian reader be encouraged by this, should his prayers not at once be answered; and, instead of ceasing to pray, wait upon God all the more earnestly and perseveringly, and *expect* answers to his petitions.”

THE DIVINE PLAN FOR SENDING OUT FOREIGN MISSIONARIES.

The Bristol Church with which Mr. Müller was connected has been privileged to set an example to the Church of God of the way in which Foreign Missionaries (who are so greatly needed) can be sent forth in answer to prayer. Mr. Müller writes on p. 516, Vol. I. of his Narrative:—

“I also mention here, that during the eight years previous to my going to Germany to labour there, it had been laid on my heart, and on the hearts of some other brethren among us, to ask the Lord that he would be pleased to honour us, as a body of believers, by calling forth from our midst brethren, for carrying the truth into foreign lands. But this prayer seemed to remain unanswered. Now, however, the time was come when the Lord was about to answer it, and I, on whose heart particularly this matter had been laid, was to be the first to carry forth the truth from among us. About that very time the Lord called our dear brother and sister Barrington from among us, to go to Demerara, to labour there in connexion with our esteemed brother Strong, and our dear brother and sister Espenett,

to go to Switzerland. Both these dear brethren and sisters left very shortly after I had gone to Germany. But this was not all. Our much valued brother Mordal, who had commended himself to the saints by his unwearied faithful service among us for twelve years, had from Aug. 31, 1843, (the day on which brothers Strong and Barrington sailed from Bristol for Demerara), his mind likewise exercised about service there, and went out from among us eleven months after. He, together with myself, had had it particularly laid upon his heart, during the eight years previously, to ask the Lord again and again to call labourers from among us for foreign service. Of all persons he, the father of a large family, and about 50 years of age, seemed the least likely to be called to that work; but God did call him. He went, laboured a little while in Demerara, and then, on January 9, 1845, the Lord took him to his rest.—When we ask God for a thing, such as that He would be pleased to raise up labourers for His harvest, or send means for the carrying on of His work, the honest question to be put to our hearts should be this: Am *I* willing to go, if He should call *me*? Am *I* willing to give according to *my* ability? For we may be the very persons whom the Lord will call for the work, or whose means He may wish to employ."

In the Report of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution for 1896 Mr. Müller shows how greatly this body of believers has been honoured by God.

"From our own midst, as a church sixty brethren and sisters have gone forth to foreign fields of labour, some of whom have finished their labour on earth; but there are still about forty yet engaged in this precious service."

Why should not the great and crying need for workers in Asia, Africa, and other parts of the world be thus met by thousands of churches in Europe and America following this divine plan of praying the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth labourers from among them?

Surely they may expect God to answer their prayers as He did the prayers of this Bristol church.

Look what has been done in China by the faithful use of God's method! We quote Mr. Hudson Taylor's words as given in *China's Millions* for July, 1897:—

"For the obtaining of fellow-workers we took the Master's direction, 'Pray ye the Lord of the Harvest.' As for the first five before the Mission was formed, so for the twenty-four for whom we first asked for the C.I.M.; for further reinforcements when they were needed; for the seventy in three years, for the hundred in one year, and for further additions from time to time, we have ever relied on this plan. Is it possible that in any other way such a band of workers from nearly every denomination, and from many lands, could have been gathered and kept together for thirty years with no other bond save that which the call of God and the love of GOD has proved—a band now numbering over seven hundred men and women, aided by more than five hundred native workers."

THE BEGINNING OF THE 1859 REVIVAL.

"In November, 1856, a young Irishman, Mr. James McQuilkin, was brought to the knowledge of the Lord. Soon after his conversion he saw my Narrative advertised, viz.: the first two volumes of this book. He had a great desire to read it, and procured it

accordingly, about January, 1857. God blessed it greatly to his soul, especially in showing to him, what could be obtained by prayer. He said to himself something like this: ‘See what Mr. Müller obtains simply by prayer. Thus I may obtain blessing by prayer.’ He now set himself to pray, that the Lord would give him a spiritual companion, one who knew the Lord. Soon after he became acquainted with a young man who was a believer. These two began a prayer-meeting in one of the Sunday Schools in the parish of Connor. Having his prayer answered in obtaining a spiritual companion, Mr. James McQuilkin asked the Lord to lead him to become acquainted with some more of His hidden ones. Soon after the Lord gave him two more young men, who were believers previously, as far as he could judge. In Autumn, 1857, Mr. James McQuilkin stated to these three young men, given him in answer to believing prayer, what blessing he had derived from my Narrative, how it had led him to see the power of believing prayer; and he proposed that they should meet for prayer to seek the Lord’s blessing upon their various labours in the Sunday Schools, prayer-meetings, and preaching of the Gospel. Accordingly in Autumn, 1857, these four young men met together for prayer in a small school-house near the village of Kells, in the parish of Connor, every Friday evening. By this time the great and mighty working of the Spirit, in 1857, in the United States, had become known, and Mr. James McQuilkin said to himself, ‘Why may not we have such a blessed work here, seeing that God did such great things for Mr. Müller, simply in answer to prayer.’ On January 1, 1858, the Lord gave them the first remarkable answer to prayer in the conversion of a farm servant. He was taken into the number, and thus there were five who gave themselves to prayer. Shortly after, another young man, about 20 years old, was converted; there were now six. This greatly encouraged the other three who first had met with Mr. James McQuilkin. Others now were converted, who were also taken into the number; but only believers were admitted to these fellowship meetings, in which they read, prayed, and offered to each other a few thoughts from the Scriptures. These meetings and others for the preaching of the Gospel were held in the parish of Connor, Antrim, Ireland. Up to this time all was going on most quietly, though many souls were converted, There were no physical prostrations, as afterwards.

“About Christmas, 1858, a young man, from Ahoghill, who had come to live at Connor, and who had been converted through this little company of believers, went to see his friends at Ahoghill, and spoke to them about their own souls, and the work of God at Connor. His friends desired to see some of these converts. Accordingly Mr. James McQuilkin, with two of the first who met for prayer, went on February 2, 1859, and held a meeting at Ahoghill in one of the Presbyterian Churches. Some believed, some mocked, and others thought there was a great deal of presumption in these young converts; yet many wished to have another meeting. This was held by the same three young men on February 16th, 1859; and now the Spirit of God began to work, and to work mightily. Souls were converted, and from that time conversions multiplied rapidly. Some of these converts went to other places, and carried the spiritual fire, so to speak, with them. The blessed work of the spirit of God spread in *many places*.—On April 5th, 1859, Mr. James McQuilkin went to Ballymena, held a meeting there in one of the Presbyterian Churches; and on April 11th held another meeting in another of the Presbyterian churches. Several were convinced of sin and the work of the Spirit of God went forward in Ballymena.—On May 28th, 1859, he went to Belfast. During the first week there were meetings held in five different Presbyterian Churches, and from that time the blessed work commenced at

Belfast. In all these visits he was accompanied and helped by Mr. Jeremiah Meneely, one of the three young men who first met with him, after the reading of my Narrative. From this time the work of the Holy Ghost spread further and further; for the young converts were used by the Lord to carry the truth from one place to another.

"Such was the *beginning* of that mighty work of the Holy Spirit, which has led to the conversion of hundreds of thousands; for some of my readers will remember how in 1859 this fire was kindled in England, Wales and Scotland; how it spread through Ireland, England, Wales and Scotland; how the Continent of Europe was more or less partaking of this mighty working of the Holy Spirit; how it led thousands to give themselves to the work of Evangelists; and how up to the year 1874 not only the effects of this work, first begun in Ireland, are felt, but that still more or less this blessed work is going on in Europe generally. It is almost needless to add, that in no degree the honour is due to the instruments, but to the Holy Spirit alone; yet these facts are stated, in order that it may be seen, what delight God has in answering abundantly the believing prayer of His children."

MR. MÜLLER'S MARRIAGE.

In Vol. 3 of The Narrative, Mr. Müller shows the ordering of God in his meeting with and subsequent marriage to his first wife, Miss Mary Groves.

"In giving her to me, I own the hand of God; nay, His hand was most marked; and my soul says, 'Thou art good, and doest good.'

"I refer to a few particulars for the instruction of others. When at the end of the year 1829, I left London to labour in Devonshire in the Gospel, a brother in the Lord gave to me a card, containing the address of a well-known Christian lady, Miss Paget, who then resided in Exeter, in order that I should call on her, as she was an excellent Christian. I took this address and put it into my pocket, but thought little of calling on her. Three weeks I carried this card in my pocket, without making an effort to see this lady; but at last I was led to do so. This was God's way of giving me my excellent wife. Miss Paget asked me to preach the last Tuesday in the month of January, 1830, at the room which she had fitted up at Poltimore, a village near Exeter, and where Mr. A. N. Groves, afterwards my brother-in-law, had preached once a month, before he went out as a Missionary to Bagdad. I accepted readily the invitation, as I longed, everywhere to set forth the precious truth of the Lord's return, and other deeply important truths, which not long before my own soul had been filled with.

"On leaving Miss Paget, she gave me the address of a Christian brother, Mr. Hake, who had an Infant Boarding School for young ladies and gentlemen, at Northernhay House, the former residence of Mr. A. N. Groves, in order that I might stay there on my arrival in Exeter from Teignmouth. To this place I went at the appointed time. Miss Groves, afterwards my beloved wife, was there; for Mrs. Hake had been a great invalid for a long time, and Miss Groves helped Mr. Hake in his great affliction, by superintending his household matters. My first visit led to my going again to preach at Poltimore, after the lapse of a month, and I stayed again at Mr. Hake's house; and this second visit led to my preaching once a week in a chapel at Exeter; and thus I went, week after week, from Teignmouth to Exeter, each time staying in the house of Mr. Hake. All this time my

purpose had been, not to marry at all, but to remain free for travelling about in the service of the Gospel; but after some months I saw, for many reasons, that it was better for me, as a young Pastor, under 25 years of age, to be married. The question now was, to whom shall I be united? Miss Groves was before my mind; but the prayerful conflict was long, before I came to a decision; for I could not bear the thought, that I should take away from Mr. Hake this valued helper, as Mrs. Hake continued still unable to take the responsibility of so large a household. But I prayed again and again. At last this decided me, I had reason to believe that I had begotten an affection in the heart of Miss Groves for me, and that therefore I ought to make a proposal of marriage to her, however unkindly I might appear to act to my dear friend and brother Mr. Hake, and to ask God to give him a suitable helper to succeed Miss Groves. On Aug. 15th, 1830, I therefore wrote to her, proposing to her to become my wife, and on Aug. 19th, when I went over as usual to Exeter for preaching, she accepted me. The first thing we did, after I was accepted, was, to fall on our knees, and to ask the blessing of the Lord on our intended union. In about two or three weeks the Lord, in answer to prayer, found an individual, who seemed suitable to act as housekeeper, whilst Mrs. Hake continued ill; and on Oct. 7, 1830, we were united in marriage. Our marriage was of the most simple character. We walked to church, had no wedding breakfast, but in the afternoon had a meeting of Christian friends in Mr. Hake's house and commemorated the Lord's death; and then I drove off in the stagecoach with my beloved bride to Teignmouth, and the next day we went to work for the Lord. Simple as our beginning was, and unlike the habits of the world, for Christ's sake, so our Godly aim has been, to continue ever since. Now see the hand of God in giving me my dearest wife:—1st, that address of Miss Paget's was given to me under the ordering of God. 2nd, I must at last be made to call on her, though I had long delayed it. 3rd, She might have provided a resting-place with some other Christian friend, where I should not have seen Miss Groves. 4th, My mind might have at last, after all, decided, not to make a proposal to her; but God settled the matter thus in speaking to me through my conscience—you know that you have begotten affection in the heart of this Christian sister, by the way you have acted towards her, and therefore, painful though it may be, to appear to act unkindly towards your friend and brother, you ought to make her a proposal. I obeyed. I wrote the letter in which I made the proposal, and nothing but one even stream of blessing has been the result.

"Let me here add a word of Christian counsel. To enter upon the marriage union is one of the most deeply important events of life. It cannot be too prayerfully treated. Our happiness, our usefulness, our living for God or for ourselves afterwards, are often most intimately connected with our choice. Therefore, in the most prayerful manner, this choice should be made. Neither beauty, nor age, nor money, nor mental powers, should be that which prompt the decision; but 1st, Much waiting upon God for guidance should be used; 2nd, A hearty purpose, to be willing to be guided by Him should be aimed after; 3rd, True godliness without a shadow of doubt, should be the first and absolutely needful qualification, to a Christian, with regard to a companion for life. In addition to this, however, it ought to be, at the same time, calmly and patiently weighed, whether, in other respects, there is a suitableness.

For instance, for an educated man to choose an entirely uneducated woman, is unwise; for however much on his part love might be willing to cover the defect, it will work very unhappily with regard to the children."

DANGEROUS ILLNESS OF MR. MÜLLER'S DAUGHTER.

"In July, 1853, it pleased the Lord to try my faith in a way in which before it had not been tried. My beloved daughter and only child, and a believer since the commencement of the year 1846, was taken ill on June 20th.

"This illness, at first a low fever, turned to typhus. On July 3rd there seemed no hope of her recovery. Now was the trial of faith. But faith triumphed. My beloved wife and I were enabled to give her up into the hands of the Lord. He sustained us both exceedingly. But I will only speak about myself. Though my only and beloved child was brought near the grave, yet was my soul in perfect peace, satisfied with the will of my Heavenly Father, being assured that He would only do that for her and her parents, which in the end would be the best. She continued very ill till about July 20th, when restoration began.

"On Aug. 18th she was so far restored that she could be removed to Clevedon for change of air, though exceedingly weak. It was then 59 days since she was first taken ill. * * * * * *

"Parents know what an only child, a beloved child is, and what to believing parents an only child, a believing child must be. Well, the Father in Heaven said, as it were, by this His dispensation, 'Art thou willing to give up this child to me?' My heart responded, As it seems good to Thee, my Heavenly Father. Thy will be done. But as our hearts were made willing to give back our beloved child to Him who had given her to us, so He was ready to leave her to us, and she lived. 'Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.' Psalm xxxvii. 4. The desires of my heart were, to retain the beloved daughter if it were the will of God; the means to retain her were to be satisfied with the will of the Lord.

"Of all the trials of faith that as yet I have had to pass through, this was the greatest; and by God's abundant mercy, I own it to His praise, I was enabled to delight myself in the will of God; for I felt perfectly sure, that, if the Lord took this beloved daughter, it would be best for her parents, best for herself, and more for the glory of God than if she lived: this better part I was satisfied with; and thus my heart had peace, perfect peace, and I had not a moment's anxiety. Thus would it be under all circumstances, however painful, were the believer exercising faith."

THE DAILY BREAD.

"Aug. 3, 1844. Saturday. With the 12s. we began the day. My soul said: 'I will now look out for the way in which the Lord will deliver us this day again; for He will surely deliver. Many Saturdays, when we were in need, He helped us, and so He will do this day also.' Between nine and ten o'clock this morning I gave myself to prayer for means, with three of my fellow-labourers, in my house. Whilst we were in prayer, there was a knock at my room-door, and I was informed that a gentleman had come to see me. When we had finished prayer, it was found to be a brother from Tetbury, who had brought from Barnstaple £1 2s. 6d. for the Orphans. Thus we have £1 14s. 6d., with which I must return

the letter-bag to the Orphan-Houses, looking to the Lord for more.

“Aug. 6.—Without *one single penny* in my hands the day began. The post brought nothing, nor had I yet received anything, when ten minutes after ten this morning the letter-bag was brought from the Orphan-Houses, for the supplies of to-day.—Now see the Lord’s deliverance! In the bag I found a note from one of the labourers in the Orphan-Houses, enclosing two sovereigns, which she sent for the Orphans, stating that it was part of a present which she had just received unexpectedly, for herself.—Thus we are supplied for to-day.

“Sept. 4.—Only one farthing was in my hands this morning. Pause a moment, dear reader! Only one farthing in hand when the day commenced. Think of this, and think of nearly 140 persons to be provided for. You, poor brethren, who have six or eight children and small wages, think of this; and you, my brethren, who do not belong to the working classes, but have, as it is called, very limited means, think of this! May you not do, what we do, under your *trials*? Does the Lord love you less than He loves us? Does He not love all His children with no less love than that, with which He loves His only begotten Son, according to John xvii. 20-23? Or are we better than you? Nay, are we not in ourselves poor miserable sinners as you are; and have any of the children of God any claim upon God, on account of their own worthiness? Is not that, which alone can make us worthy to receive anything from our Heavenly Father, the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, which is imputed to those who believe in Him? Therefore, dear reader, as we pray in our every need, of whatever character it may be, in connection with this work, to our Father in Heaven for help, and as He does help us, so is He willing to help all His children who put their trust in Him.—Well, let us hear then, how God helped when there was only one farthing left in my hands, on the morning of Sept. 4, 1844.

“A little after nine o’clock I received a sovereign from a sister in the Lord, who does not wish the name of the place, where she resides, mentioned. Between ten and eleven o’clock the bag was sent from the Orphan-Houses, in which in a note it was stated that £1 2s. was required for to-day. Scarcely had i read this, when a fly stopped before my house, and a gentleman, Mr. ——, from the neighbourhood of Manchester, was announced. I found that he was a believer, who had come on business to Bristol. He had heard about the Orphan-Houses, and expressed his surprise, that without any regular system of collections, and without personal application to anyone, simply by faith and prayer, I obtained £2,000 and more yearly for the work of the Lord in my hands. This brother, whom I had never seen before; and whose name I did not even know before he came, gave me £2, as an exemplification of what I had stated to him.”

“THE POOR WITH YOU ALWAYS.”

“Feb. 12, 1845.—After I had sent off this morning the money which was required for the housekeeping of to-day, I had again only 16s. 2½d. left, being only about one-fourth as much as is generally needed for one day, merely for housekeeping, so that there was now again a fresh call for trusting in the Lord. In the morning I met again, as usual, with my dear wife and her sister, for prayer, to ask the Lord for many blessings in connection with this work, and for means also.

"About one hour after, I received a letter from Devonshire, containing an order for £22 of which £10 was for the Orphans, £2 for a poor brother in Bristol, and £10 for myself.—Besides having thus a fresh proof of the willingness of our Heavenly Father to answer our requests on behalf of the Orphans, there is this, moreover, to be noticed. For many months past, the necessities of the poor saints among us have been particularly laid upon my heart. The word of our Lord: 'Ye have the poor with you always,' and 'whensoever ye will ye may do them good,' has again and again stirred me up to prayer on their behalf, and thus it was again in particular this morning. It was the coldest morning we have had the whole winter. In my morning walk for prayer and meditation I thought how well I was supplied with coals, nourishing food, and warm clothing, and how many of the dear children of God might be in need; and I lifted up my heart to God to give me more means for myself, that I might be able, by actions, to show more abundant sympathy with the poor believers in their need; and it was but three hours after when I received this £10 for myself."

THE LORD DIRECTING THE STEPS.

"Feb. 1, 1847.—Before breakfast I took a direction in my usual morning's walk, in which I had not been for many weeks, feeling drawn in that direction, just as if God had an intention in leading me in that way. Returning home I met a Christian gentleman whom formerly I used to meet almost every morning, but whom I had not met for many weeks, because I had not been walking in that direction. He stopped me and gave me £2 for the Orphans. Then I knew why I had been led thus; for there is not yet enough in hand, to supply the matrons to-morrow evening with the necessary means for house-keeping during another week.

"Feb. 4.—Yesterday nothing had come in. This morning, just before I was going to give myself to prayer about the Orphans, a sister in the Lord sent a sovereign, which she had received, as she writes, 'From a friend who had met the Orphan Boys, and was particularly pleased with their neat and orderly appearance.' After having received this £1, I prayed for means for present use, though not confining my prayers to that. About a quarter of an hour after I had risen from my knees, I received a Setter, with an order for £5. The donor writes, that it is 'the proceeds of a strip of land, sold to the railway company.' What various means does the Lord employ to send us help, in answer to our prayers!"

CONTINUED TRIALS OF FAITH AND PATIENCE.

With the enlargement of the work, by which some 330 persons needed to be provided for, the trials of faith continued. Mr. Müller writes:—

"If we formerly had no certain income, so now have we none. We have to look to God for everything in connection with the work, of which often, however, the pecuniary necessities are the smallest matter; but to Him we are enabled to look, and *therefore* it is, that we are not disappointed."

"Oct. 7, 1852.—This evening there was only £8 left in hand for the current expenses for the Orphans. Hitherto we had generally abounded. But though much had come in, since

the commencement of this new period, yet our expenses had been greater than our income, as every donation almost of which the disposal was left with me, had been put to the Building Fund. Thus the balance in hand on May 26, 1852, notwithstanding the large income since then, was reduced to about £8. I therefore gave myself particularly to prayer for means, that this small sum might be increased.

"Oct. 9.—This morning Luke vii came in the course of my reading before breakfast. While reading the account about the Centurion and the raising from death the widow's son at Nain, I lifted up my heart to the Lord Jesus thus: 'Lord Jesus, Thou hast the same power now. Thou canst provide me with means for Thy work in my hands. Be pleased to do so.' About half an hour afterwards I received £230 15s.

"The joy which such answers to prayer afford, cannot be described. I was determined to wait upon God only, and not to work an unscriptural deliverance for myself. I have thousands of pounds for the Building Fund; but I would not take of this sum because it was once set apart for that object. There is also a legacy of £100 for the Orphans two months overdue, in the prospect of the payment of which the heart might be naturally inclined to use some money of the Building Fund, to be replaced by the legacy money, when it comes in; but I would not thus step out of God's way of obtaining help. At the very time when this donation arrived, I had packed up £100 which I happened to have in hand; received for the Building Fund, in order to take it to the Bank, as I was determined not to touch it, but to wait upon God. My soul does magnify the Lord for His goodness.

"June 13, 1853.—We were now very poor. Not indeed in debt, nor was even all the money gone; for there was still about £12 in hand; but then there was needed to be bought flour, of which we buy generally 10 sacks at a time, 300 stones of oatmeal, 4 cwt. of soap, and there were many little repairs going on in the house, with a number of workmen, besides the regular current expenses of about £70 per week. Over and above all this, on Saturday, the day before yesterday, I found that the heating apparatus needed to be repaired, which would cost in all probability £25. It was therefore desirable, humanly speaking, to have £100 for these heavy extra expenses, besides means for the current expenses.

"But I had no human prospect whatever of getting even 100 pence, much less £100. In addition to this, to-day was Monday, when generally the income is little. But, in walking to the Orphan-House this morning, and praying as I went, I particularly told the Lord in prayer, that on this day, though Monday, He could send me much. And thus it was. I received this morning £301 for the Lord's service, as might be most needed.—The joy which I had cannot be described. I walked up and down in my room for a long time, tears of joy and gratitude to the Lord raining plentifully over my cheeks, praising and magnifying the Lord for His goodness, and surrendering myself afresh, with all my heart, to Him for His blessed service. I scarcely ever felt more the kindness of the Lord in helping me.

"Nov. 9.—Our need of means is now great, very great. The Lord tries our faith and patience. This afternoon, a brother and sister in the Lord, from Gloucestershire, called to see me at the New Orphan-House, before going through the house. After a few minutes I received from the sister a sovereign, which she had been requested to bring to me for the Building Fund; and she gave me from herself £1 for my own personal expenses, and £1 for the Building Fund, and her husband gave me £5 for the Orphans, and £5 for Foreign

Missions.

“Thus the Lord has refreshed my spirit greatly; but I look for more, and need much more.

“Nov. 12.—This evening, while praying for means, came a little parcel, containing ten sovereigns, from a Christian lady, living not far from the New Orphan-House. This was a very great refreshment to my spirit.

“Oct. 17, 1854.—This morning at family prayer, came, in the course of reading, Exodus v, which shows that, just before the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt, their trials were greater than ever. They had not only to make the same number of bricks as before, but also to gather stubble, as no straw was given them any longer. This led me, in expounding the portion, to observe that even now the children of God are often in greater trial than ever, just before help and deliverance comes. Immediately after family prayer it was found, that by the morning’s post not one penny had come in for the work of the Lord in which I am engaged, though we needed much, and though but very little had come in during the three previous days. Thus I had now to remember Exodus v, and to practice the truths contained therein. In the course of the day nothing was received. In the evening I had, as usual, a season for prayer with my dear wife, respecting the various objects of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution, and then we left the New Orphan-House for our home.

“When we arrived at our house, about nine o’clock, we found that £5 and also 5s. had been sent from Norwich in two Post Office Orders for the Building Fund, and that £8 3s. 11d. had been sent in for Bibles, Tracts, and Reports, which had been sold. This called for thanksgiving. But a little later, between nine and ten o’clock, a Christian gentleman called and gave me £1 for the Orphans and £200 for foreign missions. He had received these sums from an aged Christian woman, whose savings as a servant, during her whole life, made up the £200, and who, having recently had left to her a little annual income of about £30, felt herself constrained, by the love of Christ, to send the savings of her whole life for foreign missions. * * *

“Our especial prayer had been again and again, that the Lord would be pleased to send in means for missionary brethren, as I had reason to believe they were in much need of help; and only at eight o’clock this evening I had particularly besought the Lord to send help for this object. By the last mail I had sent off £40 to British Guiana, to help seven brethren there in some measure. This amount took the last pound in hand for this object. How gladly would I have sent assistance to other brethren also, but I had no more. Now I am in some degree supplied for this object.

“July 12, 1854.—Our means were now again reduced to about £30, as only about £150 had come in since June 15. In addition to this, we had very heavy expenses before us. This morning, in reading through the book of Proverbs, when I came to chapter xxii. 19—‘That thy trust may be in the Lord, &c.,’ I said in prayer to Him: ‘Lord, I do trust in Thee; but wilt Thou now be pleased to help me; for I am in need of means for the current expenses of all the various objects of the Institution.’ By the first delivery of letters I received an order on a London bank for £100, to be used for all the various objects ‘as the present need might require.’”

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR ETERNITY?

"In looking over my account books, I meet again and again with the name of one and another who has finished his course. Soon, dear reader, your turn and mine may come. Are you prepared for eternity? Affectionately I press this question upon you. Do not put it away. Nothing is of greater moment than this point; yea, all other things, however important in their place, are of exceedingly small importance, in comparison with this matter. Do you ask, how you may be prepared for eternity, how to be saved, how to obtain the forgiveness of your sins? The answer is, believe in the Lord Jesus, trust in Him, depend upon Him alone as it regards the salvation of your soul. He was punished by God, in order that we guilty sinners, if we believe in Him, might not be punished. He fulfilled the law of God, and was obedient even unto death, in order that we disobedient, guilty sinners, if we believe in Him, might, on His account, be reckoned righteous by God. Ponder these things, dear reader, should you have never done so before. Through faith in the Lord Jesus alone can we obtain forgiveness of our sins, and be at peace with God; but, believing in Jesus, we become, through this very faith, the children of God; have God as our Father, and may come to Him for all the temporal and spiritual blessings which we need. Thus everyone of my readers may obtain answers to prayers, not only to the same extent that we obtain them, but far more abundantly.

"It may be that few, comparatively, of the children of God are called to serve the Lord in the way of establishing Orphan-Houses, &c.; but all of them may, yea, are called upon to trust in God, to rely upon Him, in their various positions and circumstances, and apply the word of God, faith, and prayer to their family circumstances, their earthly occupation, their afflictions and necessities of every kind, both temporally and spiritually; just as we, by God's help, in some little measure seek to apply the word of God, faith and prayer to the various objects of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad. Make but trial of it, if you have never done so before, and you will see how happy a life it is. * * * *

"Truly I prefer by far this life of almost constant trial, if I am only able to roll all my cares upon my Heavenly Father, and thus become increasingly acquainted with Him, to a life of outward peace and quietness, without these constant proofs of His faithfulness, His wisdom, His love, His power, His over-ruling providence, &c."

WAITING ONLY UPON GOD.

"Sept 6, 1854.—Received from Clerkenwell £50 to be used one-half for missions, and the other half as I thought best. I took the one-half for the support of the Orphans, and find the following remark in my journal respecting this donation: 'What a precious answer to prayer!' Since Aug. 26th we have been day by day coming to the Lord for our daily supplies. Precious, also, on account of Missionary brethren, whom I seek to help, for whom there was nothing in hand when this donation was received."

Mr. Müller adds a few remarks to this part of the Narrative:—

"1. Should anyone suppose, on account of its having been stated in the previous pages that we were repeatedly brought low as to means, that the Orphans have not had all that was needful for them; we reply that *never*, since the work has been in existence, has there a meal-time come, but the Orphans have had good nourishing food in sufficient quantity:

and never have they needed clothes, but I have had the means to provide them with all they required.

“2. Never since the Orphan work has been in existence have I asked one single human being for any help for this work; and yet, unasked for, simply in answer to prayer, from so many parts of the world, as has been stated, the donations have come in, and that very frequently at a time of the greatest need.”

