

In Memoriam.

Prayer.

By

James Kennedy.



Rev. James Kennedy, D. D.

Thoughts on Prayer.

BY

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With Brief Memoir, Etc.

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Memoir.

The following little treatise on Prayer was completed by Mr. Kennedy not long before his death. He had it on hands for a year or two and spent many hours over it during those last days of his life in which he was not able for continuous pulpit work. The spirit in which it was begun was, as he said himself, a desire to leave behind him something by which he might do good and be remembered. It is the fruit of his most mature Christian experience, although not of his greatest intellectual vigor.

In offering some biographical details, it should be said, perhaps, that Mr. Kennedy had a great aversion to being written up. He did not like to see in print matters that he thought concerned only himself in his private relations. He enjoyed appreciation of his work as much as any man, and found a stimulus in it, but to record personal and complimentary matter *as such* would be contrary to his wishes. The following details are meant only to illustrate character and to furnish to his friends the outlines of his life.*

James Kennedy was born in August of the year 1818. He was of Scottish ancestry, but his forefathers had lived for some years in County Derry in the North of Ireland. In his boyhood he showed great force of character by overcoming difficulties in preparing for college. His early professional training was received at the Belfast Academical Institution under the presidency of Dr. Bryce, famous as an educator in his day. After completing his studies in Belfast he went to Paisley, Scotland, to study theology and hear the lectures of Dr. Andrew Symington. On May 10th, 1842, he was licensed to preach the gospel, and a little more than a year after he was ordained pastor of the Broadlane and Derrybeg congregation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Dates and facts such as these are an imperfect record. Between these turning points of his career were multitudes of lesser experiences—heart experiences, also—that made the man. During his years at

*Some details of Mr. Kennedy's life are best told by his associates in church work, and will be found in Minutes appended.

college and seminary, as well as in the early period of his ministry, he gave some time to teaching. He had certificates from Dr. Bryce of his knowledge and skill in the sciences and the ancient languages. He prepared young men for college; and the invigoration his own mind received by this means contributed to the development of that logical force and grasp that were admired in his preaching to his latest years.

It is interesting to notice the pains Mr. Kennedy took to make his pulpit work finished in matter and method. Among his books is a bound volume of manuscript sermons dated at the village in which he first resided. It consists of twenty-four sermons and lectures, each on its own text, written in full and with all the excellencies and faults in form characteristic of the rhetorical tastes of the age. But they illustrate very well the distinctive notes of his preaching—its instructiveness, its many-sidedness, its attention to all the possibilities of a text, with an "Improvement" which leaves no doubt as to what he thought the main value of doctrine.

It was not long after his settlement that the temperance reform began to stir the churches of Ireland. Mr. Kennedy threw himself into this work with all his might. Drunkenness was the most prevalent social evil of his time, and in his early youth it had often excited his disgust. When a public attack was made upon it, he was ready to follow or to lead. The main hope of the reformers was in methods for protecting the young.

**"The drunkards will never be dead :
I'll tell you the reason why—
The young ones they grow up
Before the old ones die."**

So ran the slogan, and thousands rallied to the cry. Bands of Hope were organized everywhere and printed pledges were signed by old and young. Mr. Kennedy and his people were among the first in zeal and in effort. A great deal of good was accomplished. He knew men too well to expect at once a perfect change in habits that were the growth of years. But let us make an advance when we can, he said, and trust to God and the best in man to conserve what is gained.

During the first period of his ministry, Mr. Kennedy was fond of open air preaching on the evenings of the Sabbaths. The long twilights and the respect paid to the Sabbath by all classes,

made it possible to gather great companies of people on some piece of green meadow, under the shelter of a few friendly trees. In such places he delighted to preach the word of life, and to bring to bear on men and women of all classes the motives of the gospel of Christ. It was a semi-mission work, peculiar in some respects to the place, and it offered opportunities which Mr. Kennedy's eager spirit as eagerly seized.

In the year 1859 took place that strange religious stirring which was then called a Revival. It was somewhat similar to a movement which our missionaries say is now in progress among the Ansairies of Syria. The distinctive feature of it was the physical accompaniments. Under the preaching of the gospel, men and women were "stricken down" and rolled on the floor. When carried out they lay silent, as in a trance, or described visions they saw of Christ walking on the roof of the church, or in some of the attitudes familiar from passages of Scripture. Explanations of these phenomena have been offered from the standpoints of natural science and of theology. Mr. Kennedy welcomed the whole manifestation with some reserve. There were instances of genuine conversion and the beginnings of a holy life. There were also cases that were bodily exercise and nothing more. In the mysterious mingling of physical and spiritual, Mr. Kennedy applied Christ's supreme test, "By their fruits ye shall know them." The whole extraordinary incident, with its divine and human aspects, was a remarkable object lesson in the working of the grace of God on the basis of depraved humanity. It is for this reason that it is referred to here, giving occasion as it did to some of Mr. Kennedy's strongest convictions on the nature of the Christian life.

The hearty interest which Mr. Kennedy took in guiding this spiritual awakening increased his reputation, and two consequences were soon apparent: His congregation was increased in numbers by the accession of families of awakened people who felt drawn to him, and invitations came to him to accept a pastorate in churches offering a wider field. But, of course, a change in ecclesiastical relations was never seriously considered by him. Good feelings were reciprocated and life-long friendships established.

It was early in his ministry, in the year 1848, that Mr. Kennedy was happily married to Eliza Conn. This made him

acquainted with a domestic sphere and domestic duties to which by temperament he was greatly inclined. He took pride in his family and in his house and grounds. That famous old book, "The Manse Garden," with its poetry and its good sense, was a favorite. The cultivation of fruits and flowers was his recreation. He found pleasure in every aspect of nature, and in ministering to nature and interpreting her phases, he found food for lofty thought. His family grew up in a genial atmosphere. Parental discipline was mild, and the memories of home still cherished by his children have their center in the affections of a cheerful and godly mother and father.

Mr. Kennedy always had correspondents in the churches in the United States. Some of his letters show that a good report of his work had reached the distant land. He had suggestions for settlement in vacant congregations. At this time Mr. Kennedy had no definite desires or design of any kind for a change in his place of work. But he had a desire to visit friends in the western world. We find him, accordingly, in the year 1869, on his way across the Atlantic and preaching in the churches of New York. As the outcome of an unexpected turn of events, he was called to the pastorate of the Fourth Reformed Presbyterian church of New York. It held a position in the city well removed from the other congregations of the same denomination, and it looked forward to a fruitful work in its own field. Letters from members of the congregation to the pastor-elect overflow with good opinions and good hopes. The call was accepted, chiefly because it was considered a call of Providence and of the Lord of the church. On the 13th of November, 1870, Mr. Kennedy was installed pastor of the Fourth New York congregation. The congregation grew in numbers and erected a new church building on 48th street.

In the year 1887 Mr. Kennedy was elected by the church to fill the chair in the Theological Seminary left vacant by the death of Dr. Sloane. He was thought well fitted for the position by experience and ability, and was urged strongly to accept it. But it was his own opinion that at his age and with his attachments to his congregation it was not wise to undertake anything in which so much depended on his success in an untried field.

It is a matter of more than private interest that in the year 1886 the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred on Mr. Kennedy by the trustees of Geneva College. This corporation does

not use its legal right to grant such degrees frequently, and it proceeds only on the ground of sufficient reason. Mr. Kennedy appreciated the intention and the honor, although all his life he had a singular dislike to titles of any kind.

During the last years of his ministry, the Fourth church, like many others, suffered severely in membership. Mr. Kennedy often spoke with regret of that movement of population which carried so many to the suburbs and eventually lost them to the church. The work of the church, however, went on, and the members sustained their pastor heartily to the last. At the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination to the ministry, an affectionate address was presented to him by his people, recounting the work and the achievements of his pastorate. This was emphasized by a public meeting and accompanied by valuable gifts.

It was at this period of his life, when Mr. Kennedy had reached his greatest ripeness of thought and experience, that he published his volume on "Christ in the Song." His work for the press had begun early in life. It included controversy, in pamphlet form, and periodical matter of general interest to the church and the times. His book on the *Song* is a good indication of his estimation of the Saviour in His relations to men, and it speaks for itself as an interpretation of a difficult book of Scripture. The following papers on Prayer now published are almost his last word to the world. If his mode of presenting this vital subject will bring help to any reader, the purpose in writing and publishing is so far attained. Mr. Kennedy had somewhat of Bacon's feeling, that every man owes a debt to his profession; and to his mind, the preparation of a useful book was a fitting recognition of his obligations to posterity and the public.

Mr. Kennedy had resigned the care of his congregation in 1896, and in November of 1897 he removed with his daughter to St. John, New Brunswick. The change was made for domestic reasons. It took off his shoulders the charge of a house and it brought him under the immediate care of a devoted daughter—Mrs. Dr. Morrison—and her family. The change of scene seemed favorable to his health. He was contented and happy in his new home. He felt strong enough to preach twice for the congregation in St. John. But the bodily frame was weakening more rapidly than any one suspected. Heart action decreased in vigor, and from this other parts of the system suffered. The end came

on the 26th of January, 1898, after only a few days of actual prostration. It was peaceful in every way. In life he was ever reticent on matters nearest his heart, and in the hour and article of death he spake little. But his composed spirit and placid countenance betokened the triumph of faith and were more eloquent than speech in commending the death of the righteous.

This sketch would scarcely be complete without a particular reference to Matilda Kennedy, the daughter who was the constant companion of her father during his last years. She was companion, care-taker, amanuensis, and it was she who provided for the publication of this volume as a Memorial. Her devotion was so unremitting that she denied herself the ease and change of place which might have improved her health and prolonged her days. Her health was not vigorous, and after the shock of a father's death it declined rapidly. In November, 1898—about ten months after the aged father—she closed her earthly life and went to her reward. She lived in quietness and did her part—a part that was rich in spiritual significance, and to those who know, a memory of precious worth.

. . . MINUTE . . .

OF THE

Session of the Fourth R. P. Church,

WEST FORTY-EIGHTH STREET, NEW YORK.

We began our existence as an organization in February, 1870. In November of same year, the organization was completed by the Presbytery of New York, through the installation over us of Rev. James Kennedy, of Ireland.

At this time there was but a membership of sixty-two. Under his faithful ministry, the congregation grew into an active and vigorous organization. In consequence of this, with the Holy Spirit as our helper, a great deal of work was accomplished in the locality where we were situated.

Dr. Kennedy came to us in the full vigor of mental and physical power. Nothing could better characterize these years than to say that he was a man of growth. It was not long, therefore, ere his attainments as a scholar along biblical and literary lines were recognized throughout our Church. Still, never would this have occurred had not Mr. Kennedy kept abreast of the times in every respect.

It is with pleasure, therefore, we bear testimony to the character of the late esteemed Dr. Kennedy, our pastor and friend, in the following three-fold respect:

As a *man*, he was deeply spiritual in his every-day life. What seemed theory in the pulpit became experience here. On the street, as well as in the home, did he emulate the Christ, "whose he was and whom he served." As far as our knowledge goes, he never lost an opportunity of endeavoring to do good with whomsoever he came in contact.

As a *pastor*, he was diligent and faithful in ministering to the people of his charge. It seemed to be a matter of conscience for him to follow the Christ law of service, "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you." During his pastorate over us, he never failed to make a pastoral

- visit annually on every member of his congregation. He was also a frequent visitor as a counselor and friend, in times of trouble, sickness, bereavement. Thereby many were comforted, and brought into closer relation with their Master.

As a *preacher*, he was great and powerful. As an expounder of Scripture, he was keen. As an illustrator of Divine Truth, he was a firm believer in using the natural sciences and all phases of human life. In our church he had few equals in pulpit eloquence and heart-searching power.

As a Session, therefore, be it *resolved*:

I. That, in the death of Dr. Kennedy, we recognize the loss of a pastor, a counselor, a friend. He will live long in our memory, and his name is already enshrined in our hearts.

II. That, to the members of his immediate family, we offer our warmest sympathy. We know they will recognize that for him "to live was Christ, and to die is gain." We commend them to our Saviour's care. May their hearthstone be one where He loves to dwell.

III. To the congregation we would recommend a most earnest endeavor to *live* Christ. Let none of the sheep or lambs be missing, so that both the undershepherd and flock may be reunited on the other shore, in the presence of our Shepherd King.

IV. That a copy of this minute be sent to the immediate family of the late Dr. Kennedy. Also that a copy be forwarded to the *Olive Trees* and *Christian Nation* of our Church.

THEODORE MELVILLE CARLISLE, *Moderator*.

ROBERT MCAFEE, *Clerk*.

. . . MINUTE . . .
OF THE
Reformed Presbyterian Synod,

AT WALTON, NEW YORK, MAY, 1898.

On Wednesday, January 26, 1898, passed away from earth Rev. James Kennedy, D. D. At the time of his departure he had been in the Gospel ministry for over 55 years. The ability which attracted attention to his preaching in the North of Ireland, where he was engaged in pastoral work from 1843 to 1870, characterized his ministry in the United States. As pastor of the Fourth Congregation in New York, his preaching was uniformly clear and impressive, every truth that he presented having been evidently wrought out in his own experience before it fell from his lips in the pulpit. An unblemished character, united with a well cultivated mind, and a sanctified desire to excel, placed him, not only in the opinion of his own congregation, but of brethren in other parts of the Church, in the front rank of the ministers of this century. Like the witnesses in Reformation times, he held up before men, always and everywhere, the living Christ, in whose fellowship he found so much joy and strength. The great truths centering in the person of the Mediator were portrayed with a vividness and beauty of illustration that at once impressed and delighted his audiences.

James Kennedy never claimed for himself a prominent place in the Church courts ; but, when he did speak, his views always commanded respect. He listened quietly to the debates, and often at an opportune moment would make a suggestion that carried conviction and served to harmonize conflicting opinions. His election in 1886 to a professorship in the Theological Seminary showed very clearly the esteem and confidence in which he was held by his brethren. A man of ripe scholarship, a close student of the Bible, a thoroughly devoted servant of Jesus Christ, he was well qualified to instruct and train young men for their life-work.

James Kennedy was indeed "a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." As a Synod we record our appreciation of his character and services as an able minister of the New Testament, and for 27 years a loyal fellow-laborer. We think of him as having finished his course and as having received the crown of righteousness that the Lord gives to every one that loves His appearing.

R. M. SOMMERVILLE,

F. M. FOSTER,

T. M. CARLISLE,

A. ALEXANDER,

ROBERT McAFEE,

Committee.

To
Mrs. Hugh O'Neill,
His Dear Niece and True Friend,
this little volume
was
Affectionately Inscribed
by
The Author.

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THOUGHTS ON PRAYER.

CHAPTER I.

PRAYER—INDISPENSABLE TO CHRISTIAN CHARACTER AND LIFE.

" Pray without ceasing."

" In everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God."

" Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."

" Continuing instant in prayer."

" Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation."

" Behold, he prayeth !"

It is a noticeable fact that no other grace, or gracious exercise, is referred to so frequently, either in the Word of God, or in the experience of the saints, as what is usually known as prayer: and as has been suggested, if we would only collect and arrange in order all the forms in which it is found to exist, we could build a towering pyramid of passages, promises, commands, encouragements and examples, which would not only show the importance of the ordinance, but also how helpful it has been to the children of God in every age, and under every circumstance. We may well enquire why such emphasis has been given to an exercise so familiar and so humbling, why such confidence in the full assurance of its success; yea, even why so much enthusiasm as has often been excited and kept alive by its influence, as, with our eyes toward the throne, our attitude is one of constant expectation. Look down that long line of exercised and experienced saints, since Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice than his brother; look narrowly into the details of their every-day life, even through changing dispensations: let the eye note their attitude as they give form to practical godliness, and nine times out of ten they will be found on their knees, wrapped in devout meditation, or prostrate in humble supplication.

The value and importance of prayer are seen in the following particulars :

First. Without prayer there is neither true religion nor practical piety in life or character. Job asks of the hypocrite, " Will he delight himself in the Almighty, will he always call on God ? " (ch. 27 : 10). Hypocrisy, idolatry, formalism, worldly pomp and display, may find substitutes for true religion, but true piety, that " seeks the face of God," knows no substitute. True piety and genuine religion commence with the new birth, and prayer is the birth-cry of the quickened soul. " Behold, he prayeth ! " What an epoch in the life of Paul, of whom these words were written ! He, before his conversion, had often prayed as a Pharisee, but all that went for nothing now. There had been nothing in his self-righteous performances that God could recognize as real religion, and now, for the first time, it is said, " Behold, he prayeth ! " Paul describes Pharasaic religion as " having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. "

Again, the value and importance of prayer is evidenced by the fact that without it we cannot make any claim of gracious relationship to God. " Our Father "—is the breath of prayer and the seal of the promise, and is used in prayer by our Lord himself, as our example. " He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation " (Ps. 89 : 26). He also taught His disciples, to say " Our Father," when they would approach God, on the ground of their relation. To be habitually without prayer is like living in a fatherless world, while it robs God and despoils Him of the glory due to Him from all His works. He has assured us that " the prayer of the upright is His delight," and " whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me." And to live without prayer neglects and despises the only channel through which we can obtain boundless blessings for ourselves and others. " If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it for you." Yea, neglect of prayer under-values even close fellowship with God Himself ; and when He erects His royal pavilion and spreads His imperial tent, saying invitingly, " Draw nigh unto God, and He will draw nigh unto you," it turns away, practically exclaiming, " Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways." To avoid such evil the remedy is " continuing instant in prayer."

Again, prayer is all-important in our spiritual life, as being the sphere of operation in all the other exercises of grace, in the new

man. "Behold, he prayeth," and if it be "the prayer of faith," then there are in exercise, love, faith, repentance, humility, meditation, submission to God, new obedience, and "good hope through grace," in fact, every grace and the sum of all spiritual experience. Prayer is the heart-center of our new life, and from it are "all the issues of life." It is the breath of all life, the joy of all hope, and the chief element in all instrumentality and work; and yet is so simple as to be defined,

"Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear."

Prayer is the pulse of our spiritual circulation, indicating not only the state of the heart, but what the system needs daily to breathe, so as to live in a healthful atmosphere. Or, to vary the figure, it is the warp and woof of all ordinary religious life, woven in the mill of experience and put on and worn in Christian character. Or, prayer might be compared to the use of a solvent by a chemist. When he has different bodies which he wishes to incorporate, he subjects them to the action of some strong solvent, as water, fire or some powerful acid, and so melts them that they run together, and unite, so as to form an amalgam. And so it is in prayer: it is a spiritual solvent, that fuses and melts down our love, joy, faith, hope and new obedience, and makes them form a spiritual amalgam, in which each unites with all the rest in every form of gracious exercise, according to the laws of spiritual life. Or, still farther, the operations and results of prayer may be compared to what takes place in the bodily system in what is called the process of digestion. At one meal we may pass into the system nearly a dozen separate and distinct elements of food, as fish, flesh, vegetables of many kinds, bread, butter, tea, coffee, milk, etc., yet when they are acted upon by the gastric juice from the stomach, bile from the liver, and other solvents, the different elements are so blended and assimilated, as to be undistinguishable; so powerfully does the law of digestion operate, that out of many it has made one. And so of our spiritual digestion: prayer animates and quickens each and every part, and fuses all the faculties into one life and one service.

Again, the indispensable importance of prayer is farther seen in that, though not the meritorious ground of our receiving anything from God, yet it is the channel or instrumentality through

which he gives. "If ye ask anything in My name I will do it for you." "Ask and ye shall receive." "Ye have not, because ye ask not." Anything, therefore, by which prayer would be weakened, and its power of communicating impaired or lost, must always prove injurious to Christian life and attainments. Therefore, we are exhorted, "Continuing instant in prayer." The two words in this exhortation, "continuing" and "instant," have a wonderful amount of practical meaning. "Instant" means pressing, overcoming opposition and forceful, such as Jacob's wrestling; and "continuing" means persevering and importunate, and the two strongly express what our Lord means when He says, "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force," and also what God promised by Isaiah, "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, who shall never hold their peace, day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (Is. 62:6). It was thus directed and encouraged that a youthful convert in one of our foreign mission fields was wont to call prayer and other exercises "the gift of the knees."

It was in full view of the awful danger of either neglecting or making light of prayer that we have undertaken the responsible task of offering some instruction on this all-important theme; and if there be any living without prayer, or with false views of its nature and importance, may the good Spirit so enlighten and instruct such an one that it may be said of him, "Behold, he prayeth."

CHAPTER II.

PRAYER—ITS TRUE NATURE AND CHARACTER.

"Lord, teach us to pray."

"Teach us what we shall say unto Him, for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness."

"Likewise the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what to pray for, as we ought."

"Come, let us reason together." "Behold, he prayeth."

There is not in any language a word more simple and easily understood, when employed in relation to the affairs of this life, than *prayer*, and its verb, *to pray*. Used sometimes in its widest sense, and at others, in a restricted, graduated scale, it always, according to the outward circumstances or inward desire of the offerer, bears the idea of calling for help in difficulties and dangers, or other forms of want and human extremity. But to reach that idea more fully a great number of other words besides *prayer* are employed. Thus Paul, in his directions to Timothy, how prayer should be offered, uses four different words to denote the nature of the exercise, "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men" (Tim. 2:1). In the original, the first of these terms, "supplications," implies a sense of need and of consequent desire. The second, "prayers," is literally offering of a petition. The third, "intercessions," means interceding for another; and the fourth, "giving thanks," means gratitude and praise for what we enjoy. Now, by the help of these four words, we learn, practically, that prayer is the offering up our desires to God, petitioning help, interceding for ourselves and others, drawing on the fullness of God, and ascribing all the honor to Him alone, who is ever able and willing to supply our wants, lift us out of all our dangers, deliver us from our fears and bestow upon us promised good. And it is interesting to note that in this enlarged view of the nature of prayer, it becomes a universal law of God's kingdom, and that every sentient being, whether consciously or unconsciously, is constantly praying. "Ask and receive," is the universal

rule of the divine government, and in one form or other all are placed under its operation. "The eyes of all things wait on Thee, the giver of all good." And in this enlarged sphere of operation, God becomes, as in grace so also in the natural world, the "Hearer of prayer." Therefore, He himself declares, "And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord. I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth. And the earth shall hear the corn and the wine and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel" (Hos. 2:22). Thus the universe seems full of prayer, realizing the words of the Psalmist, "The young lions roar after their prey and seek their meat from God." Yea, so universal is the law, that when our Lord was on earth, even the devils *besought* him "not to send them away into the deep." And though "besought" is not one of Paul's four words for prayer, its application to those beings who are said to "believe and tremble" shows that the law of acknowledged dependence prevails everywhere — in hell as well as on earth and in heaven. It shows us, in fact, that all parts of the universe, according to their place, position, knowledge and powers, whether rationally or irrationally, willingly or unwillingly, are all the subjects of this great institution, and in one form or other, in the spirit of dependence and expectancy, honor the great "Lord of Hosts," the giver of all good.

