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THE MINISTRY OF PREVAILING PRAYER
Heart-Talks To Prayer Warriors
By Harry Edward Jessop

Author of
Foundations Of Doctrine In Scripture And Experience
The Final Counterfeit
Entire Sanctification: What It Is...
The Consecrating Believer And The Sanctifying God

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INSIDE FRONT COVER TEXT -- ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Harry E. Jessop, D.D., the author of this book, is well-known to many among that section of the Christian public where the deep things of God are enjoyed. For more than a quarter of a century he has exercised a fruitful ministry as preacher and Bible teacher, first in the British Isles and later on this continent. His work as dean and teacher of Bible and theology in Chicago Evangelistic Institute with which he has been associated for the past ten years is in itself a sufficient introduction. For several years he has edited the magazine Heart And Life, while his earlier book Foundations Of Doctrine In Scripture And Experience, which is now in its third edition, has found its way around the world and into many Bible Schools and Colleges as a text for students.

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DEDICATION

To the precious memory of praying friends mentioned in these pages, who are now at Home with their Lord in the Glory -- and -- To his fellow laborers in the ministry of prayer, whatever their Church or color, who with the author desire to pray more and to pray better, this book is affectionately dedicated.

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INTRODUCTION

How much do you really pray? The prayerless heart is a spiritual tragedy, especially where that heart is professing Christian; for be it remembered that prayerlessness is not necessarily the abandonment of religious profession, nor even the cessation of saying prayers.

A prayerless heart is a heart in which there is no pull toward the prayer chamber. Such a heart is in more danger than it knows, and there are many such in the Church today. These need to

repent. Prayerlessness requires repentance; it is as much to be repented of as open sin. It is far more deceptive than open sin. An open sinner is at least on record as such; those around him know where he stands in relation to the things of God; but a prayerless religious professor is a living lie. He is making people believe that he is what really he is not.

We must recognize at the outset that it is easier to discuss the subject of prayer than to pray. Few people know how to pray, and fewer still exercise this mighty ministry as they ought. Many volumes have been written about it; every true Christian is interested in it; everybody admires those known to successfully exercise its ministry; but the actual participation in prevailing prayer activity is a very different thing.

This volume is for those who, like its author, are seeking to enter ever more deeply into the mysteries of prevailing prayer.

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!

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01 -- STANDING IN THE GAP

Read for background thought -- Gen. 18-19. Exodus 32.

"And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand before me in the gap for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none." Ezek. 22:30.

Such was the sin of the land -- a great gap stood open wide through which at any moment an awful judgment might pour. Such was the state of the professing people of God -- there was not a man to be found who could stand there and stem the awful tide. Such was the sorrow filling the Divine heart -- these words were desperately sobbed out, words which burn with unspeakable anguish and throb with pain.

While this Scripture, like all others has its definite historic background, there is no need to date it; the application is perpetual and is twofold.

1. Sin Brings Its Own Inevitable Judgment.

Not that God delights to send it. There is a sense in which it is not necessary for Him to send it; the undeviating law of cause and effect does all that is required.

God delights in mercy; yet even Divine mercy cannot perpetually operate in the face of persistent sin. There is a place in the economy of justice where the weight of iniquity looses the floodgates of judgment whether it be on the individual, the community, or the wider world. There is a significant passage occurring early in the Genesis record which very clearly illustrates this. God is talking to Abram about his seed which should come after him, stating in covenant promise that they should be as the stars of the heaven for multitude, and the land of Canaan should be theirs to inherit. But meanwhile, other things were to happen. In a good old age Abram would die and be

buried. The nation which would spring from him would sojourn as strangers in a land not theirs, but in the fourth generation they would return -- and the reason given is couched in this significant sentence, "For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." Gen. 15.

Now what had the iniquity of the Amorites to do with the title of Abram's seed to the Promised Land? Just this: even God Himself could not without adequate reason take the land from its former inhabitants simply to give it to His people Israel. Whenever God deprives either men or nations of that which is good, there are moral reasons behind it. The laws of God's universe are such that the punishment of iniquity will fall by its own weight upon the transgressor. There is no way of evading it when the time is ripe and the iniquity is full.

"Though the wheels of God grind slowly
Yet they grind exceeding small;
Though with patience long He waiteth,
With exactness grinds He all."

2. One Thing Alone Stems This Awful Tide.

A sufficient prayer force on the part of the people of God. When we say prayer force we do not mean any specified amount of noise; we mean irresistible prayer power.

Prayer power such as this is not unknown in the history of God's dealings with His people.

Abraham knew it -- as the record behind the destruction of Sodom in Genesis, chapters eighteen and nineteen, will show.

There is a significant word in connection with this story which it is quite easy for the casual reader to miss. It is the word "Then" in chapter 19:24. "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven."

"Then!" When? When two significant things had happened. When Abraham had ceased to ask, bringing a consequent vacancy in the prayer chamber; and when Lot had been Divinely removed from Sodom bringing a consequent vacuum in Sodom itself. It would seem that as long as a praying man stood before the Throne representing Sodom, and a righteous man remained in Sodom representing God, judgment was automatically withheld, but when the praying ceased and the representative of righteousness was removed, judgment fell. Hear this prevailing saint as with humble persistence he argues the cause of Sodom with Almighty God. The dialogue recorded in the latter part of chapter eighteen is amazing.

"And the Lord said . . . And Abraham answered . . . And he spake unto him yet again... And he said unto him..."

What an amazing intimacy is here. What spiritual daring. Here is a man who stands right in the middle of the road as the juggernaut of destruction is bearing down upon Sodom and deliberately obstructs its progress. See how one obstacle after another is thrown in the way. Those six peradventures of verses 24, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32. We have sometimes wondered what might have

happened if Abraham had not stopped with the sixth, and whether the seventh peradventure might have saved Sodom, hopeless as the case may have seemed? But it stands recorded, "And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left off communing with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place. And there came two angels to Sodom... and said unto Lot... escape for thy life... Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord. And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace."

We are not even suggesting that in leaving off where he did in that tremendous moment of intercession Abraham contracted spiritual guilt. It would ill become us whose prayer lives by comparison are so shallow, to criticize these men of Herculean prayer effort who have gone so far, nevertheless we cannot read of Abraham watching the rising smoke of Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction from the very place where only a few hours earlier he had stood before the Lord, without wondering whether in the mind of this man of God there might have been a thought something like this -- "What would have happened if I had insisted with a seventh peradventure when last I talked with the Lord?" Moses also knew this prayer power -- the record of his intercession for Israel indicates, but this we shall deal with in another sermon.

What would have become of this poor rebellious people but for the advocacy of this praying man of God? Recalling that period at a later date he said: "I stood between the Lord and you at that time." Deut. 5:5. Were you ever conscious of an experience like that -- of literally standing in the gap?

In approaching our subject, I am not forgetting, of course, the distinctive difference in the dispensations, and also the present mediatorial office of our Lord Jesus Christ. Between the sinner and his doom now stands the Son of God as the Bleeding Sacrifice and Exalted High Priest. That becomes the basis for our intercession. In the gap, from the heavenly viewpoint, stands His gory cross and His interceding work, but while the atonement which He made is forever completed, the advocacy is a ministry to be shared by His people, hence the apostle Peter wrote, "Ye are a royal priesthood." I Pet. 2:9.

In the deepest spiritual sense Christ and His people are one; He the Head in the inner sanctuary; we, the Body yet upon the earth. The exalted Christ and the redeemed Church form a united prayer partnership which only together can complete the fullest extent of His redeeming work.

Three thoughts, then, are suggested here:

I. The Divine Sorrow

A land is exposed to inevitable judgment. It is not a heathen land, but a land which having known much of God's favor had been blessed under His smile. Yet, despite such marvelous manifestation of Divine favor the people had continued to sin.

Some years ago, when visiting the city of Montreal we were arrested by the glaring light of a massive illuminated cross. There it stood on Mount Royal flaming out for miles around for every eye to see. Attracted by the sight, we journeyed the next day to the hill on which it stood and on its base we read this inscription:

"To commemorate the growth of the city of Montreal under the protection of the Cross."

Yet, standing there beside that towering cross we could look down into the city and we knew that among its inhabitants was sin in all its forms. Nor is this fact limited to one city; it is found in them all.

The land in which God's ancient people lived had known much of His care. It had been described as "A land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it." Deut. 11:12. Yet the chapter supplying our text tells a pitiful story concerning that very land and its people. God Himself is represented as saying: "The house of Israel is to me become dross." ver. 18. Its priests, prophets, princes, and people were laden with sins.

Think of our own land -- and with it so many others which have been literally loaded with blessings. Where are we today? The world is obviously ripening for judgment. Every personal sin adds to the aggregate weight as well as to the condemnation of the individual. If men and women could see the accumulative guilt which hangs over the world as viewed through the eyes of a holy God, not one among them would survive the vision.

II. The Divine Search

"I sought for a man." Not an angel -- not a scholar, not an orator -- just a man. A plain, ordinary, everyday man. "A man among them."

1. A Man Who Will Dare To Deal with Sin -- and deal with it no matter where that sin lies. "To make up the hedge," as Moses did with Israel and the golden calf. The ministry of prayer has its moral and ethical implications. Where wrongs exist the man of prayer must do his part to put them right. If the calf stands between Israel and God, then the calf must be ground to powder, no matter what form that calf may take.