Mr. Müller writes under date, 1859:—

“Every Wednesday evening I meet with my helpers for united prayer; and day by day I have stated seasons, when I seek to bring the work with its great variety of spiritual and temporal necessities, before the Lord in prayer, having perhaps each day 50 or more matters to bring before Him, and thus I obtain the blessing. I ask no human being for help concerning the work. Nay, if I could obtain £10,000 through each application for help; by God’s grace, I would not ask. And why not? Because I have dedicated my whole life cheerfully to the precious service of giving to the world and to the church, a clear, distinct, and undeniable demonstration, that it is a blessed thing to trust in, and to wait upon, God; that He is now, as He ever was, the Living God, the same as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that if we know and are reconciled to Him through faith in the Lord Jesus, and ask Him in His name for that which is according to His mind, He will surely give it to us, in His own time, provided that we believe that He will. * * * * *

“Nor has God failed me at any time. Forty years have I proved His faithfulness, in this work.”

IN THE LORD JEHOVAH IS EVERLASTING STRENGTH.

Under date Nov. 9, 1861, Mr. Müller wrote:—

“Nov. 9. Saturday evening. When this week commenced, I received only £3 19s. by the first delivery. Shortly after there came in the course of my reading, through the Holy Scriptures, Isaiah xxvi, 4, ‘Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.’—I laid aside my Bible, fell on my knees, and prayed thus: I believe that there is everlasting strength in the Lord Jehovah, and I do trust in Him; help me, O Lord, for ever to trust in Thee. Be pleased to give me more means this day, and much this week, though only so little now has come in.—That same day, Nov. 3rd, I received £10 from Surbiton, £5 from a donor residing in Clifton, £2 from a Bristol donor, and in the course of the week altogether £457 came in; thus Jehovah again proved, that in Him is everlasting strength, and that He is worthy to be trusted.—Dear believing reader, seek but in the same way to trust in the Lord, if you are not in the habit of doing so already, and you will find as I have found thousands of times, how blessed it is. But if the reader should be yet going on in carelessness about his soul, and therefore be without the knowledge of God and His dear Son, then the first, and most important thing, such a one has to do, is to trust in the Lord Jesus for the salvation of his soul, that he may be reconciled to God, and obtain the forgiveness of his sins.”

JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TO-DAY, AND FOREVER.

“May 26, 1861.—At the close of the period I find, that the total expenditure for all the various objects was £24,700 16s. 4d., or £67 13s. 5¾d. per day, all the year round. During the coming year I expect the expenses to be considerably greater. But God, who has helped me these many years, will, I believe, help me in future also.

“You see, esteemed reader, how the Lord, in His faithful love helped us year after year. With every year the expenses increased, because the operations of the Institutions were further enlarged; but He never failed us. You may say, however, ‘What would you do, if He should fail in helping you?’ My reply is, that cannot be, as long as we trust in Him and do not live in sin. But if we were to forsake Him, the fountain of living waters, and to hew out to ourselves broken cisterns, which cannot hold water, by trusting in an arm of flesh; or if we were to live in sin, we should then have to call upon Him in vain, even though we professed still to trust in Him, according to that word: ‘If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.’ Psalm lxvi, 18.

“Hitherto, by God’s grace, I have been enabled to continue to trust in Him alone; and hitherto, though failing and weak in many ways, yet, by God’s grace, I have been enabled to walk uprightly, hating sin and loving holiness, and longing after increased conformity to the Lord Jesus.

“Oct. 21 1868—As the days come, we make known our requests to Him, for our outgoings have now been for several years at the rate of more than One Hundred Pounds each day; but though the expenses have been so great, He has never failed us. We have indeed, as to the outward appearance, like the ‘Burning Bush in the Wilderness;’ yet we have not been consumed. Moreover, we are full of trust in the Lord, and therefore of good courage, though we have before us the prospect, that, year by year, our expenses will increase more and more. Did all my beloved fellow disciples, who seek to work for God know the blessedness of looking truly to God alone, and trusting in Him alone, they would soon see how soul refreshing this way is, and how entirely beyond disappointment, so far as He is concerned. Earthly friends may alter their minds regarding the work in which we are engaged; but if indeed we work for God, whoever may alter His mind regarding our service, He will not. Earthly friends may lose their ability to help us, however much they desire so to do; but He remains throughout eternity the infinitely Rich One. Earthly friends may have their minds after a time diverted to other objects, and, as they cannot help everywhere, much as they may desire it, they may, though reluctantly, have to discontinue to help us; but He is able, in all directions, though the requirements were multiplied a million times, to supply all that can possibly be needed, and does it with delight, where His work is carried on, and where He is confided in. Earthly friends may be removed by death, and thus we may lose their help, but He lives for ever, He cannot die. In this latter point of view, I have especially, during the past 40 years, in connection with this Institution, seen the blessedness of trusting in the Living God alone. Not one nor two, nor even five nor ten, but many more, who once helped me much with their means, have been removed by death; but have the operations of the Institution been stopped on that account? No. And how came this? Because I trusted in God, and in God alone.”

THOROUGHLY IN HEART PREPARED FOR TRIALS OF FAITH.

Under date July 28, 1874, Mr. Müller wrote:—

“It has for months appeared to me, as if the Lord meant, by His dealings with us, to bring us back to that state of things, in which we were for more than ten years, from August, 1838, to April, 1849, when we had day by day, almost without interruption, to look to Him for our daily supplies, and, for a great part of the time, from meal to meal. The difficulties appeared to me indeed very great, as the Institution is now twenty times larger, than it was then, and our purchases are to be made in a wholesale way; but, at the same time, I am comforted by the knowledge, that God is aware of all this; and that, if this way be for the glory of His name, and for the good of His church and the unconverted world, I am, by His grace, willing to go this way, and to do it to the end of my course. The funds were thus fast expended; but God, our infinitely rich Treasurer, remains to us. It is this which gives me peace. Moreover, if it pleases Him, with a work requiring about £44,000 a year, to make me do again at the evening of my life, what I did from August, 1838, to April, 1849, I am not only prepared for it, but gladly again I would pass through all these trials of faith, with regard to means, if He only might be glorified, and His church and the world be benefited. Often and often this last point has of late passed through my mind, and I have placed myself in the position of having no means at all left, and Two Thousand and One Hundred persons not only daily at the table, but with everything else to be provided for, and all funds gone; 189 Missionaries to be assisted, and nothing whatever left; about one hundred schools, with about nine thousand scholars in them, to be entirely supported, and no means for them in hand; about Four Millions of Tracts and Tens of Thousands of copies of the Holy Scriptures yearly now to be sent out, and all the money expended. Invariably, however, with this probability before me, I have said to myself: ‘God, who has raised up this work through me, God who has led me generally year after year to enlarge it, God who has supported this work now for more than forty years, will still help, and will not suffer me to be confounded, because I rely upon Him, I commit the whole work to Him, and He will provide me with what I need, in future also, though I know not, whence the means are to come.’

“Thus I wrote in my journal on July 28, 1874. The reader will now feel interested in learning how we fared under these circumstances.

“When I came home, last evening (July 27), I found letters had arrived, which contained £193, among which there was one from a Missionary in Foreign lands, helped by the funds of this Institution, who, having come into the possession of some money, by the death of a relative, sent £153 0s. 4d. for Foreign Missions. This morning, July 28, came in £24 more, so that, when I met this afternoon with several of my helpers for prayer for means and various other matters, such as spiritual blessing upon the various Objects of the Institution, for more rain in this very dry season, the health of our fellow-labourers, etc., we had received, since yesterday afternoon, altogether £217. We thanked God for it, and asked for more. When the meeting for prayer was over, there was handed to me a letter from Scotland, containing £73 17s. 10d., and a paper with 13s. This was the immediate answer to prayer for more means.

“Aug. 12.—The income for this whole week, since Aug. 5, has been £897 15s. 6½d.

“Sept. 16.—Just after having again prayed for the payment of legacies, which have been left, I had a legacy receipt sent for the payment of a legacy for £1,800.

“Sept. 23.—Income to-day £5,365 13s. 6d., of which there was sent in one donation £5,327 7s. 6d. The Lord be praised!”

STRONG IN FAITH, GIVING GLORY TO GOD.

On March 27, 1881, Mr. Müller found that no money remained in hand for the School, Bible, Missionary and Tract Funds. Nearly £1,400 had been spent for these Objects during the previous month. He writes:—

“What was now to be done, dear reader, under these circumstances, when all the money for the above Objects was again gone? I reply, we did what we have done for 47 years, that is, we waited continually upon God. My dear fellow-labourers in Bristol, and my dear wife and myself in America, brought our necessities again and again before the Lord.

“Here in the United States, besides our habitual daily prayer for help, we had especial seasons 4, 5, and 6 times a day additionally, for pouring out our hearts before our Heavenly Father, and making known our requests unto Him, being assured that help would come: and we have not waited upon the Lord in vain. This plan may be despised by some, ridiculed by others, and considered insufficient by a third class of persons; but, under every trial and difficulty, we find prayer and faith to be our universal remedy; and, after having experienced for half a century their efficacy, we purpose, by God’s help, to *continue* waiting upon Him, in order to show to an ungodly world, and to a doubting Church, that the Living God is still able and willing to answer prayer, and that it is the joy of His heart to listen to the supplications of His children. In Psalm ix. 10, the Divine testimony regarding Jehovah is, ‘They that know thy name will put their trust in Thee.’ We know Him, by His grace, and do therefore put our trust in Him.

“April 27.—On March 27th we had no means at all in hand for these Objects, as stated under that date. We have now been helped through one more month, in answer to prayer, and have been supplied with all we needed, though that amounted to nearly £1000, and have £23 8s. 6¼d. left.

“April 29.—A servant of the Lord Jesus, who, constrained by the love of Christ, seeks to lay up treasure in heaven, having received a legacy of £532 14s. 5d., gave £500 of it for these Objects.

“July 28, 1881.—The income has been for some time past only about the third part of the expenses. Consequently, all we have for the support of the Orphans is nearly gone; and for the first four Objects of the Institution we have nothing at all in hand. The natural appearance now is, that the work cannot be carried on. But I believe that the Lord will help, both with means for the Orphans and also for the other Objects of the Institution, and that we shall not be confounded; also, that the work shall not need to be given up. I am fully expecting help, and have written this to the glory of God, that it may be recorded hereafter for the encouragement of His children. The result will be seen.

“The foregoing was written at 7 A. M. July 28, 1881. As yet we have the means to meet our expenses, and I expect that we shall not be confounded, though for seven years we have not been so poor.”

The result has indeed been seen, and will be seen. For more than 20 years since those

words were written and Mr. Müller had thus recorded his confidence in the Lord's help, God has sustained the work, and in May, 1902, there was a balance in hand of some thousands of pounds, notwithstanding that more than £500,000 had been received and expended since this entry was made in Mr. Müller's journal on July 28, 1881.

During these 20 years faith and patience were at times greatly tried:

"Aug. 15, 1881.—The balance for the Orphans is now reduced to £332 12s. 7d., lower than it has been for more than twenty-five years. This sum we have in hand to meet the daily expenses in connection with 2,100 persons. It is only enough for the average outgoings of 4½ days. But our eyes are upon the Lord. I look to my heavenly Provider. The total income of to-day has been £28 5s. 2½d.

"Aug. 22.—Part of a legacy, left years ago, £1,000, was paid, as the answer to many prayers.

"Feb. 26, 1882.—The balance in hand to-day for the Orphans is £97 10s. 7½d., viz., £24 more than the average expenses of one single day.

"March 2.—Our position now regarding the Orphan work is, praying day by day 'Give us *this day* our *daily* bread'. For a considerable time we have had day by day to look to the Lord for the supply of our *daily* wants; but God has helped us thus far.

"April 20, 1882.—When in the greatest need we received from Edinburgh £100 with this statement: 'The enclosed was intended as a legacy, but I have sent it in my lifetime.'

"June 3.—From Wottan-under-edge £500. A glorious deliverance was this donation, and a precious earnest of what God would do further for us.

"Oct. 21.—Received from Wottan-under-edge £1,000. * * * * * God, in answer to our prayers, spoke to His dear child, and inclined his heart to send to us more than ever. Thus He also gives proof, that during the previous year, when we were so low as to funds, it was only for the trial of our faith and patience, and not in anger; nor did He thereby mean to indicate, that He would not help us any more. For my own part, I *expected* further great help from God, and I have not been confounded.

"Aug. 17, 1883.—Our balance was reduced this afternoon to £10 2s. 7d. Think of this, dear reader! Day by day about 2,100 persons are to be provided for in the Orphan Institution, and £10 2s. 7d. was all that was in hand to do this. You see that we are just in the same position in which we were 46 years since as to funds. God is our banker. In Him we trust, and on Him we draw by faith. This was Saturday. In the evening £30 was received. On Monday we received £129 further, but had to pay out £60. On Tuesday we received £295, but had to pay out £180. * * * * *

"God is pleased continually to vary His mode of dealing with us, in order that we may not be tempted to trust in donors, or in circumstances, but in Him alone, and to keep our eye fixed upon Him. This, by His grace, we are enabled to do, and our hearts are kept in peace."

Some ten months later, when the balance in hand was only £41 10s., a very little more than one-half of the average expenses for the Orphans for one day, and there were sanitary operations advisable to be carried out, the expenses of which would amount to upwards of

£2,000, Mr. Müller received a legacy of £11,034 6s.

"June 7, 1884.—This is the largest donation I have *ever* received at *one time*. This legacy had been above six years in Chancery, and year after year its payment was expected, but remained unsettled by the Chancery Court. I kept on praying, however, and for six years prayed day by day that the money might be paid, believing that God in His own time (*which is always the best*), would help at last; for *many* legacies in Chancery I had prayed out of the Court, and the money was eventually paid. In the present case, too, after faith and patience had been sufficiently exercised, God granted this request likewise."

1893.—In the Fifty-fourth Report of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution Mr. Müller says: —

"The readers of the last report will remember, under what particular trials we entered upon the last financial year of the Institution, from May 26th, 1892, to May 26th, 1893; but we trusted in *God*; with unshaken confidence we looked to *Him*, and we *expected* that we should somehow or other be helped. * * While thus we went on, my heart was at peace habitually, being assured that all this was permitted by God, to prepare a blessing for thousands, who would afterwards read the record of His dealings with us, during the year from May 26th, 1892, to May 26th, 1893. With reference to our dear fellow-labourers, Mr. Wright and I have seen already, while passing through the trial, how God has blessed it to them.

"Aug. 30, 1892.—This evening, whilst reading in the Psalms, I came to Psalm lxxxi, 10, and remembered the work of the Holy Spirit in my heart, when reading this verse on Dec. 5, 1835, and the effect which this had, not only on leading me to found the greatest Orphan Institution in the world, but I thought also of the blessing which has thus been brought to tens of thousands of believers and unbelievers all over the world. Putting aside the Bible, therefore, I fell on my knees and asked God that He would graciously be pleased to repeat His former kindness, and to supply me again more abundantly with means. Accordingly in less than half an hour, I received £50 from a Bristol Donor and from Redland a large quantity of fish, in addition to £97 already received to-day as the result of much prayer. By the last delivery, at 9 p. m., I received £5 more also, and had thus £152 in all, this day, as the result of prayer.

"Nov. 11.—There came in to-day, by the first two deliveries, only about £8, but the Lord increased the income to more than £200 this day. I am never discouraged by very little only coming in, but say to myself, and also to my dear helpers, 'More prayer, more patience, and more exercise of faith will bring greater blessing'; for thus I have invariably found it, since October, 1830, now 63 years ago, when I first began this life of entire dependence upon God for everything.

"March 1, 1893.—The income during this week, ending to-day, was £92 8s. 8¾d. for the Orphans, and £9 11s. 2d. for the other Objects, being about the sixth part of our weekly expenses; but now the great trial of our faith was nearly brought to a close, as will presently be seen.

"March 4.—*This very day* God begins to answer our prayers, as we have received a very good offer for the land we have to sell, even £1,000 per acre. The beginning of the day was darker as to outward appearances than ever: but we trusted in God for help. The first

three deliveries of letters brought us only £4, and the remaining three brought us so little that the whole day's income was only £8 instead of £90, the amount we require every day to meet all our expenses. But God has now helped us. We have been able this evening to sell ten acres of land and two-fifths of an acre at £1,000 per acre, and shall receive £10,405 altogether for the whole of one field. The contract was signed at 8 o'clock this evening."

MR. MÜLLER'S DEPARTURE TO BE WITH CHRIST.

On the evening of Wednesday, March 9th, 1898, Mr. Müller took part in the usual meeting for prayer held in the Orphan-House No. 3; retired at his usual hour to rest, and early on the following morning (the 10th of March) alone, in his bed-room, breathed his last, realizing what had long been with him a most joyous anticipation, viz., that "to depart and to be with Christ is far better."

March 14.—This day Mr. Müller's earthly remains were laid in the grave of his first and second wives, at Arno' Vale Cemetery. The attendant circumstances, throughout, were very remarkable and interesting to the Christian mind chiefly as illustrating God's eternal principle—"Them that honour Me I will honour." The man who in life sought not his own glory, became in death the one to whom all classes delighted to show respect and honour.

From the masses of sympathizing spectators that lined the streets, from the tearful eyes, and the audible prayerful ejaculations that escaped the lips of bystanders (many of them the poorest of the poor), as the orphans filed past, following the hearse; from the suspension of all traffic in the principal streets, the tolling of muffled bells, and the half-masted flags, and from the dense crowds in the cemetery that awaited the arrival of the funeral company, it seemed as if the whole city had spontaneously resolved to do honour to the man who had not lived for himself, but for the glory of God and the good of his fellows.

For some 21 months before Mr. Müller's death the trials of faith and patience were great. Mr. James Wright, Mr. Müller's successor, writes:

"He who is pleased, sometimes, to teach His servants 'how to *abound*,' sees it *best* for them, at other times 'to be instructed how to suffer need.' For many of the 64 years during which this work has been carried on, the former was our experience; we abounded and richly abounded, latterly, and especially during the last 2 or 3 years it has been the very reverse. *Pressing need* has been the *rule*; a balance in hand, over and above our need, the rare exception. Yet we have never been forsaken."

"Sept. 23, 1897.—Residue of the legacy of the late G. J., Esq., £2,679 18s. 7d. This sum was received when we were in the *deepest need*; and after it had pleased the Lord to allow a very protracted trial of faith and patience; but see, beloved reader, He did not disappoint nor forsake us, as He *never* does those who really trust in Him. The *joy* of *such* a deliverance cannot be tasted without the experience of the previous *trial*.

"Feb. 26, 1898.—The following entry, under this date, is in Mr. Müller's own hand-writing:

"The income to-day, by the two first deliveries, was £7 15s. 11d. Day by day our great trial

of faith and patience continues, and thus it has been, more or less, now, for 21 months, yet, by Thy grace, we are sustained."

March 1, 1898.—The following, again, is from a memorandum in Mr. Müller's own hand-writing, under this date:

"For about 21 months with scarcely the least intermission the trial of our faith and patience has continued. Now, to-day, the Lord has refreshed our hearts. This afternoon came in, for the Lord's work, £1,427 1s. 7d. as part payment of a legacy of the late Mrs. E. C. S. For 3 years and 10 months this money had been in the Irish Chancery Court. Hundreds of petitions had been brought before the Lord regarding it, and now at last, this portion of the total legacy has been received."

Thus the Lord, in love and faithfulness, greatly refreshed the heart of His servant, only nine days before taking him home to be with Himself.

Appendix A: Five Conditions Of Prevailing Prayer

Entire dependence upon the merits and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only ground of any claim for blessing. (See John xiv. 13, 14; xv. 16, etc.)

2.—Separation from all known sin. If we regard iniquity in our hearts, the Lord will not hear us, for it would be sanctioning sin. (Psalm lxvi. 18.)

3.—Faith in God's word of promise as confirmed by His oath. Not to believe Him is to make Him both a liar and a perjurer. (Hebrews xi. 6; vi. 13-20.)

4.—Asking in accordance with His will. Our motives must be godly: we must not seek any gift of God to consume it upon our lusts. (1 John v. 14; James iv. 3.)

5.—Importunity in supplication. There must be waiting on God and waiting for God, as the husbandman has long patience to wait for the harvest. (James v. 7; Luke xviii. 1-8.)

Appendix B: The Careful And Consecutive Reading Of The Holy Scriptures

Concerning this subject Mr. Müller says: “I fell into the snare, into which so many young believers fall, the reading of religious books in preference to the Scriptures. I could no longer read French and German novels, as I had formerly done, to feed my carnal mind; but still I did not put into the room of those books the best of all books. I read tracts, missionary papers, sermons, and biographies of godly persons. The last kind of books I found more profitable than others, and had they been well selected, or had I not read too much of such writings, or had any of them tended particularly to endear the Scriptures to me, they might have done me much good.—I never had been at any time in my life in the habit of reading the Holy Scriptures. When under fifteen years of age, I occasionally read a little of them at school; afterwards God’s precious book was entirely laid aside, so that I never read one single chapter of it, as far as I remember, till it pleased God to begin a work of grace in my heart. Now the Scriptural way of reasoning would have been: God himself has condescended to become an author, and I am ignorant about that precious book, which His Holy Spirit has caused to be written through the instrumentality of His servants, and it contains that which I ought to know, and the knowledge of which will lead me to true happiness; therefore I ought to read again and again this most precious book, this book of books, most earnestly, most prayerfully, and with much meditation; and in this practice I ought to continue all the days of my life. For I was aware, though I read it but little, that I knew scarcely anything of it. But instead of acting thus, and being led by my ignorance of the word of God to study it more, my difficulty in understanding it, and the little enjoyment I had in it, made me careless of reading it (for much prayerful reading of the Word, gives not merely more knowledge, but increases the delight we have in reading it); and thus, like many believers, I practically preferred, for the first four years of my divine life, the works of uninspired men to the oracles of the living God. The consequence was, that I remained a babe, both in knowledge and grace. In knowledge I say; for all *true* knowledge must be derived, by the Spirit, from the Word. And as I neglected the Word, I was for nearly four years so ignorant, that I did not *clearly* know even the *fundamental* points of our holy faith. And this lack of knowledge most sadly kept me back from walking steadily in the ways of God. For it is the truth that makes us free, (John viii. 31, 32,) by delivering us from the slavery of the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life. The Word proves it. The experience of the saints proves it; and also my own experience most decidedly proves it. For when it pleased the Lord in Aug. 1829, to bring me really to the Scriptures, my life and walk became very different. And though even since that I have very much fallen short of what I might and ought to be, yet, by the grace of God, I have been enabled to live much nearer to Him than before.

“If any believers read this, who practically prefer other books to the Holy Scriptures, and

who enjoy the writings of men much more than the word of God, may they be warned by my loss. I shall consider this book to have been the means of doing much good, should it please the Lord, through its instrumentality, to lead some of His people no longer to neglect the Holy Scriptures, but to give them that preference, which they have hitherto bestowed on the writings of men. My dislike to increase the number of books would have been sufficient to deter me from writing these pages, had I not been convinced, that this is the only way in which the brethren at large may be benefited through my mistakes and errors, and been influenced by the hope, that in answer to my prayers, the reading of my experience may be the means of leading them to value the Scriptures more highly, and to make them the rule of all their actions. * * *

"If anyone should ask me, how he may read the Scriptures most profitably, I would advise him, that:

"I.—Above all he should seek to have it settled in his own mind, that God alone, by His Spirit, can teach him, and that therefore, as God will be enquired of for blessings, it becomes him to seek God's blessing previous to reading, and also whilst reading.

"II.—He should have it, moreover, settled in his mind, that, although the Holy Spirit is the *best* and *sufficient* teacher, yet that this teacher does not always teach immediately when we desire it, and that, therefore, we may have to entreat Him again and again for the explanation of certain passages; but that He will surely teach us at last, if indeed we are seeking for light prayerfully, patiently, and with a view to the glory of God.

"III.—It is of immense importance for the understanding of the word of God, to read it in course, so that we may read every day a portion of the Old and a portion of the New Testament, going on where we previously left off. This is important—1, Because it throws light upon the connection; and a different course, according to which one *habitually* selects particular chapters, will make it utterly impossible ever to understand much of the Scriptures. 2, Whilst we are in the body, we need a change even in spiritual things; and this change the Lord has graciously provided in the great variety which is to be found in His word. 3, It tends to the glory of God; for the leaving out some chapters here and there, is practically saying, that certain portions are better than others: or, that there are certain parts of revealed truth unprofitable or unnecessary. 4, It may keep us, by the blessing of God, from erroneous views, as in reading thus regularly through the Scriptures we are led to see the meaning of the whole, and also kept from laying too much stress upon certain favourite views. 5, The Scriptures contain the whole revealed will of God, and therefore we ought to seek to read from time to time through the whole of that revealed will. There are many believers, I fear, in our day, who have not read even once through the whole of the Scriptures; and yet in a few months, by reading only a few chapters every day they might accomplish it.

"IV.—It is also of the greatest importance to meditate on what we read, so that perhaps a small portion of that which we have read, or, if we have time, the whole may be meditated upon in the course of the day. Or a small portion of a book, or an epistle, or a gospel, through which we go regularly for meditation, may be considered every day, without, however, suffering oneself to be brought into bondage by this plan.

"Learned *commentaries* I have found to store the *head*, with many notions and often also

with the truth of God; but when the *Spirit* teaches, through the instrumentality of prayer and meditation, the *heart* is affected. The former kind of knowledge generally puffs up, and is often renounced, when another commentary gives a different opinion, and often also is found good for nothing, when it is to be carried out into practice. The latter kind of knowledge generally humbles, gives joy, leads as nearer to God, and is not easily reasoned away; and having been obtained from God, and thus having entered into the heart, and become our own, is also generally carried out."

Appendix C: Proving The Acceptable Will Of God

It is very instructive and helpful to see the way in which Mr. Müller proved the acceptable will of the Lord, when exercised in heart about the enlargement of the Orphan work, so that not only 300 but 1000 Orphans might be provided for.

“Dec. 11, 1850.—The especial burden of my prayer therefore is, that God would be pleased to teach me His will. My mind has also been especially pondering, how I could know His will satisfactorily concerning this particular. Sure I am, that I shall be taught. I therefore desire patiently to wait for the Lord’s time, when He shall be pleased to shine on my path concerning this point.

“Dec. 26.—Fifteen days have elapsed since I wrote the preceding paragraph. Every day since then I have continued to pray about this matter, and that with a goodly measure of earnestness, by the help of God. There has passed scarcely an hour during these days, in which, whilst awake, this matter has not been more or less before me. But all without even a shadow of excitement. I converse with no one about it. Hitherto have I not even done so with my dear wife. From this I refrain still, and deal with God alone about the matter, in order that no outward influence, and no outward excitement may keep me from attaining unto a clear discovery of His will. I have the fullest and most peaceful assurance, that He will clearly show me His will. This evening I have had again an especial solemn season for prayer, to seek to know the will of God. But whilst I continue to entreat and beseech the Lord, that He would not allow me to be deluded in this business, I may say I have scarcely any doubt remaining on my mind as to what will be the issue, even that I should go forward in this matter.

“As this, however, is one of the most momentous steps that I have ever taken, I judge that I cannot go about this matter with too much caution, prayerfulness, and deliberation. I am in no hurry about it. I could wait for years, by God’s grace, were this His will, before even taking one single step towards this thing, or even speaking to anyone about it; and, on the other hand, I would set to work to-morrow, were the Lord to bid me do so. This calmness of mind, this having no will of my own in the matter, this only wishing to please my Heavenly Father in it, this only seeking His and not my honour in it; this state of heart, I say, is the fullest assurance to me that my heart is not under a fleshly excitement, and that, if I am helped thus to go on, I shall know the will of God to the full. But, while I write thus, I cannot but add at the same time, that I do crave the honour and the glorious privilege to be more and more used by the Lord. I have served Satan much in my younger years, and I desire now with all my might to serve God, during the remaining days of my earthly pilgrimage. I am forty-five years and three months old. Every day decreases the number of days that I have to stay on earth. I therefore desire with all my might to work. There are vast multitudes of Orphans to be provided for. * * *

“I desire that thus it may be more abundantly manifest that God is still the hearer and answerer of prayer, and that He is the living God now, as He ever was and ever will be, when He shall, simply in answer to prayer, have condescended to provide me with a house for 700 Orphans, and with means to support them. This last consideration is the most important point in my mind. The Lord’s honour is the principal point with me in this whole matter; and just because that is the case, if He would be more glorified by my not going forward in this business, I should, by His grace, be perfectly content to give up all thoughts about another Orphan-House. Surely, in such a state of mind, obtained by the Holy Spirit, Thou, O my Heavenly Father, will not suffer Thy child to be mistaken, much less to be deluded! By the help of God I shall continue further, day by day, to wait upon Him in prayer concerning this thing, till He shall bid me act.