In the exercise we call prayer we can recognize various elements, the first of which is, *a strong sense of want*, producing an *earnest desire* for what may meet and supply it. Of this we have many striking examples in the history of our Lord when on earth, as he dispensed those healing virtues that reached and relieved so many sufferers. Of them it is said that they asked, cried, besought, forced their way through crowds, climbed to the roof of the house where He sat, journeyed many miles to reach Him, often incurred the hostility of friends, and were cast out of the Synagogue, all that they might have their hope and earnest expectation realized in a successful application to the great Healer.

The *second* element in prayer is the impression, right or wrong, that *help is within reach* and to it we may apply. "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" They said unto Him, "Yea, Lord," and "Lord, I believe: help Thou my unbelief." Without some such impression, there could be no prayer, because no hope, nor anything that would warrant us to apply.

The third element in prayer is *utterance*, in which we intimate to some one, whom we believe to be able and willing to perform our desires and relieve all our wants, that we need his help and depend on him for assistance. It is interesting to note that on every class of animated beings has been conferred, to a greater or less degree, this power of utterance. In danger, want, mutual intercourse and enjoyment, this power is put forth. The cry, the screech, the song, and every form of expression, from the roar of the lion to the chirp of the grasshopper, are simply the exercise of a God-given provision, contributing to the safety and pleasure of sentient beings. In these three elements, variously modified, consists the substance of all prayer.

Now, in two distinct ways, is this expression of need and desire met by God, as the "hearer of prayer." First, hearing and answering the *cry of distress*. The power of expression is two-fold: enjoyment, and pain and suffering. Now, God sympathizes with our suffering, and in the day of distress is represented as hearing and relieving His creatures' ills, in the exercise of pity and compassion. This is often spoken of, in a general way, in terms borrowed from hearing and answering prayer in a higher and more spiritual sense. So, in reference to all sentient beings, God challenges, "He that planted the ear, shall He not hear?"

But, besides this cry of distress, to which Jehovah bends His ear, we have also prayer in the evangelical sense. This may be defined as access and approach to God, through the mediation of Christ, and the privilege, thus conferred, of laying all our wants, sorrows, cares, hopes, and desires before Him, with the earnest request and assurance that He will do all things most perfectly for ourselves and others. And this exercise is not only encouraged by the example of His saints in all ages, and by great and precious promises, but it is, in its very nature, clearly defined by the many different terms and forms of expression used for it in the Scriptures. Thus, besides the term prayer, we have such terms as cry, loud cry, asking, begging, entreating, beseeching, supplication, wrestling, lifting up the soul, lifting up the eyes, lifting up the hands, incense, petition, intercession, pouring out the heart, prostrate before God, and even "groaning that cannot be uttered," all of which enable us more fully to understand the end for which prayer was appointed, and to rise in intensity of desire to attain the experience of the children of God. And oh, how humbling

that perhaps in no other grace or gracious exercise, are we so wanting in earnestness and intensity, and that God at times has to send affliction and suffering to make us more "fervent in spirit!" A look at the experience of some of the redeemed will illustrate this thought. Look in and see that distressed form in the darkened chamber in Damascus, blinded by the intense glare of that light, that appeared to him in the way thither from Jerusalem, and requiring some one to lead him by the hand that he might find the shelter of a roof. Three days he has passed, and has neither eaten, drank nor slept. A deep sense of sin, a distressed conscience, and a "fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation," make him feel that he is lying at the mouth of the yawning pit; and yet all this fearful suffering, both of body and mind, only quickens him to pray. "Behold, he prayeth!" is the record of these days. Under such circumstances, how like he was made to Him whom he was to serve so faithfully in the future, when it is said by Him, "He took me from a fearful pit and from the miry clay!" And how wonderfully in contrast that other prayer, which he tells us he offered in the temple. "Even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance!" What an experience, a trance prayer! And yet it was from the same glorious Person who sent Ananias to his help on a former occasion. Both, however, show how terribly in earnest true prayer is, and how different from those stereotyped forms and petitionless prayers of the hypocrite, which with the Pharisee only mean a little puff of vainglory. Ah, prayer is no vain romance to the child of God, nor is it a dreamy, vague state of mind, that even while repeating words, good in themselves, has hardly ever thought of an answer to Christ's question, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" How terribly in earnest was Abraham when he stood before the Lord, pleading for the cities of the Plain! and how fearfully Moses must have been wrought up, as for hours his hands were upheld by Aaron and Hur, to obtain a victory over Amalek! How fearfully excited, also, must David and his followers have been when Saul and his soldiers entered into the very cave in the sides of which they had taken refuge! And above all, how intense the desire, how fervent the spirit, how earnest the supplication, how strong the assurance of the mind of Jesus, as He made Gethsemane His closet, and spent whole nights in prayer! And what an amount of meaning in that expression,

“ And, being in an *agony*, he prayed more fervently ! ” Alas, while He was praying, the disciples were sleeping ; while He was in agony, they were indifferent ; and so it will be till we know “ the secret of the Lord,” and receive such a pentecostal baptism of His Spirit as shall lift us above the weakness of the flesh.

If, while outwardly and formally approaching to God, we have no sense of want, no thought of the abundance laid up for us in the fullness of Christ, no burning desire for what God has provided, no agony about our spiritual condition, no soul-wrestlings about our future, no Gethsemane of fear, danger and suffering, no unquenchable longing for our own and others’ salvation, then let us not delay to examine our own state before God, and ask the great Physician to diagnose the state of every faculty, praying as we proceed, “ Search me, O Lord, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in Thy way everlasting.”

CHAPTER III.

PRAYER—ITS USE AND ENDS.

“What is the Almighty that we should serve Him, and what shall we have if we pray unto Him?”

“Lord, in trouble they have visited Thee; they poured out a prayer when Thy chastening was on them.”

“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, pray in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God.”

“But the prayer of the righteous is His delight.”

It is told of Napoleon the Great, that when on shipboard, on his way to St. Helena, observing how active and assiduous all the officers and employes of the vessel were to promote the general comfort and make the voyage pleasant, he remarked, “Well, I never knew until now, how much we live by the help of others.” And so in all the various details of the spiritual life, we have no adequate conception of how, or by what, we live, till we apprehend and realize the end contemplated in the appointment of prayer, in the use of which “we come to the throne of grace, and obtain mercy and find grace to help us in every time of need,” and thus experience the truth of the divine statement, “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thy help found.” And it is very pleasant to reflect that whatever God designs to accomplish in nature, grace or glory, He always has, and always employs means worthy of Himself, and beneficial to His creatures, to bring it about. As prayer, therefore, like every other gracious ordinance, has an end to serve, worthy of God, it is of much importance that we understand its place, purpose and sphere of operation in the spiritual world. Without, however, referring at present, to the many advantages resulting from its diligent use, let us first seek to ascertain what the purpose, use and object, that prayer is intended to serve in the economy of our salvation. And

First. Prayer is designed to be the expression of restored relation to, and fellowship with God. Our present fallen state and condition may be defined by one word, *departure* from God.

“ They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water.” If, in some way, one of the planets should break from its orbit, by the power of the centrifugal, it would be carried away, never to return. Like it, we have broken away from God, so that left to ourselves, we would never return. But in the day of grace and salvation, God not only calls on the sinner to return, but also puts forth a power to constrain to willing compliance, so that when He calls, “ Return unto Me, for I have redeemed thee,” the new-born soul responds, “ Turn Thou me and I shall be turned, for Thou art the Lord, my God” (Jer. 31:18). Our response is thus the echo of God’s invitation and command. And in virtue of this return, in which God is the chief factor, He puts us among the children, addresses us by many delightful and endearing names and gives us many glorious epithets by which we may address Him. The Abba of prayer is thus the result and evidence of restored relation to God, and fellowship with Him, without which there could be no prayer. It has been truly said “ a prayerless soul is a graceless soul,” and “ a dumb spirit is the spirit of a devil.” And we see something of this kind among men, in observing how kindly feeling and relation are necessary to fellowship. An incident will illustrate : Two neighboring families had a quarrel, and a stranger, ignorant of their dispute, requested a member of one of them to convey a message to the other. “ I am sorry that I cannot oblige you,” he replied, “ but our families have had a quarrel lately, and we are not speaking now.” So in religion, out of gracious relation there can be no fellowship, but a heart filled “ with enmity against God,” still “ in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity.”

Secondly. Prayer is intended to make the most of our relation to God. There is nothing that has a happier or more beneficial influence on human life, than the kindly relations we sustain to one another, as they prompt to deeds of kindness, bestowal of favors, mutual pity and sympathy, help, good feeling and kind offices. And not only are these relations full of enjoyment to the individual, but we plead them when asking help or soliciting favors for ourselves and others, and laying hold of them we make them arguments, whether addressed to God or man. Thus we plead that God is our Father, Jesus our Brother and Friend, and the Spirit our Advocate and Comforter, and that these and all other gracious relations embolden us to take no refusal for any-

thing we feel warranted to ask. This is the ground upon which our Lord encourages importunity in prayer. The friend in the parable asked, at an unseasonable hour, the favor of a few loaves, but the friend within refused to give him because he was his friend, but because of his annoying importunity he finally yielded to his request, showing that among men importunity is more profitable than relation. But not so with God. Of that we have a wonderful example, when in Jacob's case we see prayer, apparently matched against Omnipotence, and the weak prevailing over the strong. Ah, he had a hold of God in covenant relation; that was the secret of his strength, he was "in close grips with God." Therefore, he pled that God had bidden him return to Canaan, and that he was only in the way of duty, that God had recognized him as the seed of Abraham, to whom all the promises were made, and that he had, therefore covenant rights he would not forego. Holding on tenaciously by these, he gloriously prevailed not only in being delivered from the fear of Esau, but also being, as it were, "knighted on the field," and receiving a patent of nobility, and a new name, "Israel, Prince of God," such the mightiest monarchs cannot confer. True, a touch of the finger of the covenant Angel, partially disabled him, but it was to teach him that he had not prevailed in his own strength, and that his great achievement was all of grace, and the memorial was needed to keep him humble and mindful of all that through which he had passed both at Bethel and Peniel. One thing is certain, however, that the record of these two events enters, more or less, into the experience of all the saints. We know that Nathanael, "an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile," was promised a sight of Jacob's ladder, in witnessing the angels ascending and descending on the Son of man: while Hosea speaks of wrestling with the angel as the common experience of all who "continue instant in prayer." "He found him in Bethel and there He spake with us" (Hos. 12:4). This laying hold of God and refusing to let Him go, or as Barnabas puts it, "cleaving to the Lord," is a wonderful power to raise us up to higher attainments in the spiritual life. It may be compared to what we witness in the vine and other climbing plants in the early spring. When growth sets in for the season, the vine develops a system of tendrils, by which it lays hold on any object within reach, and by its aid climbs to any height where it may find support, often overtopping

even the forest trees. In fact, by weakness it is made strong. So in grace, we grasp by faith in prayer the divine character, attributes, relations and promises; or what Isaiah calls "laying hold of His covenant," and as "we grow up unto him in all things" we have strength and support to aid us to press upward and heavenward on our way to perfection.

Thirdly. Prayer is designed to empty and humble us, and make us feel both our want and unworthiness in the divine presence. It is noteworthy that in Jacob's victory at Peniel, there is the confession, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which Thou hast shewed unto Thy servant." Such is the spirit in which prayer achieves victories over want, unworthiness and dependence. Spurgeon tells of a person who once applied to him for help. The beggar was literally clothed in rags, and the eloquent preacher compassionating him, took him into his home, furnished him comfortable clothing and a hearty meal, and with many good advices sent him away, hoping that he would be a better and wiser man. But a few days later, he met the same man on the street, arrayed in the same filthy garments, and when remonstrated with, he gave as excuse, that he lived by begging, and that the clothes given him were too good to beg in, and that he must beg in rags if he would be successful. So it is spiritually: the grace enjoyed through prayer empties us of all our own righteousness, so that we feel like begging in rags, as we make the prophet's confession, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags: we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Is. 64:6).

Fourthly. Prayer is designed to stir up all our graces into lively and simultaneous exercise. We have already shown how prayer acts as a spiritual solvent, especially as it effects spiritual changes, somewhat in the way that the process of digestion makes changes in our food, transforming different elements into one homogeneous mass. Prayer acts on faith, love, joy, hope, humility, patience, and all the graces, mingling and blending their several exercises in simultaneous action and sweetest harmony. Or, prayer in this respect may be likened to music, making at times all the graces dance in holy rapture, most wonderfully harmonizing and bringing into simultaneous action the highest and lowest notes in the scale. And marvelous are the extremes through which spirit-

ual experience often leads us. Sometimes we "mount up with wings as eagles," soaring to the very gate of heaven, and again we are "crying to God out of the depths." Like the Apocalyptic woman, we are sometimes "clothed with the sun, and the moon under our feet," and at other times, like Jonah, crying "from the belly of hell," and singing of "deeps and darksome caves" (Ps. 88:6). Now we are on the Delectable Mountains, in view of the Celestial City, soon after in Doubting Castle, "despairing even of life;" at one time feeling strong as Samson, at others, like the feeble coney that makes her house in the rock. All such experiences are intended to quicken us to abound in prayer. "Lord, in trouble they have visited Thee, they poured out a prayer when Thy chastening was upon them." How blessed, then, is the ordinance of prayer in its use and ends!

Fifthly. Another use and end of prayer is thereby to sanctify and consecrate all our blessings anew to God. When speaking of lawful enjoyment of creature blessings, daily bestowed, Paul declares, "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving. For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4:4). "By the word of God," implies first that it contains the grant of all things necessary for our support, and also, it directs how they should be enjoyed, so that God may be honored and glorified in their use, according to Paul's directions, "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Again, our blessings are sanctified "by prayer" as well as by the word. By prayer our blessings, of which we have divine grant, are continued with us, notwithstanding our ingratitude and want of faith, forgetfulness and tendency to abuse. Prayer counteracts these evils so that with good judgment and clear conscience, we may enjoy what God has bestowed. And the same rule prevails in the spiritual world. Thus Paul and Barnabas were sent forth, after "they had fasted and prayed and laid on them their hands," thus dedicating them anew to missionary work, praying they might have abundant success.

But who can enumerate all the practical ends prayer is intended to serve in the experience of the believer and of the Church of God? From the experience of Jacob and Nathanael, prayer has been called "the stairway to heaven"; others, again, speak of it as spreading our begging letters before God, while

others have no other idea of prayer than merely a matter of duty. But, perhaps the fullest view we can take, is that of fellowship with God, in his felt presence and touch, as exemplified in the life of Christ, who not only abounded above measure in prayer, but of His seven last utterances on the cross, five are prayers, thus impressing us with His idea of its value and importance. And it is this feature of the Church in the Song of Solomon, which the Beloved praises so pre-eminently above all her other graces. "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the Rock, in the secret places of the stairs (ascents), let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is comely" (ch. 2:14). The being in the "clefts of the Rock," is closest relation to the Rock, Christ, while "the stairs" are the same as the steps of Jacob's ladder, without which there could be no living and constant fellowship with God, and both of which are joy and music to a loving Redeemer.

CHAPTER IV.

PRAYER—ITS MODES, FORMS, TIMES AND PLACES.

- “So I prayed unto the God of Heaven.”
- “In everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.”
- “I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”
- “Seven times a day I praise Thee, because of Thy righteous judgments.”
- “My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord, in the morning I will direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up.”
- “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.”
- “My house shall be called the house of prayer unto all nations.”
- “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.”

There is a law in Japan that the Emperor is never to be looked at except when he is in a position higher than the spectator, so that should his Majesty be in his carriage on the street, and the other on the roof of his house, the latter must come down before he can have a sight of the Chief Ruler. This law is curiously illustrative of the words of the psalm, quoted above, “I will direct my prayer unto Thee and look up” (Ps. 5:3), and also of the story of Zaccheus, who, “when Jesus passed by,” climbed up into a tree, that he might see Him from above, but was commanded to “come down,” to behold Him in saving relation, and is also suggestive of two things which may be helpful to our direction and comfort in the exercise of prayer. These are, *first*, the *essentials* of prayer, and *second*, its *circumstantials*. It is not necessary to enlarge upon the former, here, as the nature, use and ends of prayer have already been considered, and further particulars will come up in their order. As to the circumstantials, it is true that we must in prayer keep “looking up,” knowing that He who is “the way, the truth and the life,” is at the top of the ladder still, “on a throne high and lifted up,” and that He extends

His favors from an exalted position "in the midst of the throne," while we, poor, miserable creatures, are at its foot, humbled and emptied, as we plead, "Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled," and "that we may be filled with all the fullness of God." The energy and fervency with which we are led to pray for such things is expressed, in some measure, by a variety of terms, which, though only circumstantial, are helpful to the spirit of prayer. Thus we pray, "I will lift up my eyes to the hills"; "lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting"; "Let my prayer be set before Thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice"; "I will lift up my hands to Thy holy oracle," and many other figurative terms are used for a similar object. Among these some express the modes and forms, others the times, places and occasions of prayer, and often greatly exercise spiritual worshipers. And

First. One mode and form of prayer is what some call *ejaculatory* and others *fragmentary*. This is the form of prayer Nehemiah mentions when he, on a most important occasion, says, "So I prayed to the God of Heaven" (Neh. 2:4). He was, as he informs us, cup-bearer to the king of Media and Persia, and was, at the moment, serving his master while at table. Having recently heard of the sad condition of Jerusalem, his countenance exhibited unusual sadness, so marked as to be noticeable by the king, who inquired what was the cause of his apparent illness. As the Eastern monarchs were intensely jealous and suspicious of those who waited on them at table, the king's notice of Nehemiah's countenance filled the cup-bearer with alarm; but having told the cause of his deep dejection and gotten some favorable reply from the king, he tells us, "So I prayed to the God of heaven." Now, as all this was done in the presence of the queen and many of the nobles and courtiers the idea is precluded that his prayer was open and heard by all present. It was evidently heart-prayer, and might be called fragmentary, because only a small fraction of his pleading for Jerusalem, and ejaculatory, because secretly thrown up to God, unheard by others. Such in form was also the prayer of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, of whom it is recorded, "Now, Hannah, she spake in her heart, only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard" (1 Sam. 1:13). And many of the dear children of God have often been exercised

in the same way, not in prayer only, but also in thanksgiving and praise.

Secondly. We have another form of prayer which might suitably be called *meditational* prayer, often referred to as a spiritual exercise. "Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation, and hearken unto the voice of my cry, my king and my God" (Ps. 5:1); also "let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, my Strength and my Redeemer" (Ps. 19:14). In this form, the reading of the Scriptures, meditating upon them, self-examination in the light of the truth, are all turned God-ward, become part of our worship, and often are the most profitable and enjoyable of all religious exercises.

Thirdly. There is the *closet* form of prayer, enjoined by our Lord Himself. "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." While these directions apply chiefly to individuals, they are not inconsistent with the promise made to "the two or three" to be with them, when met in His name, or other more public forms. Yet closet prayer, when diligently observed, has a marked place and influence, belonging to no other means of grace. To be "alone with God," talking familiarly with Him about all His interests and ours, weighing ourselves in His scales, pledging ourselves to be faithful in His service, even unto death, these, as the experience of closet prayer, are the surest proof that we are His genuine followers and that He will, in due time, "reward us openly." Hypocrites and formalists dislike such secrecy, and love rather the praise of men and applause of the world.

Fourthly. Another form of prayer often referred to is *family* or *domestic* prayer. God, who knows what is in man, speaks thus of Abraham: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." Joshua also declared, "As for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord"; and, in keeping with that resolution, are the words of the Psalmist, "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacle of the righteous," and "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart." The invaluable advantages of this domestic form of prayer, however, will be more fully considered in another part of our subject.

Fifthly. There is another form of prayer, the *social*, or stated regular prayer-meeting. The Israelites in these journeys to and from Jerusalem, seem to have made these occasions very joyful with religious exercises, as we learn from the hymns they employed, as recorded in Psalms 84, 122, and many others. After the institution of the Synagogue, Jews and early Christians seem for a time to have regularly resorted thither for devotional exercises. But apart from the Synagogue, the early Christians had stated places, where they could meet for prayer, in smaller numbers than in temple or synagogue: to these the promise referred, "Where two or three are met together in My name, there I am," and "if any two of you agree on earth as to what they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven." And to this accords the statement about Paul's first visit to Philippi, "And on the Sabbath we went out of the city, by the river-side, where prayer was wont to be made, and we sat down and spake unto the women that resorted thither," a quiet prayer-meeting in the open air.

Sixthly. We have also prayer in its *public* form: "My house shall be called the house of prayer for all nations," "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is," and "if the whole church be come together in one place," all clearly show that the people of God are in public assembly to call on the "Hearer of prayer.

Seventhly. We have *special intercessory* prayer, for special times, seasons and objects, affecting the work, welfare or circumstances of ourselves or the people and church of God at large. Of this we have many striking examples. Of such form was Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, and Paul's request, "Brethren, pray for us," and "Pray for one another," "prayer for all saints," prayer for the sick, "Let them pray over him," and that we should "pray for kings and all that are in authority." In all things this special prayer is the duty and privilege of the people of God.

In all these modes and forms, it is our blessed privilege to seek His face, and perhaps, it was in reference to these that David declares, "Seven times a day do I praise Thee." Seven is the number of perfection and the expression may simply mean that he was substantially living up to the whole standard of duty and privilege, especially as elsewhere he says, "Evening and

morning and at noon will I pray aloud, and He shall hear my voice" (Ps. 55:17). We need one and all of these forms of prayer, and each is calculated to put forth an influence of the most salutary kind. Thus, *ejaculatory* prayer not only realizes the constant sense of the divine presence, but as a spiritual purgative drives out heart sins. "If I regard sin in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." God and sin cannot both be cherished and dominant in the same human heart. Therefore, heart prayer greatly promotes our sanctification, as in the case of Joseph, when he cried, "How can I do this wickedness against God!" Also, *meditational* prayer, being made up of thoughts, desires, petitions and promises, a sense of want and unworthiness, views of the riches of free grace, is wonderfully potent to promote in us "the peace of God which passeth understanding." So, *closet* or *secret* prayer is a mighty power that keeps us constantly in fellowship with God, so as to feel that "in Him we live and move and have our being," in fact, like Enoch, be daily "walking with God." When the spirit of prayer rules in the *family* we not only realize our relation to God, as the source of all true domestic comfort, but as we honor Him, we feel that everything is sweetened by His presence, as "the God of the families of the whole earth." Moreover, there is nothing so calculated to promote the training of the young in the fear and service of God, as family prayer, regularly observed, as there is nothing so injurious as a godless home. "All thy children are taught of the Lord and great shall be the peace of thy children." Domestics also may thus be reached and receive impressions never to be effaced. The same thing may be said of *social*, *public* and *intercessory* prayer; they associate us with the people of God in every place, they cherish the spirit of the promises, familiarize our minds with the wants of the world, give us an interest in the whole kingdom of God, promote spiritual effort, and in the spirit of assured expectation, we cry with the prophet, "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest until He establish and till He make Jerusalem a praise in all the earth" (Is. 62:7).