The man who would pray for a sober nation must plainly declare himself on the liquor issue. The man who would pray for an honest nation must be the foe of greed and graft in all its forms. The man who would pray for a spiritual nation must give himself to the work of soul winning. Morally and spiritually he must make up the hedge. Old time standards and convictions must be proclaimed whether men will hear or whether they will forbear.

2. A Man Who Will Dare To Plead with God and plead with Him no matter what inconvenience it involves.

"And stand in the gap before me for the land" -- as Abraham did for Sodom. As Knox did for Scotland. As Brainerd did for the Indians.

"Stand in the gap" -- that is the supreme need of the hour, just plain, old-fashioned gap fillers. It is a crisis hour and our supreme need is that of men and women who will spend time in the secret place: who will weep, mourn and intercede. Our only hope is in old-fashioned stalwarts of prayer. That same God who sought for a man in Ezekiel's day is seeking still.

III. The Divine Sob

"But I found none. Therefore have I poured out my indignation upon them."

It was not that nobody prayed. Among the Jews there was lots of religion. The difficulty was that nobody's praying measured up to the requisite standard of power.

Suppose God should search your immediate locality. Suppose, did we say? There is no need to suppose. He is doing it. Does He find in you what He so ardently seeks? Maybe you have more religion than you ever had. Possibly you are more generous than you have ever been before. But as God pauses and looks you over He is seeking a man with a quality other than all these.

What hinders you from being that man?

Is it unwillingness to renounce known sin?

I did not say DEnounce, I said REnounce it. If you regard iniquity in your heart, you may try to pray, but the Lord will not hear you. (Psa. 66:18.)

Is it unreadiness to part company with the world?

You know you cannot flirt with the world and hold fellowship with God.

Is it reluctance to sacrifice time which is non, being given to other things?

That is the most frequent cause of prayer-life failure to be found among the entire people of God. Prayer is a costly business. It means cutting out so much that is harmless in itself and which other people enjoy. The society of friends. The enjoyment of things. The pleasure of p/aces. All of them good, sometimes religious. You must get time alone with God.

I am bringing you here a daring challenge. Dare you, standing in the presence of God, offer yourself to Him for this priceless ministry of intercession? It will take all there is of you, and few people will know or even care enough about it to thank you for what you are doing, but away in the heart of God your prayer contacts will be registered, and when the roll is called of those who have done exploits for God, you, one of the humble gap standers will have your reward.

* * * * *

"Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin -- and if not, blot me I pray thee out of thy book which thou hast written." Exodus 32:32.

As an Old Testament portion this passage stands unique. Even in the New Testament there is only one passage to match it, namely, Paul's concern for Israel as expressed in Romans 9:[-3, where the apostle carries so great a burden for the souls of men that in his "great heaviness and constant sorrow of heart" he declares, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

It is surpassed only, but there surely, by our Lord in His Gethsemane agony, Who "being in agony prayed more earnestly; and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Luke 22:41.

If only we can find our way into the inner side of this passage, we shall find it to be throbbing with a holy passion and quivering with emotion. Into it are packed all the elements of eloquence, intensity, and agony. Unless we are spiritual enough to get behind its wording, it will be impossible to obtain an adequate idea of its true content; for no human phrases can express it.

The most significant thing in the passage is not a word at all. It is that little dash immediately following the words "their sin." "If Thou wilt forgive their sin -- and if not blot me I pray Thee out of Thy book which Thou hast written."

That dash speaks volumes. It suggests a break; a sob. You cannot write a sob. Literature has no capacity to express such a thing in cold print. It defies language and beggars description. Breaking hearts cannot be reproduced in printer's ink. You cannot put them on paper.

This heartbreak was not for himself. Neither was it the result of worked up emotion, the hysteria born of overwrought nerves. The sin of others and their consequent danger, so weighed upon his soul that he was driven to earnest pleading with strong cryings and tears. He could hardly endure the thought of an eternity of bliss if these wandering souls were left to their awful doom, therefore he prayed, and prayed with a breaking heart.

I. Let Us View the Situation Forming the Back. ground of This Scripture and Its Reflex among Us Today.

Moses had been away in the Mount alone with his God, and while he had tarried there some strange things had happened in the valley below. In an astonishingly short time practically the whole nation had lost its grip on God, and an alarming apostasy had set in.

It is amazing how soon such a thing can happen whether among nations or in an individual soul. Only six short weeks earlier they had shouted: "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." Ch. 24: 7.

National life is governed by personal experience and once this begins to dwindle there is a rapid hold of materialism which soon ends in widespread national sin. Men are not long in

stripping off the things they had prized the most and in making idolatrous "calves" for worship. The root cause is carnality within.

It was there, in the midst of his mountain communion that Moses received the Divine intimation of the happenings in the valley below. "Get thee down," said Jehovah, "for My people have corrupted themselves. Now therefore let me alone... that I may consume them." Ver. 7-10.

Here again is the same startling suggestion which we met in our last address when referring to Abraham and Sodom. Is it possible that God could not act in judgment toward this sinful nation so long as a faithful intercessor stood in the way? Is it possible that this may be the very reason for the coming rapture of the Church before the judgments of the Great Tribulation are seen?

God only knows what awful judgments hang over a rebellious world, and would immediately fall upon it but for the praying souls who stand between.

1. Such Is the Condition of Things in So-called CHRISTIAN Lands.

How tragic it is to see the manner in which the Christian countries, so-called, have stripped themselves of their once most prized and valued possessions to make the idolatrous "calf." This awful fact has appeared in so many phases: Sabbath breaking, worldliness, love of gain, lust and unholy desire. Boasting of our Christian privileges we have become a nation of idolaters. Singing about the Cross, placing it in Churches, and wearing it on watch chains, we have lost the sense of its power. For the majority it has no more vital potency than Mohammed's Crescent. It is now just one of the several symbols; often revered, sometimes superstitiously worshipped, but only the few know its saving power.

2. Much More Does It Suggest the Conditions Existing among the Heathen.

Yet with the heathen there is this pathetic exception, they have never heard, no one has ever told them. They were born, and have lived, and most likely will die in an atmosphere of darkness and superstition. Their gods cannot help them. In their hour of deepest need they cry into an empty void. They make their idols, treasure their charms, reverence their witch doctors, lacerate their bodies, and withal, they indulge in the grossest forms of sin.

God's love grieves over them. God's Son bled for them. God's Spirit yearns to break in upon them. Yet the awful judgment pronounced upon a guilty world hangs over their heads. Unless the Gospel can reach these poor, benighted hearts, they have no hope in the world.

II. Consider the Effects of Such a Situation upon a Truly Spiritual Soul.

A soul once initiated into the fullness of God's mountain joys becomes supremely sensitive to the woes of the sinning multitudes on the lower plain. He is bold to face the sinner and to talk with him concerning his transgression.

How courageously Moses faced those idolaters, and how bravely he tackled their sin. This thing stood between their souls and their God, and must be put away. There could be no half

measures. The "calf" must go. Its worship must cease. Sin must be shown up in all its exceeding sinfulness. God must be honored and owned.

Then, how quick he was to approach an offended God in passionate entreaty for the sinner. The mystery of intercession is far too deep and too sacred for the natural mind. It is a soul travail for a lost world. Few, if any, have ever done their full duty in relation to it, and yet no soul can live near to God and be indifferent concerning it.

The history of the Church is rich in its record of intercessors. John Welsh is said to have prayed seven or eight hours a day, keeping a plaid on his bed at night to wrap around him when he rose to pray while others were asleep. Sometimes his wife, finding him weeping on the ground, would be tempted to complain, but his answer would be: "O woman, I have the souls of three thousand to answer for and I know not how it is with many of them.

Of David Brainerd, his diary is sufficient witness. Should any be ignorant of this man's identity, let us hasten to say that he was a missionary among the Indians. He commenced to preach at the age of twenty-four, and passed into the presence of his Lord at the early age of twenty-nine years. But those five years were so wonderful in their intensity that his name lives as one of the men who spent himself for God's glory. Here is an extract from his diary: "Near the middle of the afternoon God enabled me to wrestle ardently in intercession for my friends. But at night the Lord visited me marvelously in prayer. I think my soul was never in such agony before. I felt no restraint, for the treasures of Divine grace were opened to me. I wrestled for absent friends, for the ingathering of souls; for multitudes of poor souls. I was in such an agony from sun half an hour high until dark, that I was wet all over with sweat; but it seemed that I had wasted away the day and done nothing. Oh, my dear Saviour did sweat blood for poor souls. I longed for compassion toward them."

Moses knew this prevailing life. The very thought of men being estranged from God drove him to pray. They had no claim on his intercession. They did not deserve it, nor even desire it. Yet he could not stand and look at souls ready to perish without being driven to intercede with God.

The weight of their condition broke him down in God's presence, and what spiritual anguish is seen. Language fails. His soul feels as though it would burst. He has nothing to utter but a big choking sob. When speech is recovered he is so lost in compassionate interceding that he feels his own salvation to be of little account if these poor souls are lost. " -- and if not, blot me I pray Thee out of Thy book which Thou hast written."

Who can stand erect in the presence of praying such as this? Moses engaged in it. Paul measured up to it. Jesus surpassed it. The Church once knew something of it, and her greatest need is to regain it. The prayer passion is the key to every other problem. Without it all else is vain.

"There is a place where thou canst touch the eyes
Of blinded men to instant perfect sight,
A place where thou canst say 'Arise!'
To dying captives, bound in chains of night.

"There is a place where thou canst reach the store
Of hoarded gold and free it for the Lord:
There is a place upon some distant shore
Where thou canst send the worker and the Word.