“Jan. 2, 1851.—A week ago I wrote the preceding paragraph. During this week I have still been helped, day by day, and more than once every day, to seek the guidance of the Lord about another Orphan-House. The burden of my prayer has still been, that He, in His great mercy, would keep me from making a mistake. During the last week the Book of Proverbs has come, in the course of my Scripture reading, and my heart has been refreshed, in reference to this subject, by the following passages: ‘Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.’ Prov. iii. 5, 6. By the grace of God I do acknowledge the Lord in my ways, and in this thing in particular; I have therefore the comfortable assurance that He will direct my paths concerning this part of my service, as to whether I shall be occupied in it or not. Further: ‘The integrity of the upright shall preserve them; but the perverseness of fools shall destroy them.’ Prov. xi. 3. By the grace of God I am upright in this business. My honest purpose is to get glory to God. Therefore I expect to be guided aright. Further: ‘Commit thy works unto the Lord and thy thoughts shall be established.’ Prov. xvi. 3. I do commit my works unto the Lord, and therefore expect that my thoughts will be established.—My heart is more and more coming to a calm, quiet, and settled assurance, that the Lord will condescend to use me yet further in the Orphan Work. Here, Lord, is Thy servant!”

Mr. Müller wrote down eight reasons against and eight reasons for establishing another Orphan-House for Seven Hundred Orphans.

The following is his last reason for so doing:

“I am peaceful and happy, spiritually, in the prospect of enlarging the work as on former occasions when I had to do so. This weighs particularly with me as a reason for going forward. After all the calm, quiet, prayerful consideration of the subject for about eight weeks, I am peaceful and happy, spiritually, in the purpose of enlarging the field. This, after all the heart searching which I have had, and the daily prayer to be kept from delusion and mistake in this thing, and the betaking myself to the Word of God, would not be the case, I judge, had not the Lord purposed to condescend to use me more than ever in this service.

“I, therefore, on the ground of the objections answered, and these eight reasons FOR enlarging the work, come to the conclusion that it is the will of the blessed God, that His poor and most unworthy servant should yet more extensively serve Him in this work, which he is quite willing to do.”

“May 24.—From the time that I began to write down the exercises of my mind on Dec. 5th, 1850, till this day, ninety-two more Orphans have been applied for, and seventy-eight were already waiting for admission before. But this number increases rapidly as the work becomes more and more known.

“On the ground of what has been recorded above, I purpose to go forward in this service, and to seek to build, to the praise and honour of the living God, another Orphan-House, large enough to accommodate seven hundred Orphans.”

6. POWER THROUGH PRAYER – E. M. Bounds

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Classic Collections:

- The Top 7 Prayer Classics
- The Top 7 Classics on Holiness

- The Top 7 Catholic Classics
- The Top 7 Rules & Exercises of the Christian Faith
- The Top 5 Classics of Devotion (St Augustine, Kempis, Bro Lawrence, Smith, Sheldon)
- The Top 5 Classics on the Holy Spirit
- The Top 5 Christian Classics on Power
- The Top 5 Classics on Revival

Early Christian Classics:

- The Didache (Teaching of the 12 Apostles)
- Sketches of Jewish Social Life (*Edersheim*)
- The Temple-Its Ministry and Service (*Edersheim*)
- Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia (Ramsay)
- St Paul the Traveller (Ramsay)

Preachers and Revivalists:

- Charles Spurgeon: 40 sermons on Prayer
- Charles Spurgeon: Lectures to My Students
- The George Muller Collection
- The Revival Writings of Jonathan Edwards (7-in-1)
- The Works of Catherine Booth (7-in-1)
- The Works of Charles Finney
- The Works of D. L. Moody
- The Works of R. A. Torrey
- The Works of William Booth
- The Works of Jeanne Guyon
- The Best of Henry Drummond
- The Azusa Street Papers

Chapter 1 - Men of Prayer Needed

Study universal holiness of life. Your whole usefulness depends on this, for your sermons last but an hour or two; your life preaches all the week. If Satan can only make a covetous minister a lover of praise, of pleasure, of good eating, he has ruined your ministry. Give yourself to prayer, and get your texts, your thoughts, your words from God. Luther spent his best three hours in prayer. — Robert Murray McCheyne

WE are constantly on a stretch, if not on a strain, to devise new methods, new plans, new organizations to advance the Church and secure enlargement and efficiency for the gospel. This trend of the day has a tendency to lose sight of the man or sink the man in the plan or organization. God's plan is to make much of the man, far more of him than of anything else. Men are God's method. The Church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men. "There was a man sent from God whose name was John." The dispensation that heralded and prepared the way for Christ was bound up in that man John. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." The world's salvation comes out of that cradled Son. When Paul appeals to the personal character of the men who rooted the gospel in the world, he solves the mystery of their success. The glory and efficiency of the gospel is staked on the men who proclaim it. When God declares that "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him," he declares the necessity of men and his dependence on them as a channel through which to exert his power upon the world. This vital, urgent truth is one that this age of machinery is apt to forget. The forgetting of it is as baneful on the work of God as would be the striking of the sun from his sphere. Darkness, confusion, and death would ensue.

What the Church needs to-day is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use — men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men — men of prayer.

An eminent historian has said that the accidents of personal character have more to do with the revolutions of nations than either philosophic historians or democratic politicians will allow. This truth has its application in full to the gospel of Christ, the character and conduct of the followers of Christ — Christianize the world, transfigure nations and individuals. Of the preachers of the gospel it is eminently true.

The character as well as the fortunes of the gospel is committed to the preacher. He makes or mars the message from God to man. The preacher is the golden pipe through which the divine oil flows. The pipe must not only be golden, but open and flawless, that the oil may have a full, unhindered, unwasted flow.

The man makes the preacher. God must make the man. The messenger is, if possible, more than the message. The preacher is more than the sermon. The preacher makes the sermon. As the life-giving milk from the mother's bosom is but the mother's life, so all the preacher says is tinctured, impregnated by what the preacher is. The treasure is in earthen vessels, and the taste of the vessel impregnates and may discolor. The man, the whole man, lies behind the sermon. Preaching is not the performance of an hour. It is the outflow of a life. It takes twenty years to make a sermon, because it takes twenty years to make the man. The true sermon is a thing of life. The sermon grows because the man grows. The sermon is forceful because the man is forceful. The sermon is holy because the man is holy. The sermon is full of the divine unction because the man is full of the divine unction.

Paul termed it "My gospel;" not that he had degraded it by his personal eccentricities or diverted it by selfish appropriation, but the gospel was put into the heart and lifeblood of the man Paul, as a personal trust to be executed by his Pauline traits, to be set aflame and

empowered by the fiery energy of his fiery soul. Paul's sermons — what were they? Where are they? Skeletons, scattered fragments, afloat on the sea of inspiration! But the man Paul, greater than his sermons, lives forever, in full form, feature and stature, with his molding hand on the Church. The preaching is but a voice. The voice in silence dies, the text is forgotten, the sermon fades from memory; the preacher lives.

The sermon cannot rise in its life-giving forces above the man. Dead men give out dead sermons, and dead sermons kill. Everything depends on the spiritual character of the preacher. Under the Jewish dispensation the high priest had inscribed in jeweled letters on a golden frontlet: "Holiness to the Lord." So every preacher in Christ's ministry must be molded into and mastered by this same holy motto. It is a crying shame for the Christian ministry to fall lower in holiness of character and holiness of aim than the Jewish priesthood. Jonathan Edwards said: "I went on with my eager pursuit after more holiness and conformity to Christ. The heaven I desired was a heaven of holiness." The gospel of Christ does not move by popular waves. It has no self-propagating power. It moves as the men who have charge of it move. The preacher must impersonate the gospel. Its divine, most distinctive features must be embodied in him. The constraining power of love must be in the preacher as a projecting, eccentric, an all-commanding, self-oblivious force. The energy of self-denial must be his being, his heart and blood and bones. He must go forth as a man among men, clothed with humility, abiding in meekness, wise as a serpent, harmless as a dove; the bonds of a servant with the spirit of a king, a king in high, royal, in dependent bearing, with the simplicity and sweetness of a child. The preacher must throw himself, with all the abandon of a perfect, self-emptying faith and a self-consuming zeal, into his work for the salvation of men. Hearty, heroic, compassionate, fearless martyrs must the men be who take hold of and shape a generation for God. If they be timid time servers, place seekers, if they be men pleasers or men fearers, if their faith has a weak hold on God or his Word, if their denial be broken by any phase of self or the world, they cannot take hold of the Church nor the world for God.

The preacher's sharpest and strongest preaching should be to himself. His most difficult, delicate, laborious, and thorough work must be with himself. The training of the twelve was the great, difficult, and enduring work of Christ. Preachers are not sermon makers, but men makers and saint makers, and he only is well-trained for this business who has made himself a man and a saint. It is not great talents nor great learning nor great preachers that God needs, but men great in holiness, great in faith, great in love, great in fidelity, great for God — men always preaching by holy sermons in the pulpit, by holy lives out of it. These can mold a generation for God.

After this order, the early Christians were formed. Men they were of solid mold, preachers after the heavenly type — heroic, stalwart, soldierly, saintly. Preaching with them meant self-denying, self-crucifying, serious, toilsome, martyr business. They applied themselves to it in a way that told on their generation, and formed in its womb a generation yet unborn for God. The preaching man is to be the praying man. Prayer is the preacher's mightiest weapon. An almighty force in itself, it gives life and force to all.

The real sermon is made in the closet. The man — God's man — is made in the closet. His life and his profoundest convictions were born in his secret communion with God. The burdened and tearful agony of his spirit, his weightiest and sweetest messages were got

when alone with God. Prayer makes the man; prayer makes the preacher; prayer makes the pastor.

The pulpit of this day is weak in praying. The pride of learning is against the dependent humility of prayer. Prayer is with the pulpit too often only official — a performance for the routine of service. Prayer is not to the modern pulpit the mighty force it was in Paul's life or Paul's ministry. Every preacher who does not make prayer a mighty factor in his own life and ministry is weak as a factor in God's work and is powerless to project God's cause in this world.

Chapter 2 - Our Sufficiency is of God

But above all he excelled in prayer. The inwardness and weight of his spirit, the reverence and solemnity of his address and behavior, and the fewness and fullness of his words have often struck even strangers with admiration as they used to reach others with consolation. The most awful, living, reverend frame I ever felt or beheld, I must say, was his prayer. And truly it was a testimony. He knew and lived nearer to the Lord than other men, for they that know him most will see most reason to approach him with reverence and fear. — William Penn of George Fox

THE sweetest graces by a slight perversion may bear the bitterest fruit. The sun gives life, but sunstrokes are death. Preaching is to give life; it may kill. The preacher holds the keys; he may lock as well as unlock. Preaching is God's great institution for the planting and maturing of spiritual life. When properly executed, its benefits are untold; when wrongly executed, no evil can exceed its damaging results. It is an easy matter to destroy the flock if the shepherd be unwary or the pasture be destroyed, easy to capture the citadel if the watchmen be asleep or the food and water be poisoned. Invested with such gracious prerogatives, exposed to so great evils, involving so many grave responsibilities, it would be a parody on the shrewdness of the devil and a libel on his character and reputation if he did not bring his master influences to adulterate the preacher and the preaching. In face of all this, the exclamatory interrogatory of Paul, "Who is sufficient for these things?" is never out of order.

Paul says: "Our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The true ministry is God-touched, God-enabled, and God-made. The Spirit of God is on the preacher in anointing power, the fruit of the Spirit is in his heart, the Spirit of God has vitalized the man and the word; his preaching gives life, gives life as the spring gives life; gives life as the resurrection gives life; gives ardent life as the summer gives ardent life; gives fruitful life as the autumn gives fruitful life. The life-giving preacher is a man of

God, whose heart is ever athirst for God, whose soul is ever following hard after God, whose eye is single to God, and in whom by the power of God's Spirit the flesh and the world have been crucified and his ministry is like the generous flood of a life-giving river.

The preaching that kills is non-spiritual preaching. The ability of the preaching is not from God. Lower sources than God have given to it energy and stimulant. The Spirit is not evident in the preacher nor his preaching. Many kinds of forces may be projected and stimulated by preaching that kills, but they are not spiritual forces. They may resemble spiritual forces, but are only the shadow, the counterfeit; life they may seem to have, but the life is magnetized. The preaching that kills is the letter; shapely and orderly it may be, but it is the letter still, the dry, husky letter, the empty, bald shell. The letter may have the germ of life in it, but it has no breath of spring to evoke it; winter seeds they are, as hard as the winter's soil, as icy as the winter's air, no thawing nor germinating by them. This letter-preaching has the truth. But even divine truth has no life-giving energy alone; it must be energized by the Spirit, with all God's forces at its back. Truth unquickened by God's Spirit deadens as much as, or more than, error. It may be the truth without admixture; but without the Spirit its shade and touch are deadly, its truth error, its light darkness. The letter-preaching is unctionless, neither mellowed nor oiled by the Spirit.

There may be tears, but tears cannot run God's machinery; tears may be but summer's breath on a snow-covered iceberg, nothing but surface slush. Feelings and earnestness there may be, but it is the emotion of the actor and the earnestness of the attorney. The preacher may feel from the kindling of his own sparks, be eloquent over his own exegesis, earnest in delivering the product of his own brain; the professor may usurp the place and imitate the fire of the apostle; brains and nerves may serve the place and feign the work of God's Spirit, and by these forces the letter may glow and sparkle like an illumined text, but the glow and sparkle will be as barren of life as the field sown with pearls. The death-dealing element lies back of the words, back of the sermon, back of the occasion, back of the manner, back of the action. The great hindrance is in the preacher himself. He has not in himself the mighty life-creating forces.

There may be no discount on his orthodoxy, honesty, cleanness, or earnestness; but somehow the man, the inner man, in its secret places has never broken down and surrendered to God, his inner life is not a great highway for the transmission of God's message, God's power. Somehow self and not God rules in the holy of holiest. Somewhere, all unconscious to himself, some spiritual nonconductor has touched his inner being, and the divine current has been arrested. His inner being has never felt its thorough spiritual bankruptcy, its utter powerlessness; he has never learned to cry out with an ineffable cry of self-despair and self-helplessness till God's power and God's fire comes in and fills, purifies, empowers. Self-esteem, self-ability in some pernicious shape has defamed and violated the temple which should be held sacred for God. Life-giving preaching costs the preacher much — death to self, crucifixion to the world, the travail of his own soul. Crucified preaching only can give life. Crucified preaching can come only from a crucified man.

Chapter 3 - The Letter Killeth

During this affliction I was brought to examine my life in relation to eternity closer than I had done when in the enjoyment of health. In this examination relative to the discharge of my duties toward my fellow creatures as a man, a Christian minister, and an officer of the Church, I stood approved by my own conscience; but in relation to my Redeemer and Saviour the result was different. My returns of gratitude and loving obedience bear no proportion to my obligations for redeeming, preserving, and supporting me through the vicissitudes of life from infancy to old age. The coldness of my love to Him who first loved me and has done so much for me overwhelmed and confused me; and to complete my unworthy character, I had not only neglected to improve the grace given to the extent of my duty and privilege, but for want of improvement had, while abounding in perplexing care and labor, declined from first zeal and love. I was confounded, humbled myself, implored mercy, and renewed my covenant to strive and devote myself unreservedly to the Lord. — Bishop McKendree

THE preaching that kills may be, and often is, orthodox — dogmatically, inviolably orthodox. We love orthodoxy. It is good. It is the best. It is the clean, clear-cut teaching of God's Word, the trophies won by truth in its conflict with error, the levees which faith has raised against the desolating floods of honest or reckless misbelief or unbelief; but orthodoxy, clear and hard as crystal, suspicious and militant, may be but the letter well-shaped, well-named, and well-learned, the letter which kills. Nothing is so dead as a dead orthodoxy, too dead to speculate, too dead to think, to study, or to pray.

The preaching that kills may have insight and grasp of principles, may be scholarly and critical in taste, may have every minutia of the derivation and grammar of the letter, may be able to trim the letter into its perfect pattern, and illume it as Plato and Cicero may be illumined, may study it as a lawyer studies his text-books to form his brief or to defend his case, and yet be like a frost, a killing frost. Letter-preaching may be eloquent, enameled with poetry and rhetoric, sprinkled with prayer spiced with sensation, illumined by genius and yet these be but the massive or chaste, costly mountings, the rare and beautiful flowers which coffin the corpse. The preaching which kills may be without scholarship, unmarked by any freshness of thought or feeling, clothed in tasteless generalities or vapid specialties, with style irregular, slovenly, savoring neither of closet nor of study, graced neither by thought, expression, or prayer. Under such preaching how wide and utter the desolation! how profound the spiritual death!

This letter-preaching deals with the surface and shadow of things, and not the things themselves. It does not penetrate the inner part. It has no deep insight into, no strong grasp of, the hidden life of God's Word. It is true to the outside, but the outside is the hull which must be broken and penetrated for the kernel. The letter may be dressed so as to attract and be fashionable, but the attraction is not toward God nor is the fashion for heaven. The failure is in the preacher. God has not made him. He has never been in the hands of God

like clay in the hands of the potter. He has been busy about the sermon, its thought and finish, its drawing and impressive forces; but the deep things of God have never been sought, studied, fathomed, experienced by him. He has never stood before “the throne high and lifted up,” never heard the seraphim song, never seen the vision nor felt the rush of that awful holiness, and cried out in utter abandon and despair under the sense of weakness and guilt, and had his life renewed, his heart touched, purged, inflamed by the live coal from God’s altar. His ministry may draw people to him, to the Church, to the form and ceremony; but no true drawings to God, no sweet, holy, divine communion induced. The Church has been frescoed but not edified, pleased but not sanctified. Life is suppressed; a chill is on the summer air; the soil is baked. The city of our God becomes the city of the dead; the Church a graveyard, not an embattled army. Praise and prayer are stifled; worship is dead. The preacher and the preaching have helped sin, not holiness; peopled hell, not heaven.

Preaching which kills is prayerless preaching. Without prayer the preacher creates death, and not life. The preacher who is feeble in prayer is feeble in life-giving forces. The preacher who has retired prayer as a conspicuous and largely prevailing element in his own character has shorn his preaching of its distinctive life-giving power. Professional praying there is and will be, but professional praying helps the preaching to its deadly work. Professional praying chills and kills both preaching and praying. Much of the lax devotion and lazy, irreverent attitudes in congregational praying are attributable to professional praying in the pulpit. Long, discursive, dry, and inane are the prayers in many pulpits. Without unction or heart, they fall like a killing frost on all the graces of worship. Death-dealing prayers they are. Every vestige of devotion has perished under their breath. The deader they are the longer they grow. A plea for short praying, live praying, real heart praying, praying by the Holy Spirit — direct, specific, ardent, simple, unctuous in the pulpit — is in order. A school to teach preachers how to pray, as God counts praying, would be more beneficial to true piety, true worship, and true preaching than all theological schools.

Stop! Pause! Consider! Where are we? What are we doing? Preaching to kill? Praying to kill? Praying to God! the great God, the Maker of all worlds, the Judge of all men! What reverence! what simplicity! what sincerity! what truth in the inward parts is demanded! How real we must be! How hearty! Prayer to God the noblest exercise, the loftiest effort of man, the most real thing! Shall we not discard forever accursed preaching that kills and prayer that kills, and do the real thing, the mightiest thing — prayerful praying, life-creating preaching, bring the mightiest force to bear on heaven and earth and draw on God’s exhaustless and open treasure for the need and beggary of man?

Chapter 4 - Tendencies to be Avoided

Let us often look at Brainerd in the woods of America pouring out his very soul before God for the perishing heathen without whose salvation nothing could make him happy. Prayer — secret fervent believing prayer — lies at the root of all personal godliness. A competent knowledge of the language where a missionary lives, a mild and winning temper, a heart given up to God in closet religion — these, these are the attainments which, more than all knowledge, or all other gifts, will fit us to become the instruments of God in the great work of human redemption. — Carrey's Brotherhood, Serampore

THERE are two extreme tendencies in the ministry. The one is to shut itself out from intercourse with the people. The monk, the hermit were illustrations of this; they shut themselves out from men to be more with God. They failed, of course. Our being with God is of use only as we expend its priceless benefits on men. This age, neither with preacher nor with people, is much intent on God. Our hankering is not that way. We shut ourselves to our study, we become students, bookworms, Bible worms, sermon makers, noted for literature, thought, and sermons; but the people and God, where are they? Out of heart, out of mind. Preachers who are great thinkers, great students must be the greatest of prayers, or else they will be the greatest of backsliders, heartless professionals, rationalistic, less than the least of preachers in God's estimate.

The other tendency is to thoroughly popularize the ministry. He is no longer God's man, but a man of affairs, of the people. He prays not, because his mission is to the people. If he can move the people, create an interest, a sensation in favor of religion, an interest in Church work — he is satisfied. His personal relation to God is no factor in his work. Prayer has little or no place in his plans. The disaster and ruin of such a ministry cannot be computed by earthly arithmetic. What the preacher is in prayer to God, for himself, for his people, so is his power for real good to men, so is his true fruitfulness, his true fidelity to God, to man, for time, for eternity.

It is impossible for the preacher to keep his spirit in harmony with the divine nature of his high calling without much prayer. That the preacher by dint of duty and laborious fidelity to the work and routine of the ministry can keep himself in trim and fitness is a serious mistake. Even sermon-making, incessant and taxing as an art, as a duty, as a work, or as a pleasure, will engross and harden, will estrange the heart, by neglect of prayer, from God. The scientist loses God in nature. The preacher may lose God in his sermon.

Prayer freshens the heart of the preacher, keeps it in tune with God and in sympathy with the people, lifts his ministry out of the chilly air of a profession, fructifies routine and moves every wheel with the facility and power of a divine unction.

Mr. Spurgeon says: "Of course the preacher is above all others distinguished as a man of prayer. He prays as an ordinary Christian, else he were a hypocrite. He prays more than ordinary Christians, else he were disqualified for the office he has undertaken. If you as ministers are not very prayerful, you are to be pitied. If you become lax in sacred devotion, not only will you need to be pitied but your people also, and the day cometh in which you shall be ashamed and confounded. All our libraries and studies are mere emptiness compared with our closets. Our seasons of fasting and prayer at the Tabernacle have been high days indeed; never has heaven's gate stood wider; never have our hearts

been nearer the central Glory."

The praying which makes a prayerful ministry is not a little praying put in as we put flavor to give it a pleasant smack, but the praying must be in the body, and form the blood and bones. Prayer is no petty duty, put into a corner; no piecemeal performance made out of the fragments of time which have been snatched from business and other engagements of life; but it means that the best of our time, the heart of our time and strength must be given. It does not mean the closet absorbed in the study or swallowed up in the activities of ministerial duties; but it means the closet first, the study and activities second, both study and activities freshened and made efficient by the closet. Prayer that affects one's ministry must give tone to one's life. The praying which gives color and bent to character is no pleasant, hurried pastime. It must enter as strongly into the heart and life as Christ's "strong crying and tears" did; must draw out the soul into an agony of desire as Paul's did; must be an inwrought fire and force like the "effectual, fervent prayer" of James; must be of that quality which, when put into the golden censer and incensed before God, works mighty spiritual throes and revolutions.

Prayer is not a little habit pinned on to us while we were tied to our mother's apron strings; neither is it a little decent quarter of a minute's grace said over an hour's dinner, but it is a most serious work of our most serious years. It engages more of time and appetite than our longest dinings or richest feasts. The prayer that makes much of our preaching must be made much of. The character of our praying will determine the character of our preaching. Light praying will make light preaching. Prayer makes preaching strong, gives it unction, and makes it stick. In every ministry weighty for good, prayer has always been a serious business.

The preacher must be preeminently a man of prayer. His heart must graduate in the school of prayer. In the school of prayer only can the heart learn to preach. No learning can make up for the failure to pray. No earnestness, no diligence, no study, no gifts will supply its lack.

Talking to men for God is a great thing, but talking to God for men is greater still. He will never talk well and with real success to men for God who has not learned well how to talk to God for men. More than this, prayerless words in the pulpit and out of it are deadening words.

Chapter 5 - Prayer, the Great Essential

You know the value of prayer: it is precious beyond all price. Never, never neglect it - Sir Thomas Buxton Prayer is the first thing, the second thing, the third thing necessary to a minister. Pray, then, my dear brother: pray, pray, pray — Edward Payson

PRAYER, in the preacher's life, in the preacher's study, in the preacher's pulpit, must be a conspicuous and an all-impregnating force and an all-coloring ingredient. It must play no secondary part, be no mere coating. To him it is given to be with his Lord "all night in prayer." The preacher, to train himself in self-denying prayer, is charged to look to his Master, who, "rising up a great while before day, went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." The preacher's study ought to be a closet, a Bethel, an altar, a vision, and a ladder, that every thought might ascend heavenward ere it went manward; that every part of the sermon might be scented by the air of heaven and made serious, because God was in the study.

As the engine never moves until the fire is kindled, so preaching, with all its machinery, perfection, and polish, is at a dead standstill, as far as spiritual results are concerned, till prayer has kindled and created the steam. The texture, fineness, and strength of the sermon is as so much rubbish unless the mighty impulse of prayer is in it, through it, and behind it. The preacher must, by prayer, put God in the sermon. The preacher must, by prayer, move God toward the people before he can move the people to God by his words. The preacher must have had audience and ready access to God before he can have access to the people. An open way to God for the preacher is the surest pledge of an open way to the people.

It is necessary to iterate and reiterate that prayer, as a mere habit, as a performance gone through by routine or in a professional way, is a dead and rotten thing. Such praying has no connection with the praying for which we plead. We are stressing true praying, which engages and sets on fire every high element of the preacher's being — prayer which is born of vital oneness with Christ and the fullness of the Holy Ghost, which springs from the deep, overflowing fountains of tender compassion, deathless solicitude for man's eternal good; a consuming zeal for the glory of God; a thorough conviction of the preacher's difficult and delicate work and of the imperative need of God's mightiest help. Praying grounded on these solemn and profound convictions is the only true praying. Preaching backed by such praying is the only preaching which sows the seeds of eternal life in human hearts and builds men up for heaven.

It is true that there may be popular preaching, pleasant preaching, taking preaching, preaching of much intellectual, literary, and brainy force, with its measure and form of good, with little or no praying; but the preaching which secures God's end in preaching must be born of prayer from text to exordium, delivered with the energy and spirit of prayer, followed and made to germinate, and kept in vital force in the hearts of the hearers by the preacher's prayers, long after the occasion has past.

We may excuse the spiritual poverty of our preaching in many ways, but the true secret will be found in the lack of urgent prayer for God's presence in the power of the Holy Spirit. There are preachers innumerable who can deliver masterful sermons after their order; but the effects are short-lived and do not enter as a factor at all into the regions of the spirit where the fearful war between God and Satan, heaven and hell, is being waged because they are not made powerfully militant and spiritually victorious by prayer.

The preachers who gain mighty results for God are the men who have prevailed in their pleadings with God ere venturing to plead with men. The preachers who are the mightiest in their closets with God are the mightiest in their pulpits with men.

Preachers are human folks, and are exposed to and often caught by the strong driftings of human currents. Praying is spiritual work; and human nature does not like taxing, spiritual work. Human nature wants to sail to heaven under a favoring breeze, a full, smooth sea. Prayer is humbling work. It abases intellect and pride, crucifies vainglory, and signs our spiritual bankruptcy, and all these are hard for flesh and blood to bear. It is easier not to pray than to bear them. So we come to one of the crying evils of these times, maybe of all times — little or no praying. Of these two evils, perhaps little praying is worse than no praying. Little praying is a kind of make-believe, a salvo for the conscience, a farce and a delusion.

The little estimate we put on prayer is evident from the little time we give to it. The time given to prayer by the average preacher scarcely counts in the sum of the daily aggregate. Not infrequently the preacher's only praying is by his bedside in his nightdress, ready for bed and soon in it, with, perchance the addition of a few hasty snatches of prayer ere he is dressed in the morning. How feeble, vain, and little is such praying compared with the time and energy devoted to praying by holy men in and out of the Bible! How poor and mean our petty, childish praying is beside the habits of the true men of God in all ages! To men who think praying their main business and devote time to it according to this high estimate of its importance does God commit the keys of his kingdom, and by them does he work his spiritual wonders in this world. Great praying is the sign and seal of God's great leaders and the earnest of the conquering forces with which God will crown their labors.

The preacher is commissioned to pray as well as to preach. His mission is incomplete if he does not do both well. The preacher may speak with all the eloquence of men and of angels; but unless he can pray with a faith which draws all heaven to his aid, his preaching will be "as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal" for permanent God-honoring, soul-saving uses.