CHAPTER V.

PRAYER—AS ADDRESSED TO THE PERSONS OF THE GODHEAD.

“ Our Father who art in heaven.”

“ And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”

“ For through Him, we both have access, by one Spirit, unto the Father.”

“ Elect, according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ.”

“ And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication.”

When God said, “ Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness, He mirrored out, and revealed a great thought, namely, that in all the intercourse we are ever to enjoy with God, we have not only fellowship with a Being, with whose mental and moral nature we can communicate, but that all such intercourse is to be, not with one, but with three distinct personalities. And while nature continually echoes the sentiment, “ The hand that made us is divine,” it casts but little light on the mysteries of the Godhead. But inspiration has revealed an eternal Father, the Creator of the ends of the earth, and a “ Son, by whom also he made the worlds,” and a Spirit, who “ garnished the heavens.” And to understand these great mysteries, we have only to reflect that in the stupendous work, the eternal Father as representing the Godhead, created all things *authoritatively*, while the Son created *officially*, in uttering the creative fiat, “ Let it be, and it was,” while the Spirit of God “ moved on the face of the waters ” and created *efficiently*, by putting forth divine energy, sufficient to accomplish such a marvelous work.

Now, the mighty work of our redemption and salvation, is a *new creation*, “ Behold, I make all things new,” and the eternal God, in three Persons, sustains a relation to the new, in its whole plan, purpose and object, as He did to the old. While the old creation is still aglow in all its parts with the glory of the Triune Jehovah, yet redemption, salvation by grace, the marvelous operations of the divine government, and the ultimate renovation of

our world, will excel in glory in the "new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness," and of which we have the full assurance now. The covenant of grace, the substitution of the Son for us, the witness and work of the Spirit, more completely unfold the nature and character of God, than the making of a world. In the new creation, as in the old, we have each of the Persons of the Godhead, operating in a manner peculiar to Himself. In our election, adoption and justification, the Father works: in the substitution, suffering and exercise of saving offices, the Son works, while in regeneration, effectual calling, sanctification, perseverance in grace, ultimate perfection in holiness and meetness for heaven, we see the work of the Spirit. And as prayer is an agency by which we are put in possession of all the benefits of redemption, it requires, on our part, intercourse with each Person, in some respects peculiar and special. This we might illustrate in every phase of Christian experience, but for the present will confine our remarks to how it is to be realized in the exercise of prayer.

First, in relation to God the Father, prayer may be said to be *access or liberty of approach*. "Through whom we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access unto the Father, by one Spirit," and this access include the following particulars: 1.—Reconciliation to God. "Having no hope, and without God in the world," is the true state of all who are in their original enmity to God, and who, like our first parents, are ready to run away and hide when they hear His voice. "But if, when we are enemies we are reconciled unto God by the death of His Son," we, like the prodigal, return, our fellowship is restored. 2.—Boldness in approaching God. "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence, by the faith of Him." 3.—Acceptance of our persons and services. "Who hath made us to be accepted in the Beloved." The believer thus becomes, to use an earthly term, *persona grata* with God, and rejoices in constant intercourse. 4.—An audience. "We know that He heareth us always." 5.—A gracious response. "I will commune with you from above the mercy-seat and from between the cherubim." "And it shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear." And in sweet accordance with these particulars are many references to the Father's relation to prayer. Thus, "If ye call upon the Father, who without respect of persons,

judgeth every man's works" (1 Pet. 1 : 17), "For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Ephes. 3 : 14). There are also precious names, titles and epithets given Him, such as "Hearer of Prayer," "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," "Jehovah-Jireh," "God of Israel," and many others, all of which direct us in prayer, and fill our mouth with arguments as we approach Him on His "throne of grace."

Secondly, prayer has relation, in many respects, to the second person of the Godhead, the Son of God. He is the sole *mediator* of the new covenant, on the ground of which we can draw near. He is our *Daysman* also, who hath laid His hand upon us both, reconciling and bringing both into permanent relation. He is our *High Priest*, who bears our names on His breast and shoulders, "who hath gone into the most holy place to appear in the presence of God for us." He is our *Advocate* with the Father, in the court of heaven pleading our cause, so that none can lay anything to our charge to condemn us. He is also our *Propitiation*, so that we can approach God, without His "terror making us afraid," while His whole administration, and the rich treasures of providence, grace and glory, assure us that all shall terminate in our highest good. Thus in all His offices and operations, He commands our highest confidence, assured that "in Him, all the promises are Yea, and in Him, Amen, to the glory of God the Father." Our Lord's hearing and receiving prayer being thus, *mediatory* and *administrative*, we ask in His name, and for His sake, according to the Father's counsel and will, and the agency of the Holy Spirit. And as among men, for one man to ask in the name and for the sake of another, implies not only that he has full confidence in the ability and willingness of him in whose name he asks, but also that he will assume the responsibility of the prayer being successful; so Christ representing us in prayer, has all power to make it successful, assumes the whole responsibility of answering all believing prayer, and at the same time it is wholly for His name and sake, that the Father receives, accepts and fulfills the petition that Christ presents on our behalf. So thus we have literally fulfilled "who hath made us to be accepted in the Beloved," and, "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it for you, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." This great gospel truth might be illustrated by reference

to a law that at one time prevailed in one of the old Grecian States. It provided that any one who had a petition to offer to the King should come into the royal presence, bearing in his arms the King's son, the heir-apparent to the throne; so we come, bearing in the arms of our faith and love, our blessed Advocate, "who ever liveth to make intercession for us," as we approach the "Majesty on high," and sweetly realize what blessed comfort was bestowed on Peter, when assured, "I have prayed for thee."

Thirdly, the relation of the Holy Spirit to prayer is *subjective* and *efficient*. In grace, as in creation and providence, the Spirit is the efficient agent that forms, operates, directs and controls. Therefore Jude exhorts "praying in the Holy Spirit," and Paul says, "We know not what to pray for, as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered." "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." Now, this He does in different ways; as, first, by "taking the things of Christ and showing them unto us," so that we may be instructed what we should desire and ask. This may be called the *objective* matter of prayer, and is entirely of the Spirit. Again, the Spirit powerfully *attracts and draws* us in prayer near to God. "Draw me, and we will run after Thee." "I drew them with the cords of a man and with the bands of love." This is essential to prayer, and part of the experience of every child of God. The Spirit also makes us feel, in prayer, the power of a new relation to God, the Spirit of adoption, that makes us cry, "Abba, Father," "My Father and my God." The Spirit also "helps our infirmities" by furnishing us arguments in prayer, such as Jacob and Moses often used, and by adapting the promises and other parts of the Word to our use in our fellowship with God. As the *Comforter*, also the Spirit of prayer, is often as an atmosphere of sweetest celestial odors, which as we breathe, quickens our desire for the full enjoyment of our heavenly state. In addition, the Spirit in prayer often bestows upon us a *holy liberty* and *freedom* in asking for ourselves and for one another, for the people of God, and for the cause and kingdom of Christ in the world, so that though "we know not how to pray as we should," or "order our speech by reason of darkness," yet at times the Spirit so gives utterance and so enlarges our desires that our heart "indites good matter and our tongue

becomes as the pen of a ready writer." And oh, how all-important to our happiness, good and success, is this renewed afflatus of the Holy Ghost! It was the cry of the Church of old, "Awake, oh north wind, and come thou, south, blow upon my garden that the spices thereof may flow out:" thus the coming of the Spirit was as much foretold and expected, as was the coming of the Messiah. And Isaiah represents the success of the gospel in the latter day, as due to the enlarged measure in which the Spirit was to be given: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed and my blessing upon thine offspring" (Is. 44.2). It was the hope of Joel (2.28), and the power of Joshua and Zerubabel in building the second temple: "For behold the stone I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes," which "seven eyes" were nothing but the Spirit of Christ, in the fulness of grace and power, by which He performs for us "all things most perfectly." Therefore "not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." And so it is that our Lord addresses the churches still, as "He who hath the seven Spirits of God." In what blessed harmony, then, are the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, both in inspiring and answering our feeble prayers!

CHAPTER VI.

PRAYER, SUCCESSFUL AND EFFECTIVE.

- "Wherewith shall I come before God?"
- "Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not, Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, Thy name is everlasting."
- "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord."
- "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."
- "Why could not we cast him out? Jesus saith unto them, Because of your unbelief."
- "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

A rare advantage in the struggle of life has that man who, in whatever he undertakes, has a strong, confident feeling and assurance of success; and many of the most distinguished characters in history have felt that such a state of mind gives both energy and perseverance. The father of Hannibal, the great Carthaginian general, took his son, while yet a child, to the altar and there made him swear eternal hostility and war against the Romans, thus teaching him that their defeat was to be the great mission of his life, in the accomplishing of which he could not possibly fail. And just so with everyone who in full assurance of faith has entered a life of prayer and fellowship with God, "nothing doubting" as to final success. It is, therefore, a profitable inquiry as to what are the elements that most contribute to our success in prayer.

First. The first and chief element that makes prayer successful is *our relation to God*. "Our Father who art in Heaven," "Surely Thou art our Father." "Your father knoweth that ye have need of these things," "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him," "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," "And I shall be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people;" these and many other such passages place success in prayer on the fatherhood of God, and

our relation to Him in covenant, and thus show how to make the most of the high position we occupy as God's children. It enables us, moreover, to convert His names, attributes and promises into arguments, whereby to plead and enforce our petitions. Thus, such epithets as beloved, friend, brother, rock of salvation, etc., all appeal to what God is to us, and can be relied upon to do for us. And how often our position in relation is contrasted with the sad condition of those who know not God, nor can address Him as "Father;" thus "we are Thine, Thou never bearest rule over them, they were not called by Thy name" (Is. 63:19). Thus we get a *hold* of God.

Second. Success in prayer will also depend upon our having a *clear warrant* as to what we ask. Two of our Lord's disciples, urged and stimulated by a mother's love and ambition, once came and asked Him to grant them a favor, namely that they be allowed to sit on His right hand and left in His kingdom. They were rebuked, "Ye know not what ye ask." Again, the same two disciples asked if they would command fire to come down from heaven to consume a village of the Samaritans, that had refused an entrance to their Master, and again they were rebuked, "Ye know not what Spirit ye are of." In both cases, these two youthful disciples, misapprehending the nature of the kingdom, were fired with worldly ambition, and asked without any warrant, and one of them, in later life, perhaps remembering his mistake, wrote, "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." To ask anything without warrant or authority would be presumptuous, as forcibly set forth by the Westminster Assembly in "the sum of saving knowledge in our warrant to believe." As faith must have something on which to stand, so prayer must have something to plead, which will give us boldness and confidence as we approach. This we find both in the *general statements* of what God is willing, ready and prepared to bestow; and in the *concrete form* of what He has done for, and been to His believing people in all ages. Thus used, the promises of God are like levers resting on the fulcrum of divine truth, which, as they are skillfully pressed, raise us up to the very throne of God; nay, enable us to lay hold on God Himself, or, as one of our old divines expresses it, "get into close grips with God." Thus faith and prayer and every gracious promise and privilege, have abundant encouragement to come boldly to the throne of grace."

Third. Success in prayer is especially due to the *priestly intercession of Christ*. "And having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near, with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, "If ye ask anything, in My name, I will do it for you," "Whatsoever ye shall ask the father in My name, He will give it you," "Hitherto, ye have asked nothing in My name; ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full." In the commercial world, if a person, however poor in outward circumstances, holds a bit of paper indorsed by a bank, or by the name of a person of means and credit, he can, by virtue of that name or indorsement, turn his cheque into cash, and actually live on the supply it will purchase. So it is in respect to the name of Christ, so often referred to in connection with prayer. Christ has indorsed all the promises; they are all sworn to and, therefore, reliable, and are made "yea and amen" to every believing petitioner, yea, on God's part, affirming and swearing, and *Amen*, on our part, accepting and embracing them as the very truth of God, and claiming their fulfillment in our personal comfort and salvation. The Son of God thus has become our substitute and surety, and being thus identified with Him, our prayer becomes His prayer, and His prayer ours, and thus, through the channel of His intercession all things become ours. In what glorious figures had John these facts set before him! Thus having opened the last seal of the seven-sealed book, and introduced the seven trumpet angels (Rev. 8:1-5), our Lord, as the Covenant Angel, is seen moving toward the altar, having a golden censer, showing Him to be the High Priest of our profession, as both the altar and the censer are priestly emblems of service. And first, in the vision, the Priest-angel is seen propitiating on behalf of His saints, by receiving and offering much incense—His own merits—the smoke of which, mingling with the saints' prayers secures that they shall be successful, the success of one being the success of the other. Illustrative of this is what is said in the vision of Zacharias, "And the whole multitude of the people were without praying, at the time of incense." A more literal translation of the word *offer* would be *to add to* (R. V.) Christ's incense is added to the church's prayer, and they act in harmony as we come to the throne. And still another view of the energy and power given to our prayers by Christ's intercession, is seen in what follows: "And the angel took the censer and filled

it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth, and there were voices and thunderings and lightnings and an earthquake," showing that our Lord's intercession brings judgment on the wicked, as well as blessings on the believing. "Out of his mouth goeth forth a two-edged sword," one edge to slay His enemies and the other to protect and save His friends. And, oh, that we could take the happiness and joy of being His, "who ever liveth to make intercession for us," and who can make every glimpse of His glory and beauty "minister everlasting consolation and a good hope through grace!"

Fourthly. Another help to success in prayer is *the active and powerful agency of the Holy Spirit*. It is wonderfully in keeping with the experience of believers that the author of the "Holy War" represents Immanuel as having for his secretary the Holy Spirit, who was to prepare and sign petitions, before any success could be attained. His relation to all prayer is thus expressed: "Well," said the Lord Secretary, "I will draw up a petition for you and also set my hand thereto, but yourselves must be present at the doing of it; you must put your desires into it. The hand and the pen shall be mine, but the ink and paper must be yours, else how could you say, 'it is your petition'?" He also added, "No petition goes to the Prince but by Me and to the Father but by Him, and when the people that are chiefly concerned therein join heart and soul in the matter, that also must be inserted therein." Such a relation to prayer of the work of the Spirit has a part in the experience of all saints; "He maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God."

Fifthly. In close relation to the Spirit's work in prayer is a *right, spiritual, gracious, frame*. Connected with the exercise of prayer, many states and frames are represented in Scripture as necessary to its acceptance and success. A notice of some of these may be helpful. There is (1), a strong *faith and confidence* when we pray, "But let him ask in faith," "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth," "Strong in faith, giving glory to God," "O woman, great is thy faith," "Whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believe that ye receive it, and ye shall have it," "O ye of little faith, wherefore did ye doubt?" This last gives the reason of Peter's failure when, at one time, he tried to walk on the sea. In harmony with all these, we again refer to the "Holy War." The men of Mansoul asked how they would

best forward their petition, and were instructed to send it by Captain Credence. Credence is the author's name for faith, and faith is always free and ready to do our errands at the throne of grace, and will not, cannot fail so long as it resolutely cleaves to such assurances as, "Now unto Him who is able to do for us *exceeding abundantly*, above all we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us," etc. What a grand climax is such a passage about prayer. First to command our confidence we are assured that God is able to do all we *ask*; but above that, all we can *think*; and surely that were boundless. But His power goes infinitely beyond that, for He can do *above* all that can be spoken or imagined. Higher still, He can do *abundantly* above all, and still farther by His power He is able to do *exceeding abundantly* in answer to our prayers. What a secure resting-place for faith these five steps furnish! (2) Another frame or state of mind suitable to prayer is, *earnest desire*. The apostle James says, "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." The word *effectual*, here literally means *inwrought*, and expresses a state of mind the result of the Spirit's quickening power, "working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure." Now while Paul enumerates no less than nine different fruits of the Spirit, inwrought in the spiritual state, there is none more in keeping with the nature of prayer, and indeed including them all, as earnest, intense desire as we approach God. Nothing can be sadder or more indicative of a low spiritual condition than the use of stereotyped prayers, in the most serious moments of our lives, exhibiting a listlessness, apathy and indifference we would be ashamed to exhibit when asking a favor from a fellow-man. But the explanation is easy. With many, who have only a form of Godliness, it is not *heart-praying*, but *conscience-praying*, that we find. Having been instructed that it is our duty at stated times to repeat something we call prayer, we may feel something binding the conscience, that we cannot shake off, though we may never have risen to the earnestness, true spiritual delight and joy that this element of true religion should impart. It is with such as with the pupil in school or college. He does not feel pleasure and enjoyment in prosecuting his studies. The subject matter of his tasks is vague and impersonal. He does not feel that grammar, geography or mathematics brings him any real pleasure, yet from a sense of right he goes on studying his lessons and repeating his

tasks ; and it is only as he advances in life that he learns the value of his studies, which fit him for a position of usefulness he could not have attained without their aid. But for genuine, earnest desire, how suitable is prayer ! An interview with God, a day of grace, wrestling with the Covenant Angel, and the still, small voice in the whispers of the soul, "What wilt thou that I should do for thee ?" Oh, how deep the emotion, how earnest the desire, how irrepressible the longing, how unutterable the groanings, how copious the tears, how indescribable the agony that have been experienced as we "pour out our heart," "cry from the depths," and are even like Jonah, "Out of the belly of hell cried I, and Thou hearest my voice," or like David, when he walked "through the valley and shadow of death !" What a terrible conflict and scene that was, at Peniel, when such a victory was achieved as made a plain shepherd, "a Prince with God !" And how our Lord Himself agonized in prayer : "Who in the days of His flesh, when He offered prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared. Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered," "And, being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

(3) Another frame which the Spirit imparts to render our prayers acceptable, is that of persevering *importunity*. The Lord Himself illustrates this state of mind in the parable of the importunate widow and unjust judge. A poor, helpless widow, though denied justice again and again, and contemptuously driven away, still persists and at last prevails ; a fine example of Paul's direction, "Continuing instant in prayer." How suggestive, as formerly explained, are those two words, *continuing* and *instant* ! Continuing means persevering or never giving up, and *instant* means pressing, or not to be refused. Truly "the whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer." (4) Still another frame of mind most useful to us in prayer, is the feeling that however great our extremities, it is always safest and best to take everything to God and accept His guidance. "It is better to trust in the Lord, than put confidence in man; better to trust in the Lord, than put confidence in princes." This frame of mind in prayer secures two important advantages. First, it delivers from false confidence and false temporizing about duty, and, secondly, it, as it

were, throws us into the arms of God, leaving all our cares on Him. We have many examples of this state of mind in the experience of the saints. Thus David, when God sent him, by the prophet, to chasten him for the sin of numbering the people, the choice of three alternatives—seven years' famine, to flee three months before his enemies or three days' pestilence, replied, "I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the Lord, for His mercy is great, and let me not fall into the hand of man." The same spirit is recorded as it animated the noble and heroic Queen Esther, who to save her people, ventured on death, exclaiming, "If I perish, I perish." Thus "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," is, first, to empty and then to fill spiritually as well as physically. "Nature abhors a vacuum," and so Paul prays, "that ye may be filled with the fullness of God." Now when prayer is said to be "the burden of a sigh," how beautifully it expresses that idea! What is a sigh? It is only a more copious inhalation of air, and hence a larger amount of oxygen is taken into the lungs, purifying the blood, and fitting us for the more perfect work of life. And so it is spiritually: emptied of our confidence in man and trust in ourselves, as we run and "cast all our cares upon Him who careth for us," we have spiritual inhalation of fresh grace and strength, fresh stimuli to religious exercise, and greater submission to God in all His divine dispositions.

But, O my soul, dost thou know aught of this mysterious power! Art thou living in an atmosphere of prayer, in which thou "lives, movest and hast thy being?" Is it more a habitual attitude of spirit and frame, by which thou feelest the touch and safety of the "everlasting arms" around thee, than a mere outward form or observance? Hast thou laid hold of the great and precious promises, that, like the ring given by Queen Elizabeth to her favorite, the Earl of Essex, and which if returned to his Royal Mistress, should any danger or want threaten, would secure her protection and assistance? Hast thou returned to God these promises and assurances that are thy security, the happiness of thy life, and which make religion to be "joy and peace in believing?"

CHAPTER VII.

THE LORD'S PRAYER, OUR MODEL AND PATTERN.

"After this manner, therefore, pray ye: 'Our Father, who art in heaven.'"

"Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

"But the Comforter, who is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father shall send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

In teaching little children, or young people, generally, we make use largely of the power to impress possessed by the organ of vision, because we know that a picture on the retina of the eye will make impressions more powerful and permanent than those made by any other means. The artist recognizes and takes advantage of this power in his art. The tendency to imitativeness and copying of others, which we all display, and which often, even unconsciously, affects our whole life for good or evil, arises from these impressions. Now, something similar in the spiritual life is in constant operation. The moral image and perfect character and example of our Lord, apprehended by the eyes of our understanding, powerfully instruct and influence His true disciples, so that when they would be taught, He replies, "Learn of Me." Of every grace, and every gracious exercise, He has set us a copy; therefore when He directs His disciples to a form of prayer He had spoken some time previously, He is simply doing something like repeating the lesson, that it may be more deeply and permanently impressed. "And it came to pass as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And He said unto them, When ye pray say, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name," etc., etc. (Luke 11:1).