"There is a place where heaven's resistant power
Responsive moves to thine insistent plea;
There is a place -- a silent trysting hour
Where God Himself descends and fights for thee.

"Where is that blessed place -- dost thou ask where?
O Soul, it is the blessed place of prayer."

* * * * *

03 -- THE BURDENED WATCHMAN

"The burden of Dumah, He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night; if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come." Isaiah 21:11, 12.

The section in which this text is found treats of other nations in their respective relationships to God's ancient people. The first twelve chapters of Isaiah's prophecy contain prophetic messages concerning Judah and Jerusalem, while chapters thirteen to twenty-three have to do with surrounding peoples, concerning each of whom, and there are ten in all, the prophet proclaims what he calls a burden.

The seventh burden is the burden of Dumah, which is Edom, that old hereditary enemy of Israel. Isaiah has three distinct oracles concerning Edom:

In this, the first, she is seen as anxiously inquiring for a ray of light. In the second, she is seen as doomed to destruction for the guilt of her crimes, while in the third, she is seen as paying an awful penalty for her past. There, a solitary Warrior, majestic, but bloodstained, is seen as coming from Edom with the day of vengeance in His heart.

It is the first of these which forms the basis of our present meditation. In vision, Edom is seen as in great anxiety, sending messages to Zion's watchman inquiring how far the night has gone and how much longer the present darkness will last.

The answer is by no means encouraging. The watchman seems to have difficulty in finding a sympathetic way to announce it, declaring the simultaneous oncoming of an ever deepening darkness and approach of a glorious dawn. And yet, with kindly persuasion he encourages the inquirer to come again.

There is something very modern about all this. Edom is still turning to Israel in her hour of need. We are living in a period of sore perplexity and are watching a bewildered world face

problems which it is powerless to solve. It is asking for light, but what can we say? To interpret the events around us as we know the truth, is to declare the doom of the civilization in which we live. The handwriting is on the wall.

As we approach this tremendous theme, two thoughts again present themselves:

FIRST, the outstanding need of the present hour is men with a real soul burden, and SECOND, this burden of soul is the product of a sympathetic spiritual vision which becomes the producer of an all consuming passion.

I. The Church's Need

How glaring that need is and how amazing too. There is not nearly so much scarcity in other directions. We have preachers galore. There are to be found singers, educators, business managers, and even benevolent givers, but in this we are amazingly embarrassed. There are few, lamentably few, who know anything about a Divinely produced burden of soul.

A burden! Do you know what it means? It is literally a message or oracle which has become a heavy weight. Those old time men of God produced their messages at tremendous cost. Through Divine contact, they were first wrought into the fiber of their own being and then wrung out in agony of soul. Probably that is the reason why their messages have endured while ours are so often forgotten almost as soon as they are uttered.

Examples of these burdened servants of God are to be found both in the Scripture record and in the history of the Church. That heartbreaking sob of Moses to which we have already listened! That yearning desire of Paul which we have heard expressed.

The men who can honestly talk and act like that are carrying a burden indeed.

George Whitefield so yearned over dying men that in spiritual agony he was heard to groan,
"O God, give me souls, or take my soul."

Did you ever weep over souls, feeling the weight, carrying the burden, taking the load upon your heart?

The great need, I say, of the present hour is men with a real soul burden.

II. The Church's Secret

How does this burden come? This question has been asked again and again. How may we get it, and how may we keep it? Too often, in all sincerity there have been tragically futile efforts here which have ended in keen disappointment. Soul burden can never be manufactured. There is nothing within human nature to produce it. It is the product of a sympathetic spiritual vision which in turn becomes the producer of an all consuming passion.

"He calleth Me! What of the night?"

Do you wonder the prophet became burdened? Gazing out into the darkness around him, until, by spiritual revelation he could see that poor distracted creature and hear him calling for a ray of light, and yet there was no hand stretched out to help.

Three questions asked and answered will help us here:

I. What do we mean when we speak of spiritual vision?

This expression has become current coinage within spiritual circles and is, alas, sometimes used without any adequate conception of its deeper meaning. Christian vocabulary is a precious heritage, but without a corresponding experience it is likely to become a positive menace.

What then is this spiritual vision? It is certainly not just a pious imagination. Nor is it an overwrought emotion. It is rather a Divine revelation, a conviction deeply inwrought by the Holy Ghost.

2. But how may we possess this spiritual vision?

Three words will cover this requirement, namely, abandonment, information and investment.

(1). There must of necessity be a complete abandonment.

Abandonment to God and to His service. An utter yieldedness which brings a consciousness of entire inward cleansing.

(2). There must also be an acquired information.

The acquisition of actual facts which must be honestly faced. Too often facts are not faced. They are excused; glossed over; explained away.

a. Concerning the inner condition of the Church of God. Its worldliness. Its modernism. Its smug satisfaction. Its lost spiritual power. Its need of revival -- and its doom without it; for no amount of education and refinement can make up for lost spiritual power.

b. Concerning the corrupt condition of our present civilization.

The tragedy of its, morals, or rather the lack of them has come to be accepted as inevitable, but this is not so.

c. Concerning the lost condition of the heathen world. It is said that every time the clock ticks, a heathen soul passes into the great unknown without Christ and without hope.

It is recorded of our Lord in the days of His flesh, that "He went about all the cities and villages, teaching..., preaching... healing..., but when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." Matt. 9:35, 36.

Does not this suggest that it is possible to teach, and to do it conscientiously; to preach, and to do it earnestly; to care for the sick, and to do it tenderly; and yet to have no soul passion, because no realization of the soul's deeper needs.

It is this compassion of the tenderhearted Jesus that is needed-and it can only be obtained as we learn to see the multitudes as He sees them. The fact that we do not know, does not exonerate us. We are held responsible in the sight of God for what we could have known had we taken the trouble to ascertain it.

(3). There must further be some personal investment. Something of our own must be put into it. Something that costs. Interest only comes with investment in more senses than one.

There is a bank crash. To the newspaper men it is something to report. To the general public it is something to read about; exciting news. To some people, however, it is a heartbreak. Their savings are there. These men and women have put something into it and therefore it means something to them if the crash comes.

How much have you put into the business of saving lost men and women from a Christless eternity? Our concern is governed by our consecration.

3. In what sense does this vision become a passion?

Certainly not in the sense of being a continual emotion. It is rather a settled principle which dedicates itself to a supreme task -- that of doing the Divine will.

"I must work..., while it is day, for the night cometh... "

Other things are important, even necessary, but this is supreme; an all compelling must driving the soul on -- and on -- and on -- and on -- until pain is sweet and sacrifice is a delight; until the rugged Calvary road becomes so ablaze with dazzling glory that to leave it would be a greater sacrifice than to remain on it; until it would be easier to die than to quit.

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04 -- THE LIFE OF THE LORD JESUS, OUR PRAYER PATTERN

"Christ... who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared." Heb. 5:7.

It is a source of consolation to the tested saint to remember that our Lord Himself once knew a period which is here designated, "The days of His flesh." During these "days" He endured the maximum amount of trial, temptation and testing, yet in it He is preeminently revealed as a Man of prayer.

Concerning His earth life two things must ever be remembered:

1. His death was the propitiation for the sinner. 2. His life was the pattern for the saint. Historically, of course, His pattern life came before His propitiatory death, but spiritually His death must be trusted before His life can be traced. A pattern can only be given to living souls. The sinner is dead in trespasses and sins and consequently he must first be "born again." John 3:7. Having been spiritually born he is eligible to follow the pattern, which extends to every part of the believer's life, and not least the life of prayer.

As we turn to the prayer life of Jesus as a pattern for us, three things will be noticed:

I. How Jesus Prayed

He prayed with an intensity, a passion, a persistence which only a soul consciously pure and completely attuned to the harmonies of heaven can employ.

"He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears." Heb. 5:7.

The special reference here may be to the Gethsemane incident, but there is also at least a hint concerning the general trend of His life.

It is edifying to trace His prayer life as it is recorded for us by the Spirit's inspiration. This we shall do as we find it portrayed in the Gospel narratives.

1. He prayed early.

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day. He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." Mark 1:35.

2. He prayed late.

"And when He had sent the multitudes away,

He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when evening was come, He was there alone." Matt. 14:23.

3. He prayed all night.

"And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." Luke 6:12.

It will be noted that the context of each of these passages is the record of busy days, yet even there our Lord found time to pray. Never did He allow His praying to interfere with His service, but on no account would He permit His work to crowd out prayer. The more work to be done, then the more prayer needed, and so through the night, He prayed.

4. He prayed before important events.

Although possessing a mind at one with God such as none other knew, before making an important decision our Lord felt the need of protracted prayer.

"And it came to pass in those days that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called unto Him His disciples: and of them He chose twelve, whom he named apostles." Luke 6:12, 13.

5. He prayed for His friends.

Addressing Simon Peter, He said, "Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee..." Luke 22:31.

In His High Priestly intercession, He prayed: "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world . . . I pray for them..." John 17:6,9.

6. He prayed for His enemies.

Hanging on the cross in His dying agony He cried: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." Luke 23:34.

7. He prayed until heaven opened.

"Now, when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened." Luke 3:21.

8. He prayed until He was transfigured.

"He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as He prayed the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening." Luke 9:29.

9. He prayed when prayer was an agony -- until blood gushed through His pores.

"And being in agony He prayed more earnestly and sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground." Luke 22:44.