Chapter 6 - A Praying Ministry Successful

The principal cause of my leanness and unfruitfulness is owing to an unaccountable backwardness to pray. I can write or read or converse or hear with a ready heart; but prayer is more spiritual and inward than any of these, and the more spiritual any duty is the more my carnal heart is apt to start from it. Prayer and patience and faith are never disappointed. I have long since learned that if ever I was to be a minister faith and prayer must make me one. When I can find my heart in frame and liberty for prayer, everything else is comparatively easy. — Richard Newton

IT may be put down as a spiritual axiom that in every truly successful ministry prayer is an evident and controlling force — evident and controlling in the life of the preacher,

evident and controlling in the deep spirituality of his work. A ministry may be a very thoughtful ministry without prayer; the preacher may secure fame and popularity without prayer; the whole machinery of the preacher's life and work may be run without the oil of prayer or with scarcely enough to grease one cog; but no ministry can be a spiritual one, securing holiness in the preacher and in his people, without prayer being made an evident and controlling force.

The preacher that prays indeed puts God into the work. God does not come into the preacher's work as a matter of course or on general principles, but he comes by prayer and special urgency. That God will be found of us in the day that we seek him with the whole heart is as true of the preacher as of the penitent. A prayerful ministry is the only ministry that brings the preacher into sympathy with the people. Prayer as essentially unites to the human as it does to the divine. A prayerful ministry is the only ministry qualified for the high offices and responsibilities of the preacher. Colleges, learning, books, theology, preaching cannot make a preacher, but praying does. The apostles' commission to preach was a blank till filled up by the Pentecost which praying brought. A prayerful minister has passed beyond the regions of the popular, beyond the man of mere affairs, of secularities, of pulpit attractiveness; passed beyond the ecclesiastical organizer or general into a sublimer and mightier region, the region of the spiritual. Holiness is the product of his work; transfigured hearts and lives emblazon the reality of his work, its trueness and substantial nature. God is with him. His ministry is not projected on worldly or surface principles. He is deeply stored with and deeply schooled in the things of God. His long, deep communings with God about his people and the agony of his wrestling spirit have crowned him as a prince in the things of God. The iciness of the mere professional has long since melted under the intensity of his praying.

The superficial results of many a ministry, the deadness of others, are to be found in the lack of praying. No ministry can succeed without much praying, and this praying must be fundamental, ever-abiding, ever-increasing. The text, the sermon, should be the result of prayer. The study should be bathed in prayer, all its duties so impregnated with prayer, its whole spirit the spirit of prayer. "I am sorry that I have prayed so little," was the deathbed regret of one of God's chosen ones, a sad and remorseful regret for a preacher. "I want a life of greater, deeper, truer prayer," said the late Archbishop Tait. So may we all say, and this may we all secure.

God's true preachers have been distinguished by one great feature: they were men of prayer. Differing often in many things, they have always had a common center. They may have started from different points, and traveled by different roads, but they converged to one point: they were one in prayer. God to there was the center of attraction, and prayer was the path that led to God. These men prayed not occasionally, not a little at regular or at odd times; but they so prayed that their prayers entered into and shaped their characters; they so prayed as to affect their own lives and the lives of others; they so prayed as to make the history of the Church and influence the current of the times. They spent much time in prayer, not because they marked the shadow on the dial or the hands on the clock, but because it was to them so momentous and engaging a business that they could scarcely give over.

Prayer was to them what it was to Paul, a striving with earnest effort of soul; what it was

to Jacob, a wrestling and prevailing; what it was to Christ, “strong crying and tears.” They “prayed always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance.” “The effectual, fervent prayer” has been the mightiest weapon of God’s mightiest soldiers. The statement in regard to Elijah — that he “was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit” — comprehends all prophets and preachers who have moved their generation for God, and shows the instrument by which they worked their wonders.

Chapter 7 - Much Time Should Be Given to Prayer

The great masters and teachers in Christian doctrine have always found in prayer their highest source of illumination. Not to go beyond the limits of the English Church, it is recorded of Bishop Andrews that he spent five hours daily on his knees. The greatest practical resolves that have enriched and beautified human life in Christian times have been arrived at in prayer. — Canon Liddon

WHILE many private prayers, in the nature of things, must be short; while public prayers, as a rule, ought to be short and condensed; while there is ample room for and value put on ejaculatory prayer — yet in our private communions with God time is a feature essential to its value. Much time spent with God is the secret of all successful praying. Prayer which is felt as a mighty force is the mediate or immediate product of much time spent with God. Our short prayers owe their point and efficiency to the long ones that have preceded them. The short prevailing prayer cannot be prayed by one who has not prevailed with God in a mightier struggle of long continuance. Jacob’s victory of faith could not have been gained without that all-night wrestling. God’s acquaintance is not made by pop calls. God does not bestow his gifts on the casual or hasty comers and goers. Much with God alone is the secret of knowing him and of influence with him. He yields to the persistency of a faith that knows him. He bestows his richest gifts upon those who declare their desire for and appreciation of those gifts by the constancy as well as earnestness of their importunity. Christ, who in this as well as other things is our Example, spent many whole nights in prayer. His custom was to pray much. He had his habitual place to pray. Many long seasons of praying make up his history and character. Paul prayed day and night. It took time from very important interests for Daniel to pray three times a day. David’s morning, noon, and night praying were doubtless on many occasions very protracted. While we have no specific account of the time these Bible saints spent in prayer, yet the indications are that they consumed much time in prayer, and on some occasions long seasons of praying was their custom.

We would not have any think that the value of their prayers is to be measured by the clock, but our purpose is to impress on our minds the necessity of being much alone with God; and that if this feature has not been produced by our faith, then our faith is of a feeble and surface type.

The men who have most fully illustrated Christ in their character, and have most powerfully affected the world for him, have been men who spent so much time with God as to make it a notable feature of their lives. Charles Simeon devoted the hours from four till eight in the morning to God. Mr. Wesley spent two hours daily in prayer. He began at four in the morning. Of him, one who knew him well wrote: “He thought prayer to be more his business than anything else, and I have seen him come out of his closet with a serenity of face next to shining.” John Fletcher stained the walls of his room by the breath of his prayers. Sometimes he would pray all night; always, frequently, and with great earnestness. His whole life was a life of prayer. “I would not rise from my seat,” he said, “without lifting my heart to God.” His greeting to a friend was always: “Do I meet you praying?” Luther said: “If I fail to spend two hours in prayer each morning, the devil gets the victory through the day. I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer.” He had a motto: “He that has prayed well has studied well.”

Archbishop Leighton was so much alone with God that he seemed to be in a perpetual meditation. “Prayer and praise were his business and his pleasure,” says his biographer. Bishop Ken was so much with God that his soul was said to be God-enamored. He was with God before the clock struck three every morning. Bishop Asbury said: “I propose to rise at four o’clock as often as I can and spend two hours in prayer and meditation.” Samuel Rutherford, the fragrance of whose piety is still rich, rose at three in the morning to meet God in prayer. Joseph Alleine arose at four o’clock for his business of praying till eight. If he heard other tradesmen plying their business before he was up, he would exclaim: “O how this shames me! Doth not my Master deserve more than theirs?” He who has learned this trade well draws at will, on sight, and with acceptance of heaven’s unfailing bank.

One of the holiest and among the most gifted of Scotch preachers says: “I ought to spend the best hours in communion with God. It is my noblest and most fruitful employment, and is not to be thrust into a corner. The morning hours, from six to eight, are the most uninterrupted and should be thus employed. After tea is my best hour, and that should be solemnly dedicated to God. I ought not to give up the good old habit of prayer before going to bed; but guard must be kept against sleep. When I awake in the night, I ought to rise and pray. A little time after breakfast might be given to intercession.” This was the praying plan of Robert McCheyne. The memorable Methodist band in their praying shame us. “From four to five in the morning, private prayer; from five to six in the evening, private prayer.”

John Welch, the holy and wonderful Scotch preacher, thought the day ill spent if he did not spend eight or ten hours in prayer. He kept a plaid that he might wrap himself when he arose to pray at night. His wife would complain when she found him lying on the ground weeping. He would reply: “O woman, I have the souls of three thousand to answer for, and I know not how it is with many of them!”

Chapter 8 - Examples of Praying Men

The act of praying is the very highest energy of which the human mind is capable; praying, that is, with the total concentration of the faculties. The great mass of worldly men and of learned men are absolutely incapable of prayer. — Samuel Taylor Coleridge

BISHOP WILSON says: In H. Martyn's journal the spirit of prayer, the time he devoted to the duty, and his fervor in it are the first things which strike me."

Payson wore the hard-wood boards into grooves where his knees pressed so often and so long. His biographer says: "His continuing instant in prayer, be his circumstances what they might, is the most noticeable fact in his history, and points out the duty of all who would rival his eminency. To his ardent and persevering prayers must no doubt be ascribed in a great measure his distinguished and almost uninterrupted success."

The Marquis DeRenty, to whom Christ was most precious, ordered his servant to call him from his devotions at the end of half an hour. The servant at the time saw his face through an aperture. It was marked with such holiness that he hated to arouse him. His lips were moving, but he was perfectly silent. He waited until three half hours had passed; then he called to him, when he arose from his knees, saying that the half hour was so short when he was communing with Christ.

Brainerd said: "I love to be alone in my cottage, where I can spend much time in prayer."

William Bramwell is famous in Methodist annals for personal holiness and for his wonderful success in preaching and for the marvelous answers to his prayers. For hours at a time he would pray. He almost lived on his knees. He went over his circuits like a flame of fire. The fire was kindled by the time he spent in prayer. He often spent as much as four hours in a single season of prayer in retirement.

Bishop Andrewes spent the greatest part of five hours every day in prayer and devotion.

Sir Henry Havelock always spent the first two hours of each day alone with God. If the encampment was struck at 6 A.M., he would rise at four.

Earl Cairns rose daily at six o'clock to secure an hour and a half for the study of the Bible and for prayer, before conducting family worship at a quarter to eight.

Dr. Judson's success in prayer is attributable to the fact that he gave much time to prayer. He says on this point: "Arrange thy affairs, if possible, so that thou canst leisurely devote two or three hours every day not merely to devotional exercises but to the very act of secret prayer and communion with God. Endeavor seven times a day to withdraw from business and company and lift up thy soul to God in private retirement. Begin the day by rising after midnight and devoting some time amid the silence and darkness of the night to this sacred work. Let the hour of opening dawn find thee at the same work. Let the hours of nine, twelve, three, six, and nine at night witness the same. Be resolute in his cause. Make all practicable sacrifices to maintain it. Consider that thy time is short, and that

business and company must not be allowed to rob thee of thy God." Impossible, say we, fanatical directions! Dr. Judson impressed an empire for Christ and laid the foundations of God's kingdom with imperishable granite in the heart of Burmah. He was successful, one of the few men who mightily impressed the world for Christ. Many men of greater gifts and genius and learning than he have made no such impression; their religious work is like footsteps in the sands, but he has engraven his work on the adamant. The secret of its profundity and endurance is found in the fact that he gave time to prayer. He kept the iron red-hot with prayer, and God's skill fashioned it with enduring power. No man can do a great and enduring work for God who is not a man of prayer, and no man can be a man of prayer who does not give much time to praying.

Is it true that prayer is simply the compliance with habit, dull and mechanical? A petty performance into which we are trained till tameness, shortness, superficiality are its chief elements? "Is it true that prayer is, as is assumed, little else than the half-passive play of sentiment which flows languidly on through the minutes or hours of easy reverie?" Canon Liddon continues: "Let those who have really prayed give the answer. They sometimes describe prayer with the patriarch Jacob as a wrestling together with an Unseen Power which may last, not unfrequently in an earnest life, late into the night hours, or even to the break of day. Sometimes they refer to common intercession with St. Paul as a concerted struggle. They have, when praying, their eyes fixed on the Great Intercessor in Gethsemane, upon the drops of blood which fall to the ground in that agony of resignation and sacrifice. Importunity is of the essence of successful prayer. Importunity means not dreaminess but sustained work. It is through prayer especially that the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force. It was a saying of the late Bishop Hamilton that "No man is likely to do much good in prayer who does not begin by looking upon it in the light of a work to be prepared for and persevered in with all the earnestness which we bring to bear upon subjects which are in our opinion at once most interesting and most necessary."

Chapter 9 - Begin the Day with Prayer

I ought to pray before seeing any one. Often when I sleep long, or meet with others early, it is eleven or twelve o'clock before I begin secret prayer. This is a wretched system. It is unscriptural. Christ arose before day and went into a solitary place. David says: "Early will I seek thee"; "Thou shalt early hear my voice." Family prayer loses much of its power and sweetness, and I can do no good to those who come to seek from me. The conscience feels guilty, the soul unfed, the lamp not trimmed. Then when in secret prayer the soul is often out of tune, I feel it is far better to begin with God — to see his face first, to get my soul near him before it is near another. — Robert Murray McCheyne

THE men who have done the most for God in this world have been early on their knees. He who fritters away the early morning, its opportunity and freshness, in other pursuits

than seeking God will make poor headway seeking him the rest of the day. If God is not first in our thoughts and efforts in the morning, he will be in the last place the remainder of the day.

Behind this early rising and early praying is the ardent desire which presses us into this pursuit after God. Morning listlessness is the index to a listless heart. The heart which is behindhand in seeking God in the morning has lost its relish for God. David's heart was ardent after God. He hungered and thirsted after God, and so he sought God early, before daylight. The bed and sleep could not chain his soul in its eagerness after God. Christ longed for communion with God; and so, rising a great while before day, he would go out into the mountain to pray. The disciples, when fully awake and ashamed of their indulgence, would know where to find him. We might go through the list of men who have mightily impressed the world for God, and we would find them early after God.

A desire for God which cannot break the chains of sleep is a weak thing and will do but little good for God after it has indulged itself fully. The desire for God that keeps so far behind the devil and the world at the beginning of the day will never catch up.

It is not simply the getting up that puts men to the front and makes them captain generals in God's hosts, but it is the ardent desire which stirs and breaks all self-indulgent chains. But the getting up gives vent, increase, and strength to the desire. If they had lain in bed and indulged themselves, the desire would have been quenched. The desire aroused them and put them on the stretch for God, and this heeding and acting on the call gave their faith its grasp on God and gave to their hearts the sweetest and fullest revelation of God, and this strength of faith and fullness of revelation made them saints by eminence, and the halo of their sainthood has come down to us, and we have entered on the enjoyment of their conquests. But we take our fill in enjoyment, and not in productions. We build their tombs and write their epitaphs, but are careful not to follow their examples.

We need a generation of preachers who seek God and seek him early, who give the freshness and dew of effort to God, and secure in return the freshness and fullness of his power that he may be as the dew to them, full of gladness and strength, through all the heat and labor of the day. Our laziness after God is our crying sin. The children of this world are far wiser than we. They are at it early and late. We do not seek God with ardor and diligence. No man gets God who does not follow hard after him, and no soul follows hard after God who is not after him in early morn.

Chapter 10 - Prayer and Devotion United

There is a manifest want of spiritual influence on the ministry of the present day. I feel it in my own case and I see it in that of others. I am afraid there is too much of a low, managing, contriving, maneuvering temper of mind among us. We are laying ourselves out more than is expedient to meet one man's taste and another man's prejudices. The ministry is a grand and holy affair, and it should find in us a simple habit of spirit and a holy but

humble indifference to all consequences. The leading defect in Christian ministers is want of a devotional habit. — Richard Cecil

NEVER was there greater need for saintly men and women; more imperative still is the call for saintly, God-devoted preachers. The world moves with gigantic strides. Satan has his hold and rule on the world, and labors to make all its movements subserve his ends. Religion must do its best work, present its most attractive and perfect models. By every means, modern sainthood must be inspired by the loftiest ideals and by the largest possibilities through the Spirit. Paul lived on his knees, that the Ephesian Church might measure the heights, breadths, and depths of an unmeasurable saintliness, and "be filled with all the fullness of God." Epaphras laid himself out with the exhaustive toil and strenuous conflict of fervent prayer, that the Colossian Church might "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Everywhere, everything in apostolic times was on the stretch that the people of God might each and "all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." No premium was given to dwarfs; no encouragement to an old babyhood. The babies were to grow; the old, instead of feebleness and infirmities, were to bear fruit in old age, and be fat and flourishing. The divinest thing in religion is holy men and holy women.

No amount of money, genius, or culture can move things for God. Holiness energizing the soul, the whole man aflame with love, with desire for more faith, more prayer, more zeal, more consecration — this is the secret of power. These we need and must have, and men must be the incarnation of this God-inflamed devotedness. God's advance has been stayed, his cause crippled: his name dishonored for their lack. Genius (though the loftiest and most gifted), education (though the most learned and refined), position, dignity, place, honored names, high ecclesiastics cannot move this chariot of our God. It is a fiery one, and fiery forces only can move it. The genius of a Milton fails. The imperial strength of a Leo fails. Brainerd's spirit can move it. Brainerd's spirit was on fire for God, on fire for souls. Nothing earthly, worldly, selfish came in to abate in the least the intensity of this all-impelling and all-consuming force and flame.

Prayer is the creator as well as the channel of devotion. The spirit of devotion is the spirit of prayer. Prayer and devotion are united as soul and body are united, as life and the heart are united. There is no real prayer without devotion, no devotion without prayer. The preacher must be surrendered to God in the holiest devotion. He is not a professional man, his ministry is not a profession; it is a divine institution, a divine devotion. He is devoted to God. His aim, aspirations, ambition are for God and to God, and to such prayer is as essential as food is to life.

The preacher, above everything else, must be devoted to God. The preacher's relations to God are the insignia and credentials of his ministry. These must be clear, conclusive, unmistakable. No common, surface type of piety must be his. If he does not excel in grace, he does not excel at all. If he does not preach by life, character, conduct, he does not preach at all. If his piety be light, his preaching may be as soft and as sweet as music, as gifted as Apollo, yet its weight will be a feather's weight, visionary, fleeting as the morning cloud or the early dew. Devotion to God — there is no substitute for this in the

preacher's character and conduct. Devotion to a Church, to opinions, to an organization, to orthodoxy — these are paltry, misleading, and vain when they become the source of inspiration, the animus of a call. God must be the mainspring of the preacher's effort, the fountain and crown of all his toil. The name and honor of Jesus Christ, the advance of his cause, must be all in all. The preacher must have no inspiration but the name of Jesus Christ, no ambition but to have him glorified, no toil but for him. Then prayer will be a source of his illuminations, the means of perpetual advance, the gauge of his success. The perpetual aim, the only ambition, the preacher can cherish is to have God with him.

Never did the cause of God need perfect illustrations of the possibilities of prayer more than in this age. No age, no person, will be ensamples of the gospel power except the ages or persons of deep and earnest prayer. A prayerless age will have but scant models of divine power. Prayerless hearts will never rise to these Alpine heights. The age may be a better age than the past, but there is an infinite distance between the betterment of an age by the force of an advancing civilization and its betterment by the increase of holiness and Christlikeness by the energy of prayer. The Jews were much better when Christ came than in the ages before. It was the golden age of their Pharisaic religion. Their golden religious age crucified Christ. Never more praying, never less praying; never more sacrifices, never less sacrifice; never less idolatry, never more idolatry; never more of temple worship, never less of God worship; never more of lip service, never less of heart service (God worshiped by lips whose hearts and hands crucified God's Son!); never more of churchgoers, never less of saints.

It is prayer-force which makes saints. Holy characters are formed by the power of real praying. The more of true saints, the more of praying; the more of praying, the more of true saints.

Chapter 11 - An Example of Devotion

I urge upon you communion with Christ a growing communion. There are curtains to be drawn aside in Christ that we never saw, and new foldings of love in him. I despair that I shall ever win to the far end of that love, there are so many plies in it. Therefore dig deep, and sweat and labor and take pains for him, and set by as much time in the day for him as you can. We will be won in the labor. — Samuel Rutherford

God has now, and has had, many of these devoted, prayerful preachers — men in whose lives prayer has been a mighty, controlling, conspicuous force. The world has felt their power, God has felt and honored their power, God's cause has moved mightily and swiftly by their prayers, holiness has shone out in their characters with a divine effulgence.

God found one of the men he was looking for in David Brainerd, whose work and name have gone into history. He was no ordinary man, but was capable of shining in any company, the peer of the wise and gifted ones, eminently suited to fill the most attractive

pulpits and to labor among the most refined and the cultured, who were so anxious to secure him for their pastor. President Edwards bears testimony that he was “a young man of distingushed talents, had extraordinary knowledge of men and things, had rare conversational powers, excelled in his knowledge of theology, and was truly, for one so young, an extraordinary divine, and especially in all matters relating to experimental religion. I never knew his equal of his age and standing for clear and accurate notions of the nature and essence of true religion. His manner in prayer was almost inimitable, such as I have very rarely known equaled. His learning was very considerable, and he had extraordinary gifts for the pulpit.”

No sublimer story has been recorded in earthly annals than that of David Brainerd; no miracle attests with diviner force the truth of Christianity than the life and work of such a man. Alone in the savage wilds of America, struggling day and night with a mortal disease, unschooled in the care of souls, having access to the Indians for a large portion of time only through the bungling medium of a pagan interpreter, with the Word of God in his heart and in his hand, his soul fired with the divine flame, a place and time to pour out his soul to God in prayer, he fully established the worship of God and secured all its gracious results. The Indians were changed with a great change from the lowest besotments of an ignorant and debased heathenism to pure, devout, intelligent Christians; all vice reformed, the external duties of Christianity at once embraced and acted on; family prayer set up; the Sabbath instituted and religiously observed; the internal graces of religion exhibited with growing sweetness and strength. The solution of these results is found in David Brainerd himself, not in the conditions or accidents but in the man Brainerd. He was God’s man, for God first and last and all the time. God could flow unhindered through him. The omnipotence of grace was neither arrested nor straightened by the conditions of his heart; the whole channel was broadened and cleaned out for God’s fullest and most powerful passage, so that God with all his mighty forces could come down on the hopeless, savage wilderness, and transform it into his blooming and fruitful garden; for nothing is too hard for God to do if he can get the right kind of a man to do it with.

Brainerd lived the life of holiness and prayer. His diary is full and monotonous with the record of his seasons of fasting, meditation, and retirement. The time he spent in private prayer amounted to many hours daily. “When I return home,” he said, “and give myself to meditation, prayer, and fasting, my soul longs for mortification, self-denial, humility, and divorcement from all things of the world.” “I have nothing to do,” he said, “with earth but only to labor in it honestly for God. I do not desire to live one minute for anything which earth can afford.” After this high order did he pray: “Feeling somewhat of the sweetness of communion with God and the constraining force of his love, and how admirably it captivates the soul and makes all the desires and affections to center in God, I set apart this day for secret fasting and prayer, to entreat God to direct and bless me with regard to the great work which I have in view of preaching the gospel, and that the Lord would return to me and show me the light of his countenance. I had little life and power in the forenoon. Near the middle of the afternoon God enabled me to wrestle ardently in intercession for my absent friends, but just at night the Lord visited me marvelously in prayer. I think my soul was never in such agony before. I felt no restraint, for the treasures of divine grace were opened to me. I wrestled for absent friends, for the ingathering of souls, for

multitudes of poor souls, and for many that I thought were the children of God, personally, in many distant places. I was in such agony from sun half an hour high till near dark that I was all over wet with sweat, but yet it seemed to me I had done nothing. O, my dear Saviour did sweat blood for poor souls! I longed for more compassion toward them. I felt still in a sweet frame, under a sense of divine love and grace, and went to bed in such a frame, with my heart set on God." It was prayer which gave to his life and ministry their marvelous power.

The men of mighty prayer are men of spiritual might. Prayers never die. Brainerd's whole life was a life of prayer. By day and by night he prayed. Before preaching and after preaching he prayed. Riding through the interminable solitudes of the forests he prayed. On his bed of straw he prayed. Retiring to the dense and lonely forests, he prayed. Hour by hour, day after day, early morn and late at night, he was praying and fasting, pouring out his soul, interceding, communing with God. He was with God mightily in prayer, and God was with him mightily, and by it he being dead yet speaketh and worketh, and will speak and work till the end comes, and among the to glorious ones of that glorious day he will be with the first.

Jonathan Edwards says of him: "His life shows the right way to success in the works of the ministry. He sought it as the soldier seeks victory in a siege or battle; or as a man that runs a race for a great prize. Animated with love to Christ and souls, how did he labor? Always fervently. Not only in word and doctrine, in public and in private, but in prayers by day and night, wrestling with God in secret and travailing in birth with unutterable groans and agonies, until Christ was formed in the hearts of the people to whom he was sent. Like a true son of Jacob, he persevered in wrestling through all the darkness of the night, until the breaking of the day!"

Chapter 12 - Heart Preparation Necessary

For nothing reaches the heart but what is from the heart or pierces the conscience but what comes from a living conscience. — William Penn *In the morning was more engaged in preparing the head than the heart. This has been frequently my error, and I have always felt the evil of it especially in prayer. Reform it then, O Lord! Enlarge my heart and I shall preach.* — Robert Murray McCheyne *A sermon that has more head infused into it than heart will not borne home with efficacy to the hearers.* — Richard Cecil

PRAYER, with its manifold and many-sided forces, helps the mouth to utter the truth in its fullness and freedom. The preacher is to be prayed for, the preacher is made by prayer. The preacher's mouth is to be prayed for; his mouth is to be opened and filled by prayer. A holy mouth is made by praying, by much praying; a brave mouth is made by praying, by much praying. The Church and the world, God and heaven, owe much to Paul's mouth; Paul's mouth owed its power to prayer.

How manifold, illimitable, valuable, and helpful prayer is to the preacher in so many ways, at so many points, in every way! One great value is, it helps his heart.

Praying makes the preacher a heart preacher. Prayer puts the preacher's heart into the preacher's sermon; prayer puts the preacher's sermon into the preacher's heart.

The heart makes the preacher. Men of great hearts are great preachers. Men of bad hearts may do a measure of good, but this is rare. The hireling and the stranger may help the sheep at some points, but it is the good shepherd with the good shepherd's heart who will bless the sheep and answer the full measure of the shepherd's place.

We have emphasized sermon-preparation until we have lost sight of the important thing to be prepared — the heart. A prepared heart is much better than a prepared sermon. A prepared heart will make a prepared sermon.

Volumes have been written laying down the mechanics and taste of sermon-making, until we have become possessed with the idea that this scaffolding is the building. The young preacher has been taught to lay out all his strength on the form, taste, and beauty of his sermon as a mechanical and intellectual product. We have thereby cultivated a vicious taste among the people and raised the clamor for talent instead of grace, eloquence instead of piety, rhetoric instead of revelation, reputation and brilliancy instead of holiness. By it we have lost the true idea of preaching, lost preaching power, lost pungent conviction for sin, lost the rich experience and elevated Christian character, lost the authority over consciences and lives which always results from genuine preaching.

It would not do to say that preachers study too much. Some of them do not study at all; others do not study enough. Numbers do not study the right way to show themselves workmen approved of God. But our great lack is not in head culture, but in heart culture; not lack of knowledge but lack of holiness is our sad and telling defect — not that we know too much, but that we do not meditate on God and his word and watch and fast and pray enough. The heart is the great hindrance to our preaching. Words pregnant with divine truth find in our hearts nonconductors; arrested, they fall shorn and powerless.

Can ambition, that lusts after praise and place, preach the gospel of Him who made himself of no reputation and took on Him the form of a servant? Can the proud, the vain, the egotistical preach the gospel of him who was meek and lowly? Can the bad-tempered, passionate, selfish, hard, worldly man preach the system which teems with long-suffering, self-denial, tenderness, which imperatively demands separation from enmity and crucifixion to the world? Can the hireling official, heartless, perfunctory, preach the gospel which demands the shepherd to give his life for the sheep? Can the covetous man, who counts salary and money, preach the gospel till he has gleaned his heart and can say in the spirit of Christ and Paul in the words of Wesley: "I count it dung and dross; I trample it under my feet; I (yet not I, but the grace of God in me) esteem it just as the mire of the streets, I desire it not, I seek it not?" God's revelation does not need the light of human genius, the polish and strength of human culture, the brilliancy of human thought, the force of human brains to adorn or enforce it; but it does demand the simplicity, the docility, humility, and faith of a child's heart.

It was this surrender and subordination of intellect and genius to the divine and spiritual forces which made Paul peerless among the apostles. It was this which gave Wesley his

power and radicated his labors in the history of humanity. This gave to Loyola the strength to arrest the retreating forces of Catholicism.