It is noticeable that what we call the "Lord's Prayer" was spoken by our Lord on two different occasions, widely apart, one of them near the beginning of His public ministry, as part of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6:9), and the other after His trans-

figuration, and the Mission of the Apostles (Luke 11:2). That recorded by Matthew is also more complete and full, having a conclusion and doxology, while that by Luke has not even an amen. Some Bible scholars are, therefore, of the opinion that the conclusion in Matthew is an interpolation by a later writer; but, as a discussion here would be altogether out of place, we only wait to say that so many of the most reliable manuscripts have the clause, that the statement in our Larger Catechism is fully warranted. "The Lord's Prayer consists of three parts—a preface, six petitions and a conclusion." And, as to how it is to be used, it adds: "The Lord's Prayer is not only for direction as a pattern, according to which we are to make other prayers, but may also be used as a prayer, so that it be done with understanding, faith, reverence and other graces necessary to the right performance of the duty of prayer." Inasmuch as it is not necessary to explain how the petitions in the Lord's Prayer may be, and doubtless often are, used by many, simply as *prayers*, let us inquire of what use they are to us as models and patterns after which to copy. We will see:

First. That the Lord's Prayer is a standing example of what should be the character of our prayer, both for substance and structure. That the Lord's Prayer was used in the Apostolic churches as a liturgy, there is no evidence, for, although we read much of our Lord's praying while He tabernacled among us, we never hear of His using this form. And how marked the difference between it and His mediatorial prayer recorded by John! Nor are the Apostles or early Christians ever represented as using it exclusively, although the spirit of prayer was more abundantly shed on them than ever before. In fact, it is this more copious unction of the Spirit that renders rigid forms impossible, for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Let a soul be either in the deepest dejection, or the most glorious spiritual elevation, sad under the oppression of indwelling sin, or filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and oh, who can limit its utterances or chain it down by earthly formula? It is told of Archbishop Secker that when on his death-bed, he was visited by a brother greatly loved, and feeling that this was their last meeting, he asked him to pray with him. The friend turned to look for a prayer-book, but the dying prelate exclaimed, "Ah, that is not what I want; kneel down and pray for me, as I know you are

accustomed to do when you pour out your heart to God, as I myself have heard you pray." That is what Jude calls "Praying in the Holy Ghost."

The Lord's prayer is also a model as being the sum and substance of all we are warranted to ask. Prayer, considered in its simplest form, usually embraces three particulars—first, an intelligent object to which it is addressed; then, petition or request urged by arguments to enforce; and last, praise, gratitude and thankfulness for its success. All these three are in the Lord's Prayer. We have God in covenant as "Our Father" and the "Hearer of Prayer"; then, six petitions which amply cover all our wants, and express all our desires, and then all glory and praise are given to God "from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift." And thus, while prayer is marvelously condensed in the model, it is also wonderfully expanded until it covers every claim and interest of Christ, His people and kingdom on earth.

Then, the structure of the Lord's prayer is suggestive of much that is helpful to us in the exercise of prayer. The Lord's prayer consists of three parts—an invocation, "Our Father, who art in heaven, six petitions and a conclusion." But the peculiarity of its structure is that the invocation and the conclusion are also arguments to enforce the petitions, and may be so used. Thus, in the first petition, "Hallowed be Thy name," both preface and conclusion might be used as arguments, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, for Thine is the kingdom, power and glory." Similarly, the second petition may be used in the strength of the preface and conclusion, as "Our Father, who art in heaven, Thy kingdom come, for Thine is the kingdom, power and glory"; and so the third may also be read, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, for Thou art our Father, and Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory." And so of the other petitions, if we use them intelligently, the harmony of all the parts forming a beautiful whole, we are actually "filling our mouths with arguments."

Moreover, the Lord's Prayer as a model, shows us that God should always have the *first place*. "Seek first the kingdom of God," is wonderfully illustrated in the Lord's Prayer. The first three petitions are all about God, His name, His kingdom and will. God should have the first place in all the desires we express

and prayers we utter. Then after God's rights and interests are honored, the remaining petitions are about our own wants, daily bread, daily forgiveness, victory over temptation, and the furthering all our temporal and spiritual interests."

Ordinary prayer, therefore, when compared with the Lord's Prayer, is just adapting the latter to our circumstances and wants, and may be likened to what is said of Israel in the use of the manna. In the early morning they had to go out and gather it, then measure it, grind it in mills or beat it in a mortar, make it into cakes and bake it in pans, all requiring activity, diligence and labor, in order to secure the advantages of the God-given food. God did not supply them with bread from heaven in cakes, baked and ready to be set on the table, but he left something to be done by their own skill and industry. The same thing may be said of the daily bread we get as a divine gift, not from heaven, but from the bowels of the earth. We have to pray and plead and toil for what is promised and secured by the truth of God: our mercies often come in a general form, *en masse*, and we are directed how to use them so as to enjoy God in them. This is one of the most conspicuous features of living a life of faith and prayer, gathering early the true spiritual manna, hidden from the eyes of the world, grinding it in the mill of meditation, accepting it by faith and prayer and feeding upon it so as to feel that it is sweet as honey to the taste. If thus exercised, we will fear to despise the "hidden manna" that gives life to the world, as did the Israelites in the wilderness, but we will joyfully, in faith and prayer, remind God continually of His gracious promise to stimulate and quicken all our prayers, "To him that overcometh, I will give to eat of the hidden manna."

CHAPTER VIII.

PRAYER AND ITS ANSWER.

- "O Thou, that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come."
 "In the day when I cried, Thou answeredst me, and strengthened me with strength in my soul."
 "Blessed be the Lord, because He hath heard the voice of my supplication."
 "I sought the Lord and He heard me and delivered me from all my fears."
 "Blessed be God who hath not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me."
 "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you."
 "And if we know that He hear us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petition we desired of Him."
 "Blessed is she that believeth, for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord."
 "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, and he said, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

Next to the assured belief in the existence of a great Supreme Being, there is, perhaps, no truth more universally accepted than that this Supreme Being is always ready, when duly invoked, to respond to the request of His worshipers, and, although He is the most exalted Being in the universe, He thus shows by experience that He is, indeed, the "Hearer of prayer," unto whom ultimately "all flesh shall come." True, this conception of God may be embodied in the vilest system of heathenism, and be mixed up with the most impure and abominable dregs of fallen humanity, yet it is a diamond, found even in the dunghill of earth, and often prepares the way by which men are brought to such knowledge of God as shall be to them eternal life. It is a hopeful view, therefore, of humanity, even when in maddened fury and rage, they are heard shouting, "O Baal, hear us," or lauding their fancied virgin goddess, by shouting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." While, however, the knowledge of God attained outside of the "lively oracles" is wholly inadequate to teach us how we should approach, yet every child of grace learns by experience, "that he that cometh unto God must believe that He is, and that He is a

rewarder of all those who diligently seek Him." And, although a few years ago a number of scientists tried to convince the world that prayer is impossible, as being contrary to natural law, and suggested a "prayer test" to determine the matter by experiment, yet, as was to be expected, the attack on prayer proved a miserable failure, infringing as it did not only the laws of providence and grace, but also even the natural laws by which God is continually working in the accomplishment of His purposes. Soon, therefore, the "prayer test" gave way to the "Week of Prayer," in the observance of which the Christian religion has crushed out of being another of those crudities of the intellect that sometimes affect the learned world, and has promoted and maintained a gracious exercise which has given strength and power from age to age to all who "call upon God, who call upon Him in truth." A few points illustrative of the relation of prayer to its answer, may be helpful to some of the dear children of God.

First. Such are the arrangements on the part of God for hearing and answering prayer, there can be no possible failure. This will be self-evident when we remember that God, by special, personal promise, has pledged all His attributes and perfections, that He will, in answer to prayer, bestow all that is good; His own knowledge and wisdom being judge of what is actually good for His people. Two of His perfections in particular, His Being and Holiness, stand thus pledged: "As I live," saith the Lord, a formula often used when God would comfort and assure us, and "once have I sworn by My Holiness, that I will not lie unto David." Behind such pledges stand infinite, unerring wisdom, faithfulness, righteousness and truth, ready to give effect to all that cometh out of the mouth of God. So there can be no failure. Thus to comfort the true Israel, He declares, "For this is as the waters of Noah unto Me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee nor rebuke thee," or Paul's assurance, "That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us." But if God, like man, were changeable and unreliable, what consolation in His word and oath? But resting as they do on His pledged truth as it sets forth His character and promises, they bring us a consolation nothing can equal. Besides, in His arrangements for receiving

and answering prayer, God has, in the work of Christ, opened up an office, to receive, register and reply to all communications made to the throne of grace, with the Spirit to prompt our prayer, and the agency of holy angels, providential dispensations, and all the powers of nature to promote the accomplishment of what He has promised. And that such perfect and exalted arrangements cannot fail, our Lord gives an example of the humblest prayer answered, "If any two agree on earth concerning anything they shall ask, I will do it for them." Let God set on any assurance His own yea and amen, and it will always issue as confessed by Joshua, "Nothing failed, all came to pass."

Secondly. Prayer is often answered so directly, discernibly and openly as to assure us that we are heard. There is nothing more real than the statement, "Pray to thy Father, who is in secret, and thy Father that seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." See Jacob, an old limping shepherd, to whom we have formerly referred as our example of the power of prayer. His mind passed through most fearful distress, and his fears for a time overwhelmed him in terror and dismay, but now as he goes to meet his shaggy brother he can advance without a fear or feeling of danger. Why such a change, from the agony of despair to the peace of assured safety for himself and family? Ah, he had spent a night at Peniel, and had prayed to and wrestled with the "Hearer of prayer," and now the heavenly Father "rewards him openly." And indeed, almost all prayer receives open, visible reward. Thus, the plagues of Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, the falling of the manna, the water from the rock, the sun standing still at Joshua's command, were all open rewards for secret prayer. And many such records are given us, to strengthen our faith, encourage our confidence, cherish our hopes, and be as arguments in our mouth as we make our requests to our Father in heaven. Nor is it to be overlooked that multitudes of prayers require a literal, immediate and direct answer, or else they could not well be answered at all: Such are these, "Thy will be done in earth," "Give us this day our daily bread," "Lead us not into temptation," in which the answer, reward and fulfillment are visible direct and immediate.

Thirdly. Many prayers are answered substantially, though not literally and formally. We have an example of this in Moses' experience. Overwhelmed by the ignorance, ingratitude and

unreasonableness of the people he had led forth from Egypt, he prayed to be delivered from his work and charge, on the ground that he could bear them no longer. But God did not literally comply, but by some change of arrangements made the service bearable. So also with Elijah, when as the Reformer, he tried to bring back the tribes of God, but was so ill-treated that he requested for himself that he should die, and said, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers." He was simply directed to execute some commissions, before his prayer was answered. So in Paul's case. He had been transported up into Paradise, had seen and heard unspeakable things and was in danger of being puffed up with pride, by the "abundance of the revelations"; to prevent which, his adorable Lord and Master saw fit to send him a distressing thorn in the flesh, to keep him humble. This thorn was a "messenger of Satan," and therefore he thrice prayed the Lord to take it away. Perhaps he thought the thorn, which some think to have been a defect in his eyesight, others in his speech, would disqualify him as a missionary, for his work. But our Lord replied to his pleading, "My grace is sufficient for thee, and My strength is made perfect in weakness"; by which he was given to understand that the abundance of grace and strength he would receive was sufficient to make him more efficient, thorn and all. And thus while he received in substance what he asked in his thrice-repeated request, it was not exactly in the form he expected. It is said that sometimes a grain of sand is drawn into the shell of the pearl-oyster, and sinks into the soft tissue of the animal's body, producing great pain: but that the oyster secretes a juice from its own body, with which it repeatedly coats over the intruding sand, forming a pearl by the process; thus by its suffering it receives new value and worth. So it was with Paul's prayer and its answer.

Fourthly. God teaches us in the way He answers our prayers to *wait* on Him. Our Lord employed a whole parable to illustrate this truth, "That men should pray always and faint not," and many similar expressions have exercised some of the best of God's saints, as well as the importunate widow. What an example in the "father of the faithful" himself! Called to go to Canaan at sixty years of age, and called a second time at seventy-five, it was twenty-five years more before the birth of the

promised seed, though both he and his wife showed signs of impatience in connection with the birth of Ishmael. No wonder that they called the promised seed Isaac, laughter, when at length, after forty years waiting he did come, so long expected, so long deferred. So also might be said of the promise of an inheritance in Canaan; it was deferred many hundreds of years before fulfilled under Joshua. Especially in times of suffering the saints have been exercised with this experience to their great distress. Therefore, we are exhorted, "Wait on the Lord," and "They who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength." In such seasons the attitude of the faithful followers of the Lamb is described as seen by John at the opening of the fifth seal thus: "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held, and they cried with a loud voice, saying 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth'? And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season." This form of prayer and its answer is designated by many forms of expression, such as waiting, watching, expectation, hope, longing, anticipation, earnest desires, foretastes, joys of the future, wrestling, etc., in all of which our Lord, while He often gladdens our hopes, also exercises our patience and renews our strength.

Fifthly. In answering our prayers God may withhold what is actually asked, because He hath something better to bestow. With what intense longing did Moses desire to enter the promised land, and once and again asked for the privilege. But God cut short his petition with "Speak no more to Me of that matter." Though it seems a little hard that so old and faithful a servant as Moses should be denied so small a favor, yet when we see him in glory with the Lord and Elias in the transfiguration scene, we understand how far his condition on Tabor excelled that which even with quickened vision he saw from Pisgah. An English clergyman, wishing to teach his child to have unquestioning confidence in him, and through that to teach her faith in the heavenly Father, used the following means: On his return home one evening, his little daughter met him displaying some toys and trinkets which had been given her by a friend. On asking her father to admire her presents, she was no little surprised when his only

reply was, "It will be for your good and advantage to throw them all into the fire." While the child was astonished at such a statement, he added, "I do not command you to put them in the fire, but if you have confidence in me, you will do as I say, and you will find that it will turn out for your happiness and good." The poor child, who would have trusted papa for anything, approached the bright fire in the grate, and, though her lip quivered and her eyes were moistened, she cast her toys into its flames, and fled to conceal her grief. The next day her father brought her a much more beautiful and valuable present, saying as he gave it, that trust in the heavenly Father also will always have its reward, even if we have to wait for it, or have to make sacrifices in doing His will. "For what is good the Lord will give." Some one illustrates the idea that God alone can be implicitly trusted always to bestow the best things, by quoting our Lord's words, "If he ask bread will he give him a stone? if he ask a fish will he give him a serpent?" adding, "But what if he were to ask the serpent? Will he give the serpent because it is foolishly asked?" No; "the Lord knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask."

Sixthly. In considering prayer and its answer, we should never forget that God often "by terrible things in righteousness" answers our prayers. By corrections, afflictions, trials and judgments, we are taught, trained, sanctified and kept near God, so that our prayers are sometimes answered by a rod rather than a kiss. One of our poor, persecuted ministers in Scotland, in a sermon on God's keeping us as the apple of the eye, justly remarked: "Worldly things and peaceful times and outward prosperity are not God's best things, for the Great Physician often administers His best and most efficient medicines in a form not agreeable to the taste." And so it may be said of all His "works in righteousness," towards ourselves and others; they may not be "for the present joyous, but grievous, yet afterwards they yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby."

From all which we joyfully rest assured that no prayer of faith shall ever go unanswered, or as has been well expressed, "Believing prayer never comes home weeping." It may go forth weeping, but when it comes back with its harvest sheaves (Ps. 126), all will be thankfulness and joyful praise. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." It

shows us also the duty and privilege of waiting and looking and expecting an answer to our prayers. The Psalmist thus declares, "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up" (Ps. 5). A morning's prayer and a day's expectation, with eyes turned heavenward, is a good rule for holy living. Moreover, such constant, close communion with God should ever remind us that "the prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord," and that "if we regard sin in our hearts the Lord will not hear us." Let us therefore prove God continually and sweetly from time to time, and be able to say, "But verily, God hath heard me. He hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me" (Ps. 66: 19, 20).

CHAPTER IX.

PRAYER, ITS PRIVILEGES AND ADVANTAGES.

- " And what profit should we have if we pray unto Him ? "
 " I sought the Lord and He delivered me from all my fears."
 " Is any among you afflicted, let him pray ? " " The prayer of faith shall save the sick."
 " Lord, in trouble they have visited Thee : they poured out a prayer when Thy chastening was upon them."
 " Yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord."
 " He will regard the prayers of the destitute, and will not despise their prayer."

Among the old Romans, it was customary, when any new undertaking was proposed, to ask " Cui bono ? " or, to what practical advantage will it be? Now that was just the very question, put by Job into the mouth of the infidel of his day ; " What is the Almighty that we should serve Him, and what profit should we have if we pray unto him ? " (Job 21:15). And yet prayer more than any religious exercise, has profits and advantages, that enrich our whole being and history. In fact, prayer was instituted for this very purpose, and in its daily use we are " filled with all the fulness of God." It was in view of this fact that Dr. Chalmers is reported to have said that the prayers of Doddridge had an " *intensely business spirit.*" And so prayer should, as far as effort is made thereby, to realize some of the benefits of redemption every time we approach God. Prayer should be like the bow of Jonathan, and " never return empty." Has He not said, " Yea, what is good the Lord will give, and will withhold no good thing from him that walketh uprightly " ? And shall we not prove God and learn from experience that He is faithful and true? Romaine, in one of his wonderfully spiritual letters, states that he always, first, accepted Christ every time he approached the Father, using this formula: " I receive and accept of Christ and, on Thy gift, offer, invitation, command and promise ; " and all who thus come with the Son of God in their embrace will not fail to experience that God " who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely

give us all things ? ” Among the innumerable advantages which prayer is the means of attaining and enjoying is,

First. A more full and perfect apprehension of God than we could otherwise reach. As in prayer we stand in the light of the throne, address Him by His great and dreadful names, venerate His presence, refer to His glorious attributes and perfections, confess His wisdom, adore His grace, admire His holiness and purity and seek conformity to all we know Him to be, oh, how “ the light of the knowledge of the glory of God ” rushes in and floods the mind with such discoveries of God as we never had before! What an example of this we have in Moses, when, in familiar intercourse with the God of Israel, on Sinai, he cried, “ I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory.” It may well be asked, “ What do you mean, Moses? Have you not repeatedly seen the glory of God, in the wonders of Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, and on the fiery tops of Sinai, where such tremendous displays of His presence and power were made as to extort the cry, ‘ I exceedingly fear and quake ’ ? And did not you and the elders of Israel see Him, on His sapphire throne, and yet you ask for more? ” Yes, that is the way with prayer, the more it gets of God, the more it desires: and as the sensitive plate in the photographic instrument absorbs the light, so we make our knowledge of God a part of ourselves.

Secondly. Prayer brings us into nearer fellowship and closer communion with God, than we could otherwise enjoy. “ And truly our Fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” But how is that fellowship realized? Chiefly by the agency of believing prayer. The word fellowship, or communion, literally means having joint possession with others, or something in common, and is equally applicable, when used of God or of man. Now, nothing so perfectly realizes communion, both on the part of God and of man, as prayer, by which in speaking together and making common our thoughts, feelings, enjoyments and desires, we enter into God’s whole state of mind toward His people. Therefore, He often speaks to us of His children, people, friends, the objects of His love and interests of His kingdom, and in the fullest confidence invites us “ to reason together,” and uses the most tender, intimate and familiar terms to quicken us to “ seek His face.” And it is being lifted up to such a frame that makes the Spouse, or the redeemed family cry, “ Let my Beloved come

into His garden and eat His pleasant fruit," and she receives in reply the assurance, "I am come into My garden, My sister, My spouse, I have gathered My myrrh with My spice, I have eaten My honey-comb with My honey, I have drunk My wine with My milk. Eat, O friends: yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

Thirdly. It is also by the agency of prayer that we first attain clear assurance of a saving relation to God. Three days in a whale's belly—three sightless days in a darkened chamber, seem to us hard treatment to undergo, but both led to fervent prayer, and "the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry ground"; and Paul had a message sent him, because it was said, "Behold, he prayeth," and prayer assured him of the future and marked his relation to God. On the other hand, the religion of some men seems never to have the power to "stablish, strengthen and settle" them in the ways of God and in the joys of salvation, so that while at one time apparently brilliant and flashing Christians, at other times they are dark, cold, comfortless and destitute of "a good hope through grace," so that one doubts the reality of their religion. Again we might illustrate from the art of photography. It is well known that long ago beautiful pictures could be formed on the plate of ground glass in the camera, when at the proper focal distance. But the beautiful images thus formed could not be fixed, and were therefore evanescent and of no value. But when Daguerre discovered a method of fixing the images, the photographic art was introduced, that has since become so useful and ornamental in society. So of religion: its value cannot be realized until it becomes fixed, "stablished, strengthened and settled," and we are able to say, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise." This marked feature and high attainment is the blessed privilege of the children of God. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God."

Fourthly. Prayer is the appointed instrumentality by which we obtain all the blessings that enrich us. In many ways men seek the perishable riches of earth with greater earnestness than the "unsearchable riches of Christ," and yet they are both in the Lord's prayer and to be sought by analogous means. In two ways we seek a supply of earthly wants, namely, by agriculture and mining. In both we actually "seek hidden treasure," and as we make the earth yield her increase, we are answering the

prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," and expressing our feeling that "earth is full of His riches." And to reach those riches in another form, mining was introduced, as early in history as Lamech and his son Tubal Cain, who were "workers in brass and iron" (Gen. 4:22). Job describes the mining process: "Surely there is a vein for silver and a place for gold where they find it. Iron is taken out of the earth and brass is molten out of the stone." "The stones of it are the place of sapphires, and it hath dust of gold" (Job 28:1-6). Now if after the analogy of these two ways of realizing earthly good, we would spiritually cultivate and mine we would soon be "rich toward God." If we would plow and sow and cultivate our spiritual natures we could lay up "treasures in heaven," greater than those that swelled the granaries of Egypt, while by the study of the Word, meditation and prayer we would search the "deep things of God," and attain a spiritual and eternal wealth that is never exhausted and never lost. For this purpose, prayer keeps us at the throne.

Fifthly. Another wonderful advantage possessed by prayer is its power of comforting and supporting in trouble. "Is any man among you afflicted, let him pray." "Call on Me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee." "Lord, in trouble they have visited Thee, they poured out a prayer when Thy chastening was upon them." Prayer in the day of sorrow and trial, is like oil poured on troubled waters, causing the swelling rage of the billows to subside. Troubles, sorrows and suffering are often set forth by the figures of floods of waters overflowing, storms, tempest, shipwreck and extreme peril: as in the twenty-ninth Psalm, where the giant cedars of Lebanon were crushed, or in the one hundred and seventh, where the tempest drove the mariners to "their wits' ends"; or where the storm seized the recreant prophet Jonah, or in that shipwreck which Paul describes as being so fearful "that all hope of being saved was now taken away." "To pass through the waters, and through the floods" is therefore a figurative way of speaking of the dangers of life, and of those straits and narrow escapes we often experience. Nor is the storm to God's people an unmixed evil. We are thereby stimulated to closer walk with God, and especially to prayer and self-examination of the reality of our religious profession, which rouses us to greater earnestness and persevering importunity at that throne of grace, to which there is con-

stant access. The Spirit has taught us to say, "Blessed is the man Thou chastenest, Lord," and Paul speaks of some "who have chosen rather to suffer affliction with the people of God." The youthful martyr, James Renwick, well observed, "Where we have peace and privilege and all apparent worldly good, we have not got our best things; these come through suffering." And every pang of suffering, every season of distress, every valley of the shadow of death, has provided for it some "cup of consolation for God's mourners," so that we feel we can "glory in tribulation also." When on "the bed of languishing," God hangs His promises around our couch, and so comforting and so soothing is the effect that we are ready to say as Mordecai said to Esther, "Surely thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this."