10. He prayed even as He died.

"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit, and having said this, He gave up the ghost." Luke 23: 46.

Was there ever praying such as this? Surely it prostrates us in shame and in deep humiliation to think that we have done so little of it, and that what we have done has been so amazingly poor.

11. The Effect Which Such Praying Produced

The Hebrew writer says, "He was heard." What else could be expected? Could a faithful God turn a deaf ear to praying such as that?

Its immediate result was a calm, quiet, confident assurance in all that He did. Watch Him in His public work. He is never excited. Even in the face of His greatest difficulties and most critical adversaries He moves with the ease and grace of One who is sure, because of a conscious inward mastery only obtained in the solitudes upon His knees.

His word spoken at the raising of Lazarus is illuminating here.

"And Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, I thank Thee, Father, that Thou hast heard me. And I knew that Thou hearest me always . . ." John 11:41-42.

"Thou hast heard me." For what? When?

Evidently for the raising of Lazarus, for it will be remembered that "When He had heard that Lazarus was sick" instead of starting immediately for Bethany "He abode two days still in the same place where He was." How those two days were spent and why He tarried there we shall never know except by way of inference. We feel safe in saying that He tarried there to pray. There He mastered the situation on His knees, and then coming forth to face it, displayed that majestic confidence which could order the rolling away of the stone and issue commands to a stinking corpse.

Well might John say of us, His followers: "This is the confidence we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desire of Him." I John 5:14.

III. How This Praying Impressed Those Around Him

This, the words of our text, coupled with the records of His life will show.

1. It arrested attention.

So much so that thirty years later the writer to the Hebrews wrote, "Who in the days of His flesh offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears."

Whether the writer had personally known the human Jesus or not, this fact is certain, His prayer life had been so wonderful that the memory of it had lived on and had become a source of inspiration to His people.

2. It awakened desire.

"And it came to pass that as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray . . .'" Luke 11:1.

It was impossible to watch Him without wanting to pray like Him.

Does the praying of Jesus awaken any such desire in you

Take again those Gospel narratives. Go through them in the quiet hour. Watch the Master as He prays. Ask for His Spirit. Pray that within your own breast there may be kindled that same intensity and passion which drove Him into the solitudes alone with God. Then, dropping every hindering thing and buying up every precious moment, pray. Pray until with rejoicing you can say:

"My prayer hath power with God -- and grace
Unspeakable I now receive,
Through faith I see Thee face to face,
I see Thee face to face, and live;
In vain I have not wept and strove;
Thy nature and Thy name is love."

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05 -- THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, OUR PRAYER AUTHORITY

As a basis for our present study we shall call attention to a six-fold repetition, found in three successive chapters of John's Gospel, the three recurring words, "In my name."

"And whatsoever ye shall ask IN MY NAME that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Ch. 14:13.

"If ye shall ask anything IN MY NAME, I will do it." Ch. 14:14.

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask the Father IN MY NAME he may give it you." Ch. 15:16.

"And in that day ye shall ask me nothing, verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father IN MY NAME, He will give it you." Ch. 16:23.

"Hitherto ye have asked nothing IN MY NAME; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." Ch. 16:24.

"And at that day ye shall ask IN MY NAME: and I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you." Ch. 16:26.

There can be no mistaking the Master's mind here; the declaration is emphatic, repeated and plain. Surely an expression reiterated until used six times cannot be merely casual -- and cannot well be misunderstood.

Our Lord had no misgivings about the power of His own name. Some have more confidence in the influence of their name than results would seem to warrant. Said a man of our acquaintance one day, "O there need to be no trouble about a little thing like that, just call at Mr. Blank's office and use my name." We did, but nothing happened.

The name of Jesus is declared throughout the Scriptures to possess peculiar currency in the spiritual realm.

His name has saving power.

Sin disappears wherever it is pleaded. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins." Matt. 1:21.

His name has conquering power.

Demons yield and flee before it. "The seventy returned again with joy, saying Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name." Luke 10:17.

His name has miracle working power.

Disease disappears when faith uses it. The early Christians put it to the test and found it to work. "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk . . . and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength." Acts 3:6, 7.

But what startles us most of all is the fact of its God moving power.

Deity is influenced by the use of His name. That is the theme of our present study, and as we approach it, two thoughts suggest themselves.

1. The Authority of the Name of Jesus in the Realm of Prayer

The disciples had known in measure, at least, what it meant to pray in the name of others, even though recognizing the worthlessness of their own names as a means of recommendation in the presence of God.

A pious Jew would plead many names wherewith to enforce his petition, urging a formula often tedious and almost endless. Addressing Jehovah and presenting his request he might begin to enforce it somewhat as follows:

"Do it for Thy Name's sake. Do it for Thy truth's sake. Do it for Thy Covenant's sake. Do it for the sake of Thy greatness and majesty. Do it for the sake of Thy law. Do it for the sake of thine honor. Do it for the sake of Abraham. Do it for the sake of Isaac. Do it for the sake of Jacob. Do it for the sake of..."

And so he would go on and on. Those who have heard these devotions have not hesitated to state that there is no more wearisome and monotonous thing in the world than to hear an orthodox Jew pray.

How refreshing therefore, and how sublimely simple to be told, "Ask in my name."

How remarkably full and copious too is this reiterated word: "And whatsoever ye shall ask..." Ch. 14:13. "If ye shall ask anything..." Ch. 14:14. "Ye shall ask what ye will..." Ch. 15:7. "That whatsoever ye shall ask..." Ch. 15:16. "Whatsoever ye shall ask..." Ch. 16:23.

Here, surely, is given to the believer a free hand at the Throne of Grace. All the promises of God are at his disposal when quickened to him by the Holy Ghost. The Bible becomes a book of blank checks all duly authorized and signed, with unlimited capital behind them.

These Divinely authorized checks stand in startling contrast with the check about which we heard some time ago. The representative of an institution is said to have called on a wealthy but eccentric money magnate soliciting his benevolence. "I trust, sir," said he, "that you may see fit to write me a check for a generous amount. It would greatly relieve the pressure." Forthwith the check was written and the amount duly entered, but as the representative was leaving he noticed that although the amount was stated no name had been signed and promptly he called attention to the matter. "Well," replied the generous soul, "you see, whenever I deal in large amounts I always prefer to remain anonymous."

Now what is the use of an anonymous check whatever the amount? Here, however, the case is distinctly opposite. The name is signed and the amount is left open. The only limit is "anything," "whatsoever," "what ye will."

What then is the secret of such wonderful authority vested in a name? The answer is simple. Two things stand behind it, a character and a covenant; and the name can never be divorced from either.

I. The Character.

Was there ever another such as He? He stands out preeminently as the Father's Beloved in Whom He is well pleased. Matt. 3:17; 17:5.

Before creation He "was daily His delight rejoicing always before Him." Prov. 8: 30.

In the days of His humiliation He "did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." I Peter 2: 22.

From cradle to cross He was immaculately holy, perfectly obedient, and utterly abandoned.

In His exaltation He is honored, worshipped, and adored. All heaven rings with His praise, as looking upon the Throne, they see Him in the midst of it as a Lamb newly slain. See Rev. 5. That holy character stands behind His name when used by the believing soul in the sacred exercise of prayer.

2. The Covenant.

The Bible has eight great Covenants proposed by God to man, and on this pledged word of Deity it is absolutely safe for man to rely. Here, however, is a Covenant surpassing all others. It was made not between God and man but between God and God. Far back in the councils of eternity the Holy Trinity was in solemn conclave. There creation was determined and redemption was planned. We may not be able to explain or even to understand how the sacred Three in One could be so separated as to become responsible for distinctive angles of the great redemptive work, but we are compelled to see that these Three August Persons, One in essence and in energy, engaged Themselves in mutual covenant relationships for the carrying out of Redemption. The Son engaged to take upon Himself the form of Man and under His Redemption name Jesus, to give Himself even unto death for the sin of the world. The Father pledged Himself to honor that Redemption name and to "accept" every trusting soul who would embrace it.

That covenant, made by the Father with the Son, is behind the name, and all the weight of it is thrown into operation when, using that Name, we pray.

Praying in His name is the Divinely ordained method of release in the spiritual realm. It is the Master key by which the doors of God's treasury are opened; the lever by which the sluices of the Divine reservoir are loosed; the secret by which the trusting soul may enter into and explore all the fullness of God.

II. The People by Whom This Wondrous Authority Can Alone Be Successfully Wielded

"Now," says someone, "all that sounds fine; there is only one thing wrong with it: it doesn't seem to work like that in my case."

Well, in all probability it may not. We may as well be frank and say, there are many with whom it does not so work.

We have already called attention to some outstanding expressions in the verses used as our Scripture basis; may we now ask the reader to notice one more. It is found in each of the seven verses, the little word "Ye." The all important question now becomes, Are you one of the "Yes"? The three background chapters from which the verses are taken, very clearly describe them. Read chapters fourteen to sixteen. Each of these will be seen to possess an outstanding idea, which is intended to become an experiential fact in the life of the wholly yielded soul. Therefore, those who wield this mighty prayer authority may be described as enjoying in their respective measure this threefold experience:

1. They Know the Secret of An Untroubled Heart.

This is seen in chapter fourteen. How majestic are the Master's utterances here: "Let not your heart be troubled... My peace I give unto you... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Ver. 1, 27.

An untroubled heart in days like these? Canon Bickersteth faced that question, and answered it in a poem which has become one of the immortal hymns of the Church:

"Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.
Peace, perfect peace, by thronging duties pressed?
To do the will of Jesus -- this is rest.