Our great need is heart-preparation. Luther held it as an axiom: “He who has prayed well has studied well.” We do not say that men are not to think and use their intellects; but he will use his intellect best who cultivates his heart most. We do not say that preachers should not be students; but we do say that their great study should be the Bible, and he studies the Bible best who has kept his heart with diligence. We do not say that the preacher should not know men, but he will be the greater adept in human nature who has fathomed the depths and intricacies of his own heart. We do say that while the channel of preaching is the mind, its fountain is the heart; you may broaden and deepen the channel, but if you do not look well to the purity and depth of the fountain, you will have a dry or polluted channel. We do say that almost any man of common intelligence has sense enough to preach the gospel, but very few have grace enough to do so. We do say that he who has struggled with his own heart and conquered it; who has taught it humility, faith, love, truth, mercy, sympathy, courage; who can pour the rich treasures of the heart thus trained, through a manly intellect, all surcharged with the power of the gospel on the consciences of his hearers — such a one will be the truest, most successful preacher in the esteem of his Lord.

Chapter 13 - Grace from the Heart Rather than the Head

Study not to be a fine preacher. Jerichos are blown down with rams’ horns. Look simply unto Jesus for preaching food; and what is wanted will be given, and what is given will be blessed, whether it be a barley grain or a wheaten loaf, a crust or a crumb. Your mouth will be a flowing stream or a fountain sealed, according as your heart is. Avoid all controversy in preaching, talking, or writing; preach nothing down but the devil, and nothing up but Jesus Christ. — Berridge

THE heart is the Saviour of the world. Heads do not save. Genius, brains, brilliancy, strength, natural gifts do not save. The gospel flows through hearts. All the mightiest forces are heart forces. All the sweetest and loveliest graces are heart graces. Great hearts make great characters; great hearts make divine characters. God is love. There is nothing greater than love, nothing greater than God. Hearts make heaven; heaven is love. There is nothing higher, nothing sweeter, than heaven. It is the heart and not the head which makes God’s great preachers. The heart counts much every way in religion. The heart must speak from the pulpit. The heart must hear in the pew. In fact, we serve God with our hearts. Head homage does not pass current in heaven.

We believe that one of the serious and most popular errors of the modern pulpit is the

putting of more thought than prayer, of more head than of heart in its sermons. Big hearts make big preachers; good hearts make good preachers. A theological school to enlarge and cultivate the heart is the golden desideratum of the gospel. The pastor binds his people to him and rules his people by his heart. They may admire his gifts, they may be proud of his ability, they may be affected for the time by his sermons; but the stronghold of his power is his heart. His scepter is love. The throne of his power is his heart.

The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. Heads never make martyrs. It is the heart which surrenders the life to love and fidelity. It takes great courage to be a faithful pastor, but the heart alone can supply this courage. Gifts and genius may be brave, but it is the gifts and genius of the heart and not of the head.

It is easier to fill the head than it is to prepare the heart. It is easier to make a brain sermon than a heart sermon. It was heart that drew the Son of God from heaven. It is heart that will draw men to heaven. Men of heart is what the world needs to sympathize with its woe, to kiss away its sorrows, to compassionate its misery, and to alleviate its pain. Christ was eminently the man of sorrows, because he was preeminently the man of heart.

“Give me thy heart,” is God’s requisition of men. “Give me thy heart!” is man’s demand of man.

A professional ministry is a heartless ministry. When salary plays a great part in the ministry, the heart plays little part. We may make preaching our business, and not put our hearts in the business. He who puts self to the front in his preaching puts heart to the rear. He who does not sow with his heart in his study will never reap a harvest for God. The closet is the heart’s study. We will learn more about how to preach and what to preach there than we can learn in our libraries. “Jesus wept” is the shortest and biggest verse in the Bible. It is he who goes forth *weeping* (not preaching great sermons), bearing precious seed, who shall come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Praying gives sense, brings wisdom, broadens and strengthens the mind. The closet is a perfect school-teacher and schoolhouse for the preacher. Thought is not only brightened and clarified in prayer, but thought is born in prayer. We can learn more in an hour praying, when praying indeed, than from many hours in the study. Books are in the closet which can be found and read nowhere else. Revelations are made in the closet which are made nowhere else.

Chapter 14 - Unction a Necessity

One bright benison which private prayer brings down upon the ministry is an indescribable and inimitable something — an unction from the Holy One … . If the anointing which we bear come not from the Lord of hosts, we are deceivers, since only in prayer can we obtain it. Let us continue instant constant fervent in supplication. Let your fleece lie on the thrashing floor of supplication till it is wet with the dew of heaven. — Charles Haddon Spurgeon

ALEXANDER KNOX, a Christian philosopher of the days of Wesley, not an adherent but a strong personal friend of Wesley, and with much spiritual sympathy with the Wesleyan movement, writes: “It is strange and lamentable, but I verily believe the fact to be that except among Methodists and Methodistical clergyman, there is not much interesting preaching in England. The clergy, too generally have absolutely lost the art. There is, I conceive, in the great laws of the moral world a kind of secret understanding like the affinities in chemistry, between rightly promulgated religious truth and the deepest feelings of the human mind. Where the one is duly exhibited, the other will respond. Did not our hearts burn within us? — but to this devout feeling is indispensable in the speaker. Now, I am obliged to state from my own observation that this *onction*, as the French not unfitly term it, is beyond all comparison more likely to be found in England in a Methodist conventicle than in a parish Church. This, and this alone, seems really to be that which fills the Methodist houses and thins the Churches. I am, I verily think, no enthusiast; I am a most sincere and cordial churchman, a humble disciple of the School of Hale and Boyle, of Burnet and Leighton. Now I must aver that when I was in this country, two years ago, I did not hear a single preacher who taught me like my own great masters but such as are deemed Methodistical. And I now despair of getting an atom of heart instruction from any other quarter. The Methodist preachers (however I may not always approve of all their expressions) do most assuredly diffuse this true religion and undefiled. I felt real pleasure last Sunday. I can bear witness that the preacher did at once speak the words of truth and soberness. There was no eloquence — the honest man never dreamed of such a thing — but there was far better: a cordial communication of vitalized truth. I say vitalized because what he declared to others it was impossible not to feel he lived on himself.”

This unction is the art of preaching. The preacher who never had this unction never had the art of preaching. The preacher who has lost this unction has lost the art of preaching. Whatever other arts he may have and retain — the art of sermon-making, the art of eloquence, the art of great, clear thinking, the art of pleasing an audience — he has lost the divine art of preaching. This unction makes God’s truth powerful and interesting, draws and attracts, edifies, convicts, saves.

This unction vitalizes God’s revealed truth, makes it living and life-giving. Even God’s truth spoken without this unction is light, dead, and deadening. Though abounding in truth, though weighty with thought, though sparkling with rhetoric, though pointed by logic, though powerful by earnestness, without this divine unction it issues in death and not in life. Mr. Spurgeon says: “I wonder how long we might beat our brains before we could plainly put into word what is meant by preaching with unction. Yet he who preaches knows its presence, and he who hears soon detects its absence. Samaria, in famine, typifies a discourse without it. Jerusalem, with her feast of fat things, full of marrow, may represent a sermon enriched with it. Every one knows what the freshness of the morning is when orient pearls abound on every blade of grass, but who can describe it, much less produce it of itself? Such is the mystery of spiritual anointing. We know, but we cannot tell to others what it is. It is as easy as it is foolish, to counterfeit it. Unction is a thing which you cannot manufacture, and its counterfeits are worse than worthless. Yet it is, in itself, priceless, and beyond measure needful if you would edify believers and bring sinners to Christ.”

Chapter 15 - Unction, the Mark of True Gospel Preaching

Speak for eternity. Above all things, cultivate your own spirit. A word spoken by you when your conscience is clear and your heart full of God's Spirit is worth ten thousand words spoken in unbelief and sin. Remember that God, and not man, must have the glory. If the veil of the world's machinery were lifted off, how much we would find is done in answer to the prayers of God's children. — Robert Murray McCheyne

UNCTION is that indefinable, indescribable something which an old, renowned Scotch preacher describes thus: "There is sometimes somewhat in preaching that cannot be ascribed either to matter or expression, and cannot be described what it is, or from whence it cometh, but with a sweet violence it pierceth into the heart and affections and comes immediately from the Word; but if there be any way to obtain such a thing, it is by the heavenly disposition of the speaker."

We call it unction. It is this unction which makes the word of God "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It is this unction which gives the words of the preacher such point, sharpness, and power, and which creates such friction and stir in many a dead congregation. The same truths have been told in the strictness of the letter, smooth as human oil could make them; but no signs of life, not a pulse throb; all as peaceful as the grave and as dead. The same preacher in the meanwhile receives a baptism of this unction, the divine inflatus is on him, the letter of the Word has been embellished and fired by this mysterious power, and the throbbings of life begin — life which receives or life which resists. The unction pervades and convicts the conscience and breaks the heart.

This divine unction is the feature which separates and distinguishes true gospel preaching from all other methods of presenting the truth, and which creates a wide spiritual chasm between the preacher who has it and the one who has it not. It backs and impregns revealed truth with all the energy of God. Unction is simply putting God in his own word and on his own preachers. By mighty and great prayerfulness and by continual prayerfulness, it is all potential and personal to the preacher; it inspires and clarifies his intellect, gives insight and grasp and projecting power; it gives to the preacher heart power, which is greater than head power; and tenderness, purity, force flow from the heart by it. Enlargement, freedom, fullness of thought, directness and simplicity of utterance are the fruits of this unction.

Often earnestness is mistaken for this unction. He who has the divine unction will be

earnest in the very spiritual nature of things, but there may be a vast deal of earnestness without the least mixture of unction.

Earnestness and unction look alike from some points of view. Earnestness may be readily and without detection substituted or mistaken for unction. It requires a spiritual eye and a spiritual taste to discriminate.

Earnestness may be sincere, serious, ardent, and persevering. It goes at a thing with good will, pursues it with perseverance, and urges it with ardor; puts force in it. But all these forces do not rise higher than the mere human. The *man* is in it — the whole man, with all that he has of will and heart, of brain and genius, of planning and working and talking. He has set himself to some purpose which has mastered him, and he pursues to master it. There may be none of God in it. There may be little of God in it, because there is so much of the man in it. He may present pleas in advocacy of his earnest purpose which please or touch and move or overwhelm with conviction of their importance; and in all this earnestness may move along earthly ways, being propelled by human forces only, its altar made by earthly hands and its fire kindled by earthly flames. It is said of a rather famous preacher of gifts, whose construction of Scripture was to his fancy or purpose, that he "grew very eloquent over his own exegesis." So men grow exceeding earnest over their own plans or movements. Earnestness may be selfishness simulated.

What of unction? It is the indefinable in preaching which makes it preaching. It is that which distinguishes and separates preaching from all mere human addresses. It is the divine in preaching. It makes the preaching sharp to those who need sharpness. It distills as the dew to those who need to he refreshed. It is well described as:

"a two-edged sword
Of heavenly temper keen,
And double were the wounds it made
Wherever it glanced between.
'Twas death to silt; 'twas life
To all who mourned for sin.
It kindled and it silenced strife,
Made war and peace within."

This unction comes to the preacher not in the study but in the closet. It is heaven's distillation in answer to prayer. It is the sweetest exhalation of the Holy Spirit. It impregnates, suffuses, softens, percolates, cuts, and soothes. It carries the Word like dynamite, like salt, like sugar; makes the Word a soother, an arranger, a revealer, a searcher; makes the hearer a culprit or a saint, makes him weep like a child and live like a giant; opens his heart and his purse as gently, yet as strongly as the spring opens the leaves. This unction is not the gift of genius. It is not found in the halls of learning. No eloquence can woo it. No industry can win it. No prelatical hands can confer it. It is the gift of God — the signet set to his own messengers. It is heaven's knighthood given to the chosen true and brave ones who have sought this anointed honor through many an hour of tearful, wrestling prayer.

Earnestness is good and impressive: genius is gifted and great. Thought kindles and inspires, but it takes a diviner endowment, a more powerful energy than earnestness or

genius or thought to break the chains of sin, to win estranged and depraved hearts to God, to repair the breaches and restore the Church to her old ways of purity and power. Nothing but this holy unction can do this.

Chapter 16 - Much Prayer the Price of Unction

All the minister's efforts will be vanity or worse than vanity if he have not unction. Unction must come down from heaven and spread a savor and feeling and relish over his ministry; and among the other means of qualifying himself for his office, the Bible must hold the first place, and the last also must be given to the Word of God and prayer. — Richard Cecil

IN the Christian system unction is the anointing of the Holy Ghost, separating unto God's work and qualifying for it. This unction is the one divine enablement by which the preacher accomplishes the peculiar and saving ends of preaching. Without this unction there are no true spiritual results accomplished; the results and forces in preaching do not rise above the results of unsanctified speech. Without unction the former is as potent as the pulpit.

This divine unction on the preacher generates through the Word of God the spiritual results that flow from the gospel; and without this unction, these results are not secured. Many pleasant impressions may be made, but these all fall far below the ends of gospel preaching. This unction may be simulated. There are many things that look like it, there are many results that resemble its effects; but they are foreign to its results and to its nature. The fervor or softness excited by a pathetic or emotional sermon may look like the movements of the divine unction, but they have no pungent, perpetrating heart-breaking force. No heart-healing balm is there in these surface, sympathetic, emotional movements; they are not radical, neither sin-searching nor sin-curing.

This divine unction is the one distinguishing feature that separates true gospel preaching from all other methods of presenting truth. It backs and interpenetrates the revealed truth with all the force of God. It illumines the Word and broadens and enrichens the intellect and empowers it to grasp and apprehend the Word. It qualifies the preacher's heart, and brings it to that condition of tenderness, of purity, of force and light that are necessary to secure the highest results. This unction gives to the preacher liberty and enlargement of thought and soul — a freedom, fullness, and directness of utterance that can be secured by no other process.

Without this unction on the preacher the gospel has no more power to propagate itself than any other system of truth. This is the seal of its divinity. Unction in the preacher puts God in the gospel. Without the unction, God is absent, and the gospel is left to the low and

unsatisfactory forces that the ingenuity, interest, or talents of men can devise to enforce and project its doctrines.

It is in this element that the pulpit oftener fails than in any other element. Just at this all-important point it lapses. Learning it may have, brilliancy and eloquence may delight and charm, sensation or less offensive methods may bring the populace in crowds, mental power may impress and enforce truth with all its resources; but without this unction, each and all these will be but as the fretful assault of the waters on a Gibraltar. Spray and foam may cover and spangle; but the rocks are there still, unimpressed and unimpressible. The human heart can no more be swept of its hardness and sin by these human forces than these rocks can be swept away by the ocean's ceaseless flow.

This unction is the consecration force, and its presence the continuous test of that consecration. It is this divine anointing on the preacher that secures his consecration to God and his work. Other forces and motives may call him to the work, but this only is consecration. A separation to God's work by the power of the Holy Spirit is the only consecration recognized by God as legitimate.

The unction, the divine unction, this heavenly anointing, is what the pulpit needs and must have. This divine and heavenly oil put on it by the imposition of God's hand must soften and lubricate the whole man — heart, head, spirit — until it separates him with a mighty separation from all earthly, secular, worldly, selfish motives and aims, separating him to everything that is pure and Godlike.

It is the presence of this unction on the preacher that creates the stir and friction in many a congregation. The same truths have been told in the strictness of the letter, but no ruffle has been seen, no pain or pulsation felt. All is quiet as a graveyard. Another preacher comes, and this mysterious influence is on him; the letter of the Word has been fired by the Spirit, the throes of a mighty movement are felt, it is the unction that pervades and stirs the conscience and breaks the heart. Unctionless preaching makes everything hard, dry, acrid, dead.

This unction is not a memory or an era of the past only; it is a present, realized, conscious fact. It belongs to the experience of the man as well as to his preaching. It is that which transforms him into the image of his divine Master, as well as that by which he declares the truths of Christ with power. It is so much the power in the ministry as to make all else seem feeble and vain without it, and by its presence to atone for the absence of all other and feebler forces.

This unction is not an inalienable gift. It is a conditional gift, and its presence is perpetuated and increased by the same process by which it was at first secured; by unceasing prayer to God, by impassioned desires after God, by estimating it, by seeking it with tireless ardor, by deeming all else loss and failure without it.

How and whence comes this unction? Direct from God in answer to prayer. Praying hearts only are the hearts filled with this holy oil; praying lips only are anointed with this divine unction.

Prayer, much prayer, is the price of preaching unction; prayer, much prayer, is the one, sole condition of keeping this unction. Without unceasing prayer the unction never comes to the preacher. Without perseverance in prayer, the unction, like the manna overkept,

breeds worms.

Chapter 17 - Prayer Marks Spiritual Leadership

Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven on earth. God does nothing but in answer to prayer. — John Wesley

THE apostles knew the necessity and worth of prayer to their ministry. They knew that their high commission as apostles, instead of relieving them from the necessity of prayer, committed them to it by a more urgent need; so that they were exceedingly jealous else some other important work should exhaust their time and prevent their praying as they ought; so they appointed laymen to look after the delicate and engrossing duties of ministering to the poor, that they (the apostles) might, unhindered, "give themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." Prayer is put first, and their relation to prayer is put most strongly — "give themselves to it," making a business of it, surrendering themselves to praying, putting fervor, urgency, perseverance, and time in it.

How holy, apostolic men devoted themselves to this divine work of prayer! "Night and day praying exceedingly," says Paul. "We will give ourselves continually to prayer" is the consensus of apostolic devotement. How these New Testament preachers laid themselves out in prayer for God's people! How they put God in full force into their Churches by their praying! These holy apostles did not vainly fancy that they had met their high and solemn duties by delivering faithfully God's word, but their preaching was made to stick and tell by the ardor and insistence of their praying. Apostolic praying was as taxing, toilsome, and imperative as apostolic preaching. They prayed mightily day and night to bring their people to the highest regions of faith and holiness. They prayed mightier still to hold them to this high spiritual altitude. The preacher who has never learned in the school of Christ the high and divine art of intercession for his people will never learn the art of preaching, though homiletics be poured into him by the ton, and though he be the most gifted genius in sermon-making and sermon-delivery.

The prayers of apostolic, saintly leaders do much in making saints of those who are not apostles. If the Church leaders in after years had been as particular and fervent in praying for their people as the apostles were, the sad, dark times of worldliness and apostasy had not marred the history and eclipsed the glory and arrested the advance of the Church. Apostolic praying makes apostolic saints and keeps apostolic times of purity and power in the Church.

What loftiness of soul, what purity and elevation of motive, what unselfishness, what self-

sacrifice, what exhaustive toil, what ardor of spirit, what divine tact are requisite to be an intercessor for men!

The preacher is to lay himself out in prayer for his people; not that they might be saved, simply, but that they be mightily saved. The apostles laid themselves out in prayer that their saints might be perfect; not that they should have a little relish for the things of God, but that they "might be filled with all the fullness of God." Paul did not rely on his apostolic preaching to secure this end, but "for this cause he bowed his knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul's praying carried Paul's converts farther along the highway of sainthood than Paul's preaching did. Epaphras did as much or more by prayer for the Colossian saints than by his preaching. He labored fervently always in prayer for them that "they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."

Preachers are preeminently God's leaders. They are primarily responsible for the condition of the Church. They shape its character, give tone and direction to its life.

Much every way depends on these leaders. They shape the times and the institutions. The Church is divine, the treasure it incases is heavenly, but it bears the imprint of the human. The treasure is in earthen vessels, and it smacks of the vessel. The Church of God makes, or is made by, its leaders. Whether it makes them or is made by them, it will be what its leaders are; spiritual if they are so, secular if they are, conglomerate if its leaders are. Israel's kings gave character to Israel's piety. A Church rarely revolts against or rises above the religion of its leaders. Strongly spiritual leaders; men of holy might, at the lead, are tokens of God's favor; disaster and weakness follow the wake of feeble or worldly leaders. Israel had fallen low when God gave children to be their princes and babes to rule over them. No happy state is predicted by the prophets when children oppress God's Israel and women rule over them. Times of spiritual leadership are times of great spiritual prosperity to the Church.

Prayer is one of the eminent characteristics of strong spiritual leadership. Men of mighty prayer are men of might and mold things. Their power with God has the conquering tread.

How can a man preach who does not get his message fresh from God in the closet? How can he preach without having his faith quickened, his vision cleared, and his heart warmed by his closeting with God? Alas, for the pulpit lips which are untouched by this closet flame. Dry and unctionless they will ever be, and truths divine will never come with power from such lips. As far as the real interests of religion are concerned, a pulpit without a closet will always be a barren thing.

A preacher may preach in an official, entertaining, or learned way without prayer, but between this kind of preaching and sowing God's precious seed with holy hands and prayerful, weeping hearts there is an immeasurable distance.

A prayerless ministry is the undertaker for all God's truth and for God's Church. He may have the most costly casket and the most beautiful flowers, but it is a funeral, notwithstanding the charmful array. A prayerless Christian will never learn God's truth; a prayerless ministry will never be able to teach God's truth. Ages of millennial glory have been lost by a prayerless Church. The coming of our Lord has been postponed indefinitely by a prayerless Church. Hell has enlarged herself and filled her dire caves in the presence of the dead service of a prayerless Church.

The best, the greatest offering is an offering of prayer. If the preachers of the twentieth century will learn well the lesson of prayer, and use fully the power of prayer, the millennium will come to its noon ere the century closes. “Pray without ceasing” is the trumpet call to the preachers of the twentieth century. If the twentieth century will get their texts, their thoughts, their words, their sermons in their closets, the next century will find a new heaven and a new earth. The old sin-stained and sin-eclipsed heaven and earth will pass away under the power of a praying ministry.

Chapter 18 - Preachers Need the Prayers of the People

If some Christians that have been complaining of their ministers had said and acted less before men and had applied themselves with all their might to cry to God for their ministers — had, as it were, risen and stormed heaven with their humble, fervent and incessant prayers for them — they would have been much more in the way of success. — Jonathan Edwards

SOMEHOW the practice of praying in particular for the preacher has fallen into disuse or become discounted. Occasionally have we heard the practice arraigned as a disparagement of the ministry, being a public declaration by those who do it of the inefficiency of the ministry. It offends the pride of learning and self-sufficiency, perhaps, and these ought to be offended and rebuked in a ministry that is so derelict as to allow them to exist.

Prayer, to the preacher, is not simply the duty of his profession, a privilege, but it is a necessity. Air is not more necessary to the lungs than prayer is to the preacher. It is absolutely necessary for the preacher to pray. It is an absolute necessity that the preacher be prayed for. These two propositions are wedded into a union which ought never to know any divorce: *the preacher must pray; the preacher must be prayed for*. It will take all the praying he can do, and all the praying he can get done, to meet the fearful responsibilities and gain the largest, truest success in his great work. The true preacher, next to the cultivation of the spirit and fact of prayer in himself, in their intensest form, covets with a great covetousness the prayers of God’s people.

The holier a man is, the more does he estimate prayer; the clearer does he see that God gives himself to the praying ones, and that the measure of God’s revelation to the soul is the measure of the soul’s longing, importunate prayer for God. Salvation never finds its way to a prayerless heart. The Holy Spirit never abides in a prayerless spirit. Preaching never edifies a prayerless soul. Christ knows nothing of prayerless Christians. The gospel cannot be projected by a prayerless preacher. Gifts, talents, education, eloquence, God’s call, cannot abate the demand of prayer, but only intensify the necessity for the preacher to pray and to be prayed for. The more the preacher’s eyes are opened to the nature,

responsibility, and difficulties in his work, the more will he see, and if he be a true preacher the more will he feel, the necessity of prayer; not only the increasing demand to pray himself, but to call on others to help him by their prayers.

Paul is an illustration of this. If any man could project the gospel by dint of personal force, by brain power, by culture, by personal grace, by God's apostolic commission, God's extraordinary call, that man was Paul. That the preacher must be a man given to prayer, Paul is an eminent example. That the true apostolic preacher must have the prayers of other good people to give to his ministry its full quota of success, Paul is a preeminent example. He asks, he covets, he pleads in an impassioned way for the help of all God's saints. He knew that in the spiritual realm, as elsewhere, in union there is strength; that the concentration and aggregation of faith, desire, and prayer increased the volume of spiritual force until it became overwhelming and irresistible in its power. Units of prayer combined, like drops of water, make an ocean which defies resistance. So Paul, with his clear and full apprehension of spiritual dynamics, determined to make his ministry as impressive, as eternal, as irresistible as the ocean, by gathering all the scattered units of prayer and precipitating them on his ministry. May not the solution of Paul's preeminence in labors and results, and impress on the Church and the world, be found in this fact that he was able to center on himself and his ministry more of prayer than others? To his brethren at Rome he wrote: "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in prayers to God for me." To the Ephesians he says: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel." To the Colossians he emphasizes: "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: that I may make it manifest as I ought to speak." To the Thessalonians he says sharply, strongly: "Brethren, pray for us." Paul calls on the Corinthian Church to help him: "Ye also helping together by prayer for us." This was to be part of their work. They were to lay to the helping hand of prayer. He in an additional and closing charge to the Thessalonian Church about the importance and necessity of their prayers says: "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men." He impresses the Philippians that all his trials and opposition can be made subservient to the spread of the gospel by the efficiency of their prayers for him. Philemon was to prepare a lodging for him, for through Philemon's prayer Paul was to be his guest.

Paul's attitude on this question illustrates his humility and his deep insight into the spiritual forces which project the gospel. More than this, it teaches a lesson for all times, that if Paul was so dependent on the prayers of God's saints to give his ministry success, how much greater the necessity that the prayers of God's saints be centered on the ministry of to-day!

Paul did not feel that this urgent plea for prayer was to lower his dignity, lessen his influence, or depreciate his piety. What if it did? Let dignity go, let influence be destroyed, let his reputation be marred — he must have their prayers. Called, commissioned, chief of the Apostles as he was, all his equipment was imperfect without the prayers of his people. He wrote letters everywhere, urging them to pray for him. Do you pray for your preacher?

Do you pray for him in secret? Public prayers are of little worth unless they are founded on or followed up by private praying. The praying ones are to the preacher as Aaron and Hur were to Moses. They hold up his hands and decide the issue that is so fiercely raging around them.

The plea and purpose of the apostles were to put the Church to praying. They did not ignore the grace of cheerful giving. They were not ignorant of the place which religious activity and work occupied an the spiritual life; but not one nor all of these, in apostolic estimate or urgency, could at all compare in necessity and importance with prayer. The most sacred and urgent pleas were used, the most fervid exhortations, the most comprehensive and arousing words were uttered to enforce the all-important obligation and necessity of prayer.

“Put the saints everywhere to praying” is the burden of the apostolic effort and the keynote of apostolic success. Jesus Christ had striven to do this in the days of his personal ministry. As he was moved by infinite compassion at the ripened fields of earth perishing for lack of laborers and pausing in his own praying — he tries to awaken the stupid sensibilities of his disciples to the duty of prayer as he charges them, “Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.” “And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint.”

Chapter 19 - Deliberation Necessary to Largest Results from Prayer

This perpetual hurry of business and company ruins me in soul if not in body. More solitude and earlier hours! I suspect I have been allotting habitually too little time to religious exercises, as private devotion and religious meditation, Scripture-reading, etc. Hence I am lean and cold and hard. I had better allot two hours or an hour and a half daily. I have been keeping too late hours, and hence have had but a hurried half hour in a morning to myself. Surely the experience of all good men confirms the proposition that without a due measure of private devotions the soul will grow lean. But all may be done through prayer — almighty prayer, I am ready to say — and why not? For that it is almighty is only through the gracious ordination of the God of love and truth. O then, pray, pray, pray! — William Wilberforce

OUR devotions are not measured by the clock, but time is of their essence. The ability to wait and stay and press belongs essentially to our intercourse with God. Hurry, everywhere unseeming and damaging, is so to an alarming extent in the great business of communion with God. Short devotions are the bane of deep piety. Calmness, grasp, strength, are never the companions of hurry. Short devotions deplete spiritual vigor, arrest spiritual progress, sap spiritual foundations, blight the root and bloom of spiritual life.

They are the prolific source of backsliding, the sure indication of a superficial piety; they deceive, blight, rot the seed, and impoverish the soil.

It is true that Bible prayers in word and print are short, but the praying men of the Bible were with God through many a sweet and holy wrestling hour. They won by few words but long waiting. The prayers Moses records may be short, but Moses prayed to God with fastings and mighty cryings forty days and nights.

The statement of Elijah's praying may be condensed to a few brief paragraphs, but doubtless Elijah, who when "praying he prayed," spent many hours of fiery struggle and lofty intercourse with God before he could, with assured boldness, say to Ahab, "There shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." The verbal brief of Paul's prayers is short, but Paul "prayed night and day exceedingly." The "Lord's Prayer" is a divine epitome for infant lips, but the man Christ Jesus prayed many an all-night ere his work was done; and his all-night and long-sustained devotions gave to his work its finish and perfection, and to his character the fullness and glory of its divinity.