Sixthly. In bearing our burdens and doing our work, prayer is a mighty power, with many advantages. "Cast thy burden on the Lord," "Take My yoke upon you," "That strong our oxen be for labor," "Work while it is called to-day," "Occupy till I come," "Run the race that is set before us," and many such expressions show us that activity is expected of us. God, however, Who knows our frame, has ordered all things in the service in which He would have us to be active, so that it is true, "God has a plan for every man." And not by our own power can we fill up the plan and purpose of God in the obedience we render. How beautifully that is set forth by the scene from the death bed of the prophet Elisha! In great extremities, the king of Israel visited the dying prophet, and as he wept over him, he cried, "O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!" The prophet having some intimation that deliverance would be granted for a time, directed the king to take a bow and arrows, and lay his hands upon them. When the king had done so, the prophet put his hands upon the king's hands, and after a window was opened facing eastward, the direction of his enemies, shot an arrow therefrom, saying "The arrow of the Lord's deliverance" (2 Kings 13: 15). And just so it is in all our deliverances, successes, direction and support. He puts his hands on ours, giving a divine energy and aim we could not otherwise possess. Hands upon hands, shoulder to shoulder, reminding us of the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee, and My strength is made perfect in weakness"; also what was said of the patri-

archs, "out of weakness were made strong," and such is the life of every one who is quickened into new obedience. This is true in bearing burdens, as well as doing work. We would be utterly overwhelmed and swallowed up but for the help prayer obtains from above. It is related of one of the martyrs in the "killing time" in Scotland, that having been condemned to be burned at the stake, on the night before his execution he was in great terror, lest he might not be able to undergo such a cruel death, and so fail to honor Christ, in whose service he suffered. He resolved to put his endurance to a test, and thrust his hand into the flame of a large lamp, that stood before him. But not for a moment could he endure the fearful agony, and hastily snatching his hand away, he fled anew to God in prayer, and, after a night spent in that exercise, he was able without a quiver of bodily distress or mental agony to suffer even joyfully "for His name's sake." Ah, there are many fiery furnaces, besides that one kindled of old by the king of Babylon!

Seventhly. Prayer is the most efficient means of repelling the adversary and overcoming temptation. Forty days of prayer and fasting preceded the Temptation in the wilderness, when the Prince of Darkness thought to make a victim of the second Adam, as in Eden he had of the first. There was a striking contrast between the scenes, an Eden and a wilderness—luxuriant supply and intense hunger—who would doubt the result? Ah, but what could the most infuriated adversary do to one who had been forty days and nights alone with God, in a heavenly atmosphere, purer than Eden, and more strengthening than its luxuries. And so it is with us in some respects, as we "fight the good fight of faith," and are "exercised unto godliness," temptation has a beneficial rather than an evil effect. It is told that an old Roman general, as he advanced on the foe to the spot where arrows and darts flew thick, cried, when warned of his danger, "Oh, they are only furbishing my armor." So to the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of Righteousness, the shield of faith and sword of the Spirit are all brightened and sharpened and rendered more effective in our daily conflict with sin, Satan and the world, as we take unto us the "whole armor of God," and "quench the fiery darts of the wicked one." The pilgrims to the Celestial City found that there were enemies who regarded not their sword, and could only be overcome by a vigorous use of the weapon, "All prayer."

“For this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.” And so promise, in the hand of prayer, is a key to open every lock in Doubting Castle. Prayer thus employed gives practical experience of the truth, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

Eighthly. Prayer has a wonderful power to adapt the promises to our present state and condition. “Oh, how great is the goodness which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee!” Laid up, how? In His promises. They are God’s treasury and storehouse, and we can always get treasury notes for them, for Christ has assured us, “all things are yours.” Now, in the commercial world, there may be a large amount of gold in the treasury, but being in the state of bullion, it cannot be put in circulation. Two means may be taken to meet the public demand. Treasury notes may be issued that represent, and are secured by, the gold in the treasury, which may safely be accepted at their face value; or the gold bullion may be coined, and thus adapted for circulation. In ways somewhat similar God meets our spiritual wants. He issues His great and precious promises, that are in value, “in Him yea, and in Him, amen,” which are secured by the infallible truth of God, and we put them into circulation as we bring them in our hand, and receive all we need. Or, the golden truths and experiences of God’s people may be melted down and brought into a form that we can live on them as adapted to our present condition. But some may say, Of what use to us are the ancient statements and promises to Noah and Abraham? To many the truths and promises of the Word are dark, obscure and antiquated, but to the spiritual mind that has learnt, “rightly to divide the work of God,” so as rightly to apply it, it will be valued and serve practical ends that nothing else can reach. “For what was written aforetime was written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” As prayer thus adapts the promises to our use and comfort, embraces them as suited to every form of providence through which we pass, oh, how precious it should be, such a heritage of covenant promises, not one of which shall ever fail! Nor in view of such advantages secured by prayer, would it be out of place to notice that some of our old writers compare believers of spiritual character to ruminants that chew the cud, as well as part the hoof. In the silent hours of meditation we digest and assimilate what we have eaten, and live thereon in all forms of Christian

progress "as we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." At the same time the hoof—indicative of our life, walk and conversation—parted and separated from the evil world, is another aspect of the moral purity by which we are recognized as having a place among the people of God. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." And whatever is thus realized by prayer adapting the promises to our several conditions, will be like the money the sons of Jacob found in their sacks' mouths, and by the advice of their father, returned. We can bring these promises to God once and again, and always find them fresh, exhaustless and potent as arguments in prayer.

Ninthly. Another blessed advantage of habitual prayer is its sanctifying and purifying influence. David prays, "Let my prayer be set before Thee as incense." Prayer, like incense, leaves a sweet fragrance behind, and is one of the most powerful influences that go to form our character and regulate our lives. Prayer may be compared to medicine which is used to effect two ends. First, it is a detergent to purge out and throw from the system what is deleterious and unhealthful, and, secondly, it is a tonic to build up the system and renew in it its former vigor. And, however numerous the elements in any particular form of medicine, each one, when taken, goes to that part of the system upon which it is intended to act with healing power. So, spiritually, prayer administers the medicine God has provided, and applies it in all its elements of doctrines or morals, and thus fulfils our Lord's earnest desire for all His people, "Sanctify them through Thy truth." And thus, in close communion with God and constant use of His word in prayer, "we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

CHAPTER X.

PRAYER—ITS INFLUENCE, DIRECT AND REFLEX.

- “ Let my prayer be set before Thee as incense, and the uplifting of my hands as the evening sacrifice.”
- “ Nevertheless He regarded their afflictions when He heard their cry, and He remembered for them His covenant, and repented according to the multitude of His mercies.”
- “ For it repented the Lord because of their groanings, by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.”
- “ And my prayer returned into my own bosom.”

The expression, “prayer moves the hand that moves the world,” has been often quoted, and while in some respects it contains a glorious truth, yet as often understood and applied, it is neither true in sentiment nor practice. That God, the glorious object of our worship and Hearer of prayer is influenced thereby, is no doubt taught by many expressions in His Word, and it requires much careful discrimination rightly to understand how such expressions are in harmony with what God is, and what He has done. Indeed, both the direct influence of prayer, Godward, and its reflex influence on ourselves, require to be well understood if we would pray with any good measure of comfort. And

First. To understand the effect of prayer when addressed to the Divine Being, we must always interpret what is said of Him and His doings, in harmony with His character, perfections, unchangeable purposes and plans and the unerring foreknowledge, that enters into all He does. He never can, like earthly parents, at one time treat His children with unwise indulgence, and at others with unreasonable severity. Being perfectly wise, good, holy, patient, righteous, true, and in all these, unchangeable, He cannot be the subject of any passion, that would lead Him for a moment to act so as to make mistakes or inflict injury or wrong. Therefore when we read of His wrath, anger, hatred, favor, or of His repenting, forgetting, sleeping, resting or journeying, we must not forget that He claims in all these to be infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth, and that what would seem to imply change

must be understood in the light of His own words: "I, the Lord, change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed," and "That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie." It is therefore, because we see so little of God's ways, and get such small glimpses of His glorious perfections, that we make mistakes of judgment, either concerning Him or His works. God's ways have been compared to logs of wood floating on the waters of a troubled sea. As the swell raises them to the crest of the billow, we can catch a glimpse of them from the deck of the passing vessel; but it is only for a moment, for they soon sink into the trough of the wave and are lost to view. No wonder, then, that we make mistakes about God and His ways from imperfect knowledge. A child one evening noticed the new moon, when it only presented to the eye a narrow line of light, and admired the crescent it formed. After some days, when the moon was nearly full the same child looking up and seeing, not a slender line of light, but a magnificent globe of fire, so different from what he had seen before, could not believe that it was the *same moon*. And so, in spiritual things, we "know in part and we prophesy in part." If we could only see everything about God and His ways in the light of his perfect foreknowledge, eternal purpose, unerring wisdom and infinite power, we would have less trouble in understanding that though "from all mutation free," He may appear to receive impressions and undergo changes as He condescends graciously to hold fellowship with us and hear and answer our supplication.

Again, the language we employ of and to God, being entirely figurative, must be so used as to understand what is said of Him. It has often been said that God, like a fond parent, lisps to us in our own language, which is just another way of saying that "He speaks to us after the manner of men." What is this lisping or speaking after the manner of men? It is simply speaking of and to God in the way and terms we would employ in speaking of and to our fellow Christians. Thus we use almost all the relations of life to designate Him as father, husband, friend, etc., and in expressing our love, conveying our wishes, declaring our intentions, expressing our sympathy, and in many other ways, we clothe God with much that is human and so get nearer Him in every spiritual exercise. How we see this exemplified in the case of children. We fondle the tender little ones, talk with them in

their own way, enjoy their infantile prattle. In talking with them, we do not take our subject or terms from mathematics or astronomy, but from things ordinary and familiar, according to the rule, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child." Now, there are two things that prevent us obtaining clear views of the influences of prayer on God, namely, the poverty of human language to express all we know, and our ignorance and mistakes in interpreting the language in which God manifests himself. "After the manner of men," therefore, does not merely mean something out of the usual and ordinary way of speaking of God and divine things, for there is no other way of addressing Him, but by such names, titles, terms, words and revelations, as He employs Himself, and which are the medium of all inter-communication between Him and us; but the expression also means the right and intelligent use of all the figurative and spiritual language by which God is worshiped. Otherwise our mind will be dark and our speech confused. Thus, Paul was on one occasion borne up to the heavenly Paradise, and though he saw many unutterable things there, brought nothing back: he had no language in which to utter what he saw; therefore, except to himself, the vision was comparatively unprofitable. The word of God is the mother tongue of all we know of religion while on earth. "Behold, I show you a mystery."

Again, all we know of the direct influence of prayer on God, is chiefly summed up in this, His unspeakable readiness to give and so relieve every form of want. It might be supposed from our relation to God and our constant tendency to offend Him, that it would be difficult, yea, impossible, to reach Him with prayer or have access to Him with any petition; and language is often used that would seemingly suggest such a thought. But no, "For Thou, Lord, art good and *ready* to forgive, and *plenteous* in mercy, unto all them that call upon Thee." And that He is "*waiting* to be gracious," is seen in the manner in which He receives the returning prodigal, as compared with the earnest suasion and powerful appeals which the widow of Tekoah presented to David to persuade him to bring home his banished Absalom. So abundant is the grace shown us in Christ, that we are represented as receiving even before we ask. "And it shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear." If in His foreknowledge God hears and answers prayer

before it is offered, it cannot be anything on our part that makes it successful. Besides, we are so apt to confound the primary cause of success in prayer in God with the secondary cause, the use of means, that we sometimes think and speak of changes as if in God rather than in ourselves. Therefore, as formerly referred to, when the "prayer test" was under discussion, many wrote and spoke of prayer as something that brings down God's will to ours, and inclines and persuades Him to give us what we ask : whereas the truth is we pray our will up to His will. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

As to the *reflex* influence of prayer upon him that offers it, it is both manifold and precious. First, habitual prayer changes, elevates and purifies the moral character and life of him that offers it. It is amazing what power is in the expression, "If I regard sin in my heart, the Lord will not hear me," or that by Paul, "But we all with open (unveiled) faces, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Exposed to the light and heat of the sun, our bodies change in color and general appearance. Plants also change color by the same power. The presence of a wise and valued friend will change us intellectually and socially ; and to realize the presence of God in Christ changes us morally and spiritually and makes us to "grow in grace," and "to grow up in all things unto Him who is the head." How wonderfully illustrative of this is the Psalmist's assurance, "I will behold Thy face in righteousness, and when I awake I shall be satisfied with Thy likeness !" (Ps. 17 : 15). At every stage of human life we grow up to some model or ideal. With the children of God this is the image of Christ, to which they are "transformed by the renewing of their minds." But though growing and progressing in likeness to Christ, they are never satisfied, till on the morning of the resurrection, they awake to the possession of a perfected, glorified body, which is received again by the glorified soul, and then, and not until then, are they satisfied with His likeness. As the sun ripens the fruits of the earth and perfects the formation of the precious diamond, so three or four score years of fellowship with "open face," must result in blessed results and increase of spiritual attainments, walking and talking together and resting satisfied and assured, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall

be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John 3:2).

Secondly. The reflex influence of prayer greatly increases our spirituality and heavenly mindedness. "Praying in the Holy Ghost," "Praying always with all prayer in the Spirit," these expressions clearly indicate what will be the effect of habitual prayer upon our whole mental and moral nature. Thus, "that which is born of the Spirit," becomes a living reality, and we more and more "walk in the Spirit." And this becomes a force to "mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts," and carefully guard against all that would grieve, quench or resist the Spirit in carrying forward His work in heart and life. This spirituality is kept alive and rendered effective by much prayer, which is the reason that the man of prayer is often called the "man of God" in Scripture, as in the cases of Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and it is applied not only to the youthful Timothy, but to all who are living in fellowship with God, that "the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Prayer polishes and perfects our graces of life and character and enables us to live more for the spiritual world, realizing what that means, "who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit," and "to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

Thirdly. In the reflex influence of prayer we have a power to give strength, stability and perseverance in God's service. In the natural world there is a law, or rather a combination of laws, wonderfully paralleled in our moral and spiritual experience. We refer to those laws that guide the planets in their courses, the centripetal and centrifugal forces. The former is constantly attracting to its center, while the centrifugal is constantly driving away, and in their co-operation, though acting in opposition, they hold the planet in its course as it moves in its orbit. Something of a similar kind we have in the spiritual world. Thus Paul declares of his own experience, "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin that is in my members." But on the other hand he tells us, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death," thus breaking the force of that tendency to depart from God which is so deep-seated in our fallen nature. Therefore by His prophets, God could declare, "I draw them with cords of a man and with bands of

love," and the Spouse could pray, "Draw me and we will run after Thee," the surest way to realize, "Be ye steadfast, and unmovable." In prayer, in the hour of temptation or affliction, God lays his hand on our hands, and thereby we are strengthened "with all might, by His Spirit in the inner man." And oh, if David, in the hour of temptation to lustful passion, had only turned aside and spent an hour with God, how different would his history have been! "Call on me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee."

Fourthly. The reflex influence of prayer is also often seen in prayer returning to the bosom of him who offers it: "And my prayer returned into my own bosom" (Ps. 53:13). In the previous part of the Psalm, David tells us how he was exercised in prayer even for his enemies, as in addition to other acts of kindness, he had been praying and fasting on their behalf. But without success. And yet it was not in vain; it had done himself good by returning into his own bosom. This is an experience in prayer of which we have many examples. Thus Abraham prayed for the Sodomites, without their receiving from it any perceptible advantage, and yet it is recorded to his honor and as an example to us. And so of many of the saints. The influence of prayer can never be inoperative in whatever form it may be presented. It must have greatly strengthened the Patriarch's own faith, that God had heard him on behalf of the cities of the plain, and although they had not apparently received any benefit from these prolonged pleadings, yet Lot was saved and Abraham was farther instructed and posterity benefited by that old record. Oh, no, prayer is never in vain. The sun may not always be shining on the same spot, and yet be at work in other planets. The moon may, for a time, entirely disappear, and the heavens be clothed with darkness, but, sun, moon and stars are at all times in the grasp of that Celestial Power that controls the operation of every law, and ministers to our safety and comfort. At one time the waters of the Jordan were divided, when the feet of the priests who bore the tabernacle touched them (Josh. 4:10); once and again the same thing was accomplished when they were smitten by the wrapped mantle of a prophet (2 Kings 2), but in every case it was in answer to prayer.

Fifthly. Further, another element in the reflex influence of prayer is a calm and holy peace. "In everything by prayer and

supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passeth knowledge shall keep your heart and mind through Jesus Christ." "In Me ye shall have peace." As in the House Beautiful, the Christian Pilgrim, after being sustained and comforted by many spiritual joys, was "laid down in the chamber of peace," so the unspeakable joy of having a God in covenant relation, upon whom we "roll all our burdens" and "cast all our cares," is one of the most elevating, soul-satisfying and transcendent blessings we can possess on earth, realizing the words, "The soul's calm sunshine and heartfelt joy is virtue's prize."

Sabbath. Again, prayer has also the power to neutralize our selfishness and make us love as brethren. "Peace on earth and good will toward men," is the spirit of true prayer wherever offered. "A stubborn and a froward heart," David learned, must be put away if we would pray in comfort and enjoy the blessings it is the means of procuring. We once knew a godly mother who said that on one occasion she had prayed more in twenty-four hours than in a good part of her past life. She had a child some seven or eight years of age, who greatly desired something which the parent did not think judicious or safe to allow her. The child took offense because her desire was not gratified, displayed a most undutiful spirit, shaking her head in angry passion, refusing to acknowledge that she was acting sinfully toward the most kind and tender parent. This continued through a whole night, which the mother spent in prayer. In the morning she was gratified beyond measure by receiving from the little one the confession of her error, and prayer for forgiveness, as she told how bitter had been the fruits of stubbornness. Similar experiences may happen in the higher walks of spiritual life. We stubbornly refuse God's will and way, and are often swayed by our personal feelings. A person who at one time was declaring about another who had injured him, that he forgave the offence, but could not forget it, was asked, "Do you like to pray for him?" When he confessed that he neither prayed nor liked to pray for one who had so grievously injured him, the question then was asked, "Is that the way you would wish God to forgive you?" "Pray for them that hate you and despitefully use you"; and "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." That is God's way, and it is effective for greater moral good than all the threats of vengeance that have ever

been uttered on earth. "Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst, give him drink, for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head," not to consume, but to purify, as when God declares, "I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross and take away all thy tin." (Is. 1 : 25). And oh, how earnestly should fellow-believers and disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus, who even in the depths of His suffering prayed for them who were inflicting on Him the most grievous injuries, how they should earnestly seek to be conformed and assimilated to Him whom they call Lord and Master, and thus help to hasten on the promised era, "when the whole earth shall be full of His glory." And it is only when these reflex influences of prayer are powerfully felt by all the followers of the Lamb, that such blessed results are to be realized.

CHAPTER XI.

PRAYER AS A RESTORATIVE.

"He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for His name's sake."

"Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation."

"I have seen his ways and will heal him; I will lead him also and will restore comfort to him and to his mourners."

"The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul."

"For I will restore health unto thee, and will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord."

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye that are spiritual restore such an one, in the spirit of meekness."

Prayer a restorative! Yes, and so in harmony with the kingdom of God, both in providence and grace. It may be truly said, not only that all animate beings require restoratives in some form, but that a good part of their active life is taken up in providing, preparing and using what may legitimately be called by that name. The word restorative signifies something that renews or brings back some good thing or condition which we have temporarily lost. An example from nature will illustrate. In describing some of the phenomena in nature, the Psalmist, among other grand statements, declares: "Thou renewest the face of the earth." Spring comes as a restorative, and the earth lays aside her winter robe, and in all the beauty of a new dress she charms the senses again, while her productiveness is stimulated for the supply of our wants. But besides these large operations in the wide field of nature, we have personal and social experiences in which the failure of the necessities, the joys, happiness and good of life, make us wish for and seek what will "restore comfort to us and our mourners." Therefore, temporary failure and restoration constitute an important experience in human life. Thus "the waters fail," "the labor of the olive fails," "the pastures fail," our "tongues fail," and "we all do fade as a leaf." But not physically alone is this experience realized, but morally and spiritually; failure and restoration are things common to all true believers, as illustrated in the passages quoted above. May the Word "restore our soul."

First, then, a season of spiritual *exhaustion* requires prayer as a restorative. We know the effects of hunger, thirst and want on our bodily powers, and how their strength is restored by a suitable supply, and this exhaustion and supply becomes so regular and uniform that they form a law of our life. Therefore, Solomon declares: "All the labor of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled" (Eccles. 6:7). We know how the powerful Sampson, after slaying a thousand Philistines, with so contemptible a weapon as the jaw-bone of an ass, was so exhausted that he was near death for lack of water to quench his thirst, when God intervened to provide what was necessary to save his servant's life. That was literal restoration. And transferring the matter to the spiritual world, we often find such terms and forms of expression, as show how largely it is the experience of the saints. Thus David declares: "I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living"; and God promised, "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I, the Lord, will hear them, I, the Lord of Israel, will not forsake them." And it is worthy of notice that when in the one hundred and seventh Psalm, God's redeemed pilgrims, and captives, and afflicted ones are so largely described, their deliverance is no less than four times connected with prayer. "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and He saved them out of their distress." "He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death and brake their bands in sunder." What a blessed restoration!

But, again, not only in seasons of exhaustion, but of terror, alarm and suffering, prayer "restores the soul." Prayer is the means of getting back our joy and peace, when lost for a time, and the need of restoration mentioned in the twenty-third Psalm, is put in common with "walking through the valley of the shadow of death," and in another Psalm is spoken of as the common experience of every child of God. "I sought the Lord and He heard me and delivered me from all my fears. They looked to Him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried and the Lord heard and saved him out of his troubles." And it would almost seem as if God had some secret, wise purpose to serve, in allowing His people to be visited and tried with what seems a large measure of distress and suffering. But

it is not from any desire on His part to see His children suffer, but for the spiritual results to be thus realized. "Lord, in trouble they have visited Thee, they poured out a prayer when Thy chastening was upon them," "In my distress, I called upon the Lord," "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten," all revealing the moral purpose of many of God's dealings with us. See those ten men standing before one of Egypt's well-stocked granaries. Not only are they refused corn, but they are cast into prison to be punished as spies. Very hard treatment, we think. But thirteen years ago those men had committed a grievous sin against a brother, and of that sin they had never repented. And it is only by the sorrows and troubles in which they are now involved that they are brought to repentance and confession of their guilt. Above the rage of the storm and the lash of the billows of the Sea of Galilee on a dark night, were heard loud cries of distress, "Master, Master, save us, we perish." In such excited exclamations we hear the voice of sorrow, fear and danger, from all which, prayer or "The cry to the Lord" delivers us.