Peace, perfect peace, with sorrows surging round?
On Jesus' bosom nought but calm is found.
Peace, perfect peace, with loved ones far away?
In Jesus' keeping we are safe and they.

Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown?
Jesus we know, and He is on the Throne.
Peace, perfect peace, death shadowing us and ours?
Jesus has vanquished death and all its powers."

But how few really know this secret. Where is the difficulty? The root cause is indwelling sin. That is the great heart troubler, but thank God it may be removed. Rom. 6: 6; I John 3: 19-22.

2. They Know How To Live the Abiding Life.

This is seen in chapter fifteen, where the outstanding word is abide.

Perhaps it might be well to pause for a moment over that simple but significant word. No word is more familiar in the Christian vocabulary, and yet none is more frequently misunderstood.

Among young believers especially, there is difficulty, not because of unwillingness to abide, but because of a faulty conception as to how to do so. Some have told me that they were trying to abide. But their very trying has spoiled the abiding.

Spiritual abiding comes as the result of cessation of human effort. It is a quiet sinking down into God. Probably another Scripture passage may help us here. It concerns the Master's instructions to His disciples as He sent them forth.

"And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide . . ." Literally, Go in, and stay there until it is necessary to move on.

Your house is your Lord Himself. "Abide in Me." Taking the faith position, you are to go h and stay there until it is necessary to move on. Having moved in, we need no more go out forever.

"'Tis here I would always abide
And never a moment depart;
Concealed in the cleft of Thy side
Eternally held in Thy heart."

To abide deeply, is to know how to pray successfully.

3. They Know the Secret of the Indwelling Holy Ghost.

This is seen in chapter sixteen especially, but throughout the three chapters in general. It is the thought of the indwelling Holy Ghost, and has to do with the experience of Pentecost. With such an Indweller the believer will be inspired to ask, and to ask within range of the Divine will. Such asking will always be productive, for whatever Cod inspires in the realm of prayer He certainly brings to pass.

Away on the battlefield of Flanders a young American soldier was dying. He was a son of the mansion, of a family of wealth. His faithful buddie, a boy from the slums, remained by his side. "I can never repay you," said the dying boy, "but my father will. Help me write him a note." It was a painful task, but with trembling hand he wrote on the dirty piece of paper, the only one at hand, then gave it to his friend, instructing him that when the war was over and he was released from army life, he should take it to his father's home.

Many months later, on a cold, dreary day, a hungry looking man, apparently a tramp, presented himself at the mansion door. Without listening to his story, the servant ordered him away. When he returned he was threatened with arrest. Trying a third time, he managed to make the doorman listen while he said, "Tell your master I was John's personal friend." "Master," said the servant, "he says he was a friend of John's." The owner of the mansion did not order him away. He did not even wait for him to be admitted. He went out to the door to meet him, saying, "Did you know my John? What can I do for you for the sake of John?"

The rest of the story need not be told, nor is it necessary to apply the teaching.

"He hath made us accepted in the Beloved," said Paul. Eph. 1:6. Then why not ask in His name?

"Ask what ye will."

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06 -- THE HOLY SPIRIT, OUR PRAYER ENERGY

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be

uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Rom. 8:26, 27.

The believing soul has two Intercessors. Without either of these the life of prayer would be utterly impossible.

1. The Risen Lord Intercedes in the Glory.

"It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again. Who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." vet. 34.

There, as the heavenly High Priest making intercession for us, He makes two things possible: a. Our acceptance with God. Eph. 1:6, 7. b. Our access to God. Rom. 5:2.

2. The Holy Spirit Intercedes in the Heart.

As the heaven sent Executive, He energizes us in our praying.

Thus, with a Divine Agent in charge at either end the prayer life of the wholly yielded soul is neither spasmodic in its character nor uncertain in its results.

The chapter before us has much to say about the Holy Spirit. In the previous chapters of this epistle He is mentioned only once (ch. 5:5), but as soon as we reach chapter eight we find Him mentioned nineteen times. Among other things He is said to: Make free from the law of sin and death, ver. 2. Indwell those who are not after the flesh, ver. 9. Quicken the mortal body, ver. 11. Lead those who are the sons of God, ver. 13. Bear witness to our sonship, ver. 14. Help our infirmities, ver. 16.

Make intercession for the saints according to the will of God, ver. 27.

It is the Spirit's aid in this prayer ministry that is to occupy our attention in the present study. The verses selected as the basis for our thought clearly teach two things, while a third suggestion naturally arises out of the other two.

I. Our Utter Helplessness in the Ministry of Prayer This is here seen as arising from a twofold cause:

1. Our limited comprehension.

"We know not what we should pray for as we ought."

We are not even conscious of the depth of our own need, either as to its nature or as to its measure, consequently until divinely helped in this matter we blandly generalize and go blindly on.

Some years ago in the city of London a British holiness teacher gave a practical example of this, in relation to the general conception of need concerning full salvation. There are no more

vague generalizations anywhere than those used concerning this important truth. People are invited to come for "consecration, a deeper consecration," "reconsecration, a fuller realization of God," "more power" and so on, but the exact location of the soul's deep need is seldom attempted. Said the speaker, "Now I am going to invite to this altar rail all who are conscious of spiritual need. Will those who desire power for service please come down the aisle to my left, and will those desiring purity of heart come down the aisle to my right." At a later period describing that service the preacher said,

"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain... " ver. 22.

The second is the groan of a waiting church -- waiting for the full fruition of the Calvary redemption.

"And not only they, but we ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." ver.. 23.

The third is the groan of an interceding Spirit -- who alone can reach the heart of God on our behalf.

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities... the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

This Spirit is our great Energizer in the mighty ministry of prayer.

As we contemplate this, three reasons suggest themselves as to why this should be so:

1. Because He knows our uttermost need -- and is aware of its fullest extent in both heart and life.

No matter how deep that need goes, the Holy Spirit knows it, He can see us through and through;

2. Because He knows God's fullest will -- and clearly comprehends all its minutest details.

What the human mind can never penetrate the Holy Spirit knows and can reveal.

3. Because He knows the direct route to the heart of God and He gets there every time.

It is the sacred prerogative of this Divine Spirit to take the believer's deepest need and God's fullest will and bring them together at the Throne of Grace, thus enabling the fully yielded soul to "pray in the Holy Ghost." Jude 20.

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"For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us."
II Cor. 1:20.

"For how many so ever may be the promises of God, in him is the yea; wherefore also through him is the amen, unto the glory of God through us." (R. V.)

"For all the promises of God, whatever their number, have their confirmation in him: and for this reason through him also our "Amen" acknowledges their truth and promotes the glory of God through our faith." (Weymouth's translation.)

We now turn to a consideration of the Scriptures as our basis for praying. We can only pray with confidence as we base our petitions on the Word of God.

This Book is the most valuable asset the saint can hold. That is why Satan is so constantly hurling his forces against it. In the dark ages he did his best to destroy it, but in this age of boasted enlightenment he is doing his utmost to discount and discredit it.

The devil hates the Bible, and no wonder. He has strong reasons for doing so.

It is the Spirit's Sword. With it He fights. Consequently we are exhorted to "Take the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God." Eph. 6:17.

In His wilderness conflict with Satan, our Lord made full use of His Divine Sword, defeating His wily foe. Matt. 4: 4, 7, 10.

It is the Spirit's Fire. With it He destroys error. "What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my Word like fire?" Jer. 23:28, 29.

The acid test of every ism is the Word of God. It is the Spirit's Hammer. With it He breaks rock. "Is not my Word like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Jer. 23:29. The most powerful agency against the hardest nature is the Word of God.

It is the Spirit's Mirror. With it He shows man his own picture. Jas. 1:22-25.

It is the Spirit's Check Book. With it the Holy Ghost places at the believer's disposal the limitless resources of deity.

Hence the text with which we commenced this message. If we are to intercede successfully, we must know how to lay hold of the promises and turn them to account. We must pray on the Word of God.

With this in view, two thoughts here suggest themselves.

1. The Permanent and Abiding Value of the Promises of God.

"All the promises of God, whatever their number... " What a sweep! No matter when they were made. Nor how. Nor to whom. Whether in the Old Testament or in the New. "All... have their confirmation in Him." Every one of them is valid in Christ. No promise of God is outworn so long as the God of the promise is alive to fulfill it and so long as any needy soul remains who has faith to claim it.

No Scripture is exhausted in one fulfillment. The fulfillment is usually threefold -- immediate, intermediate and ultimate!

1. The immediate.

The immediate fulfillment is, of course, the primary meaning; the incident out of which the promise arose. Often it is associated with some local event and has had a historic significance to the people or individual to whom it was originally given.

Some of the choicest Divine promises and most cherished affirmations possessed by the Church today were originally given to meet some local or personal need. Take for example the Psalms. Certainly the truth which they contain is often both dispensational and spiritual, but the circumstances amid which it was born had to do with somebody's personal need and his contact with God. Within that soul desires were kindled and faith quickened so that the Holy Ghost got His opportunity of so deeply inspiring him that he uttered truth much deeper, and farther reaching than he knew.

2. The ultimate.

The ultimate fulfillment is the far-reaching, dispensational value of the things written there; God's prophetic program which only the passing ages can unfold.

3. The intermediate.

The intermediate fulfillment has to do with the spiritual truth contained there for all time; that which belongs to any man in any age through any Scripture.