Spiritual work is taxing work, and men are loath to do it. Praying, true praying, costs an outlay of serious attention and of time, which flesh and blood do not relish. Few persons are made of such strong fiber that they will make a costly outlay when surface work will pass as well in the market. We can habituate ourselves to our beggarly praying until it looks well to us, at least it keeps up a decent form and quiets conscience — the deadliest of opiates! We can slight our praying, and not realize the peril till the foundations are gone. Hurried devotions make weak faith, feeble convictions, questionable piety. To be little with God is to be little for God. To cut short the praying makes the whole religious character short, scrimp, niggardly, and slovenly.

It takes good time for the full flow of God into the spirit. Short devotions cut the pipe of God's full flow. It takes time in the secret places to get the full revelation of God. Little time and hurry mar the picture.

Henry Martyn laments that "want of private devotional reading and shortness of prayer through incessant sermon-making had produced much strangeness between God and his soul." He judged that he had dedicated too much time to public ministrations and too little to private communion with God. He was much impressed to set apart times for fasting and to devote times for solemn prayer. Resulting from this he records: "Was assisted this morning to pray for two hours." Said William Wilberforce, the peer of kings: "I must secure more time for private devotions. I have been living far too public for me. The shortening of private devotions starves the soul; it grows lean and faint. I have been keeping too late hours." Of a failure in Parliament he says: "Let me record my grief and shame, and all, probably, from private devotions having been contracted, and so God let me stumble." More solitude and earlier hours was his remedy.

More time and early hours for prayer would act like magic to revive and invigorate many a decayed spiritual life. More time and early hours for prayer would be manifest in holy living. A holy life would not be so rare or so difficult a thing if our devotions were not so short and hurried. A Christly temper in its sweet and passionless fragrance would not be so alien and hopeless a heritage if our closet stay were lengthened and intensified. We live shabbily because we pray meanly. Plenty of time to feast in our closets will bring marrow

and fatness to our lives. Our ability to stay with God in our closet measures our ability to stay with God out of the closet. Hasty closet visits are deceptive, defaulting. We are not only deluded by them, but we are losers by them in many ways and in many rich legacies. Tarrying in the closet instructs and wins. We are taught by it, and the greatest victories are often the results of great waiting — waiting till words and plans are exhausted, and silent and patient waiting gains the crown. Jesus Christ asks with an affronted emphasis, “Shall not God avenge his own elect which cry day and night unto him?”

To pray is the greatest thing we can do: and to do it well there must be calmness, time, and deliberation; otherwise it is degraded into the littlest and meanest of things. True praying has the largest results for good; and poor praying, the least. We cannot do too much of real praying; we cannot do too little of the sham. We must learn anew the worth of prayer, enter anew the school of prayer. There is nothing which it takes more time to learn. And if we would learn the wondrous art, we must not give a fragment here and there — “A little talk with Jesus,” as the tiny saintlets sing — but we must demand and hold with iron grasp the best hours of the day for God and prayer, or there will be no praying worth the name.

This, however, is not a day of prayer. Few men there are who pray. Prayer is defamed by preacher and priest. In these days of hurry and bustle, of electricity and steam, men will not take time to pray. Preachers there are who “say prayers” as a part of their programme, on regular or state occasions; but who “stirs himself up to take hold upon God?” Who prays as Jacob prayed — till he is crowned as a prevailing, princely intercessor? Who prays as Elijah prayed — till all the locked-up forces of nature were unsealed and a famine-stricken land bloomed as the garden of God? Who prayed as Jesus Christ prayed as out upon the mountain he “continued all night in prayer to God?” The apostles “gave themselves to prayer” — the most difficult thing to get men or even the preachers to do. Laymen there are who will give their money — some of them in rich abundance — but they will not “give themselves” to prayer, without which their money is but a curse. There are plenty of preachers who will preach and deliver great and eloquent addresses on the need of revival and the spread of the kingdom of God, but not many there are who will do that without which all preaching and organizing are worse than vain — pray. It is out of date, almost a lost art, and the greatest benefactor this age could have is the man who will bring the preachers and the Church back to prayer.

Chapter 20 - A Praying Pulpit Begets a Praying Pew

I judge that my prayer is more than the devil himself; if it were otherwise, Luther would have fared differently long before this. Yet men will not see and acknowledge the great wonders or miracles God works in my behalf. If I should neglect prayer but a single day, I should lose a great deal of the fire of faith. — Martin Luther

ONLY glimpses of the great importance of prayer could the apostles get before Pentecost. But the Spirit coming and filling on Pentecost elevated prayer to its vital and all-commanding position in the gospel of Christ. The call now of prayer to every saint is the Spirit's loudest and most exigent call. Sainthood's piety is made, refined, perfected, by prayer. The gospel moves with slow and timid pace when the saints are not at their prayers early and late and long.

Where are the Christly leaders who can teach the modern saints how to pray and put them at it? Do we know we are raising up a prayerless set of saints? Where are the apostolic leaders who can put God's people to praying? Let them come to the front and do the work, and it will be the greatest work which can be done. An increase of educational facilities and a great increase of money force will be the direst curse to religion if they are not sanctified by more and better praying than we are doing. More praying will not come as a matter of course. The campaign for the twentieth or thirtieth century fund will not help our praying but hinder if we are not careful. Nothing but a specific effort from a praying leadership will avail. The chief ones must lead in the apostolic effort to radicate the vital importance and *fact* of prayer in the heart and life of the Church. None but praying leaders can have praying followers. Praying apostles will beget praying saints. A praying pulpit will beget praying pews. We do greatly need some body who can set the saints to this business of praying. We are not a generation of praying saints. Non-praying saints are a beggarly gang of saints who have neither the ardor nor the beauty nor the power of saints. Who will restore this breach? The greatest will he be of reformers and apostles, who can set the Church to praying.

We put it as our most sober judgment that the great need of the Church in this and all ages is men of such commanding faith, of such unsullied holiness, of such marked spiritual vigor and consuming zeal, that their prayers, faith, lives, and ministry will be of such a radical and aggressive form as to work spiritual revolutions which will form eras in individual and Church life.

We do not mean men who get up sensational stirs by novel devices, nor those who attract by a pleasing entertainment; but men who can stir things, and work revolutions by the preaching of God's Word and by the power of the Holy Ghost, revolutions which change the whole current of things.

Natural ability and educational advantages do not figure as factors in this matter; but capacity for faith, the ability to pray, the power of thorough consecration, the ability of self-littleness, an absolute losing of one's self in God's glory, and an ever-present and insatiable yearning and seeking after all the fullness of God — men who can set the Church ablaze for God; not in a noisy, showy way, but with an intense and quiet heat that melts and moves everything for God.

God can work wonders if he can get a suitable man. Men can work wonders if they can get God to lead them. The full endowment of the spirit that turned the world upside down would be eminently useful in these latter days. Men who can stir things mightily for God, whose spiritual revolutions change the whole aspect of things, are the universal need of the Church.

The Church has never been without these men; they adorn its history; they are the standing

miracles of the divinity of the Church; their example and history are an unfailing inspiration and blessing. An increase in their number and power should be our prayer.

That which has been done in spiritual matters can be done again, and be better done. This was Christ's view. He said "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." The past has not exhausted the possibilities nor the demands for doing great things for God. The Church that is dependent on its past history for its miracles of power and grace is a fallen Church.

God wants elect men — men out of whom self and the world have gone by a severe crucifixion, by a bankruptcy which has so totally ruined self and the world that there is neither hope nor desire of recovery; men who by this insolvency and crucifixion have turned toward God perfect hearts.

Let us pray ardently that God's promise to prayer may be more than realized.

7. A SHORT AND VERY EASY METHOD OF PRAYER – Madame Guyon

This English translation originally appeared in

"Spiritual Progress" or "Instructions in the Divine Life of the Soul"
from the French of Fenelon and Madame Guyon;

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Reference Note: The scripture references shown as (Eccles) refer to the Old Testament Book of **Ecclesiastes**, which appears after the Proverbs; the references shown as (Eccles'us), refer to the Book of **Ecclesiasticus**, which in the Douay Rheims Version, appeared just before Isaias.

A Short and Very Easy METHOD

OF

PRAYER;

WHICH ALL CAN PRACTICE WITH THE GREATEST FACILITY,

AND ARRIVE IN A SHORT TIME, BY ITS MEANS,

AT A HIGH DEGREE OF PERFECTION.

BY MADAME GUYON
(1648 - 1717)

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"Walk before me
and be thou perfect."
Gen. xvii.1.

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The Author's Preface.

THIS little treatise, conceived in great simplicity, was not originally intended for publication. It was written for a few individuals, who were desirous of loving God with all their heart. Many, however, because of the profit they received in reading the manuscript, wished to obtain copies, and, on this account alone, it was committed to the press.

It still remains in its original simplicity. It contains no censure on the various divine leadings of others; on the contrary, it enforces the received teachings. The whole is submitted to the judgment of the learned and experienced; requesting them, however, not to stop at the surface, but to enter into the main design of the author, which is to *induce the whole world to love God, and to serve Him with comfort and success,* in a simple and easy manner, adapted to those *little ones* who are unqualified for learned and deep researches, but who earnestly *desire to be truly devoted to God.*

An unprejudiced reader will find, hidden under the most common expressions, a secret unction, which will excite him to seek after that happiness which all should wish to enjoy.

In asserting that perfection is easily attained, the word *facility,* is used; because God is, indeed found with facility, *when we seek Him within ourselves.* But some, perhaps, may urge that passage in St. John *"Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me,"* (vii. 34); this apparent difficulty, however, is removed by another passage, where He, who cannot contradict himself, has said to all, *"Seek and ye shall find,"* (*Matt*. vii. 7). It is true, indeed, that he who would seek God, and is yet unwilling to forsake his sins, shall not find him, because he seeks Him where He is not; and, therefore, it is added, *"Ye shall die in your sins."* But he, who will take some trouble to seek God in his own heart, and sincerely forsake his sin, that he may draw near unto Him, shall infallibly find Him.

A life of *piety* appears so frightful to many, and *prayer* of such difficult attainment, that they are discouraged from taking a single step towards it. But as the apprehended difficulty of an undertaking often causes despair of succeeding and reluctance in commencing, so its desirableness, and the idea that it is easy to accomplish, induce us to enter upon its

pursuit with pleasure, and to pursue it with vigor. The advantages and *facility* of this way are therefore set forth in the following treatise.

O were we once persuaded of the goodness of God toward his poor creatures, and of his desire to communicate Himself to them, we should not create ideal monsters, nor so easily despair of obtaining that good which He is so earnest to bestow: *"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall He not, with him, also freely give us all things?"* (*Rom*. viii. 32). It needs only a little courage and perseverance; we have enough of both in our temporal concerns, but none at all in the one thing needful, (*Luke* x. 42).

If any think that God is not easily to be found in this way, let them not on my testimony alter their minds, but let them try it, and their own experience will convince them, that the reality far exceeds all my representations of it.

Beloved reader, puruse this little tract with a sincere and candid spirit, in lowliness of mind, and not with an inclination to criticize, and you will not fail to reap profit from it. It was written with a desire that you might *wholly devote yourself to God;* receive it then with a like desire: for it has no other design than to invite the simple and the child-like to approach their father, who delights in the humble confidence of his children, and is greatly grieved at their distrust. With a sincere desire, therefore, for your salvation, seek nothing from the unpretending method here proposed, but the love of God, and you shall assuredly obtain it.

Without setting up our opinions above those of others, we mean only with sincerity to declare, from our own experience and the experience of others, the happy effects produced by thus simply following after the Lord.

As this treatise was intended only to instruct in prayer, nothing is said of many things which we esteem, because they do not immediately relate to our main subject. It is, however, beyond a doubt, that nothing will be found herein to offend, provided it be read in the spirit with which it was written. And it is still more certain, that those who in right earnest make trial of the way, will find we have written the truth.

It is Thou alone, O holy Jesus, who lovest simplicity and innocence, *"and whose delight is to dwell with the children of men,"* (*Prov*. viii. 31), with those who are, indeed, willing to become *"little children,"* (*Matt*. xviii. 3); it is Thou alone, who canst render this little work of any value, by imprinting it on the heart, and leading those who read it to seek Thee within themselves, where Thou reposest as in the manger, waiting to receive proofs of their love, and to give them testimony of thine. They lose these advantages by their own fault. But it belongeth unto thee, O child Almighty! uncreated Love! silent and all-containing Word! to make thyself loved, enjoyed and understood. Thou canst do it; and I know Thou wilt do it by this little work, which belongeth entirely to Thee, proceedeth wholly from Thee, and tendeth only to Thee!

Chapter 1: The Prayer of the Heart.

ALL are capable of prayer, and it is a dreadful misfortune that almost all the world have conceived the idea that they are not called to prayer. We are all called to prayer, as we are all called to salvation.

PRAYER is nothing but the *application of the heart to God,* and the internal exercise of love. St. Paul has enjoined us to *"pray without ceasing;"* (*1 Thess*. v.17) and our Lord bids us watch and pray, (*Mark* xiii. 33,37): all therefore may, and all ought to practise prayer. I grant that meditation is attainable but by few, for few are capable of it; and therefore, my beloved brethren who are athirst for salvation, meditative prayer is not the prayer which God requires of you, nor which we would recommend.

2. Let all pray: you should live by prayer, as you should live by love. *"I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that ye may be rich."* (*Rev*. iii. 18.) This is very easily obtained, much more easily than you can conceive.

Come all ye that are athirst to the living waters, nor lose your precious moments in hewing out cisterns that will hold no water. (John vii. 37; Jer. ii. 13.) Come ye famishing souls, who find nought to satisfy you; come, and ye shall be filled! Come, ye poor afflicted ones, bending beneath your load of wretchedness and pain, and ye shall be consoled! Come, ye sick, to your physician, and be not fearful of approaching him because ye are filled with diseases; show them, and they shall be healed!

Children, draw near to your Father, and he will embrace you in the arms of love! Come ye poor, stray, wandering sheep, return to your Shepherd! Come, sinners, to your Saviour! Come ye dull, ignorant, and illiterate, ye who think

yourselves the most incapable of prayer! ye are more peculiarly called and adapted thereto. Let all without exception come, for Jesus Christ hath called ALL.

Yet let not those come who are without a heart; they are excused; for there must be a heart before there can be love. But who is without a heart? O come, then, give this heart to God; and here learn how to make the donation.

3. All who are desirous of prayer, may easily pray, enabled by those ordinary graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit which are common to all men.

PRAYER is the key to perfection, and the sovereign good; it is the means of delivering us from every vice, and obtaining us every virtue; for the one great means of becoming perfect, is to walk in the presence of God. He himself hath said, *"Walk before me, and be thou perfect."* (*Gen.* xvii. 1.) It is by prayer alone that we are brought into his presence, and maintained in it without interruption.

4. You must, then, learn a species of prayer which may be exercised at all times; which does not obstruct outward employments; which may be equally practised by princes, kings, prelates, priests and magistrates, soldiers and children, tradesmen, laborers, women, and sick persons; it is not the prayer of the head, but OF THE HEART.

It is not a prayer of the understanding alone, for the mind of man is so limited in its operations that it can have but one object at a time; but it is the PRAYER OF THE HEART which is not interrupted by the exercises of reason. Nothing can interrupt this prayer but disordered affections; and when once we have enjoyed God, and the sweetness of his love, we shall find it impossible to relish aught but himself.

5. Nothing is so easily obtained as the possession and enjoyment of God. He is more present to us than we are to ourselves. He is more desirous of giving Himself to us than we are to possess Him; we only need to know how to seek Him, and the way is easier and more natural to us than breathing.

Ah! ye who think yourselves so dull and fit for nothing, by prayer you may live on God himself with less difficulty or interruption than you live on the vital air. Will it not then be highly sinful to neglect prayer? But doubtless you will not, when you have learnt the method, which is the easiest in the world.

Chapter 2: The First Degree of Prayer: Meditation

THERE are two ways of introducing a soul into prayer, which should be pursued for some time; the one is *meditation*, the other is *reading accompanied by meditation.*

Meditative reading is the choosing some important practical or speculative truth, always preferring the practical, and proceeding thus: whatever truth you have chosen, read only a small portion of it, endeavoring to taste and digest it, to extract the essence and substance of it, and proceed no farther while any savor or relish remains in the passage: then take up your book again, and proceed as before, seldom reading more than half a page at a time.

It is not the quantity that is read, but the manner of reading, that yields us profit. Those who read fast, reap no more advantage, than a bee would by only skimming over the surface of the flower, instead of waiting to penetrate into it, and extract its sweets. Much reading is rather for scholastic subjects, than divine truths; to receive profit from spiritual books, we must read as I have described; and I am certain that if that method were pursued, we should become gradually habituated to prayer by our reading, and more fully disposed for its exercise.

2. Meditation, which is the other method, is to be practised at an appropriated season, and not in the time of reading. I believe that the best manner of meditating is as follows:

When by an act of lively faith, you are placed in the presence of God, read some truth wherein there is substance; pause gently thereon, not to employ the reason, but merely to fix the mind; observing that the principal exercise should ever be the presence of God, and that the subject, therefore, should rather serve to stay the mind, than exercise it in reasoning.

Then let a *lively faith in God immediately present in our inmost souls*, produce an eager sinking into ourselves, restraining all our senses from wandering abroad: this serves to extricate us, in the first instance, from numerous

distractions, to remove us far from external objects, and to bring us nigh to God, who is only to be found in our inmost centre, which is the *Holy of Holies* wherein he dwells. He has even promised to come and make his abode with him that doeth his will. (*John* xiv. 23.) St. Augustine blames himself for the time he had lost in not having sought God, from the first, in this manner of prayer.

3. When we are thus fully entered into ourselves, and warmly penetrated throughout with a lively sense of the Divine presence; when the senses are all recollected, and withdrawn from the circumference to the centre, and the soul is sweetly and silently employed on the truths we have read, not in reasoning, but in feeding thereon, and animating the will by affection, rather than fatiguing the understanding by study; when, I say, the affections are in this state, (which, however difficult it may appear at first, is, as I shall hereafter show, easily attainable,) we must allow them *sweetly to repose*, and, as it were, *swallow* what they have tasted.

For as a person may enjoy the flavor of the finest viands in mastication, yet receive no nourishment from them, if he does not cease the action and swallow the food; so when our affections are enkindled, if we endeavor to stir them up yet more, we extinguish the flame, and the soul is deprived of its nourishment. We should, therefore, in a *repose of love*, full of respect and confidence, swallow the blessed food we have received. This method is highly necessary, and will advance the soul more in a short time, than any other in years.

4. But as I have said that our direct and principal exercise should consist *in the contemplation of the Divine presence*, we should be exceedingly diligent in *recalling our dissipated senses*, as the most easy method of overcoming distractions; for a direct contest only serves to irritate and augment them; whereas, by sinking within, under a view by faith, of a present God, and simply recollecting ourselves, we wage insensibly a very successful, though indirect war with them.

It is proper here to caution beginners against wandering from truth to truth, and from subject to subject; the right way to penetrate every divine truth, to enjoy its full relish, and to imprint it on the heart, is to dwell upon it whilst its savor continues.

Though recollection is *difficult* in the beginning, from the habit the soul has acquired of being always abroad, yet, when by the violence it has done itself, it becomes a little accustomed to it, the process is soon rendered perfectly easy; and this partly from the force of habit, and partly because God, whose one will towards his creatures is to communicate himself to them, imparts abundant grace, and an experimental enjoyment of his presence, which very much facilitate it.

Chapter 3: The Method of Prayer for Those Who Cannot Read.

THOSE who cannot read books, are not, on that account, excluded from prayer. The great book which teaches all things, and which is written all over, within and without, is Jesus Christ himself.

The method they should practice is this: they should first learn this fundamental truth, that *"the kingdom of God is within them,"* (*Luke* xvii. 21,) and that it must be sought there only.

It is as incumbent on the clergy to instruct their parishioners in prayer, as in their catechism. It is true they tell them the end of their creation; but they do not give them sufficient instructions how they may attain it.

They should be taught to begin by an act of profound adoration and annihilation before God, and closing the corporeal eyes, endeavor to open those of the soul; they should then collect themselves inwardly, and by a lively faith in God, as dwelling within them, pierce into the divine presence; not suffering the senses to wander abroad, but holding them as much as may be in subjection.

2. They should then repeat the Lord's prayer in their native tongue; pondering a little upon the meaning of the words, and the infinite willingness of that God who dwells within them to become, indeed, "their father." In this state let them pour out their wants before him; and when they have pronounced the word, "father," remain a few moments in a reverential silence, waiting to have the will of this their heavenly Father made manifest to them.

Again, the Christian, beholding himself in the state of a feeble child, soiled and sorely bruised by repeated falls, destitute of strength to stand, or of power to cleanse himself, should lay his deplorable situation open to his Father's view in

humble confusion; occasionally intermingling a word or two of love and grief, and then again sinking into silence before Him. Then, continuing the Lord's prayer, let him beseech this King of Glory to reign in him, abandoning himself to God, that He may do it, and acknowledging his right to rule over him.

If they feel an inclination to peace and silence, let them not continue the words of the prayer so long as this sensation holds; and when it subsides, let them go on with the second petition, *"thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!"* upon which let these humble supplicants beseech God to accomplish in them, and by them, all his will, and let them surrender their hearts and freedom into his hands, to be disposed of as He pleases. When they find that the will should be employed in loving, they will desire to love, and will implore Him for his LOVE; but all this will take place sweetly and peacefully: and so of the rest of the prayer, in which the clergy may instruct them.

But they should not burthen themselves with frequent repetitions of set forms, or studied prayers; for the Lord's prayer once repeated as I have just described, will produce abundant fruit.

3. At other times, they may place themselves as sheep before their Shepherd, looking up to Him for their true food: O divine Shepherd, Thou feedest thy flock with Thyself, and art indeed their daily bread. They may also represent to him the necessities of their families: but let all be done from this principal and one great view of faith, that God is within them.

All our imaginations of God amount to nothing; a lively faith in his presence is sufficient. For we must not form any image of the Deity, though we may of Jesus Christ, beholding him in his birth, or his crucifixion, or in some other state or mystery, provided the soul always seeks Him in its own centre.

On other occasions, we may look to him as a physician, and present for his healing virtue all our maladies; but always without perturbation, and with pauses from time to time, that the silence, being mingled with action, may be gradually extended, and our own exertion lessened; till at length, by continually yielding to God's operations, He gains the complete ascendancy, as shall be hereafter explained.

4. When the divine presence is granted us, and we gradually begin to relish silence and repose, *this experimental enjoyment of the presence of God* introduces the soul into the second degree of prayer, which, by proceeding in the manner I have described, is attainable as well by the illiterate as by the learned; some privileged souls, indeed, are favored with it even from the beginning.

Chapter 4: The Prayer of Simplicity.

SOME call the second degree of prayer *Contemplation, The prayer of Faith and Stillness,* and others call it *The prayer of Simplicity.* I shall here use this latter appellation, as being more just than that of contemplation, which implies a more advanced state than that I am now treating of.

When the soul has been for some time exercised in the way I have mentioned, it gradually finds that it is enabled to approach God with facility; that recollection is attended with much less difficulty, and that prayer becomes easy, sweet, and delightful: it recognizes that this is the true way of finding God, and feels that *"his name is as ointment poured forth."* (*Cant.* i. 3.) The method must now be altered, and that which I describe must be pursued with courage and fidelity, without being disturbed at the difficulties we may encounter in the way.

2. First, as soon as the soul by faith places itself in the presence of God, and becomes recollected before Him, let it remain thus for a little time in respectful silence.

But if, at the beginning, in forming the act of faith, it feels some little pleasing sense of the Divine presence, let it remain there without being troubled for a subject, and proceed no farther, but carefully cherish this sensation while it continues. When it abates, it may excite the will by some tender affection; and if, by the first moving thereof, it finds itself reinstated in sweet peace, let it there remain; the fire must be gently fanned, but as soon as it is kindled, we must cease our efforts, lest we extinguish it by our activity.

3. I would warmly recommend to all, never to finish prayer without remaining some little time afterward in a respectful silence. It is also of the greatest importance for the soul to go to prayer with courage, and to bring with it such a pure and disinterested love, as seeks nothing from God, but to please Him, and to do his will; for a servant who only

proportions his diligence to his hope of reward, is unworthy of any recompense. Go then to prayer, not desiring to enjoy spiritual delights, but to be just as it pleases God; this will preserve your spirit tranquil in aridities as well as in consolation, and prevent your being surprised at the apparent repulses or absence of God.

Chapter 5: Aridities to be Borne in Love.

THOUGH God has no other desire than to impart Himself to the loving soul that seeks Him, yet He frequently conceals Himself from it, that it may be roused from sloth, and impelled to seek Him with fidelity and love. But with what abundant goodness does He recompense the faithfulness of his beloved! And how often are these apparent withdrawings of Himself succeeded by the caresses of love!

At these seasons we are apt to believe that it proves our fidelity, and evinces a greater ardor of affection to seek Him by an exertion of our own strength and activity; or that such a course will induce Him the more speedily to revisit us. No, dear souls, believe me, this is not the best way in this degree of prayer; with patient love, with self-abasement and humiliation, with the reiterated breathings of an ardent but peaceful affection, and with silence full of veneration, you must await the return of the Beloved.

2. Thus only can you demonstrate that it is HIMSELF alone, and his good pleasure, that you seek; and not the selfish delights of your own sensations in loving Him. Hence it is said (*Eccles'us*. ii. 2,3): *"Be not impatient in the time of dryness and obscurity; suffer the suspensions and delays of the consolations of God; cleave unto him, and wait upon him patiently, that thy life may increase and be renewed."*

Be patient in prayer, though during your whole lifetime you should do nothing else than wait the return of the Beloved in a spirit of humiliation, abandonment, contentment, and resignation. Most excellent prayer! and it may be intermingled with the sighings of plaintive love! This conduct indeed is most pleasing to the heart of God, and will, above all others, compel his return.

Chapter 6: The Importance of Self-Abandonment.

HERE we must begin to *abandon* and give up our whole existence to God, from the strong and positive conviction, that the occurrences of every moment result from his immediate will and permission, and are just such as our state requires. This conviction will make us content with everything; and cause us to regard all that happens, not from the side of the creature, but from that of God.

But, dearly beloved, whoever you are who sincerely wish to give yourselves up to God, I conjure you, that after having once made the donation, you take not yourselves back again; remember, a gift once presented, is no longer at the disposal of the giver.

2. *Abandonment* is a matter of the greatest importance in our progress; it is the key to the inner court; so that he who knows truly how to abandon himself, will soon become perfect. We must therefore continue steadfast and immovable therein, without listening to the voice of natural reason. Great faith produces great abandonment; we must confide in God, *"hoping against hope."* (*Rom*. iv. 18.)

3. *Abandonment* is the casting off all selfish care, that we may be altogether at the divine disposal. All Christians are exhorted to abandonment; for it is said to all; *"Take no thought for the morrow; for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."* (*Matt*. vi. 32-34.) *"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."*

(*Prov*. iii. 6.) *"Commit thy works unto the Lord and thy thoughts shall be established."* (*Prov*. xvi. 3.) *"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him and He will bring it to pass."* (*Psalm* xxxvii. 5.)

Our abandonment, then, should be, both in respect to external and internal things, an absolute giving up of all our concerns into the hands of God, forgetting ourselves and thinking only of Him; by which the heart will remain always disengaged, free, and at peace.

4. It is practised by continually losing our own will in the will of God; renouncing every private inclination as soon as it arises, however good it may appear, that we may stand in indifference with respect to ourselves, and only will what God has willed from all eternity; resigning ourselves in all things, whether for soul or body, for time or eternity; forgetting the past, leaving the future to Providence, and devoting the present to God; satisfied with the present moment, which brings with it God's eternal order in reference to us, and is as infallible a declaration of his will, as it is inevitable and common to all; attributing nothing that befalls us to the creature, but regarding all things in God, and looking upon all, excepting only our sins, as infallibly proceeding from Him.

Surrender yourselves then to be led and disposed of just as God pleases, with respect both to your outward and inward state.

Chapter 7: Suffering – A Source of Consolation.

BE patient under all the sufferings God sends; if your love to Him be pure, you will not seek Him less on Calvary, than on Tabor; and surely, He should be as much loved on that as on this, since it was on Calvary that he made the greatest display of love.

Be not like those who give themselves to Him at one season, only to withdraw from Him at another. They give themselves only to be caressed, and wrest themselves back again, when they are crucified; or at least turn for consolation to the creature.

2. No, beloved souls, you will not find consolation in aught but in the love of the cross, and in total abandonment; who savoreth not the cross, savoreth not the things that be of God. (See *Matt*. xvi. 23.) It is impossible to love God without loving the cross; and a heart that savors the cross, finds the bitterest things to be sweet; *"To the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet;"* (*Prov*. xxvii. 7) because it finds itself hungering for God, in proportion as it is hungering for the cross. God gives us the cross, and the cross gives us God.