Again, prayer as a restorative, relieves us from *anxieties* and *uncertainties* that would mar our peace. What a blessed assurance, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace (peace, peace), whose mind is stayed upon Thee, because he trusteth in Thee!" "Trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." To soothe, rest and refresh the wearied body, there is nothing so valuable as what the poet calls, "Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep." When the fevered system shows marked evidence of a desire for sleep, it is hailed as a favorable symptom that health will soon be restored. And so spiritually, "When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble, and when He hideth His face, who then can behold Him?" (Job 34: 29). And, oh, what a relief, then, in our anxiety and uncertainty—to be able to respond to God's assurance, "Casting all your cares upon Him, for He careth for you," and be able to say with the young reformer, "My anxieties drive me to the throne of grace, and the throne of grace driveth away my anxieties." He that can realize and daily exercise such a frame as that, may lie down in the chamber of peace.

Again, by the power of prayer we may be "renewed unto repentance," and restored to joys lost for a time. How mourn

fully the royal Psalmist cries, when he realizes the nature and terrible aggravations of the sin he had committed, "Restore unto me the joys of Thy salvation!" He had with his glory—vocal power—praised Jehovah in the most delightful strains, and called upon all nature and even the angels of heaven to join him. But where is that glorious concert now? He is now but a poor self-condemned criminal, acknowledging himself worthy of death, the light of whose joy seems extinguished forever. And yet he keeps knocking at the door of mercy and plaintively pleads, "Restore the joy of Thy salvation." And, amazing though it may appear, he was heard and brought out of darkness into "God's marvelous light," realizing through faith and prayer the words of God by Isaiah, "In returning and rest ye shall be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be your strength." "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning," is the common experience of all saints.

Again, prayer as a restorative, is often the means of checking and correcting hard thoughts of God and His ways. Every child of God, familiar with the details of Christian experience, knows how frequently we are tempted to entertain hard thoughts of God, and judge of His dealings with us in providence, as if they were hardly in accordance with what we are taught concerning Him. Thus, Job often speaks of some of the doings of God, as if they could not be justified, and until that awful challenge by God Himself, "Wilt thou disannul my judgment, wilt thou condemn Me that thou mayst be righteous?" he uttered words for which he afterward abhorred himself as "hiding counsel without knowledge." In the same way throughout the Psalms, which are not only a treasure house of Christian experience, but also a looking-glass, reflecting the light that thereby we may judge more correctly of our own condition, there are many examples, especially in seasons of affliction, suffering, weakness and desertion, of God's people uttering "words unadvisedly," undutifully and unbelievably. Thus Asaph, as the outcome of his survey of things on earth, represents the godly as crying, "How doth God know, and is there knowledge in the Most High?" (Ps. 73: 11). And again, "Will the Lord cast off forever, and will He be favorable no more?" (Ps. 77: 7). But while faint and weak, restoratives were at hand. Therefore, it is of the greatest importance to understand such songs fully, especially as

we use them daily in our worship, and as they are in full adaptation to the needs of believers in all ages. In the two Psalms quoted above, Asaph first acknowledges that the mistakes which disturbed his peace, were faults of his own, and not of God. "I said this in my infirmity," and then he went to the house of God and got relief. "When I thought to know this it was too painful for me until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end"; and so he was restored to his former joy and peace by "drawing near to God."

Nor are we to overlook the case of those of whom Paul writes, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye that are spiritual restore such an one, in the spirit of meekness." Fellow members and brethren in the church assume grave responsibilities when they consent to be their "brother's keeper," and are often admonished not only to "love one another," but to maintain a healthy, prayerful discipline to that end. In the early days of Christianity, such discipline was greatly needed. Such were the difficulties of following Christ faithfully, such the persecutions to be endured, and so much self-denial to be exercised, that at times much backsliding and falling away did, no doubt, prevail. But transgressors were not rejected, but were dealt with according to the nature of the offense, so as to "renew them to repentance," and this was accomplished in and by prayer, realizing Peter's words, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promises, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

But who can tell all that is implied in being restored as part of our spiritual experience. Our tendency to weary in well-doing, to backslide from Christian attainments, our breach of vows, our unreasonable fears, unholy and inconsistent walk, these and many other things require often that our Great Shepherd should "restore our soul." From the Slough of Despond, up the Hill Difficulty, through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, through Vanity Fair, over the Enchanted Ground, and through the River that has no bridge; in everyone and all of these we need in some form such restoration as will enable us constantly to say, "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint" (Is. 40: 36).

CHAPTER XII.

PRAYER—A RETREAT.

- “ And Abraham got up early in the morning, to the place where he stood before the Lord.”
- “ And Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him, till the breaking of the day.”
- “ And he (Moses) was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights. He did neither eat bread nor drink water.”
- “ And he (Elijah) came thither unto a cave and lodged there: and behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, and He said unto him, “ What doest thou here, Elijah ? ”
- “ For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion, in the secret of His tabernacle He shall hide me: He shall set me upon a rock.”
- “ They wandered in deserts and on mountains and in dens and caves of the earth.”
- “ The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe.”

It has often been observed that we cannot remain long in one position, or apply ourselves continuously to one pursuit, without a desire for change to relieve the strained nerve and rest the active muscle. Therefore life is full of changes, sometimes undesirable, but often largely adding to the sum of our enjoyments. This is true also of all our religious exercises and pursuits. God has provided so many forms, public and private, in which we can approach and enjoy Him, that we find food in every pasture and fruit on every tree. Thus we are invited, at one time, publicly to worship Him, “ in the Beauty of Holiness,” where we have a temple manifestation of God, and at another time we are instructed, “ Enter into thy closet and pray to thy Father in secret,” to impress us with the importance of being alone with God. Again, we are refreshed by fellowship with the saints, the household of Christ, and yet again by fellowship with God Himself, the Head of all the spiritual family. Sometimes we walk, at other times we run, and at still others we rest with a feeling of enjoyment. Now, we sing in the most joyful and exalted strains, but our attitude has often been prostrate before God, exclaiming, “ God be merciful to me, a sinner.”

Now, when impelled by the force of prayer to seek God's

face, either for privacy or security, we think that the most distinct and definite idea is that of betaking ourselves to a retreat, a figurative way of speaking often mentioned in God's word, and easily understood by us. Thus, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe," and "He shall hide me in His pavilion," and "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers and shut thy door about thee: hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast," and "who have fled for refuge to the hope set before us." "Apart from the busy haunts of men," free from many distracting and conflicting scenes of life, alone with God, such a retreat is realized, as was experienced by Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Hannah, Elijah, and many other of the saints, one of whom, after having daily, during many years, spent certain hours apart with God, wrote his experience under the title, "Solitude Sweetened." Such hours were to him a retreat indeed; a "solitude sweetened." While, however, we call prayer, in some of its aspects, a retreat, we do not merely mean the idea of privacy, only, but rather that of an inward, hidden life. Lexicographers define the word retreat as, a place of privacy, retirement; a place of security, and the act of retiring before a superior force. As we are exercised in spiritual things, we will experience the value of such a retreat.

First. There is true privacy and retirement in the felt presence of God. As Moses was covered up, and shut in, in absolute seclusion, when at Horeb he had lengthened intercourse with God, so the spirit and exercise of prayer may become so intense, that we are conscious of nothing but God's presence. And how enraptured the spirit of the Spouse as she felt the power of such an hour and exclaims, "His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up nor awake my love till He please." Thus, the exercised soul may, like Moses, feel a holy awe and terror in God's presence, and yet, like Him, be unwilling to leave without seeing more and more of His glory manifested, and enjoying more of His presence.

Secondly. Prayer, in the sense of retirement, gives us the seclusion we need in many spiritual exercises. It is all important that everything that would mar our thoughts of and fellowship with God, be kept apart from our religious duties and services.

We need our wandering thoughts, vain imaginations, mere animal excitement and the fear of man, all mortified and cast out, if we would seek God in spirit and in truth. Nay, there are many of the functions of the spiritual life absolutely require some such seclusion for their right performance, such as confession of sins, especially secret sins, special personal petitions, vowing and covenanting ; for these, we must be alone with God, "in secret." A Christian poet describes, in well-known words, the need of such retreat,

. . . . "Retire,
The world shut out : thy thoughts call home :
Imagination's airy wings repress :
Wake all to reason : let her reign alone."

We all need a measure of solitude to give time and opportunity for reflection, to help to form our religious character and to correct our judgment about men and measures, and to make us know God as our highest good.

Thirdly. Prayer is a blessed retreat in the *sense of peace and security* it brings. "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rocks, in the secret place of the stairs," is our Lord's own description of His people. By being "in the clefts of the rocks," He means our being in the Rock, Christ, and by "the secret places of the stairs" (ascents, Jacob's ladder), He means habitual, sustained prayer. Such a position, in the evil day, is invaluable. Thus, when Saul was leading an army on one side of a mountain, seeking to capture and destroy David, and David and his few followers were on the other side, doing all they could to escape, the safety and security of the King Elect, were the result of prayer from one "in the clefts of the Rock." We know this by reference to the Psalms, where David tells of his experience, both on this occasion and on another, when Saul and his men, pursuing David, entered the cave where David and his men were hiding (1 Sam. 23 : 24). In the first case, a messenger that came crying to Saul, "Haste thee and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land!" was the answer to a prayer that no ears but God's ever heard ; in the second case we see how "darkness hideth not from God," as he seeks safety in prayer. In fact, God can make anything a retreat from danger or a false position. Even the storms and tempests of life, as seen in the shipwreck scene of the 107th Psalm, often prove our safety, as they were in the cases of Jonah, Paul, and of "good Queen Bess," when God marvelously broke and

scattered what was blasphemously called the Invincible Armada. Prayer may be like Hezekiah's, "Like the crane or the swallow did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove, my eyes fail with looking upward; O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake Thou for me" (Is. 38: 14); yet nevertheless it is mighty through God, and though often only a cry from the depths, its answer proves the truthfulness of Solomon's assurance, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe." It is told of Alexander Peden, one of Scotland's most faithful martyrs, that on one occasion, when hiding in a rough retreat of rocks and heather, he was warned by a private messenger that the dragoons were on his track, and so near that they must soon surround and apprehend him. He arose with calm demeanor and cried, "Good Lord, cast Thy cloak about poor auld Sandie," and as if in immediate reply, a dense cloud of fog and mist descended and hid him so thoroughly that his enemies were unable to find or injure him. God's people are His "hidden ones," whose way he knows, and whom He covers in His pavilion.

Fourthly. Prayer is a retreat, as it furnishes infallible direction in all our ways. Retreat is a military term, and is often used of armies skillfully changing their position the more readily to achieve success, sometimes in camps or strongholds, and at others employed in active field movements. Now, while we cordially acquiesce in the saying of one of our old writers, that the roof of the righteous is bomb-proof, yet, as in war, there are active marches, outside operations, exposure and many forms of danger when unprotected by a fortress, so there are many dangers in our spiritual warfare, that give great value to the promise that we shall be led in the right way by unerring wisdom. A stronghold and fortified position may be important in war, but a skilled strategist and competent general is better. In the Peninsular campaign, by which the great European war was terminated, at Waterloo, the Duke of Wellington declared that the victory was achieved not so much by the courage of his troops, or the weight of his battalions, or the power of his artillery, as by the Fabian policy of retreating, wearing out and demoralizing the forces of the enemy, exhausting their resources, thus gaining a victory of strategy more than of force. Now, in our Lord's work and warfare, we need to use Christian wisdom and skill, as well as courage and might: and our need of these is supplied by the promise, "And with

my eye upon thee set, I will direction show"; or the assurance, "Them also in a way to walk that right is He did guide." And, oh, if we could at all times choose as He chooses, and will as He wills, and be like trained soldiers ever ready and obedient and anxious to know what our Lord and Master would have us do, we would have more of this sweet assurance that we have a retreat in our relation to God to which prayer can ever flee. But, alas, even His own disciples frequently by unbelief and disobedience refuse to "dwell under His shadow," and are ready sometimes to question the wisdom of some of His doings, as did Job, Moses, David, Asaph, Elijah and Peter. But if we could always look through God's eyes, and see and know as He does, our minds would enjoy a peace that passeth knowledge, however great the storm or trial may be. If we could only look up at all times, in every difficulty and strait, to the ineffable wisdom and glory of God as seen in the face of Jesus, always reverently inquiring at His footstool for all we need, our comfort and peace would be greatly enlarged.

Fifthly. Prayer is a retreat, as it realizes that the "secret of the Lord" is our chief happiness and good. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." There are many secrets and secret joys between God and the living, loving, believing spirits that fear, love and obey Him. Secret places, secret meetings, secret interchange of feeling and thought, secret joys and prospects, secret treasures laid up in heaven, and secret, precious glimpses we get of our name being in the Lamb's Book of Life. These are enjoyments and treasures that can never be spent, wasted, decrease in value or be stolen or lost. The pilgrim might lose his *spending money*, and go to heaven a beggar as to the things of the world, but his *jewels* are in God's safe, and not His own keeping. When precious treasures are laid up safely for their future possessors, sometimes the safe is opened for a little to allow the heirs a glimpse of what will some day be theirs: so our Lord gives us sometimes glimpses of what in ordinary experience the eye cannot see now, nor the ear hear. And, oh, the blessed effects of such glimpses of "what we shall be" in enlarging our joy, quickening our hopes and maintaining our spirituality of mind! The writer once knew a dear child of God, who sometimes about communion seasons became so enraptured that she would plead with intense desire, "Lord,

Lord, just take me away from this table to paradise. Oh, let me no longer be polluted with sin, and my joy and peace marred by my weakness and instability." Speaking of this experience, she afterwards said to a friend, "Oh, ay, we sat that day at a weel-furnished table in the banqueting house and the Lord Himself brought us a cup, lippen fou, and runnin' o'er, but my troubles and trials hae emptied somewhat my joy since, and I can noo only pray with the Spouse, 'Until the day break and the shadows flee away, be as a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Bether.'"

CHAPTER XIII. PRAYER—A SEDATIVE.

“What time I am afraid I will trust in Thee.”

“For I said in my haste, I am cut off from thine eyes. Nevertheless, Thou heardest the voice of my supplication, when I cried unto Thee.”

“From the ends of the earth will I cry unto Thee: when my heart is overwhelmed lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.” “Lord, save us, we perish.”

“Oh, Lord, I am oppressed; undertake Thou for me.”

“Righteous art Thou, O Lord, when I plead with Thee, yet let me talk with Thee of Thy judgments.”

By the use of many of the figures of speech we often express the manner in which our organs and powers are daily performing the ordinary functions of life, both separately and conjointly, both bodily and mentally. Thus, our powers of body and mind have been beautifully compared to a musical instrument, capable of producing the grandest and most inspiring strains. And the first thing the figure suggests is that the music is not in the instrument, but in a performer; and that his skill operating on a perfect instrument can alone produce the “music that hath charms.” The strings of the psaltery and harp, the bore of the flute and other wind instruments, and the touch of the cymbal and drum can only produce either melody or harmony as they are operated on by a performer in whose mind the music was, before a sound was uttered. To produce fine music it requires that the instrument be in perfect condition and that the performer be skilled in its use. For this purpose, the instrument is *tuned* so that it may render perfectly the sounds that the player wills. Something similar is true in our spiritual life. When “the Holy Spirit that dwelleth in us,” operates on a well tuned and well instructed heart and mind, then only do we worship in spirit and in truth. It is all important that our state of mind, feelings, appetites, affections and desires be all tuned and brought into complete harmony with God and one another, if we would serve Him with comfort. Therefore, we find the writers of many of the Psalms, as it were, tuning their own frames and putting both body and mind into a lofty condition when they approach God:

“ Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name.” “ My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise.” “ Awake up, my glory, awake psaltery and harp; I myself will awake early ” (Ps. 57 : 8). In other words, we should tune up all our powers so that understanding, mind, memory and imagination may all be active and effective in God’s service.

And here comes in the idea suggested by the word *sedative*, which we have put at the head of this chapter, to illustrate some of the benefits daily enjoyed through the agency of prayer. Sedative is a medical term and is put for anything that soothes and allays pain and assuages grief, so much so that under its power the nervous system is not only relieved from irritation, but can bear operations that would otherwise be intolerable. And in the general subject of anaesthetics, what wonderful progress has been made, both in medicine and surgery, by modern research and discovery. At one time, only Indian flax was known to possess anaesthetic power to any extent, but now we have nitrous oxide gas, chloroform, coca and other preparations that by their effects on the nervous system have, especially in surgical cases, proved a blessing to thousands.

And as we turn to the working and weakness of our spiritual condition, oh how desirable it would be to have some power that could and would control us in all our religious exercises, operations and experiences ! Nor have we any hesitation in asserting that prayer is that spiritual sedative that calms and soothes and strengthens us in every emergency through which we pass. Take the following points :

First. Prayer has the power of calming all undue excitement and mental perturbation. This may be illustrated by an incident in the history of the prophet Elisha when he was visited and consulted by Jehoshaphat, and the King of Israel (2 Kings 3 : 15). The prophet became much excited by the presence of the idolatrous king of Israel, and declared, but for the respect he entertained for Jehoshaphat he would not “ look toward thee nor see thee.” But when he consented to consult God on their behalf, that his mind might be brought into a calm and collected condition, he asks, “ and now bring me a minstrel.” There seems to have been in Israel a class of musicians, who hired out on public occasions, and whose music was supposed to tranquilize

any excitement that might prevail. Such were the minstrels whom our Lord found at the ruler's house when He came to restore life to his deceased daughter (Matt. 9: 23). Such musicians were probably among the camp followers of the kings, and one of them was called in, that by his soothing music he might calm the prophet's feelings and prepare him for the divine afflatus. And just such a power has prayer. It is our minstrel, whose melody charms us out of all our distractions and prepares us for holy and peaceful fellowship with God and His people.

Second. Prayer has wonderful power to allay our fears and free us from distressing alarms. This is perhaps one of the most frequent and delightful experiences we enjoy on earth. Fear has torment, and oh, for a sedative powerful enough to put it to flight, and bless us with the calm enjoyment of peace! The remedy has been found, an old remedy, too, that all the saints have tested. The Psalmist thus records his use of it: "I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." Here prayer and fear come into collision, and fear is broken and dispelled. Again, see Jacob, an old man, limping along to meet a brother, of whom at one time he was terribly afraid, lest he would slay himself and family, for an old grudge, which Esau was quite powerful enough to do, having a strong force of armed men. But how does it come that the old shepherd, in the face of such calamity, is so calm? Simply, because he had spent the night alone with God, and fear had fled and peace returned. True, he is limping, but that blessed lameness is the seal of his having been in the conflict and come off victor, an honorable scar carried from the battlefield. Our Lord, Himself, our example, passed through a similar experience. Not only is it recorded of Him, as of Jacob, that He spent whole nights in prayer, but of Him it is said, "Who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared." And in a lower line of illustration, the recorded experience of Abraham Lincoln might be quoted. When in conversation with General Sickles, who had lost a limb at the Battle of Gettysburg, the General asked him whether he and his Cabinet had not been in great anxiety as to the result of that engagement. Lincoln said that some members of his cabinet had, but he himself had had no fears. He explained that in every pinch and stress of the Gettysburg

campaign, he had gone to the Almighty in secret prayer. He said that he told the Lord that this was His country, and the war was His war, and that he then and there made a solemn vow, that if the Lord would stand by us at Gettysburg, he would stand by Him in all the future. And he added, "He *did* and I *will*. After thus praying, in some unknown way a sweet comfort crept into my soul, assuring me that God Almighty had taken the whole business into His own hands, and we were bound to win at Gettysburg." "They looked unto Him and were lightened."

Third. Prayer has also the power to relieve those anxieties and distressful feelings we often experience. "Casting all your cares on Him, for He careth for you," is a remarkable passage. The word for *cares* is literally *distractions*, that which rends asunder, as a wild beast would his prey. On the other hand, the second *care* in the sentence, means, tender, thoughtful wisdom and power, always securing our chief good. And oh, how many forms of distractions we have to encounter. Distractions, sometimes, in knowing our duty and the will of God; distractions in understanding and reconciling divine providences; distractions from the power of temptation; our distress about the future; about our being the children of God, and about the interests of religion in the world: all these are often such that God only can relieve. Witness the good old Eli, the High Priest, of whom it is recorded that when the ark, the symbol of the divine presence, was borne away, "his heart trembled for the ark of God." In days of persecution, when the seed of the woman is in deadly conflict with the seed of the serpent, this has often been experienced, and nothing but prayer can give relief from distraction. Thus, it is told of Melancthon, the fellow-laborer of Luther, that when some of his friends advised him to put away his anxieties about the success of the Reformation, replied that such was not good counsel, for his anxieties drove him to the throne of grace and the throne of grace drove away his anxieties. In the same spirit was the rebuke of a godly woman in Scotland, who, when her husband was expressing despondent feelings about the future, replied, "But, John, is God dead?" This class of distractions may also include all wandering thoughts in duty, spiritual despondency, worldly-mindedness, alienation from brethren, neglect of ordinances, all of which prayer alone can control.

Fourth. Prayer alone can control and remove all impatience

and harsh thoughts of God. Every reader of the Bible knows how frequently the most eminent saints have been heard crying, "O Lord, how long?" and have been exhorted, "Wait on the Lord." But the fact is that we often do not understand God's ways with man so as fully to acquiesce, nay, rejoice in His will. Therefore, our Lord needed to instruct His disciples, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Some things may appear so detrimental to our own interests, and to the glory and cause of God, and so favorable to the enemy, that we do not always dutifully express ourselves about divine dispensations. We often find God's otherwise faithful servants, remonstrating with God, and asking why such things should occur under the rule of One so wise and faithful and just. Thus Job frequently remonstrates as to the nature of the things that had befallen him, as he exclaims, "Even to-day is my complaint bitter; my stroke is heavier than my groaning." The Psalmist cries, "Awake, why sleepest Thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off forever; wherefore hidest Thou Thy face, and forgettest our affliction and oppression?" Such a state of mind can only be met by earnest, believing, persevering prayer, the only true spiritual sedative that works effectively in all the people of God. Therefore, Job, after many doubts, fears and misapprehensions, finds, when he comes *to talk* with God, that all is right and good. The Psalmist also says, "I set myself to pray," and "I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end" (Ps. 73: 17).