The reader of the New Testament is sometimes amazed at the manner in which its writers have laid hold on what at first sight seem to be most unlikely passages and have applied them as Church truth. Take for example the following: The Law of Moses states,

"Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn." Deut. 25:4. Concerning it the apostle writes:

"For it is written in the law of Moses that thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. Does God care for oxen? Or, saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope." I Cor. 9: 9-10.

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Rom. 15 : 4.

Today the devil has a big gun. Call it, if you will, dispensationalism run ragged. With simple faith one of God's little ones dares to take hold of a promise from His Word and to rejoice in its wealth or promised blessing, when suddenly he receives an unexpected shock.

"O that is Jewish," says one. Or "That is Millennial truth." Or "That has to do with the Great Tribulation." And maybe it is really so, but what of it?

Along an English country road a little girl is walking with her mother. Immediately before her is a wide gateway leading into a large estate and just inside the gate a well-kept lawn and beds of beautiful flowers. The child wants those flowers and is starting toward them when her horrified mother exclaims, "No darling, you can't touch those, they belong to Lord Graball. They were planted in the spring and are to be gathered for decoration at the big party which he is to give for his son's wedding." Just then in the ears of both mother and child is a familiar buzz-z-z-z, and an audacious bee, with no concern either for his lordship or for the coming wedding, goes right into those flowers. That is exactly what the believer of any age may do with any promise.

"But," says someone, "what are you going to do about the curses? This means that you would apply all the promises to the believer and leave the curses to the Jew."

Exactly so. That is the right thing to do. The Jew, as a Jew is under the law, but whether Jew or Gentile, the believer is under grace. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us... that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." Gal. 3:13, 14.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse... that the blessing might come." In other words, every Old Testament promise is made over to the believer in the blood of Jesus.

"All the promises of God, whatever their number, have their confirmation in Him."

"All are yours: and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." I Cor. 3:22, 23.

II. The Personal Appropriation of These Promises by the Believer Today.

Two things are necessary if these promises are really to become experientially our own.

1. We must acknowledge them.

And that acknowledgment is not to be in a mere general sense; it must be individual and particular.

There are promises for cleansing and enduement. They are mine. There are promises of sustaining grace for the trying hour. They are mine. There are promises of guidance for perplexing days. They are mine. All are mine. There is not a blessing in the Sacred Book that in Christ does

not belong to me. "Exceeding great and precious promises." II Peter 1:4 -- all mine. Hallelujah for such abounding spiritual wealth, all belonging to me.

2. We must "Amen" them.

To "Amen" a promise is to confidently affirm the truth which it states and to take an uncompromising stand in faith upon its declaration.

"Our amen acknowledges their truth and promotes the glory of God through our faith."

Do you know how to Amen the promises of God? Are you among those who "through faith obtained promises," Heb. 11:33? How many promises have you really obtained?

Amening the promises. What an occupation! What an employment for faith! What a challenging thought, that those mighty, majestic promises of Deity, tried and tested through the centuries by the mighty giants of faith, are at my disposal as surely as they were at theirs. They await my amen, and that amen is not an emotional urge for which I need to indefinitely wait -- it is a bold, fearless, confident affirmation which appropriates the pledged resources of God.

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08 -- THE CHILDREN OF GOD, OUR PRAYER PARTNERS

Seven Scripture passages will here form the basis of our thought:

"Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18:18-20.

"These all continued with one accord in prayer, and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." Acts 1:14.

"Peter therefore was kept in prison; but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him... And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying." Acts 12:5, 12.

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Eph. 6:18.

"For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer..." Phil. 1:19.

"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Col. 4:12.

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16.

All these Scriptures, though differing widely in substance and setting, unite in proclaiming one great truth; they show how unmistakably God's children need each other in the ministry of prayer.

It is encouraging to know that in this holy exercise, which is necessarily a lonely way, there are other souls, kindred spirits, who link themselves with our spirits at the Throne of Grace.

It has become a commonplace to say that the holy life from its inception, is a separation from. II Cor. 6:17.

We need also to realize that it is an inheritance among and a union with. Acts 26:18. As we go more deeply into the life of intercessory prayer we shall be less understood by the rank and file Christian, but in the spiritual realm in which we live we shall never lack partners for this sacred ministry.

As we contemplate this theme three thoughts are suggested concerning it:

1. The Life of Prayer Is a Mystic Fellowship. It is with other children of God.

This is suggested by two expressions in the Scriptures read.

"If two of you shall agree on earth," Matt. 18: 19. The word agree there means literally to symphonize, harmonize, or strike the same. note. The figure is that of two musical instruments tuned to the same key.

"Praying always... in the Spirit," Eph. 6:18. The thought here is not some special devotional mood of the human spirit, although that will of necessity be produced. The word Spirit is emphasized by the capital "S" indicating that here we have the Holy Spirit in view, and the thought suggested is that of the soul praying under the guidance of -- with the assistance of -- because possessed by -- the Holy Spirit.

Those knowing the blessed secret of Spirit-possession soon begin to recognize His inner promptings and become conscious that as they enter into the Holiest with their burdens of intercession, they do so in common, nay in close communion with other kindred hearts.

There is a mystic fellowship of the praying heart; first with God, the great Source of spiritual attraction, and then with every other praying heart approaching Him.

John the apostle emphasized this thought, saying: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ... If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another..." I John 1:3, 7.

But what is the nature of this fellowship? Is it local; dependent upon physical nearness or even upon postal communication? By no means. It is a mystic bond of affinity greater than nation, denomination, caste or creed.

"There is a spot where spirits blend
And friend holds fellowship with friend;
Though sundered far, by faith we meet
Around one common Mercy Seat."

II. The Life of Prayer Is a Marvelous Stewardship.

It is for other children of God.

It is the cardinal stewardship; the most important stewardship ever committed to man. It is more important than the stewardship of money for giving; or of the voice for singing; or even of the truth for preaching.

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of.
Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day,
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by golden chains about the feet of God."

Tennyson -- Morte d' Arthur.

We owe it to other children of God to keep up our side of the prayer life.

Said the rejected Samuel to Israel, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." I Sam. 12:23. His faithful prayer stewardship held the nation for God.

Of the early believers it is written, "All these continued with one accord in prayer." Acts 1:14.

Their faithful prayer stewardship brought the Church its first Pentecost.

"Peter was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." Acts 12: 5. Their faithful prayer stewardship released Peter.

"Epaphras... always laboring fervently for you in prayers... " Col. 4: 12. His faithful prayer stewardship raised the spiritual level of the Church.

How will you answer to God for the prayer stewardship committed to you?

III. The Life of Prayer Is a Mighty Contest. We are members of a fighting host.

Prayer is a warfare. That is why it is so often hard to pray. Two Scripture portions will shed light here.

"In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks... Then I lifted up mine eyes and behold a certain man clothed in linen... Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel; for from the first clay... thy words were heard, but the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days..." Dan. 10:1-14.

"... For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in high places. Wherefore... praying always... for all saints." Eph. 6:10-20.

Prayer, then, is a uniting with God against the powers of darkness. These come between the Church and the Divine purposes, and must be fought back and broken through. Heaven fights with us, therefore we must stand and hold our ground in tenacious faith. Armor clad, the believer must stand, withstand, and having done all, to stand. If he fails, it is not merely his own defeat but it sends a reaction through the entire praying host. Therefore, he must never cease to pray.

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09 -- THE SECRET OF CONFIDENT ASKING

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." I John 5:14-15.

One of the outstanding features of a life which is wholly God's is the confident assurance enjoyed, first with regard to its spiritual relationships and then in its life of prayer. A soul consciously one with God is confident in its approach to Him, and what is more, that confidence produces definite results.

It is our purpose here, first, to say something about that confidence, and then to show in a concrete manner from the record of personal experience, the effective nature of the medium of prayer.

1. The Confident Assertion of the Scripture Before Us

This assertion is twofold in its character, namely, the confidence of having been heard, and consequently of having been answered.

There is no more sweeping passage within the entire scope of revelation. There are no boundaries and no limits beyond our asking on the one hand, and His trill on the other. Within this boundary lies our twofold confidence.

1. The Confidence of Having Been Heard.

"If we ask anything according to his will he heareth us."

There, at once, is found the secret of the prayer that reaches the Throne of God -- it is asked in His will. No prayer in the will of God can ever go unanswered, and no prayer outside that will can ever reach His Throne. "But," says one, 'I always say, 'if it be Thy will,' yet my prayers do not seem to be answered. I am never sure whether they are according to His will or not; how may I have the knowledge which creates this confidence?'

Where one is not sure, it is always best to pause and enquire, yet the person who talks in this manner -- and there are many who do, and do it sincerely -- is living on a very elementary level so far as the prayer life is concerned. They are not living the life of prayer; they are just offering isolated petitions as a hoped for way out of difficult situations, and the very manner in which they talk about prayer indicates their lack of familiarity with it. There is an awkwardness which is suggestive of strangeness. It is as though a casual caller spoke of having knocked at our door rather than as though a close friend remarked on having asked some favor while enjoying the intimacy of our home.

The Prayer Chamber is not a place at which to make an occasional call, it is a sphere in which to live, and consequently an atmosphere to which the soul becomes sensitive in its movements.

Certainly there may be great crisis moments, in which the soul, overwhelmed by their importance and crushed by their weight will cry, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Matt. 26:39. But life in general is not lived at the point of crisis. We are oftener upon the common road. Our Lord Himself only knew one Gethsemane, and so far as we know it is only on that one occasion that He prayed in that manner. His more natural attitude is expressed at the graveside of Lazarus:

"And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always." John 11:41-42.