We may be assured that there is an internal advancement, when there is progress in the way of the cross; abandonment and the cross go hand in hand together.

3. As soon as anything is presented in the form of suffering, and you feel a repugnance, resign yourself immediately to God with respect to it, and give yourself up to Him in sacrifice: you will then find, that when the cross arrives, it will not be so very burthensome, because you have yourself desired it. This, however does not prevent you from feeling its weight, as some have imagined; for when we do not feel the cross, we do not suffer. A sensibility to suffering is one of the principal parts of suffering itself. Jesus Christ himself chose to endure its utmost rigors. We often bear the cross in weakness, at other times in strength; all should be alike to us in the will of God.

Chapter 8: On Mysteries.

IT will be objected, that, by this method, we shall have no mysteries imprinted on our minds; but so far is this from being the case, that it is the peculiar means of imparting them to the soul. Jesus Christ, to whom we are abandoned, and whom we follow as the way, whom we hear as the truth, and who animates us as the life (*John* xiv. 6,) in imprinting himself on the soul, impresses there the characters of his different states. To bear all the states of Jesus Christ, is a much greater thing, than merely to meditate about them. St. Paul bore in his body the states of Jesus Christ; *"I bear in my body,"* says he, *"the marks of the Lord Jesus;"* (*Gal*. vi. 17;) but he does not say that he reasoned thereon.

2. In this state of abandonment Jesus Christ frequently communicates some peculiar views, or revelations of his states: these we should thankfully accept, and dispose ourselves for what appears to be his will; receiving equally whatever frame He may bestow, and having no other choice, but that of ardently reaching after Him, of dwelling ever with Him, and of sinking into nothingness before Him, and accepting indiscriminately all his gifts, whether darkness or illumination, fecundity or barrenness, weakness or strength, sweetness or bitterness, temptations, distractions, pain, weariness, or uncertainty; and none of all these should, for one moment, retard our course.

3. God engages some, for whole years, in the contemplation and enjoyment of a single mystery, the simple view or contemplation of which recollects the soul; let them be faithful to it; but as soon as God is pleased to withdraw this view from the soul, let it freely yield to the deprivation. Some are very uneasy at their inability to meditate on certain mysteries; but without reason, since an affectionate attachment to God includes in itself every species of devotion, and whoever is calmly united to God alone, is, indeed, most excellently and effectually applied to every divine mystery. Whoever loves God loves all that appertains to him.

Chapter 9: On Virtue.

IT is thus that we acquire virtue with facility and certainty; for as God is the principle of all virtue, we inherit all in the possession of Himself; and in proportion as we approach toward his possession, in like proportion do we receive the most eminent virtues. For all virtue is but as a mask, an outside appearance mutable as our garments, if it be not bestowed from within; then, indeed, it is genuine, essential, and permanent: *"The King's daughter is all glorious within,"* says David. (*Psalm* xlv. 13.) These souls, above all others, practice virtue in the most eminent degree, though they advert not to any particular virtue. God, to whom they are united, leads them to the most extensive practice of it; He is exceedingly jealous over them, and permits them not the least pleasure.

2. What a hungering for sufferings have those souls, who thus glow with divine love! How would they precipitate themselves into excessive austerities, were they permitted to pursue their own inclinations! They think of nought save how they may please their Beloved; and they begin to neglect and forget themselves; and as their love to God increases, so do self-detestation and disregard of the creature.

3. O were this simple method once acquired, a way so suited to all, to the dull and ignorant as well as to the most learned, how easily would the whole church of God be reformed! LOVE only is required: *"Love,"* says St. Augustine, *"and then do what you please."* For when we truly love, we cannot have so much as a will to do anything that might offend the object of our affections.

Chapter 10: Mortification Must Be Interior.

I SAY further, that, in any other way, it is next to impossible to acquire a perfect mortification of the senses and passions.

The reason is obvious: the soul gives vigor and energy to the senses, and the senses raise and stimulate the passions; a dead body has neither sensations nor passions, because its connection with the soul is dissolved. All endeavors merely

to rectify the exterior impel the soul yet farther outward into that about which it is so warmly and zealously engaged. Its powers are diffused and scattered abroad; for, its whole attention being immediately directed to austerities and other externals, it thus invigorates those very senses it is aiming to subdue. For the senses have no other spring whence to derive their vigor than the application of the soul to themselves, the degree of their life and activity being proportioned to the degree of attention which the soul bestows upon them. This life of the senses stirs up and provokes the passions, instead of suppressing or subduing them; austerities may indeed enfeeble the body, but for the reasons just mentioned, can never take off the keenness of the senses, nor lessen their activity.

2. The only method of effecting this, is inward recollection, by which the soul is turned wholly and altogether inward, to possess a present God. If it direct all its vigor and energy within, this simple act separates it from the senses, and, employing all its powers internally, it renders them faint; and the nearer it draws to God, the farther is it separated from self. Hence it is, that those in whom the attractions of grace are very powerful, find the outward man altogether weak and feeble, and even liable to faintings.

3. I do not mean by this, to discourage mortification; for it should ever accompany prayer, according to the strength and state of the person, or as obedience demands. But I say, that mortification should not be our principal exercise; nor should we prescribe to ourselves such and such austerities, but simply following the internal attractions of grace, and being occupied with the divine presence, without thinking particularly on mortification, God will enable us to perform every species of it. He gives those who abide faithful to their abandonment to Him, no relaxation until He has subdued everything in them that remains to be mortified.

We have only, then, to continue steadfast in the utmost attention to God, and all things will be perfectly done. All are not capable of outward austerities, but all are capable of this. In the mortification of the eye and ear, which continually supply the busy imagination with new subjects, there is little danger of falling into excess; but God will teach us this also, and we have only to follow his Spirit.

4. The soul has a double advantage by proceeding thus; for, in withdrawing from outward objects, it constantly draws nearer to God; and besides the secret sustaining and preserving power and virtue which it receives, it is farther removed from sin the nearer it comes to Him; so that its conversion becomes firmly established as a matter of habit.

Chapter 11: On Perfect Conversion.

"Turn ye unto Him from whom the children of Israel have so deeply revolted." (*Isa*. xxxi. 6.) Conversion is nothing more than turning from the creature in order to return to God.

It is not perfect (however good and essential to salvation) when it consists simply in turning from sin to grace. To be complete, it should take place from without inwardly.

When the soul is once turned toward God, it finds a wonderful facility in continuing steadfast in conversion; and the longer it remains thus converted, the nearer it approaches and the more firmly it adheres to God; and the nearer it draws to Him, it is of necessity the farther removed from the creature, which is so contrary to Him; so that it is so effectually established in conversion, that the state becomes habitual, and as it were natural.

Now, we must not suppose that this is effected by a violent exertion of its own powers; for it is not capable of, nor should it attempt any other co-operation with divine grace, than that of endeavoring to withdraw itself from external objects, and to turn inwards; after which it has nothing farther to do, than to continue firm in its adherence to God.

2. GOD has an *attractive virtue* which draws the soul more and more powerfully to Himself, and in attracting, He purifies; just as it is with a gross vapor exhaled by the sun, which, as it gradually ascends, is rarified and rendered pure; the vapor, indeed, contributes to its ascent only by its passivity; but the soul co-operates freely and voluntarily.

This kind of introversion is very easy and advances the soul naturally, and without effort, because God is our centre. The centre always exerts a very powerful attractive virtue; and the more spiritual and exalted it is, the more violent and irresistible are its attractions.

3. But besides the attracting virtue of the centre, there is, in every creature, *a strong tendency to reunion* with its centre,

which is vigorous and active in proportion to the spirituality and perfection of the subject.

As soon as anything is turned towards its centre, it is precipitated towards it with extreme rapidity, unless it be withheld by some invincible obstacle. A stone held in the hand is no sooner disengaged than by its own weight it falls to the earth as to its centre; so also water and fire, when unobstructed, flow incessantly towards their centre. Now, when the soul by its efforts to recollect itself, is brought into the influence of the central tendency, it falls gradually, without any other force than the weight of love, into its proper centre; and the more passive and tranquil it remains, and the freer from self-motion, the more rapidly it advances, because the energy of the central attractive virtue is unobstructed, and has full liberty for action.

4. All our care should therefore be directed towards acquiring the greatest degree of inward recollection; nor should we be discouraged by the difficulties we encounter in this exercise, which will soon be recompensed on the part of God, by such abundant supplies of grace, as will render it perfectly easy, provided we are faithful in meekly *withdrawing* our hearts from outward distractions and occupations, and returning to our centre, with *affections* full of tenderness and serenity. When at any time the passions are turbulent, a gentle retreat inwards to a present God, easily deadens them; any other way of opposing rather irritates than appeases them.

Chapter 12: Prayer of the Presence of God.

THE soul that is faithful in the exercise of love and adherence to God, as above described, is astonished to feel Him gradually taking possession of its whole being; it now enjoys a continual sense of that presence which is become as it were natural to it; and this, as well as prayer, becomes a matter of habit. It feels an unusual serenity gradually diffusing itself over all its faculties. Silence now constitutes its whole prayer; whilst God communicates an infused love, which is the beginning of ineffable blessedness.

O that I were permitted to pursue this subject, and describe some degrees of the endless progression of subsequent states? But I now write only for beginners; and shall therefore proceed no farther, but wait our Lord's time for developing what may be applicable to every state.

2. We must, however, urge it as a matter of the highest import, to cease from self-action and self-exertion, that God himself may act alone: He says by the mouth of his prophet David, *"Be still and know that I am God."* (*Psalm* xlvi. 10.) But the creature is so infatuated with love and attachment to its own working, that it does not believe that it works at all unless it can feel, know, and distinguish all its operations. It is ignorant that its inability minutely to observe the manner of its motion, is occasioned by the swiftness of its progress; and that the operations of God, abounding more and more, absorb those of the creature; just as we see that the stars shine brightly before the sun rises, but gradually vanish as his light advances, and become invisible, not from want of light in themselves, but from the excess of it in him.

The case is similar here; for there is a strong and universal light which absorbs all the little distinct lights of the soul; they grow faint and disappear under its powerful influence, and self-activity is now no longer distinguishable.

3. Those greatly err, who accuse this prayer of inactivity, a charge that can only arise from inexperience. O! if they would but make some efforts towards the attainment of it, they would soon become full of light and knowledge in relation to it.

This appearance of inaction is, indeed, not the consequence of sterility, but of abundance, as will be clearly perceived by the experienced soul, who will recognize that the silence is full and unctuous by reason of plenty.

4. There are two kinds of people that keep silence; the one because they have nothing to say, the other because they have too much: the latter is the case in this state; silence is occasioned by excess and not by defect.

To be drowned, and to die of thirst, are deaths widely different; yet water may be said to be the cause of both; abundance destroys in one case, and want in the other. So here the fullness of grace stills the activity of self; and therefore it is of the utmost importance to remain as silent as possible.

The infant hanging at its mother's breast, is a lively illustration of our subject; it begins to draw the milk, by moving its little lips; but when its nourishment flows abundantly, it is content to swallow without effort; by any other course it

would only hurt itself, spill the milk, and be obliged to quit the breast.

We must act in like manner in the beginning of prayer, by moving the lips of the affections; but as soon as the milk of divine grace flows freely, we have nothing to do, but, in stillness, sweetly to imbibe it, and when it ceases to flow, again stir up the affections as the infant moves its lips. Whoever acts otherwise, cannot make the best use of this grace, which is bestowed to allure the soul *into the repose of* Love, and not to force it into the multiplicity of self.

5. But what becomes of the babe that thus gently and without exertion, drinks in the milk? Who would believe that it could thus receive nourishment? Yet the more peacefully it feeds, the better it thrives. What, I say, becomes of this infant? It drops asleep on its mother's bosom. So the soul that is tranquil and peaceful in prayer, sinks frequently into a mystic slumber, wherein all its powers are at rest, till it is wholly fitted for that state, of which it enjoys these transient anticipations. You see that in this process the soul is led naturally, without trouble, effort, art or study.

The interior is not a strong hold, to be taken by storm and violence; but a kingdom of peace, which is to be gained only by love. If any will thus pursue the little path I have pointed out, it will lead them to *infused prayer.* God demands nothing extraordinary nor too difficult; on the contrary, He is greatly pleased by a simple and child-like conduct.

6. The most sublime attainments in religion, are those which are easiest reached; the most necessary ordinances are the least difficult. It is thus also in natural things; if you would reach the sea, embark on a river, and you will be conveyed to it insensibly and without exertion. Would you go to God, follow this sweet and simple path, and you will arrive at the desired object, with an ease and expedition that will amaze you.

O that you would but once make the trial! how soon would you find that all I have said is too little, and that your own experience will carry you infinitely beyond it! What is it you fear? Why do you not instantly cast yourself into the arms of LOVE, who only extended them on the cross that He might embrace you? What risk do you run in depending solely on God, and abandoning yourself wholly to Him? Ah! he will not deceive you, unless by bestowing an abundance beyond your highest hopes; but those who expect all from themselves, may hear this rebuke of God by his prophet Isaiah, *"Ye have wearied yourselves in the multiplicity of your ways, and have not said, let us rest in peace."* (*Isa*. lvii. 10, Vulgate.)

Chapter 13: On Rest Before God.

THE SOUL advanced thus far, has no need of any other preparation than its quietude: for now the presence of God, during the day, which is the great effect, or rather continuation of prayer, begins to be *infused, and almost without intermission.* The soul certainly enjoys transcendent blessedness, and finds that God is more intimately present to it than it is to itself.

The only way to find him is by introversion. No sooner do the bodily eyes close, than the soul is wrapt in prayer: it is amazed at so great a blessing, and enjoys an internal converse, which external matters cannot interrupt.

2. The same may be said of this species of prayer, that is said of wisdom: *"all good things come together with her."* (*Wisdom* vii. 11.) For virtues flow from this soul into exercise with so much sweetness and facility, that they appear natural to it, and the living spring within breaks forth abundantly into a facility for all goodness, and an insensibility to all evil.

3. Let it then remain faithful in this state; and beware of choosing or seeking any other disposition whatever than this simple rest, as a preparative either to confession or communion, to action or prayer; for its sole business is to suffer itself to be filled with this divine effusion. I would not be understood to speak of the preparations necessary for ordinances, but of the most perfect interior disposition in which they can be received.

Chapter 14: On Interior Silence.

"The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." (*Hab*. ii. 20.) The reason why inward silence is so indispensable, is, because the Word is essential and eternal, and necessarily requires dispositions in the soul in some degree correspondent to His nature, as a capacity for the reception of Himself. Hearing is a sense formed to receive sounds, and is rather passive than active, admitting, but not communicating sensation; and if we would hear, we must lend the ear for that purpose. Christ, the eternal Word, who must be communicated to the soul to give it new life, requires the most intense attention to his voice, when He would speak within us.

2. Hence it is so frequently enjoined upon us in sacred writ, to listen and be attentive to the voice of God; I quote a few of the numerous exhortations to this effect: *"Hearken unto me, my people, and give ear unto me, O my nation!"* (*Isa*. li. 4,) and again *"Hear me, all ye whom I carry in my bosom, and bear within my bowels:"* (*Isa*. xlvi. 3,) and further by the Psalmist, *"Hearken, O daughter! and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty."* (Ps. xlv. 10,11.)

We must *forget ourselves*, and all self-interest, and listen and be attentive *to God*; these two simple actions, or rather passive dispositions, produce the love of that beauty, which He himself communicates.

3. Outward silence is very requisite for the cultivation and improvement of inward; and, indeed, it is impossible we should become truly interior, without loving silence and retirement. God saith by the mouth of his prophet, *"I will lead her into solitude, and there will I speak to her heart* (*Hos*. ii. 14, Vulg.); and unquestionably the being internally engaged with God is wholly incompatible with being externally busied about a thousand trifles.

When, through weakness, we become as it were uncentered, we must immediately turn again inward; and this process we must repeat as often as our distractions recur. It is a small matter to be devout and recollected for an hour or half hour, if the unction and spirit of prayer do not continue with us during the whole day.

Chapter 15: God Himself Examines Us.

SELF-EXAMINATION should always precede confession, but the manner of it should be conformable to the state of the soul. The business of those that are advanced to the degree of which we now treat, is to lay their whole souls open before God, who will not fail to enlighten them, and enable them to see the peculiar nature of their faults. This examination, however, should be peaceful and tranquil; and we should depend on God for the discovery and knowledge of our sins, rather than on the diligence of our own scrutiny.

When we examine with effort, we are easily deceived, and betrayed by self-love into error: *"We call the evil good, and the good evil,"* (*Isa*. v. 20); but when we lie in full exposure before the Sun of Righteousness, his divine beams render the smallest atoms visible. We must, then, forsake self, and abandon our souls to God, as well in examination as confession.

2. When souls have attained to this species of prayer, no fault escapes the reprehension of God; no sooner are they committed than they are rebuked by an inward burning and tender confusion. Such is the scrutiny of Him who suffers no evil to be concealed; and the only way is to turn simply to God, and bear the pain and correction He inflicts.

As He becomes the incessant examiner of the soul, it can now no longer examine itself; and if it be faithful in its abandonment, experience will prove that it is much more effectually explored by his divine light, than by all its own carefulness.

3. Those who tread these paths should be informed of a matter respecting their confession, in which they are apt to err. When they begin to give an account of their sins, instead of the regret and contrition they had been accustomed to feel, they find that love and tranquility sweetly pervade and take possession of their souls: now those who are not properly instructed are desirous of resisting this sensation, and forming an act of contrition, because they have heard, and with truth, that this is requisite. But they are not aware that they thereby lose the genuine contrition, which is *this infused love*, and which infinitely surpasses any effect produced by self-exertion, comprehending the other acts in itself as in one

principal act, in much higher perfection than if they were distinctly perceived.

Let them not be troubled to do otherwise, when God acts so excellently in and for them. To hate sin in this manner, is to hate it as God does. The purest love is that which is of his immediate operation in the soul; why should we then be so eager for action? Let us remain in the state He assigns us, agreeably to the instructions of the wise man: *"Put your confidence in God; remain in quiet where he hath placed you."* (*Eccles'us*. xi. 22.)

4. The soul will also be amazed at finding a difficulty in calling its faults to remembrance. This, however, should cause no uneasiness, first, because this forgetfulness of our faults is some proof of our purification from them, and, in this degree of advancement, it is best to forget whatever concerns ourselves that we may remember only God. Secondly, because, when confession is our duty, God will not fail to make known to us our greatest faults; for then He himself examines; and the soul will feel the end of examination more perfectly accomplished, than it could possibly have been by all our own endeavors.

5. These instructions, however, would be altogether unsuitable to the preceding degrees, while the soul continues in its active state, wherein it is right and necessary that it should in all things exert itself, in proportion to its advancement. As to those who have arrived at this more advanced state, I exhort them to follow these instructions, and not to vary their simple occupations even on approaching the communion; let them remain in silence, and suffer God to act freely. He cannot be better received than by Himself.

Chapter 16: On Reading and Vocal Prayers.

THE method of reading in this state, is to cease when you feel yourself recollected, and remain in stillness, reading but little, and always desisting when thus internally attracted.

2. The soul that is called to a state of inward silence, should not encumber itself with vocal prayers; whenever it makes use of them, and finds a difficulty therein, and an attraction to silence, let it not use constraint by persevering, but yield to the internal drawings, unless the repeating such prayers be a matter of obligation. In any other case, it is much better not to be burdened with and tied down to the repetition of set forms, but wholly given up to the leadings of the Holy Spirit; and in this way every species of devotion is fulfilled in a most eminent degree.

Chapter 17: The Spirit Composes Our Petitions.

THE soul should not be surprised at feeling itself unable to offer up to God such petitions as had formerly been made with facility; for now the Spirit maketh intercession for it according to the will of God; that Spirit which helpeth our infirmities; *"for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."* (*Rom*. viii. 26.) We must second the designs of God, which tend to divest us of all our own operations, that his may be substituted in their place.

2. Let this, then, be done in you; and suffer not yourself to be attached to anything, however good it may appear; it is no longer such to you, if it in any measure turns you aside from what God desires of you. For the divine will is preferable to every other good. Shake off, then, all self-interest, and live by faith and abandonment; here it is that genuine *faith* begins truly to operate.

Chapter 18: On Faults Committed.

SHOULD we either wander among externals, or commit a fault, we must instantly turn inwards; for having departed thereby from God, we should as soon as possible turn toward Him, and suffer the penalty which He inflicts.

It is of great importance to guard against vexation on account of our faults; it springs from a secret root of pride, and a love of our own excellence; we are hurt at feeling what we are.

2. If we become discouraged, we are the more enfeebled; and from our reflections on our imperfections, a chagrin arises, which is often worse than the imperfections themselves.

The truly humble soul is not surprised at its defects or failings; and the more miserable it beholds itself, the more it abandons itself to God, and presses for a more intimate alliance with Him, seeing the need it has of his aid. We should the rather be induced to act thus, as God himself has said, *"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye."* (*Psalm* xxxii. 8.)

Chapter 19: On Distractions and Temptations.

A DIRECT struggle with distractions and temptations rather serves to augment them, and withdraws the soul from that adherence to God, which should ever be its sole occupation. We should simply turn away from the evil, and draw yet nearer to God. A little child, on perceiving a monster, does not wait to fight with it, and will scarcely turn its eyes toward it, but quickly shrinks into the bosom of its mother, in assurance of its safety. *"God is in the midst of her,"* says the Psalmist, *"she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early."* (*Psalm* xlvi. 5.)

2. If we do otherwise, and in our weakness attempt to attack our enemies, we shall frequently find ourselves wounded, if not totally defeated: but, by remaining in the simple presence of God, we shall find instant supplies of strength for our support. This was the resource of David: *"I have set,"* says he, *"the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope."* (*Psalm* xvi. 8,9.) And it is said in Exodus, *"The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."* (*Exod*. xiv. 14.)

Chapter 20: Prayer Divinely Explained.

BOTH devotion and sacrifice are comprehended in prayer, which, according to St. John is an incense, the smoke whereof ascendeth unto God; therefore it is said in the Apocalypse, that *"unto the angel was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints."* (*Rev*. viii. 3.)

Prayer is the effusion of the heart in the presence of God: *"I have poured out my soul before the Lord,"* said the mother of Samuel. (*1 Sam*. i. 15.) The prayer of the wise men at the feet of Christ in the stable of Bethlehem, was signified by the incense they offered.

2. Prayer is a certain warmth of love, melting, dissolving, and sublimating the soul, and causing it to ascend unto God, and, as the soul is melted, odors rise from it; and these sweet exhalations proceed from the consuming fire of love within.

This is illustrated in the *Canticles,* (i. 12,) where the spouse says, *"While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof."* The table is the centre of the soul; and when God is there, and we know how to dwell near, and abide with Him, the sacred presence gradually dissolves the hardness of the soul, and, as it melts, fragrance issues forth; hence it is, that the Beloved says of his spouse, in seeing her soul melt when he spoke, *"Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness, like pillars of smoke perfumed with myrrh and frankincense?"* (*Cant*. v. 6; iii. 6.)

3. Thus does the soul ascend to God, by giving up self to the destroying and annihilating power of divine love. This is a state of sacrifice essential to the Christian religion, in which the soul suffers itself to be destroyed and annihilated, that it may pay homage to the sovereignty of God; as it is written, *"The power of the Lord is great, and he is honored only by the humble."* (*Eccles'us*. iii. 21.) By the destruction of self, we acknowledge the supreme existence of God. We must cease to exist in self, in order that the Spirit of the Eternal Word may exist in us: it is by the giving up of our own life, that we give place to his coming; and in dying to ourselves, He himself lives in us.

We must surrender our whole being to Christ Jesus, and cease to live any longer in ourselves, that He may become our life; *"that being dead, our life may be hid with Christ in God."* (*Col*. iii. 3.) *"Pass ye into me,"* sayeth God, *"all ye who earnestly seek after me."* (*Eccles'us*. xxiv. 16.) But how is it we pass into God? In no way but by leaving and forsaking ourselves, that we may be lost in Him; and this can be effected only by annihilation, which, being the true prayer of adoration, renders unto God alone, all *"blessing, honor, glory, and power, forever and ever."* (*Rev*. v. 13.)

4. This prayer of truth; it is *"worshipping God in spirit and in truth:"* (*John* iv. 23.) *"In spirit,"* because we enter into the purity of that Spirit which prayeth within us, and are drawn forth from our own carnal and human method; *"in truth,"* because we are thereby placed in the truth of the all of God, and the nothing of the creature.

There are but these two truths, the ALL and the NOTHING; everything else is falsehood. We can pay due honor to the ALL of God, only in our own ANNIHILATION; which is no sooner accomplished, than He, who never suffers a void in nature, instantly fills us with Himself.

Ah! did we but know the virtues and the blessings which the soul derives from this prayer, we should not be willing to do anything else; It is the *pearl of great price; the hidden treasure,* (*Matt*. xiii. 44,45,) which, whoever findeth, selleth freely all that he hath to purchase it; It is the *well of living water, which springeth up unto everlasting life.* It is the adoration of God *"in spirit and in truth:"* (*John* iv. 14-23:) and It is the full performance of the purest evangelical precepts.

5. Jesus Christ assures us, that the *"kingdom of God is within us:"* (*Luke* xvii. 21:) and this is true in two senses: first, when God becomes so fully Master and Lord in us, that nothing resists his dominion, then our interior is his kingdom; and again, when we possess God, who is the Supreme Good, we possess his kingdom also, wherein there is fulness of joy, and where we attain the end of our creation. Thus it is said, *"to serve God is to reign."* The end of our creation, indeed, is to enjoy God, even in this life; but, alas! who thinks of it?

Chapter 21: The Soul Active When Self Is Still.

SOME persons, when they hear of the prayer of silence, falsely imagine *that the soul remains stupid, dead, and inactive;* but it unquestionably acts more nobly and more extensively than it had ever done before; for God himself is its mover, and it now acts by the agency of his Spirit. St. Paul would have us *led by the Spirit of God.* (*Rom*. viii. 14.)

It is not meant that we should cease from action; but that we should act through the internal agency of his grace. This is finely represented by the prophet Ezekiel's vision of the wheels, which had a living Spirit; and whithersoever the Spirit was to go, they went; they ascended and descended as they were moved; for the Spirit of life was in them, and they returned not when they went.(*Ezek*. i. 18-21.) Thus the soul should be equally subservient to the will of that vivifying Spirit which is in it, and scrupulously faithful to follow only as that moves. These motions never tend to return in

reflections on the creatures or self; but go forward in an incessant approach toward the end.

2. This *activity* of the soul is attended with the utmost tranquility. When it acts of itself, the act is forced and constrained, and, therefore, it is more easily distinguished; but when the action is under the influence of the Spirit of grace, it is so free, so easy, and so natural, that it almost seems as if we did not act at all. *"He brought me forth also into a large place; He delivered me, because He delighted in me."* (*Ps*. xviii. 19.)

When the soul is in its central tendency, or in other words, is returned through recollection into itself, from that moment, the central attraction becomes a most potent activity, infinitely surpassing in energy every other species. Nothing, indeed, can equal the swiftness of this tendency to the centre; and though an activity, yet it is so noble, so peaceful, so full of tranquility, so natural, and so spontaneous, that it appears to the soul as if it were none at all.

When a wheel rolls slowly we can easily perceive its parts; but when its motion is rapid, we can distinguish nothing. So the soul which rests in God, has an activity exceedingly noble and elevated, yet altogether peaceful; and the more peaceful it is, the swifter is its course; because it is given up to that Spirit by whom it is moved and directed.

3. This attracting Spirit is no other than God himself, who, in drawing us, causes us to run to Him. How well did the spouse understand this, when she said, *"Draw me, we will run after thee."* (*Cant*. i. 4.) Draw me unto Thee, O my divine centre, by the secret springs of my existence, and all my powers and senses shall follow Thee! This simple attraction is both an ointment to heal and a perfume to allure: *we follow,* saith she, *the fragrance of thy perfumes;* and though so *powerful* an attraction, it is followed by the soul *freely*, and without constraint; for it is equally delightful as forcible; and whilst it attracts by its power, it carries us away by its sweetness. *"Draw me,"* says the spouse, *"and we will run after thee."* She speaks of and to herself: *"draw me,"* — behold the unity of the centre which is drawn! *"we will run,"*— behold the correspondence and course of all the senses and powers in following the attraction of the centre!

4. Instead, then, of encouraging sloth, we promote the highest activity, by inculcating a *total dependence on the Spirit of God,* as our moving principle; for it *is in Him, and by Him alone, that we live and move, and have our being.* (*Acts* xvii. 28.) This meek dependence on the Spirit of God is indispensably necessary, and causes the soul shortly to attain the unity and simplicity in which it was created.