Fifth. Prayer in the Spirit can minister support and comfort even when undergoing the *terror* of the Lord. Not only do believers, when in this tabernacle, "groan, being burdened," but in different forms have "borne the terrors of the Lord." Therefore, the Psalmist pleads, "While I suffer Thy terrors I am distracted" (Ps. 88: 15), and so intense was the agony, that he calls it "the pains of hell," and he describes it thus: "My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned." No wonder that at another time we should hear him declare, "My bones waxed old through my roaring, all day long." Jonah says, "I cried by reason of my affliction, unto the Lord, and He heard me; out of the belly of hell, cried I, and Thou heardest my voice." The prophet had been disobedient and was disciplined by being cast into the sea, but was delivered at the cry-prayer from his terrible danger. And he thus records his experience: "When my

soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came in unto Thee, into Thy holy temple. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercies." "To observe lying vanities" and thereby "forsake our own mercies," is surely the source and occasion of all such terrors as we endure, the fever temperature that burns up our bones of spiritual strength, and makes us "roar all day long." A broken law, an accusing conscience, a tempting devil, a deceitful world and sinful conformity thereto, delirious excitement from the pleasures of sense, and unbelieving doubts as to the truths of religion, and many other things of the same nature, might at any time send us to Doubting Castle, from which we can only be delivered by the key of promise in the hand of prayer. And it will be found that the key will always fit exactly into all the wards of the lock, and that every promise, appropriated by prayer, will certainly be made good : whereas the confidence inspired by "lying vanities" will prove, like the name given by Jeremiah to Pashur, when he declared, "The Lord hath not called thy name Pashur (security on every side), but Magor-Missabib (terror round about, or a terror to thyself)" (Jer. 20 : 3). What a blessed privilege, then, to be able to say, even when with Paul we speak of "the terror of the Lord," "For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Thine eyes ; nevertheless Thou heardest the voice of my supplication, when I cried unto Thee" (Ps. 31 : 22).

CHAPTER XIV.

PRAYER, A MEANS OF INCREASED USEFULNESS.

- “And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends.”
- “And he (Elijah) prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit.”
- “The effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much.”
- “Pray to the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers unto His harvest.”
- “For this cause, we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you,—that ye might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all well pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

God never intended that the gifts and graces conferred upon His people should be regarded as merely ornamental appendages, but rather as active agencies, by which He carries forward His work and accomplishes His purposes and will. Just as one generation, by education and training, is preparing for the following, undertaking enterprises and achieving results which, without such training, could not have been reached; so it is in religion. In many respects our Lord's followers are prepared, employed and commissioned, not only to work out their own salvation, but earnestly, persistently and perseveringly, to labor in many forms to promote the interests of His house, kingdom and people. And to the efficiency of such a service, prayer is eminently helpful.

First. Prayer is a most powerful weapon by which to fight, resist and overcome sin in the world. In describing “the weapons of our warfare as not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds: casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,” the apostle, in another passage, goes more into detail, and mentions a girdle, breast-plate, shoes, shield, helmet and sword, and to these he adds “all prayer”—“praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Eph. 6:18). This

arrangement is intended to show the relation of prayer to all the other pieces of our Christian armor. It has been justly said that prayer is like a clasp or buckle, to attach and hold on all the other parts of our armor and make them effective in the day of battle. Or as it apprehends the promises and is ever actively in harmony with our Lord's intercession, prayer is a two-edged sword (Ps. 149:6), proceeding out of the mouth of His people, even of "babes and sucklings," and armed with which, what grand results there have been in the past and will still be more conspicuous in the future! And while bringing confusion to the enemies of God and His kingdom, how literally realized are the words of the Psalmist, "In terrible things in righteousness wilt Thou answer us, O God of our salvation, who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth." Of this we have an example in the case of Mary, Queen of Scots, who declared that she feared the prayers of John Knox more than all the forces they could bring against her. Moses was to us all, on one occasion, a sort of anti-type, as we see him in the conflict with Amalek. Seated on the rock of divine appointment and promise, his hands held up unweariedly in prayer for an elect nation to be preserved, prospered and perpetuated, that power of prayer was shadowed forth that will ultimately destroy every Amalek on earth. Stimulated by such assurance, we should more diligently pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Second. Prayer seeks not only the destruction of evil in the world, but is pledged to promote whatever is good. Notwithstanding the mockery, or indeed the blasphemy, of scientists, who allege that because things are under natural law, therefore prayer is of no avail, yet it is a well-known fact that men at large, even heathen, who have no correct knowledge of the object of prayer, instinctively pray, and will not only fall down and ask for help from what they regard as God, but will load the altar of the supposed deity with rich sacrifices and costly gifts to propitiate his favor. As to the true spiritual service of prayer, it has been defined as "God our benefactor and we his remembrances." "Doing good" is the law of Christ's kingdom, by which He revealed Himself unto Moses, when He promised, "I will make all my *goodness* to pass before thee, and will proclaim the *name* of the Lord before thee." The two terms *goodness* and *name*, in this proclamation of what God is, are no doubt intended to be used

comprehensively, as the sum of all moral perfection and attribute, and therefore they embrace the whole Godhead in "being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth": so that "every good and perfect gift" is represented as "coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, nor any shadow of turning." And how wonderfully he exemplified this feature of the kingdom, who was both the author and subject of law, and who "went about continually doing good." Now, to His followers, the same desire and activity in doing good is to a great extent the sum of all the duties required of man. We are enjoined "To do good and communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." This feature is often wonderfully prominent in the character of those who follow Christ. Thus in blessing his sons, Jacob says of Joseph, "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall" (Gen. 49: 22). What a blessing was Joseph to his own family and friends, in preserving them in the famine and keeping alive the holy seed upon which so many promises were suspended. A modern writer has well noticed, "Joseph's usefulness was not confined to his own family connections, but had 'run over the wall' in the benefits that he had been the means of conferring upon the Egyptians." It was what Paul calls the "wall of partition, and Joseph's beneficence and desire to do good pressed over, as a long, fruitful branch of the True Vine, yielding blessing to all that came within his reach. Into the same class of benefactors may be put, pre-eminently, Moses, the man of God, "a blessing to our race to the end of the world." Elijah, too, and Daniel, the "beloved of the Lord," all mighty in doing good, because sustained and prospered by the influence of prayer.

Third. In seeking usefulness by the agency of prayer, we honor God as the power by which alone we can reach success. A humble Christian, after having heard a number of promises read and explained, remarked that it was just like having her Father's will opened and read. It let her know how many valuable and precious things her Father had prepared and bequeathed for her good, and how certainly they would all ultimately come into her possession. Now, just so we keep going to God for the things "laid up for us in heaven." Prayer elevates, purifies and sanctifies us by all this intercourse, and realizes, "Them that honor Me, I will honor." Therefore we associate prayer with

every useful undertaking, and strongly feel that without it we cannot look for success. Who, for example, would think of holding a revival meeting, or a meeting for any benevolent work, without prayer? As we have already seen, prayer is like the battering-ram that breaks down the walls of Jericho, but it is also constructive as well as destructive. It is the rain, the dew, the operations of nature, the gentle influences of which, coming constantly from the throne of grace, that enables us to breathe, in some measure, the atmosphere of heaven. It is told of Franklin, who made many valuable discoveries in chemistry and electricity, that being at one time anxious to know whether the lightning that flashed in the clouds was the same as he could generate in his machine, he constructed a kite, with a suitable arrangement of wires, and flew it under the cloud and observing the effect on the wires, he was fully satisfied that the current in the clouds was precisely the same as the current on the earth. So, in prayer heaven and earth are brought together, and all the glory and praise of all the good we can do, is due to Him, who is the "Hearer of prayer." Constantine, the Great, whose mission on earth was to destroy heathenism and establish Christianity throughout the Roman empire, when looking over the statues of some distinguished men, famous for their exploits, exclaimed, "I will get my statue carved, kneeling, for that was the way I attained my eminence."

Fourth. Prayer greatly promotes our usefulness by the moral and spiritual character it imparts. There is much meaning in the words of our Lord, "Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." True religion salts the whole man, having a detergent, purifying and preservative power that acts favorably on all our faculties of body and mind, and gives character and distinction to individuals and associations, that they would never otherwise have attained. And thus it is that many of God's dear children have been free to confess that they have never felt so comfortable, so safe and so successful, if neglecting the reading of the Scriptures, prayer and fellowship with God, before going forth and coming into contact with a wicked world. Thus it is stated in the life of Colonel Gardner, that it was his regular practice, when sometimes required to rise very early about his military duties, to get up in advance of the necessary time in order that his spiritual interests and exercises should not suffer.

Besides, "every sacrifice shall be salted with salt" implies that as salt was an indispensable element in God's covenant with us, and to be used in every sacrifice that was offered so we "in presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God," are warranted to plead our covenant relation in all our prayers for ourselves and others. All this gives prayer a place and power for good that is unspeakable, laying hold of all the promises, making all our own, realizing the force of the counsel given by one of the fathers, to a class of students, "Bene orasse est bene studuisse." To have prayed well is to have studied well. To the same effect is the testimony of the devout Payson, who declared that by devoting a larger portion of time to prayer, when a student, he could accomplish more in a week than he did before in a month. Origen also makes a remarkable statement, illustrating the same practical truth, to the effect, that having on one occasion shown weakness and made concessions to his heathen persecutors, it was because that on that day he had neglected morning prayer. The saintly Livingstone also, and President Edwards and thousands of others, including our own Washington and Lincoln, are all ready to bear witness to the worth and power of prayer. Besides to be known and distinguished for the spirit and exercise of prayer gives a person an influence and character, none can otherwise attain, especially in days of sickness, trouble and suffering. Prayer practically "puts on Christ," and loves to copy Him, so that "by prayer and fasting" even the devils are cast out and poor humanity saved.

Fifth. Prayer is an instrument in promoting and extending the kingdom of Christ. The elders whom John saw about the throne had not only harps, but also "golden vials full of odors which are the *prayers of saints*," to indicate that it was by the instrumentality of prayer that the character, work and salvation of Christ were to be made known to the world. These elders represented the entire membership of the living church and the testimony they proclaim is a fulcrum on which to rest the leverage of spiritual effort by all the church visible on earth, and the great argument with which to fill our mouth as we seek to save the lost. And, oh, how fully God meets and welcomes us when we come to the throne of grace for the power we need in such work: "Thus saith the Lord, the holy One of Israel, and his Maker, ask Me of things to come concerning My sons, and con-

cerning the work of My hands command ye Me." Prayer thus puts us into touch with God and prompts us to seek to do something to forward God's work and the condition of His kingdom. And in proportion as we have learned in the school of Christ how to serve, will we be active in some such work. Some may be humble, obscure and illiterate, but all can, like the twenty-four elders, pray; "pray without ceasing." Some may come to Zion "with songs and everlasting joy upon their hands," while others were comparatively obscure and unknown, but even in darkness and inability for any distinguished work we can all *pray*. Darwin tells us that during the working season of bees and ants, a large proportion of their number work outside, but there are others that never leave the bee-hive or ant-hill. And yet they live not idle nor in vain but build homes of mathematical figure, not only to treasure up the products of the season, but in which to deposit their eggs and bring forth their young. And all their laborious work is done in the dark and we ask how? Simply by the power and delicacy of touch of their antennæ or feelers. These are in constant touch with all their surroundings and are more fully adapted to their conditions than any visual organ. So in darkness and unseen by the world, many are working and praying with blessed results. A lady, more blessed with usefulness than many of her sex, the daughter of a distinguished minister in Scotland, was disabled by an affection of the spine, so as to be unable to leave her room or even sit up. Instead of yielding to discouragement and despondency, she sent for a number of ladies, formed a ladies' prayer-meeting, and then a missionary society, planning and arranging everything with wonderful skill and success, and though cut off from much of the light of life, working, working and praying in the Holy Ghost.

Sixth. Prayer also unites and consolidates God's people in seeking promised blessings. While there is something suggestive in the fact that on one occasion, only two persons, Saul and his servant, sought counsel from Samuel, the Seer, and that about a very trifling matter, the finding of his father's asses, of which it has been tersely said, "He sought for asses and found a kingdom," yet it is more to our taste to contemplate the same Seer in a time of great national danger, crying, "Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the Lord". (1 Sam. 7 : 5). One of the loftiest and grandest conceptions of prayer is that of

a great nation on its knees, with a God-appointed priest and mediator, through whom alone prayer is successful. It thus becomes a mighty power, the aid of which is sought for every good and holy enterprise, one great act of intercession uniting earth and heaven. It has been well defined as "helplessness casting itself on power, weakness leaning on everlasting strength, misery wooing bliss, impurity seeking holiness, the earth-born seeking the heavenly, and corruption rejoicing in hope of immortality. It is fear and doubt dissipated, the night flying away and the dawn of everlasting day already tinging with glory and beauty the morning clouds of our new life." It is when God's "house becomes a house of prayer to all nations" that the world will be universally converted and turn unto the Lord. Prayer, like light girdles the earth, and will ultimately conform everything to its own pure nature. What an inducement then to abound in this holy and profitable exercise, both on behalf of ourselves and others. God will not make a converted world "like dew from the womb of the morning," until He is asked and importuned by an earnest church, "giving Him no rest till He make Jerusalem a joy in all the earth." It has been suitably said that prayer is the rope up into the belfry : we pull on it and the sound is heard in heaven. Should we not then pull oftener, stronger, more unitedly and more in full assurance of faith ?

CHAPTER XV.

A LIFE OF PRAYER.

- “ I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live, I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.”
- “ Because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore I will call upon Him while I live.”
- “ The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”
- “ Continuing instant in prayer.” “ Pray without ceasing.”
- “ But, ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”
- “ Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints.”

One skilled well in spiritual experience, in describing a child of God, says of him: “ His life is a prayer.” Now, while we have been considering prayer in some of its details, to look at it for a while as a whole, as suggested by the above, can not fail to yield much valuable information. “ His life was a prayer,” or a life of prayer—what does it practically mean?

First. Prayer, to every child of God, is the beginning of a new era of spiritual existence. “ Behold he prayeth ! ” as spoken of Paul, was the first distinct evidence of spiritual life, all before having been a state of spiritual and moral death. True, there may be some unregenerate professors who go through a form of prayer, like the Pharisee, content to offer petitionless prayers. Such prayer is like the simulation of life, which physicians are able to produce in a dead body, by artificial means, but which, on the withdrawal of this power, immediately disappears. Before being quickened into a new life, prayer is either neglected, despised, or treated as a mere form. There was much truth and good sense in the confession of one who, although for many years he had a form of godliness, had not its power, but was at length converted. He says, “ I am an old man who said his prayers for seventy years, yet all that time I never prayed at all.” Another testified of himself: “ Before my conversion, when I prayed

before others, I prayed to them ; when I prayed in secret, I prayed to myself, but now I pray to God." It is in our spiritual, as in our natural, physical birth. Life enters and begins with a cry, and the cry of regeneration and prayer are the evidences of the life of the "new creature." And thus the man whose life is a prayer, can often date the time when he passed "from death unto life."

Second. A life of prayer also means assuming a new attitude toward God and the moral world. It has often been said that prayer is a *state*, rather than a *duty*, we being born into it as our permanent condition, and necessary, as in our physical life, to our continued existence. This attitude, as seen in the Lord's Prayer, first claims relation to God as a Father, and seeks help to fulfill the duties of His children, and then chooses with whom it shall actively co-operate in all moral ends and objects. And soon we find that there are two great moral powers active on earth, both claiming obedience and service. But we cannot serve both God and Mammon. When, however, we are enabled by grace to make a right choice of our Master, prayer seals our relation and goes constantly to the throne of grace for help against all the enemies of His kingdom. In every age the words of Joshua to Israel are exemplified, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve," as also the pledge given to the young king-elect of Israel, "Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse." Prayer is thus the homage of our soul, the allegiance of our heart, the express choice of our will and the unswerving loyalty of our life. And such a position and frame can alone, in the spirit of adoption, enable us truthfully to plead, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy will be done."

Third. A life of prayer has a transforming power and raises us from the earthly and secular to the spiritual and heavenly. Prayer is not only a service rendered unto God, but a spiritual force operating on the offerer. Prayer is like the wire in the telegraph, along which the unseen force speeds its way with irresistible power in every direction in which it finds a conductor. The spiritual force elevates the character and life, raises us up and "makes us sit in the heavenly places with Christ Jesus," and as in the case of Paul, when Ananias was sent to restore his vision, and to receive him into the church, his first act, he himself records, "And that same hour I looked up upon him" (Acts 22 : 13),

and so no doubt it is with every one savingly changed and enlightened. "I looked up" indicates that all is changed and a process of transformation commenced that will make all things new. The saints often express the same thought. Thus, "My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord, in the morning I will direct my prayer unto Thee and will look up" (Ps. 5:3). "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills" (Ps. 121:1). "Unto Thee lift I up mine eyes, O Thou that dwellest in the heavens." The apostle Paul, in describing the worldly-minded, speaks of them as "carnal, sensual, not having the Spirit," and therefore the spiritual, divine and heavenly can have no attraction for them; whereas, prayer powerfully draws us upward, and like the lark, mounts up, even before the dawn, to utter its morning tribute. This beautiful songster is said to be the only bird that sings on the wing, and in two respects illustrates the experience of the devout worshipper: First, as it mounts up, it has its field of vision wonderfully enlarged, and second, it puts forth all the powers with which it is endowed to the glory of the great Creator. And oh, for more of that blessed spirit of prayer that links earth to heaven in delightful intercourse. Even the heathen have sometimes its semblance. When Cato, the Roman, was asked why he studied Greek in his old age, he replied, "I hear that the gods speak Greek, and I would like to speak to them in their own language." And not less effective is prayer in its moral influence on life and character. It not only elevates, but purges and purifies the carnal, sensual and devilish, by enabling us to "mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts," so as "to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil world." It is thus only that we can realize the force of the command, "And be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2).

Fourth. Life-long prayer wonderfully helps us to love, trust, obey and practically serve Christ as our Master. Two things more particularly give prayer a moral, sanctifying and obediential influence. These are *identification* and *co-operation* with Christ. In prayer we enter into the closest relation to Christ, His offices, intercession, holiness and living example, in fact, "we put on Christ," and thus the Beloved becomes ours, and we become His. Accordingly, His interests are ours, and His work ours, and we so

co-operate as to become "workers together with God." And how marvelous many of the things achieved by this instrumentality! To quote an appropriate passage, "Prayer has divided seas, rolled back flowing rivers, made flinty rocks gush into fountains, quenched flames of fire, muzzled lions, disarmed vipers and poisonous beasts, marshalled the stars against the wicked, stopped the course of the moon, arrested the sun in its rapid race, burst open gates of iron, recalled souls from the dead, conquered devils, commanded legions of angels to come down from heaven, bridled and chained the raging passions of monarchs, routed and destroyed the armies of aliens, brought one man from the bottom of the sea, and carried another to heaven in a chariot of fire" (Dr. Ryland). Not every kind of prayer is productive of such results. It must be more than mere sentiment or form; it must be in the felt, conscious presence of God, at a throne of grace, where we are assured we will find mercy and grace adapted to our day, place, duty, work or suffering. It is prayer by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in perfect harmony with the mind of God and the intercession of Christ, that can by the help of the promises reason, argue, plead and refuse to let the Hearer of prayer go, until it has the assurance of being heard and blessed. To quote again, "It is not the *arithmetic* of our prayers, how many they are, nor the *rhetoric* of our prayers, how eloquent they may be, nor the *geometry* of our prayers, how long they may 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 *orthodoxy* of our prayers, how doctrinal they may be, but it is that *scrivency of spirit* that availeth much" (Bishop Hall).

Fifth. A life of prayer, by keeping us sensible of our wants, enables us more constantly to feel nearness to God. Pollock, in his "Course of Time," represents one saved from earth, telling to the unfallen spirits some things peculiar to our world, and among these one, namely, "good out of evil," which was unknown even in heaven. That is a plant that grows not in heaven, but is abundant on earth in many forms under a dispensation of grace. Accordingly, we feel constantly our need of God, and sweet, in some of the circumstances through which we pass, is the perpetual remembrancer, "Lo, I am with you to the end of the world," and "Call on Me in the day of trouble and I will deliver." It is

recorded of Philip Henry, that when praying for two of his children who were dangerously ill, he was heard to say, "If the Lord be pleased to grant this my request concerning my children, I will not say as the beggars do, 'that if Thou help me now, I will never ask of Thee again'; but on the contrary, Thou shalt hear oftener from me than ever, and I will love Thee the better as long as I shall live."

Sixth. A life of prayer is the surest means of attaining success in our undertakings. It is a delightful thought that David expressed, "This poor man cried and God heard and saved him from all his distresses," and if the question arise how one may realize such an experience, we reply: First, by apprehending in prayer our relation to God, and pleading it as an argument. "Surely Thou art my Father," "My Beloved is mine and I am His." Secondly, by a believing use of His promises, that are so many pledges, assuring us of help and success. If any of us had a beloved and intimate friend, of abundant means and resources, who had given us repeated assurances that he would, if requested, confer upon us whatever would promote our happiness and enjoyment, what an unfailing source of comfort would that friend prove. But the names by which God designates Himself as Almighty, Jehovah, Father, Brother, Friend, Beloved, and many others, are each of them a bundle of promises, or what the Spouse calls, "a bundle of myrrh." And not only do the saints whose names are enrolled in Scripture tell us how they found in God and in his relations and promises, a source of strength they never otherwise could have attained, but many in our own day have voluntarily testified to the same experience. Thus Matthew Henry tells us that he never undertook a journey, composed a sermon, or wrote a book without making particular application to the Mercy Seat for direction and success, and he adds, "When I neglected at any time to crave help of God, the chariot wheels drove heavily." Yea, truly, "our sure and all sufficient help is in Jehovah's name." Then, thirdly, prayer helps to success by directing us to the most effective means. It has been truthfully said that every furrow we turn in the Book of Psalms is sown with the seeds of wisdom and power. The perfect adaptation of means to end is the wonder both of creation and providence. Whether with David we look up unto the heavens, or with Jonah are plunged into the depths, however grand

the operation the law of means and end universally prevails, and while this fact opens a boundless field for the study of the Christian philosopher, it furnishes much help in all the use of means by which the work and will of God may be more effectively accomplished. And in spiritual things it is important to remember that "our ways are not His ways, nor our thoughts His thoughts," and that not in the wisdom of the world, but in the means of God's appointment, we are to seek the blessings He has promised to impart. An eminent physician, near the close of his life, was asked to what he ascribed his remarkable success and replied, "I always pray for my patients." Prayer sanctifies everything God has prescribed, and, therefore, in the use of all means, Paul declares of our food and all our blessings, "Being sanctified by the word of God and prayer."