The secret of praying according to the Divine will is living in the center of it, and that is not by any means so difficult as some would have us believe. But if we are to live in we must first move in. The will of God is a sphere with distinctive boundaries within which souls consciously dwell, and the knowledge of being within its confines is as real to the spiritual nature as any physical location to the senses of the body. Hence, we are urged to an understanding as to what the will of the Lord is. Eph, 5:17; and to present the body a living sacrifice that we may "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Rom. 12:1.

To understand God's will, and to prove it, means much more than to verbally acknowledge its sovereignty when we pray, and thus, lest in our ignorance we should unwittingly transgress, to limit our petitions by it. The will of God is the wholly yielded soul's perpetual home, and hence his prayer promptings while humbly abiding there are the energizing of the Holy Spirit within his heart. Thus he has confidence of having been heard.

2. The Confidence of Having Been Answered.

"And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we desired of him."

If we have consciously asked in His will, and by so doing have become conscious that He has heard us, it follows beyond any possibility of contradiction that "we have the petitions which we desire of Him." In other words, something has registered, not only in the heart of the person praying, but also in the heart of God Himself, and has set in motion spiritual forces which will produce the desired result. The answer is not yet seen, but something more important has taken place, heaven now has the matter in hand, and a thing in God's hand designated mine, is as surely mine as though it were in my own hand. Hence, our Lord Himself declared:

"Therefore, I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11:24 R. V.

Now, who ever heard a more glaring mixing of tenses than that? "Believe that ye have received and ye shall have." Who but a simpleton would believe that he had received in order that he might have? Who indeed? Just one other person -- a man who knows God.

When the bell of assurance has sounded in God's heart and reverberated in my own, all hell may stand in the way and men may fight like demons to block the avenue of blessing, but the answer is assured. In the realm of spiritual forces I have received. It follows therefore as certain as the sunrise that in the realm which men call tangible realities, I shall have. How long will it be before it materializes and takes tangible shape? That is not my business. He has said, ye shall have. I believe Him and with a soul thrilled with heavenly anticipation I can stand and watch Him work things out.

II. Some Tangible Proofs of the Truth Here Taught

When we talk about tangible proof we are conscious, of course, of a twofold difficulty.

a. What is satisfactory proof to one person will raise further questionings in another.

b. The subject of answered prayer so often has to do with things that are so personal and intimate that there is much which cannot be told to the general public, consequently what is told must be largely a repetition of familiar things.

We desire to state, however, that this experience is something far more than a spectacular happening now and again which would glaringly attract an outsider. There are answers to prayer in life's detail; things in themselves trivial, but which are pivots on which mighty issues turn; things which no one else would recognize as answers to prayer because only the person concerned knows what is involved and how they have been prayed out. Some people would call them coincidences, but the spiritual man sees in them the working of God.

We feel constrained to relate the following. They are chosen almost at random from a prayer life reaching over a long period. They are merely samples of what God is constantly doing

for His trusting people, and could be supplemented by every other praying soul. They are told to prove what a prayer answering God will do for those who trust Him.

* * *

Concerning Money -- The God-sent Check

It happened at Tilbury Dock in Essex, England, when as a young minister I had taken up my first charge. Things were going well, at least so it seemed, when suddenly an avalanche came upon us. It was in the form of a labor difficulty, the dock workers went out on strike. Tilbury had no industries; it was dependent entirely upon work in the docks provided by the shipping. The stores in the town existed largely for the dock workers. These men were paid daily as they worked, and as a rule spent their money each day as it came. When the strike occurred the first week told its own sad story. Strike funds were not forthcoming and the people were in sore need. We gave to one and all as they came to the door for help, until at last having only two shillings left and almost a month to go before our next check was due we wondered where to turn for help. Then came a woman, asking for help; she was thinly clad, and wearing an old pair of her husband's shoes -- she had pawned her own clothes and shoes to buy her children bread. Clinging to the shabby old frock she wore were three hungry children. Said she, "These are your Sunday School children; they are hungry; they went to bed last night without supper; they have had nothing to eat today. The young preacher and his wife looked at the pitiful scene and then did the only thing which under the circumstances they could do and keep their religion, they gave the woman the two shillings. But when she had gone, there were we! No money, an empty larder, and almost a month to go. There was only one thing we could do and that was to pray.

How earnestly we did it the reader will imagine. We knew we were in the Divine will. We had not wasted our money; it had gone to feed the hungry. We were not seeking luxuries, we needed food. "Lord," we pleaded, "we are here in Thy will. We need food. Thy Word says that Thou wilt give good things to them that ask Thee. Wilt Thou not just now send us a check!"

At that very moment the lid of the letter box rattled, and without waiting to finish the prayer we were on our feet and running toward the front door. There on the mat was lying a letter containing a check sent by a man who lived many miles away; a total stranger who could not possibly have known of our need. Said he, "I don't know why, but I feel compelled to send you the enclosed check, please use it for what you need most." We did.

Now, you may call that a coincidence. We called it a remarkable answer to prayer.

* * *

Concerning Church Finance -- The Extra Offering

It happened in the city of Manchester at the Brunswick Street Tabernacle.

The Tabernacle, as we had named the Church, was a large Presbyterian edifice which had been vacated by that denomination because of the changing nature of the district. We had no money,

but as the church had been offered to our committee for the amazing sum of two thousand pounds (about ten thousand dollars), we felt the opportunity to be of the Lord and arranged to buy it. We took immediate possession, and paid for the building besides paying our way, in the period of one year.

Then something unexpected happened. Without any previous warning, almost simultaneously the splendid pipe organ refused to play and the boiler governing the heating plant was found to have burst. These things had to be attended to immediately, but we had no money and all our friends had given to the limit. Of course we could have tried some worldly method of raising the money-that is, had we not been committed to a life of trust; but who can go back to money raising by the means of bazaars, billiards, and buns after God has shown him the more excellent way?

We all brought what offering we could, but when we had done our best there remained to be paid one hundred and eighteen pounds (about five hundred and ninety dollars). We called the people to prayer and as the result, it was arranged that a special service should be held at which an altar offering should be taken. That night the entire congregation marched past the Bible as it lay on the Communion Table opened at Mal. 3:10 -- "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse..., and prove me now...

As we marched we sang:

"Saviour, Thy dying love Thou gavest me,
Nor should I ought withhold my Lord, from Thee;
In love my soul would bow,
My heart fulfill its vow
Some offering bring Thee now,
Something for Thee."

There was a peculiar sense of the Master's presence that night, and we had a great testimony meeting while the money was being counted. When the official brethren brought in their report of the amount, how much do you think it was? Exactly one hundred and eighteen pounds. Not a penny more nor a penny less.

Now we may call that a coincidence. We called it a very remarkable answer to prayer.

* * *

Concerning a Bible -- A Love Gift from Himself

It happened in Morley, Yorkshire, a woolen mill town just a few miles from the city of Leeds.

I had been away on Convention work and during that series of meetings my Bible which had been well worn began to fall to pieces and its pages to loosen. Looking at the Bible as I walked up and down the platform of a railroad station as I waited for my train, and realizing its

dilapidated condition, I breathed out a spontaneous prayer. I had not intended so to pray; it seemed to be prayed through me. "O Lord," I said, "please send me a new Bible"; and then I went on to describe exactly the kind of Bible I wanted Him to send. There was no conscious need, it was rather an expression of desire; something in the nature of what would transpire between a child and its parent when one day looking into his face the child would say, "Daddy, I would like to have a bicycle." There is no real need there. It is simply a matter of desire on the part of the child and a loving indulgence on the part of the father.

The request having been made, my mind went to other things. On arriving home, I found a visitor from London, a person whom I had not seen for many months. After some conversation a Bible was produced, the exact edition -- but a far better quality than I had hoped to possess -- that I had asked the Lord for at the railroad station. Frankly, I was amazed and could not conceal my amazement, and looking at my friend I said, "Perhaps, I ought to tell you a story," and I told of the railroad station prayer. My friend replied, "Now perhaps I ought to tell you a story," and this is what I heard:

"On my way through London, as I was passing Saint Paul's Cathedral and came near to Pater-noster Row, the Lord began to talk to me. It was not, of course, an audible voice but that familiar urge inside. It seemed to say, 'Go into Paternoster Row and get a Bible for Brother Jessop.' I tried to shake off the idea and hurried along, but the faster I walked the stronger the urge became, and I could get no relief until I turned back into Paternoster Row. I knew exactly the kind of Bible I ought to get but to be frank with you I was not prepared to buy one of this quality; you will see it is a good one, in fact, it is the best they had in stock.

"I tried to select a cheaper one, but the urge seemed to say, all the time, 'It must be the best.' I said, 'Lord, I do not have money to buy the best,' and the Lord said, 'You are not buying it, I am.' I was instantly reminded that I had a portion of my tithe money with me. I have never used tithe money for presents, it is far too sacred for that; but God held me there until I did it, and when the Bible was bought I felt perfectly free, so here it is from the Lord."

My feelings will be better imagined than described. Turning once again to my friend I requested that the flyleaf be inscribed and autographed, only to receive this reply, "That Bible is not from me, it is from Him. Therefore, I must state it so," and across the front page was written:

* * *

A Love Gift from Himself

Since that day, years have passed, and that precious love gift has been used until it is no longer easy to use it. It has been re-bound and re-backed, and ultimately superseded by others, but among my most precious treasures is that dear old Book which my Lord Himself gave me as a luxury gift fulfilling my desire more than meeting my need.