We must, therefore, forsake our multifarious activity, to enter into the simplicity and unity of God, in whose image we were originally formed. (*Gen*. i. 27.) *"The Spirit is one and manifold,* (*Wisdom* vii. 22,) and his unity does not preclude his multiplicity. We enter into his unity when we are united to his Spirit, and by that means have one and the same spirit with Him; and we are multiplied in respect to the outward execution of his will, without any departure from our state of union.

In this way, when we are wholly moved by the divine Spirit, which is infinitely active, our activity must, indeed, be more energetic than that which is merely our own. We must yield ourselves to the guidance of *"wisdom, which is more moving than any motion,"* (*Wisdom* vii. 24,) and by abiding in dependence upon its action, our activity will be truly efficient.

5. *"All things were made by the Word, and without Him was not anything made, that was made."* (*John* i. 3.) God originally formed us *in his own image and likeness;* He breathed into us the Spirit of his Word, that *breath of Life* (*Gen*. ii. 7) which He gave us at our creation, in the participation whereof the image of God consisted. Now, this LIFE is one, simple, pure, intimate, and always fruitful.

The devil having broken and deformed the divine image in the soul by sin, the agency of the same Word whose Spirit was inbreathed at our creation, is absolutely necessary for its renovation. It was necessary that it should be He, because He is the express image of his Father; and no image can be repaired by its own efforts, but must remain passive for that purpose under the hand of the workman.

Our *activity* should, therefore, consist in *placing ourselves* in a state of susceptibility to divine impressions, and pliability to all the operations of the Eternal Word. Whilst a tablet is unsteady, the painter is unable to produce a correct picture upon it, and every movement of *self* is productive of erroneous lineaments; it interrupts the work and defeats the design of this adorable Painter. We must then remain in peace, and move only when He moves us. *Jesus Christ hath life in himself,* (*John* v. 26,) and He must give life to every living thing.

The spirit of the Church of God is the spirit of the divine movement. Is she idle, barren, or unfruitful? No; she acts, but her activity is in dependence upon the Spirit of God, who moves and governs her. Just so should it be in her members; that they may be spiritual children of the Church, they must be moved by the Spirit.

6. As all action is estimable only in proportion to the grandeur and dignity of the efficient principle, this action is incontestably more NOBLE than any other. Actions produced by a divine principle, are *divine;* but creaturely actions, however good they appear, are only *human,* or at least virtuous, even when accompanied by grace.

Jesus Christ says that He has life in Himself: all other beings have only a borrowed life; but the Word has life in Himself; and being communicative of his nature, He desires to bestow it upon man. We should therefore make room for the influx of this life, which can only be done by the ejection and loss of the Adamical life, and the suppression of the activity of self. This is agreeable to the assertion of St. Paul, *"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new,"* (*2Cor*. v. 17;) but this state can be accomplished only by dying to ourselves, and to all our own activity, that the activity of God may be substituted in its place.

Instead, therefore, of prohibiting activity, we enjoin it; but in absolute dependence on the Spirit of God, that his activity may take the place of our own. This can only be effected by the consent of the creature; and this concurrence can only be yielded by *moderating* our own action, that the activity of God may, little by little, be wholly substituted for it.

7. Jesus Christ has exemplified this in the Gospel. Martha did what was right; but because she did it in her own spirit, Christ rebuked her. The spirit of man is restless and turbulent; for which reason he does little, though he seems to do a great deal. *"Martha,"* says Christ, "*thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her."* (*Luke* x. 41,42.) And what was it Mary had chosen? Repose, tranquility, and peace. She had apparently ceased to act, that the Spirit of Christ might act in her; she had ceased to live, that Christ might be her life.

This shows how necessary it is to renounce ourselves, and all our activity, to follow Christ; for we cannot follow Him, if we are not animated by his Spirit. Now that his Spirit may gain admittance, it is necessary that our own should be expelled: *"He that is joined unto the Lord,"* says St. Paul, *"is one spirit."* (*1Cor*. vi. 17.) And David said it was good for him to draw near unto the Lord, and to put his trust in him. (*Psalm* lxxiii. 28.) What is this drawing near? It is the beginning of union.

8. Divine union has its commencement, its progress, its achievement, and its consummation. It is at first an inclination towards God. When the soul is introverted in the manner before described, it gets within the influence of the central attraction, and acquires an eager desire after union; this is the beginning. It then adheres to Him when it has got nearer and nearer, and finally becomes one, that is, one spirit with Him; and then it is that the spirit which had wandered from God, returns again to its end.

9. Into this way, then, which is the divine motion, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we must necessarily enter. St. Paul says, *"If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his"* (*Rom*. viii. 9): therefore, to be Christ's, we must be filled with his Spirit, and emptied of our own. The Apostle, in the same passage, proves the necessity of this divine influence. *"As many,"* says he, *"as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."* (*Rom*. viii. 14.)

The spirit of divine filiation is, then, the spirit of divine motion: he therefore adds, *"Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption whereby ye cry Abba, Father."* This spirit is no other than the spirit of Christ, through which we participate in his filiation; *"The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."*

When the soul yields itself to the influence of this blessed Spirit, it perceives the testimony of its divine filiation; and it feels also, with superadded joy, that *it has received, not the spirit of bondage, but of liberty, even the liberty of the children of God;* it then finds that it *acts freely and sweetly*, though with vigor and infallibility.

10. The spirit of divine action is so necessary in all things, that St. Paul, in the same passage, founds that necessity on our ignorance with respect to what we pray for: *"The Spirit,"* says he, *"also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered."* This is plain enough; if we know not what we stand in need of, nor how to pray as we ought for those things which are necessary, and if the Spirit which is in us, and to which we resign ourselves, must ask for us, should we not permit Him to give vent to his unutterable groanings in our behalf?

This Spirit is the Spirit of the Word, which is always heard, as He says himself: *"I knew that thou hearest me always;"* (*John* xi. 42;) and if we freely admit this Spirit to pray and intercede for us, we also shall be always heard. And why? Let us learn from the same great Apostle, that skillful Mystic, and Master of the interior life, where he adds, *"He that searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit; because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God"* (*Rom*. viii. 27): that is to say, the Spirit demands only what is conformable to the will of God. The will of God is that we should be saved, and that we should become perfect: He, therefore, intercedes for all that is necessary for our perfection.

11. Why, then, should we be burthened with superfluous cares, and *weary ourselves in the multiplicity of our ways, without ever saying, let us rest in peace.* God himself invites us to cast all our care upon Him; and He complains in Isaiah, with ineffable goodness, that the soul had expended its powers and its treasures on a thousand external objects, when there was so little to do to attain all it need desire. *"Wherefore,"* saith God, *"do you spend money for that which is*

not bread; and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." (*Isa*. lv. 2.)

Oh! did we but know the blessedness of thus hearkening to God, and how greatly the soul is strengthened by such a course! *"Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord"* (*Zech*. ii. 13); all must cease as soon as He appears. But to engage us still farther to an abandonment without reservation, God assures us, by the same Prophet, that we need fear nothing, because he takes a very special care of us; *"Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget; yet will not I forget thee."* (*Isa*. xlix. 15.) O words full of consolation! Who after that will fear to abandon himself wholly to the guidance of God?

Chapter 22: On Inward and Outward Acts.

ACTS are distinguished into external and internal. *External* acts are those which appear outwardly, and bear relation to some sensible object, and have no moral character, except such as they derive from the principle from which they proceed. I intend here to speak only of *internal* acts, those energies of the soul, by which it turns internally *towards* some objects, and *away from* others.

2. If during my application to God, I should form a will to change the nature of my act, I should thereby withdraw myself from God and turn to created objects, and that in a greater or less degree according to the strength of the act: and if, when I am turned towards the creature, I would return to God, I must necessarily form an act for that purpose; and the more perfect this act is, the more complete is the conversion.

Till conversion is perfected, many reiterated acts are necessary; for it is with some progressive, though with others it is instantaneous. My act, however, should consist in a continual turning to God, an exertion of every faculty and power of the soul purely for Him, agreeably to the instructions of the son of Sirach: *"Re-unite all the motions of thy heart in the holiness of God"* (*Eccles'us*. xxx. 24,); and to the example of David, *"I will keep my whole strength for thee,"* (*Psalm* lix. 9, Vulg.) which is done by earnestly re-entering into ourselves; as Isaiah saith, *"Return to your heart"* (*Isa.* xlvi. 8, Vulg.) For we have strayed from our heart by sin, and it is our heart only that God requires: *"My son give me thine heart, and let thine eye observe my ways."* (*Prov*. xxiii. 26.) To give the heart to God, is to have the whole energy of the soul ever centering in Him, that we may be rendered conformable to his will. We must, therefore, continue invariably turned to God, from our first application to Him.

But the spirit being unstable, and the soul accustomed to turn to external objects, it is easily distracted. This evil, however, will be counteracted if, on perceiving the wandering, we, by a pure act of return to God, instantly replace ourselves in Him; and this act subsists as long as the conversion lasts, by the powerful influence of a simple and unfeigned return to God.

3. As many reiterated acts form a habit, the soul contracts the habit of conversion; and that act which was before interrupted and distinct becomes habitual.

The soul should not, then, be perplexed about forming an act which already subsists, and which, indeed, it cannot attempt to form without very great difficulty; it even finds that it is withdrawn from its proper state, under pretence of seeking that which is in reality acquired, seeing the habit is already formed, and it is confirmed in habitual conversion and habitual love. It is seeking one act by the help of many, instead of continuing attached to God by one simple act alone.

We may remark, that at times we form with facility many *distinct yet simple* acts; which shows that we have wandered, and that we re-enter our heart after having strayed from it; yet when we have re-entered, we should remain there in peace. We err, therefore, in supposing that we must not form acts; *we form them continually:* but let them be conformable to the degree of our spiritual advancement.

4. The great difficulty with most spiritual people arises from their not clearly comprehending this matter. Now, some acts are *transient and distinct*, others are *continued*, and again, some are *direct*, and others *reflective*. All cannot form the first, neither are all in a state suited to form the others. The first are adapted to those who have strayed, and who require a distinct exertion, proportioned to the extent of their deviation; if the latter be inconsiderable, an act of the most simple kind is sufficient.

5. By the *continued* act, I mean that whereby the soul is altogether turned toward God by a *direct* act, always subsisting, and which it does not renew unless it has been interrupted. The soul being thus turned, is in charity, and abides therein; *"and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God."* (*1John* iv. 16.) The soul then, as it were, exists and rests in this habitual act. It is, however, free from sloth; for there is still an *uninterrupted act subsisting,* which is a *sweet sinking into the Deity,* whose attraction becomes more and more powerful. Following this potent attraction, and dwelling in love and charity, the soul sinks continually deeper into that Love, maintaining an activity infinitely more powerful, vigorous, and effectual than that which served to accomplish its first return.

6. Now the soul that is thus *profoundly and vigorously active,* being wholly given up to God, does not perceive this act, because it is direct and not reflective. This is the reason why some, not expressing themselves properly, say, that they make no acts; but it is a mistake, for they were never more truly or nobly active; they should say, that *they did not distinguish their acts, and not that they did not act.* I grant that they do not act of themselves; but they are drawn, and they follow the attraction. Love is the weight which sinks them. As one falling into the sea, would sink from one depth to another to all eternity, if the sea were infinite, so they, without perceiving their descent, drop with inconceivable swiftness into the lowest deeps.

It is, then, improper to say that we do not make acts; all form acts, but the manner of their formation is not alike in all. The mistake arises from this, that all who know they should act, are desirous of acting *distinguishably and perceptibly;* but this cannot be: sensible acts are for beginners; there are others for those in a more advanced state. To stop in the former, which are weak and of little profit, is to debar ourselves of the latter; as to attempt the latter without having passed through the former, is a no less considerable error.

7. *"To everything there is a season"* (*Eccles*. iii. 1): every state has its commencement, its progress, and its consummation, and it is an unhappy error to stop in the beginning. There is no art but what has its progress; at first, we labor with toil, but at last we reap the fruit of our industry.

When the vessel is in port, the mariners are obliged to exert all their strength, that they may clear her thence, and put to sea; but they subsequently turn her with facility as they please. In like manner, while the soul remains in sin and the creature, many endeavors are requisite to effect its freedom; the cables which hold it must be loosed, and then by strong and vigorous efforts it gathers itself inward, pushes off gradually from the old port of Self, and, leaving that behind, proceeds to the interior, the haven so much desired.

8. When the vessel is thus started, as she advances on the sea, she leaves the shore behind; and the farther she departs from the land, the less labor is requisite in moving her forward. At length she begins to get gently under sail, and now proceeds so swiftly in her course, that the oars, which are become useless, are laid aside. How is the pilot now employed? he is content with spreading the sails and holding the rudder.

To spread the sails, is to lay ourselves before God in the prayer of simple exposition, to be moved by his Spirit; *to hold the rudder,* is to restrain our heart from wandering from the true course, recalling it gently, and guiding it steadily by the dictates of the Spirit of God, which gradually gains possession of the heart, just as the breeze by degrees fills the sails and impels the vessel. While the winds are fair, the pilot and the mariners rest from their labors. What progress do they not now secure, without the least fatigue! They make more way now in one hour, while they rest and leave the vessel to the wind, than they did in a length of time by all their former efforts; and even were they now to attempt using the oars, besides greatly fatiguing themselves, they would only retard the vessel by their useless exertions.

This is our proper course interiorly, and a short time will advance us by the divine impulsion farther than many reiterated acts of self-exertion. Whoever will try this path, will find it the easiest in the world.

9. If the wind be contrary and blow a storm, we must cast anchor in the sea, to hold the vessel. This anchor is simply trust in God and hope in his goodness, waiting patiently the calming of the tempest and the return of a favorable gale; thus did David: *"I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry."* (*Ps*. xl. 1.) We must therefore be resigned to the Spirit of God, giving ourselves up wholly to his divine guidance.

Chapter 23: An Exhortation To Ministers.

IF all who labored for the conversion of others sought to reach them BY THE HEART, introducing them immediately into prayer and the interior life, numberless and permanent conversions would ensue. On the contrary, few and transient

fruits must attend that labor which is confined to outward matters, such as burdening the disciple with a thousand precepts for external exercises, instead of leading the soul to Christ by the occupation of the heart in Him.

If ministers were solicitous thus to instruct their parishioners, shepherds, while they watched their flocks, would have the spirit of the primitive Christians, and the husbandman at the plough would maintain a blessed intercourse with his God; the manufacturer, while he exhausted his outward man with labor, would be renewed with inward strength; every species of vice would shortly disappear, and every parishioner would become spiritually minded.

2. O when once the HEART is gained, how easily is all the rest corrected! this is why God, above all things, requires the HEART. By this means alone, we may extirpate the dreadful vices which so prevail among the lower orders, such as drunkenness, blasphemy, lewdness, enmity and theft. JESUS CHRIST would reign everywhere in peace, and the face of the church would be renewed throughout.

The decay of internal piety is unquestionably the source of the various errors that have appeared in the world; all would speedily be overthrown, were inward devotion re-established. Errors take possession of no soul, except such as are deficient in faith and prayer; and if, instead of engaging our wandering brethren in constant disputations, we would but teach them simply *to believe*, and diligently to PRAY, we should lead them sweetly to God.

O how inexpressibly great is the loss sustained by mankind from the neglect of the interior life! And what an account will those have to render who are entrusted with the care of souls, and have not discovered and communicated to their flock this hidden treasure!

3. Some excuse themselves by saying, that there is danger in this way, or that simple persons are incapable of comprehending the things of the Spirit. But the oracles of truth affirm the contrary: *"The Lord loveth those who walk simply."* (*Prov*. xii. 22, Vulg.) But what danger can there be in walking in the only true way, which is Jesus Christ, giving ourselves up to Him, fixing our eye continually on Him, placing all our confidence in his grace, and tending with all the strength of our soul to his purest love?

4. The *simple* ones, so far from being *incapable* of this perfection, are, by their docility, innocence, and humility, peculiarly qualified for its attainment; and, as they are not accustomed to reasoning, they are less tenacious of their own opinions. Even from their want of learning, they submit more freely to the teachings of the divine Spirit; whereas others, who are cramped and blinded by self-sufficiency, offer much greater resistance to the operations of grace.

We are told in Scripture that *"unto the simple, God giveth the understanding of his law"* (*Psalm* cxix. 130, cxviii. 130, Vulg.): and we are also assured, that God loves to communicate with them: *"The Lord careth for the simple; I was reduced to extremity and He saved me."* (*Psalm* cxiv. 6, cxv. 6, Vulg.) Let spiritual fathers be careful how they prevent their little ones from coming to Christ; He himself said to his apostles, *"Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."* (*Matt*. xix. 14.) It was the endeavor of the apostles to prevent children from going to our Lord, which occasioned this command.

5. Man frequently applies a remedy to the outward body, whilst the disease lies at the heart. The cause of our being so unsuccessful in reforming mankind, especially those of the lower classes, is our beginning with external matters; all our labors in this field, do but produce such fruit as endures not; but if the *key of the interior* be first given, the exterior would be naturally and easily reformed.

Now this is very easy. To teach man to seek God in his heart, to think of Him, to return to Him whenever he finds he has wandered from Him, and to do and suffer all things with a single eye to please Him, is leading the soul to the source of all grace, and causing it to find there everything necessary for sanctification.

6. I therefore beseech you all, O ye that have the care of souls, to put them at once into this way, which is Jesus Christ; nay, it is He himself that conjures you, by all the blood he has shed for those entrusted to you. *"Speak to the heart of Jerusalem!"* (*Isa*. xl. 2, Vulg.) O ye dispensers of his grace! preachers of his word! ministers of his sacraments! establish his kingdom! — and that it may indeed be established, make Him RULER OVER THE HEART! For as it is the heart alone that can oppose his sovereignty, it is by the subjection of the heart that his sovereignty is most highly honored: *"Give glory to the holiness of God, and he shall become your sanctification."* (*Isa*. viii. 13, Vulg.) Compose catechisms expressly to teach prayer, not by reasoning nor by method, for the simple are incapable of that; but to teach the prayer of the heart, not of the understanding; the prayer of God's Spirit, not of man's invention.

7. Alas! by directing them to pray in *elaborate forms*, and to be curiously critical therein, you create their chief obstacles. The children have been led astray from the best of fathers, by your endeavoring to teach them too refined a language. Go, then, ye poor children, to your heavenly Father, speak to him in your natural language; rude and barbarous as it may be, it is not so to Him. A father is better pleased with an address which love and respect have made confused, because he sees that it proceeds from the heart, than he is by a dry and barren harangue, though never so elaborate. The simple and undisguised emotions of love are infinitely more expressive than all language, and all

reasoning.

8. Men have desired to love LOVE by formal rules, and have thus lost much of that love. O how unnecessary is it to teach an art of loving! The language of love is barbarous to him that does not love, but perfectly natural to him that does; and there is no better way to learn how to love God, than to love him. The most ignorant often become the most perfect, because they proceed with more cordiality and simplicity. The Spirit of God needs none of our arrangements; when it pleases Him, He turns shepherds into Prophets, and, so far from excluding any from the temple of prayer, he throws wide the gates that all may enter; while wisdom is directed to cry aloud in the highways, *"Whoso is simple let him turn in hither"* (*Prov*. ix. 4); and to the fools she saith, *"Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled."* (*Prov*. ix. 5.) And doth not Jesus Christ himself thank his Father for having *"hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes?"* (*Matt*. xi. 25.)

Chapter 24: On The Passive Way To Divine Union.

IT is impossible to attain Divine Union, solely by the way of meditation, or of the affections, or by any devotion, no matter how illuminated. There are many reasons for this, the chief of which are those which follow.

1. According to Scripture, *"no man shall see God and live."* (*Exod*. xxxiii. 20.) Now all the exercises of discursive prayer, and even of *active contemplation*, regarded as an end, and not as a mere preparative to that which is passive, are still living exercises, by which we cannot see God; that is to say, be united with him. All that is of man and of his doing, be it never so noble, never so exalted, must first be destroyed.

St. John relates that there was silence in heaven. (*Rev*. viii. 1.) Now heaven represents the ground and centre of the soul, wherein all must be hushed to silence when the majesty of God appears. All the efforts, nay, the very existence, of self, must be destroyed; because nothing is opposite to God, but self, and all the malignity of man is in self-appropriation, as the source of its evil nature; insomuch that the purity of a soul increases in proportion as it loses this self-hood; and that which was a fault while the soul lived in self-appropriation, is no longer such, after it has acquired purity and innocence, by departing from that self-hood, which caused the dissimilitude between it and God.

2. To unite two things so opposite as the purity of God and the impurity of the creature, the simplicity of God and the multiplicity of man, much more is requisite than the efforts of the creature. Nothing less than an efficacious operation of the Almighty can ever accomplish this; for two things must have some relation or similarity before they can become one; as the impurity of dross cannot be united with the purity of gold.

3. What, then, does God do? He sends his own Wisdom before Him, as fire shall be sent upon the earth, to destroy by its activity all that is impure; and as nothing can resist the power of that fire, but it consumes everything, so this Wisdom destroys all the impurities of the creature, in order to dispose it for divine union.

The impurity which is so fatal to union consists in *Self-appropriation* and *Activity.*

Self-appropriation; because it is the source and fountain of all that defilement which can never be allied to essential purity; as the rays of the sun may shine, indeed, upon mire, but can never be united with it.
Activity; for God being in an infinite stillness, the soul, in order to be united to Him, must participate of his stillness, else the contrariety between stillness and activity would prevent assimilation.

Therefore, the soul can never arrive at divine union but in the rest of its will; nor can it ever become one with God, but by being re-established in central rest and in the purity of its first creation.

4. God purifies the soul by his Wisdom, as refiners do metals in the furnace. Gold cannot be purified but by fire, which gradually consumes all that is earthy and foreign, and separates it from the metal. It is not sufficient to fit it for use that the earthy part should be changed into gold; it must then be melted and dissolved by the force of fire, to separate from the mass every drossy or alien particle; and must be again and again cast into the furnace, until it has lost every trace of pollution, and every possibility of being farther purified.

The goldsmith cannot now discover any adulterate mixture, because of its perfect purity and simplicity. The fire no

longer touches it; and were it to remain an age in the furnace, its spotlessness would not be increased, nor its substance diminished. It is then fit for the most exquisite workmanship, and if, thereafter, this gold seem obscured or defiled, it is nothing more than an accidental impurity occasioned by the contact of some foreign body, and is only superficial; it is no hinderance to its employment, and is widely different from its former debasement, which was hidden in the ground of its nature, and, as it were, identified with it. Those, however, who are uninstructed, beholding the pure gold sullied by some external pollution, would be disposed to prefer an impure and gross metal, that appeared superficially bright and polished.

5. Farther, the pure and the impure gold are not mingled; before they can be united, they must be equally refined; the goldsmith cannot mix dross and gold. What will he do, then? He will purge out the dross with fire, so that the inferior may become as pure as the other, and then they may be united. This is what St. Paul means, when he declares that "*the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is"* (*1Cor*. iii 13); he adds, *"If any man's work be burnt, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire."* He here intimates, that there are works so degraded by impure mixtures, that though the mercy of God accepts them, yet they must pass through the fire, to be purged from self; and it is in this sense that God is said to examine and judge our righteousness, because that by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified; but by the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ. (*Rom*. iii. 20, etc.)

6. Thus we may see that the divine justice and wisdom, like a pitiless and devouring fire, must destroy all that is earthly, sensual, and carnal, and all self-activity, before the soul can be united to its God. Now, this can never be accomplished by the industry of the creature; on the contrary, he always submits to it with reluctance; because, as I have said, he is so enamored of self, and so fearful of its destruction, that did not God act upon him powerfully and with authority, he would never consent.

7. It may, perhaps, be objected here, that as God never robs man of his free will, he can always resist the divine operations; and that I therefore err in saying *God acts absolutely, and without the consent of man.*

Let me, however, explain. By man's giving a *passive consent*, God, without usurpation, may assume full power and an entire guidance; for having, in the beginning of his conversion, made an unreserved surrender of himself to all that God wills of him or by him, he thereby gave an active consent to whatever God might afterwards require. But when God begins to burn, destroy, and purify, the soul does not perceive that these operations are intended for its good, but rather supposes the contrary; and, as the gold at first seems rather to blacken than brighten in the fire, so it conceives that its purity is lost; insomuch, that if an *active and explicit* consent were then required, the soul could scarcely give it, nay would often withhold it. All it does is to remain firm in its passive consent, enduring as patiently as possible all these divine operations, which it is neither able nor desirous to obstruct.

8. In this manner, therefore, the soul is purified from all its self-originated, distinct, perceptible, and multiplied operations, which constitute a great dissimilitude between it and God; it is rendered by degrees *conform*, and then *uniform;* and the passive capacity of the creature is elevated, ennobled, and enlarged, though in a secret and hidden manner, hence called mystical; but in all these operations the soul must concur passively. It is true, indeed, that in the beginning its activity is requisite; from which, however, as the divine operations become stronger, it must gradually cease; yielding itself up to the impulses of the divine Spirit, till it is wholly absorbed in Him. But this is a process which lasts a long time.

9. We do not, then, say, as some have supposed, that there is no need of *activity*; since, on the contrary, it is the gate; at which, however, *we should not always tarry*, since we ought to tend towards ultimate perfection, which is impracticable except the first helps are laid aside; for however necessary they may have been at the entrance of the road, they afterwards become greatly detrimental to those who adhere to them obstinately, preventing them from ever attaining the end. This made St. Paul say, *"Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."* (*Phil*. iii. 13.)

Would you not say that he had lost his senses, who, having undertaken a journey, should fix his abode at the first inn, because he had been told that many travellers had come that way, that some had lodged there, and that the masters of the house dwelt there? All that we wish, then, is, that souls would *press toward the end*, taking the shortest and easiest road, and not stopping at the first stage. Let them follow the counsel and example of St. Paul, and suffer themselves *"to be led by the Spirit of God,"* (*Rom*. viii. 14,) which will infallibly conduct them to the end of their creation, the enjoyment of God.

10. But while we confess that the enjoyment of God is the end for which alone we were created, and that every soul that does not attain divine union and the purity of its creation in this life, can only be saved as by fire, how strange it is, that we should dread and avoid the process; as if that could be the cause of evil and imperfection in the present life, which is to produce the perfection of glory in the life to come.

11. None can be ignorant that God is the Supreme Good; that essential blessedness consists in union with Him; that the

saints differ in glory, according as the union is more or less perfect; and that the soul cannot attain this union by the mere activity of its own powers, since God communicates Himself to the soul, in proportion as its passive capacity is great, noble and extensive. We can only be united to God in simplicity and passivity, and as this union is beatitude itself, the way that leads us in this passivity cannot be evil, but must be the most free from danger, and the best.

12. This way is not *dangerous*. Would Jesus Christ have made this the most perfect and necessary of all ways, had it been so? No! all can travel it; and as all are called to happiness, all are likewise called to the enjoyment of God, both in this life and the next, for that alone is happiness. I say the enjoyment of God himself, and not of his gifts; these latter do not constitute essential beatitude, as they cannot fully content the soul; it is so noble and so great, that the most exalted gifts of God cannot make it happy, unless the Giver also bestows Himself. Now the whole desire of the Divine Being is to give Himself to every creature, according to the capacity with which it is endowed; and yet, alas! how reluctantly man suffers himself to be drawn to God! how fearful is he to prepare for divine union!

13. Some say, that we *must not place ourselves in this state.* I grant it; but I say also, that no creature could ever do it; since it would not be possible for any, by all their own efforts, to unite themselves to God; it is He alone must do it. It is altogether idle, then, to exclaim against those who are self-united, as such a thing cannot be.

They say again, that *some may feign to have attained this state.* None can any more feign this, than the wretch who is on the point of perishing with hunger can, for any length of time at least, feign to be full and satisfied. Some wish or word, some sigh or sign, will inevitably escape him, and betray that he is far from being satisfied.

Since then none can attain this end by their own labor, we do not pretend to introduce any into it, but *only to point out the way that leads to it:* beseeching all not *to become attached to the accommodations on the road, external practices, which must all be left behind when the signal is given.* The experienced instructor knows this, points to the water of life, and lends his aid to obtain it. Would it not be an unjustifiable cruelty to show a spring to a thirsty man, then bind him so that he could not reach it, and suffer him to die of thirst?

14. This is just what is done every day. Let us all agree in the WAY, as we all agree in the end, which is evident and incontrovertible. The WAY has its beginning, progress, and termination; and the nearer we approach the consummation, the farther is the beginning behind us; it is only by leaving the one, that we can arrive at the other. You cannot get from the entrance to a distant place, without passing over the intermediate space, and, if the end be good, holy, and necessary, and the entrance also good, why should the necessary passage, the direct road leading from the one to the other, be evil?

O the blindness of the greater part of mankind, who pride themselves on science and wisdom! How true is it, O my God, *that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes!*

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