Seventh. A life of prayer has power to perfect, ripen and fit us for a higher state of being. Forty and six years was the temple in building because all the materials were prepared at a distance and brought with great labor and expense to Jerusalem, where they were put together without noise or confusion, as each was exactly fitted for the place it was to occupy, and it was raised into position without noise of hammer, a sacred structure, as a habitation for the God of Israel. Now, spiritually, we are "builded together as a habitation of God" through the Spirit, and by divers means, as prayer, communion, sanctified affliction, we are shaped and formed severally and made meet for the "inheritance of the saints in light." We read, "This people I have formed for Myself and they shall show forth My praise," and "I have hewed them by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of My mouth, and My judgments are as the light that goeth forth." By such treatment, modified by our condition and circumstances, God still works wonderful changes and enables us to advance in faith, love, joy, hope, holiness and heavenly-mindedness, so that "we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." A clergyman was at one time suspected of holding erroneous views of evangelical truth and of preaching the same publicly. Many years after having heard this report, a brother minister heard him conduct the usual service and remarked that the report could not have been true: for especially in prayer he spake of the covenant of grace, the atonement of Christ, and the work of the Spirit in the most orthodox manner. He was told,

“ Prayer must have changed him.” And truly prayer does make wonderful changes, especially as it impresses us with the vanity of time, makes us rejoice that our citizenship is in heaven, cuts the ties that bind us to earth and gives the weary pilgrim, as his last stage, entrance to the Land of Beulah. When Melancthon lay dying he was asked how he felt, and whether anything could be done to promote his comfort. To which he gave the characteristic reply, “ Nihil aliud, nisi coelum ” : Nothing else but heaven.

CHAPTER XVI.

PRAYER ; WILL IT HAVE A PLACE IN HEAVEN ?

- “ Then the angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of Hosts, how long wilt Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah ? And the Lord answered the angel that talked with me with good words and comfortable words.”
- “ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will toward men.”
- “ And behold there talked with Him two men, who were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.”
- “ Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels.” . . .
- “ And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four living creatures, and fell before the throne on their faces and worshipped God.” . . .

Sweet hour of prayer ! Are we soon to close our eyes on every earthly thing, and become merely a memory of the past, a shadow that flies away and returns not at all, or rather may we not conceive of the two states of grace and glory as essentially one ; the one—that of grace, being so developed and absorbed as to be swallowed up of the other. True, many of the fathers have written of heaven as a place where many of the exercises and experiences of our present life shall forever disappear, when, as they delighted to quote, “ Faith shall vanish into vision and hope into fruition,” and when such ordinances as prayer, meditation and active work shall have no place, because no longer needed, where all is joy, rest, peace, and everlasting enjoyment. A few thoughts on this aspect of prayer cannot fail to be of interest to those who are living near God.

First. The inhabitants of heaven, angels and “ the spirits of just men made perfect,” are represented as having capacities and powers, and means of communication and correspondence with one another. Thus Luke speaks of those angels that announced the Saviour’s birth to the shepherds : “ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and

saying, Glory," etc., etc. Angels also often spoke to human beings, as well as to one another; while on the Mount of Transfiguration, two glorified spirits are said to have "talked with" our Lord. Paul speaks of the "tongues of men and angels," and more wonderful still, Zechariah heard an angel interceding on behalf of a suffering Church. The heavenly hosts, therefore, must have speech, music and song, all of which enter into our present state and must enter into our future of heavenly rest forever.

Secondly. The exercise of these powers and capacities in angels and glorified saints, implies the power of mutual recognition. Without that, communication, co-operation, and many of the pleasures of social life would be impossible, and a condition similar to that of the builders of the tower of Babel would exist, when their speech was confounded, and not being able to understand one another, the work was discontinued. In proof of this mutual recognition, is the fact that some, perhaps all, of the angels, have names by which they are designated and by which they are distinguished in their intercourse. Nor does this prevail in only one department of the spirit-world. Satan, Baal, Beelzebub, Mammon and the Devil are all distinctive appellations among the fallen, as Michael and Gabriel are among the faithful sons of God.

Thirdly. None of the graces of the "new man" can be properly said to cease to exist, though changed in their form of operation. "And now *abideth*, faith, hope and charity," and we cannot conceive of any one of these, or other graces, as knowledge or humility, being lost or ceasing to exist. The new creature comprehends them all, and is in its nature incorruptible: therefore when it is said of faith, hope and charity that they abide or remain, it implies that really and substantially these graces shall continue operative whatever changes may take place. Thus, take faith, which, as we have quoted, is supposed at death to "vanish into vision"; it is a state of mind, "the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen," resting on the infallible testimony of God. But when our hopes are realized, and we enter into the heavenly state, and we come actually and literally to see and enjoy, will we then lose our confidence and hope as to the reality of it all, and believe no longer? I trow not. Our faith in the seen or unseen is only in form, according to the nature of the evidence on which it rests. Vision itself is only the assurance of faith, and as such is distinguished from faith in the

unseen, as in the case of Thomas, to whom our Lord says, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed": and Peter writes: "Whom having not seen ye love, and in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable." And so of hope, the daughter of faith, "That your faith and hope might be in God," and "If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men the most miserable." What a strange thought that what we have been cultivating and cherishing into perfection during all our lives, is to be practically displaced and we are to have a hopeless and prayerless heaven, a hopeless and prayerless eternity. True, Paul says: "For we are saved by hope. But hope that is seen is not hope! for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" But hope is the assurance of future good, and those in heaven have many things about which to exercise hope. Thus, the promise of a glorious resurrection, day of judgment and eternal life. It is safe to say that Abel and many early believers have been for nearly six thousand years in heaven, and are hoping, longing and praying all these centuries that their hopes may be realized.

Fourthly. Prayer being an exercise consisting of different elements, when we find one element we find all. Many have a very limited conception of prayer. Most limit prayer to petition or the asking of something we feel we need. But taking the "Lord's Prayer" as an example, or His mediatorial intercessory prayer, we find that many other elements, such as adoration, worship, confession, desire, thanksgiving, ascription of glory and praise, mingled with peace and assurance of being heard, all included in the true prayer. Paul employs many words to designate prayer as he enjoins diligence in this spiritual exercise: "In everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." In addressing Timothy, he says, "That first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men." In fact, prayer is just intercourse with God, and whatever form it may assume, in substance it remains identical and contains many elements not unsuitable to the heavenly paradise of God.

Fifthly. The relation of our prayers to the intercession of Christ, and of His Spirit, forbids that prayer should cease. Paul, writing on his favorite theme, says to the Romans, "Who is even

- at the right hand of God who also maketh intercession for us"; and also to the Hebrews he writes, "seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for us." And of the Spirit he says, "The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us"; and Jude exhorts, "Praying in the Holy Ghost." Such passages clearly show that our prayers are founded on and identified with the intercession of Christ and His Spirit, and as we know that Christ ever liveth to make intercession, we can rest fully assured that the blessed privilege of prayer will never be withdrawn. Besides, in interceding for us, Christ represents a family, "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," and therefore "ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God." Now, as the members of that redeemed family are all "priests unto God," and even after the last day are a family bearing the priestly "Holiness to the Lord," in His name "being on their foreheads": so we can never cease to join in that glorious advocacy that unites heaven and earth in an indissoluble bond, "the High Priest of our profession."

Sixthly. As in heaven, angels and glorified spirits have active work for God to do, they must in some form seek help, direction and success. "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," tells us that there are active duties in which the inhabitants of that blessed region rejoice to engage. And therefore Paul puts as a unit "the innumerable company of angels" and "the spirits of just men made perfect." Of the former he declares, "Are they not ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be the heirs of salvation?" And what an undertaking, what a task! Thousands, millions of elect souls, heirs of salvation, to be ministered to and helped and at length carried home as was Lazarus the beggar. At the gates of Eden, at Abraham's tent door, wrestling with Jacob, in the burning bush seen by Moses, and giving the law to Israel "by the dispensation of angels," all down the ages the words of David are realized, "The angel of the Lord encompasseth about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." And for such service they are wonderfully qualified. "Bless the Lord, ye His angels that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word. Bless the Lord, all ye His hosts, ye ministers of His, that do His pleasure." But associated with the angels in the works of redemption are the redeemed who are taught to

pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." And so there is a work going on in heaven to which we look as a model that in heaven and earth may be just conformity to the divine will. And in the opening glimpse of the heavenly state, vouchsafed to John, he records some impression made upon him by the glorious scene, including both angels and redeemed men in harmonious action. "And I beheld and heard the voice of many angels, round about the throne, and the living creatures and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing." Whether we are to understand this glorious scene as a picture of the heaven of glory or as a visional heaven, the heaven of prophecy, we are most forcibly presented a view of the great moral forces, both in relation and co-operation, by which the plan of redemption was initiated, carried into effect and finally completed. A throne of regal splendor and on that throne the Eternal Father, according to whose counsel and will all is to be accomplished: in the midst of the throne a Lamb. Our Lord in the exercise of His mediatorial offices, and before the throne the lamp-like functions of the divine Spirit, who was to give efficient application to the whole: while round about the throne are the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders, which represent the human instrumentality employed: then round about the whole, "thousands of angels strong" of whom our poet has beautifully said:

"Before the throne they stand with outspread wings,
Waiting to catch His least command,
And fly through Nature ere the moment ends."

Now, while God, angels and the redeemed in heaven feel so lively an interest in the work carried on in earth, it would not be inconsistent that like the angel whom Zechariah heard praying for Jerusalem, that the "spirits of the just men made perfect" who are about the throne, should ask what would best promote the interests of religion in our world. We have no sympathy with the idea that heaven will be merely a rest, a state of comparative inactivity, in which we shall wholly cease from labor, a state of repose alternating with a kind of ecstatic rapture. We have reason to believe that they who have "died in the Lord" still

regard with tender interest those left behind. Even the sensualist who after death "lifted up his eyes, being in torment," besought that his brethren should be warned against coming to such an abode of misery. Especially in seasons of persecution and suffering, such interest is manifested. Thus, at the opening of the fifth Seal, we see a large company of "souls under the altar," those saved by Christ's atonement and who had suffered for His sake, and they cry, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" and are assured of the ultimate victory of the cause, kingdom and people of God. Thus, though in some respects, we are "lower than the angels," we as the "children of the resurrection," will be "equal to the angels," and even now are nearer the throne than those glorious beings who kept their first unfallen state.

Seventhly. The post-resurrection state shows how near and perfect our intercourse with God will be forever. In the two concluding chapters of the Apocalypse, this is exclusively the theme, and in different descriptive particulars show how it is realized. And first, "a new heaven and a new earth" have been provided, a new theatre for the display of divine glory. Then this is declared to be a home for God. "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men." Then the closest relation to God possible, "As a bride adorned for her husband," "the bride, the Lamb's wife." Then a city, "the new Jerusalem, unparalleled both in materials and dimensions. Then the utter absence and exclusion of all moral evil: "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." Then all sources of happiness without suffering: "And he showed me a pure river of the water of life," and "There was the tree of life." And above all, God manifested and enjoyed above all in the past: "And they shall see His face and His name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light and they shall reign forever and ever." In these and many other respects both now and forever we will be getting nearer to God, our intercourse enlarged, and by looking on the face of Jesus, that adoring praise is awakened which even angels cannot fully appreciate: "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."

CHAPTER XVII. PRAYER—CONCLUSION.

- “ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole of man.” ’
- “ Search me, O my 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 Thy way everlasting.”
- “ Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints.”

Divine truths are not merely a study, with the Bible as a textbook, nor merely a number of abstract conclusions founded on the most reliable data, nor even a set of opinions received on the highest human testimony ; for however desirable it be that an intellectual knowledge of the Scriptures should be attained and exercised by all, it may be reached without the higher ends being realized. Therefore, while it is important, and, indeed, imperative, that we should seek to know every truth and ordinance of religion for intellectual ends, yet it is only as we know divine truth in its quickening, enlightening and sanctifying influence that we attain an answer to our Lord’s petition, “ Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth.” And after the views that have been presented in the foregoing pages, in relation to prayer, we hope that there may be grace and help ministered to some, that they may “ grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.” We submit some practical conclusions :

First. The aspects of prayer we have been considering may help us to determine our own state, and whether our religion be real. The scientist, Agassiz, claimed that if a single bone of any animal were given him, that from his knowledge of anatomy he was able, from that bone, to determine the character of the whole skeleton. The size and shape of the fragment and its articulations, and the relative position it must have had to other parts, were sufficient, he claimed, to determine to what *department* of the animal family the animal had belonged. Now, there is a spiritual system, and a spiritual anatomy, and if by careful examination we discern the sure marks and evidences of one grace, we may safely conclude that that covers and includes all the rest of the elements of a gracious state, and consequently our religion is real. Now, while different graces may stand out more fully in different individuals, and make the reality of their religion self-

evident, yet to prayer is given most fully the evidence of the Spirit in actual manifestation. The reason is that it is by prayer all the other graces act. Prayer is a prime test of a state of grace, so that it is proverbial that a "prayerless soul is a graceless soul." How important then to "examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"

Second. These views of prayer all suggest the necessity of looking well to *our frames of mind* when we pray. "Prayer is the offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ," and as far as we know the divine will, we should be exercised in prayer in apprehending what of that will we have contained in worship and promise. Every prayer, therefore, should be the mind acting on God, rather than any bodily exercise. Thus our Lord, quoting from one of the prophets, distinguishes between the spiritual and the merely physical, "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth and honoreth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." While, therefore, "bodily exercise profiteth little," it is the more important that we constantly seek to "worship God in spirit and in truth." And how forcibly the words used to express prayer, bring out that idea. Such words as, *calling on, speaking to, crying for, longing, expecting, waiting, watching, groaning*, express a high state of mental activity, as we pour out our hearts before God. In the same way we are warned against everything that would weaken our joy and comfort by the Spirit in all our religious exercises. Five different words convey that warning, as they express the different forms of sinning against the Spirit. These words are, *tempt, provoke, resist, grieve and quench*, any of which sins, having a place in our lives, will mar the comfort and beneficial influence of the prayers we offer. It has been well said that "Prayer is not of the body alone, nor of the intellect alone, but rather of the heart and those mental and moral powers by which we can conceive aright of God and express with holy emotions our desires and our praise." Of this, Gideon furnishes a ready example. At his prayer, God gave him as a sign, a fleece of wool, spread on the ground, so saturated with dew as to yield, on pressure, a bowlful of water, while the earth

was dry. On the next night, however, at his request, the conditions were reversed, and the dew was abundant on the earth, but the fleece was dry. From this miracle we learn that the efficacy of prayer is not dependent on outward, physical conditions and circumstances, but upon the will and power of Him "who performeth all things for us most perfectly."

Third. From the subject we may also learn, what a comforter prayer is, especially in suffering and want. In prayer we realize the dream of the philosopher's stone, which was supposed to turn everything it touched into gold. When Paul and Silas were thrust into the common prison at Philippi with the undressed wounds which many stripes had left on them, still bleeding and sore, it is recorded that "they prayed and sang praises unto God, and the prisoners heard them." Their sufferings had been transmuted into gold, and the wonderful precept of Paul, to the Philippians, was carried out in his own practice, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and *again* I say, rejoice." The author of the "Pilgrim's Progress" records that when confined in Bedford Jail, a prisoner of the Lord, he had some of the sweetest experiences he ever enjoyed. So also, the saintly Rutherford writes to Lady Kenmure, "I am happy; my Lord has condescended to come and dine with His unworthy servant." His servants are not ignorant that religion has its joys, that there is "the joy of salvation," which is above every joy, and which, when at any time lost by our sin, can only be restored by prayer and promise. It is thus that martyrs and sufferers for the cause and kingdom of Christ have been enabled to rise above the present, and "glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulations worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us." It has not inaptly been said that prayer is like the thermometer and barometer. As the thermometer measures the amount of heat in the atmosphere, so prayer measures our spiritual temperature in every exercise and duty we attempt to perform. And as the barometer measures the weight of the atmospheric column, so the character of our prayers determine how much weight, worth, earnestness and sincerity are to be found in any of our religious observances. Nor would it be out of place to compare prayer to the hygrometer. This little instrument measures the amount of moisture in the atmosphere, showing

even the effect of the silent dew of heaven. So in prayer is felt the "dew of Hermon and the dew of Zion," cooling, refreshing and fertilizing the mountains of God.

Fourth. Again, we learn how prayer sweetens and reconciles us to many of God's dealings with us. All that God sends our way is not agreeable, sweet and luxurious, but as Paul says many of our experiences are "not for the present joyous, but grievous," and as the nurse gives the sick child a sweet to take away the disagreeable taste of the medicine she administers, so God does with all His children, and the sweetening is by the agency of prayer. "Who hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace." A man of God in feeble health, who had had many sleepless nights, was once asked how he could pass such nights with so much comfort. He replied, "Before retiring, I select some passage of Scripture, and I just take it into my mouth, keep it there all the long hours, sucking the substance out of it, and that keeps me comfortable." There may be services, duties, and sufferings, self-denials and hard labors, that do not taste sweet, even as Ezekiel acknowledges in his own case, when ordered on a service he did not desire, yet, unable to refuse, he declares, "I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit, but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me." What a stimulus to prayer is difficulty or trial, and we feel the truth of the assertion that a blessing in answer to prayer is a double blessing. Why? Because there is the blessing itself, that we have been asking, and besides the delightful assurance that God has heard and accepted. Prayer answered is a crowning blessing, and should ever be so acknowledged. It is recorded of Luther that when his fellow-laborer, Melancthon, was dangerously ill, he visited him and tried to impress upon him the need of help in the work in which they were both so much interested. Not being as successful as he wished, he threw himself on his knees, and for a full hour prayed and wrestled, and like Jacob, refused to let God go until He granted His request. Perceiving marked signs of improvement on the part of the young reformer, he returned home with a heart filled with joy, and said to his wife, "God gave me back my brother, Melancthon, in direct answer to prayer."

Fifth. Again, we learn how prayer is adapted to unite and prosper God's people in every good work. When Gideon led his three hundred followers against the hosts of Midian, he armed

them in a somewhat peculiar manner. Each was to provide himself with a capacious pitcher, inside of which was to be placed a burning oil lamp, and he was also to carry a trumpet, to be sounded when the proper time should arrive. Thus accoutred, they approached the enemy's camp in three divisions, at night, and having reached the most favorable point for their object, imitating their commander, they broke the three hundred pitchers, and then, midst the flashing lights and blare of trumpets, and shouts of, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," they seemed to the terrified Midianites to be an innumerable host, so that they fled before them in terror, giving an easy victory to Israel. Now, our gospel work may be parabled by these particulars. In the deepest darkness of ignorance and alienation, parabled by the pitcher that at first concealed the light, we, at the command of our Leader, are to flash the divine light of the Gospel, on both friend and foe; we are to be ready always to attack the enemies of God and assert His claims with trumpet sound, that all the earth may hear and obey, and so escape His righteous judgments. Such results, however, can only be realized in the abounding exercise of prayer, prayer more intense, earnest and universal than we have yet offered. Only a few years ago, an eminent electrician, wrote: "We no doubt have done wonderful things by the help of this mysterious agent, which we call electricity, but we have not yet girdled the earth." But we have now, literally girdled the world, not only physically by the help of science, but by missions, Bibles and many forms of gospel agency, and our most effectual way of forwarding the work is to live near the Throne, and "in giving God no rest till He make Zion the joy of all the earth."

Sixth. Our views of prayer also teach us how we may have constant intercourse with God and the spiritual world. God Himself is always at the top of the ladder that unites heaven and earth, and angels go up and down thereon continually on messages of mercy and help, and while it is true that "out of the throne proceed lightnings and thundering and voices," it is by the "still, small voice" we are brought near, so that as we approach, our eyes rest not on a throne fiery and flashing with judgments, but on a throne seen through the emerald hues of the covenant rainbow, to which we can come with boldness, for it is a "throne of grace." In all the provisions of the covenant of grace, God will

have us to be constantly in fellowship with Himself. He walks with us, stays with us, makes home with us, and in many ways attracts us near to Himself, so that our life-long prayer becomes, "Draw me and we will run after Thee." Nor is it to be overlooked or forgotten that without prayer, there is no fellowship with God: no life, no desire, no faith, no holiness, no spiritual exercise, no true religion? Habitual, earnest, persevering prayer is, therefore, a test grace, and though some may think it too far above them to live in constant view of the Throne, the spiritual man soon learns to connect prayer with every form of active life. "In everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." The Spirit of adoption, the Abba of the beloved, the "gates ajar," the rainbow around the throne, are all continually drawing us up so that we may have "our fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ."

Seventh. We may infer also that prayer is the earnest of all good in the future. Twice Paul speaks of having attained "the earnest of our inheritance" as one of the most important experiences of the Christian life. To the Corinthians, he writes: "Who hath sealed us, and hath given us the earnest of the Spirit in our heart"; and to the Ephesians: "In whom also, after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." Now, as an earnest is the first fruits or foretaste of some good or happiness to be fully enjoyed in the future, and as it is by the operation of that "Holy Spirit of promise" that it is communicated, and as it is by prayer we apprehend and appropriate the promise God has made, therefore prayer is intimately connected with this as well as all other Christian attainments. And it is worthy of notice here that while it is the privilege of all saints to enjoy this "earnest of our inheritance," yet to some, in many ages, it has been vouchsafed in the extraordinary, supernatural and miraculous form. Heavenly visions seen, heavenly utterances heard, intercourse with angelic messengers, these, and such as these, were literally preludes and foretastes of the heavenly state they were to enjoy forever. Peter's trance vision prepared his mind to go to Cornelius and preach the gospel to the Gentiles. Paul tells us of two occasions when he had trance visions, besides his experience on the way to

Damascus, at his conversion. When on his defence before the Roman Governor (Acts 22 : 17), he told his auditors, "While I prayed in the temple I was in a trance and heard Him speaking," etc.: and in 2 Corinthians 12, he tells how he was caught up unto the third heaven and heard and saw unutterable things. And John was often "in the Spirit," which was just another form of trance, that wonderfully opened all his perceptive powers to the glories of the spiritual world. And indeed, our Lord's transfiguration was something of the same character, being a glimpse of that glory into which He was soon to enter eternally. It was a glorious earnest and foretaste of all that glory of which He had emptied Himself, for a time, and was an answer to that wonderful petition, "And now, O Father, glorify Me with Thine own self, with the glory I had with Thee before the world was." In this respect we are even now transformed into the image of our glorified Head, raised at times to the very gates of heaven, so as even to ring God's own door-bell and get a glimpse of the hoped-for inheritance, that makes us feel that our choicest good things are those we obtain by prayer or the blessing of the knees.