"How can I help but love Him,
When He loves me so?"

Call that, if you will, a coincidence; it would require a lot of argument and persuasion to make me believe that it was anything rise but a very definite answer to prayer.

* * *

Concerning a Distant Friend -- An Impression of Need

It has been my privilege to enjoy some deep spiritual friendships, and I would rather have friends who are spiritual than friends who are rich. One of these deeply taught saints of God whose close friendship I cherished and whose memory I hold as sacred was Thomas Lamb Scott, a chemist in County Durham.

One day while walking down a Manchester street I felt an urge within my soul; a pull to prayer. The burden was for Brother Scott. I stood just where I was and quietly prayed. I did not know the difficulty, but that was not necessary; God had called me to pray. On reaching home, I sent him a letter stating that at 10 o'clock that morning I was burdened to pray for him and asking if there had been some special need. He replied that at that time he had been stricken with a heart attack, which it seemed he was not going to survive, but suddenly for no apparent reason and to the amazement of those around, he came out of it. Said he, "It was evidently about the time you prayed."

I visited him in his home. He was in bed. On Sunday, I had preached in the Methodist Church of which he was an official and after the evening service we held a prayer meeting in his room. After we had prayed a while he said, "Brother Jessop, I feel strongly that if you would lay your hands on me and pray, God would heal me." I prayed. It was a very simple prayer, asking God at that moment to heal Brother Scott and restore him to us for His service. As I prayed, a sense of certainty began to grip me and these words rang through my soul: "I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears; behold I will add unto thy days fifteen years." Isa. 38:5. Suddenly Brother Scott spoke and said, "Brother Jessop, I have a word from the Lord, 'I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears; behold I will add to thy life fifteen years.'

Fifteen years, brother! God is going to let me live and serve Him another fifteen years." And God did it. The next morning on rising I looked into his bedroom but he was up at his business. Breakfast over, I saw him take two heavy suitcases, one in each hand, and carry them upstairs with the ease of a young man. Only a little while ago God took him Home to heaven, his fifteen years of glorious service having been wonderfully fulfilled.

Another coincidence, says someone. I am simple-minded enough to call it another very evident answer to prayer.

* * *

Concerning an Estranged Husband -- How God Worked upon His Wife

We were holding meetings in Cleethorpes, a town on the east coast of England, in the county of Lincolnshire. On Sunday evening among the seekers was a man who with much earnestness sought the Lord.

The next morning, while walking along the sea front I met him. Said he, "I came out to seek you, I was told I might find you here. I want to talk to you on a matter which to me is of great concern. I am married, but am separated from my wife. Several times we have been separated and every time it has been my fault. At last my wife became desperate and ordered me out of the house telling me never to write her nor to show my face again, I have since written, but my letters have been returned unopened. I can't blame her, she had to put up with a lot. But I am altered now. God has saved me and I feel that the first thing I ought to do is to make things right with my wife. But how can I do it) If I write she will not open the letter, and if I go and tell her that I am a changed man, she will not believe it. She is bitter -- and she has a right to be I am wondering whether it would make any difference if you prayed? I thought perhaps if I wrote her a letter and you prayed, God might work. I assured him that God would answer his prayer just as well as mine, so we prayed together, there in a little hut on the seashore.

That night, as we were singing the opening hymn, in walked my friend, his face aglow, and with him a lady whom I guessed must be his wife, but the thing that puzzled me was the fact that he had told me that she was in Sheffield, a town many miles away, and I knew that it would have been impossible for him to get a letter to her and for her to have arrived since I had last seen him.

As soon as the sermon was finished and the invitation given, they arose, and taking her by the arm he led her to the place of prayer. At the close of the service he brought her over to me, and with a look of satisfaction that I have never been able to forget, he said, "I want to introduce you to my wife."

Then he began his explanation. "When I left you, I went to my room to write my letter, but first I prayed, then started to write, then I tore it up, and then prayed again. Somehow, I could not put the letter together. I did not know what to say. During the afternoon I tried again, and as I was beginning to write, someone knocked at the door, and when I opened it, there stood my wife. She told me that during the morning she had begun to get such a terrible feeling about me that she felt she must come and plead with me once again to do the right thing and come home. Then I showed her the letter I had started to write and I told her how God saved me; and tonight God has saved her too. We are going back to Sheffield in the morning to start life all over again."

Just another coincidence, did you say? He called it answered prayer, and so did I.

* * *

Concerning a Returned Missionary -- How God Healed Her

It was in the fall of 1932 that Dr. Lydia L. Schaum came to the Chicago Evangelistic Institute. She had been a medical missionary in Peking, China, where she had contracted tuberculosis, and had come home, not able to return to the foreign field. She had therefore found it necessary to take up work in her own land, and had come to C. E. I. for further theological study.

She had not been with us many months before the lung trouble began to assert itself, and soon she was compelled to remain in bed. She had good medical care, but did not make progress, until one day, while waiting on the Lord she was led to call for two or three praying people to pray and anoint her in the name of the Lord. Soon she was up at her work again, and today she is a member of our C. E. I. faculty. Her testimony is that God took away that continued sense of fatigue and the difficulty of chest expansion. She submitted herself to a physician for a check-up and was told that the lung scars were completely healed.

Nobody around her claimed to have anything so pretentious as the gift of healing; it was just a simple case of answered prayer. We asked and God did it.

And now, why don't you pray? God is just as willing to honor you. But to reach His Throne you must live in His will. To the wholly yielded soul there is no limit except the capacity of faith.

* * * * *

10 -- THE CHRISTIAN IN THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER

"Lord, teach us to pray." Luke 11:1.

This request, made to our Lord by His disciples, evidently is the outcome of their growing familiarity with Him. When first they followed Him they were mystified. His wonderful fortitude! His matchless words! His marvelous power! These things so perplexed and overawed them that at last, unable longer to conceal their wonder, they cried:

"What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" Matt. 8:27.

Soon, however, they began to realize the secret of it all; He prayed, and prayed in such a manner that as the result of it things happened, and more than that, the manner of His praying was such that it took Him right into the heart of God.

No wonder then that the prayer life of Jesus impressed His disciples. It was a constant reflection upon the leanness of their own lives. They said their prayers, but He prayed. About His praying there was a mysterious something to which, hitherto, they had been strangers. It was humble, and yet familiar. It was laborious, and yet in Spirit He soared and gripped the very Throne of God. He did not need to be constantly stirred; He seized every opportunity, praying while others slept.

There is little doubt that His disciples discussed Him, and comparing themselves with Him, confessed their conscious lack and acknowledged their sense of shame, until ultimately they decided to approach Him; hence the request in the words of our text.

Strange as it may seem, this text is quite often quoted incorrectly. Who has not heard somebody quote it, "Lord, teach us how to pray."

Now that how is doubtless implied, but it is not inserted, hence the suggestion here may be stated as twofold:

1. Concerning the heart of prayer. We must first be taught to pray.
2. Concerning the art of prayer. We must further be taught how to pray.

1. Concerning the Heart of Prayer.

We must be taught to pray.

There is a sense, of course, in which all Christians pray; often from a sense of duty as did the disciples previous to this request.

There are few tears, there is little sweat, no soul travail, and never a protracted period alone with God. Soarings of soul and spiritual burdens are things almost unknown.

True prayer is not erratic and spasmodic. It is a ministry to which the soul must give itself, and often at personal cost. The great spiritual giants of every age have been men who have learned to pray. Early in the history of the Church this was realized. "It is not reason," declared the Apostolic group, "that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables... we will give ourselves continually to prayer..." Acts 6:2-4.

Where would the great missionary warriors have been but for their power and authority in prayer?

Think also of George Mueller who housed and fed orphans by the thousand, without asking the world for a penny, just because he had learned to pray.

Today, the Lord is seeking for souls whom He can teach to pray. There is only one way for Him to teach them; He must create within them a sense of need, and then increasingly deepen it until there is evidence of response.

But how is this conscious prayer need to be created? Not all souls respond to the same method. Some are easily drawn; others may need to be driven. God seems to employ both these methods in His attempt to teach men to pray, wooing wherever they will respond, but whipping where they resist; exercising the beauty of Divine charm, but where needs be following it with the severity of Divine chastisement. Where men refuse to be attracted they are oftentimes afflicted. He longs to teach them to pray.

1. Our Lord teaches men to pray by the charm, the wooing, the drawing power of Divine attraction.

And who has not been conscious of this? It is the office of the Holy Spirit to create the prayer desire; to put a Godward tug within the soul. The soul is drawn out Godward. The wonders of the prayer life are displayed and its possibilities are revealed. The soul is made to see what it really could possess if only it would give itself to this ministry. Is it not strange that despite the conscious Godward tug so few respond?

2. Our Lord teaches men to pray by the chastisement, the whipping, the driving force of Divine affliction.

Sadly enough there are natures -- and perhaps in measure it may be true of us all -- where the prayer life is only awakened along the avenues of pain. Sometimes that pain is physical and sometimes mental, but it so often requires the strain of things to drive us into God.

Some people will never cry except they are under the lash; hence the psalmist writes:

"Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy Word ... It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." Psalm 119: 67, 71.

Walking along the street of a coastal town, I was overtaken by a man, a perfect stranger, with whom I fell into a spiritual conversation. It soon transpired that he was not without knowledge of sacred things and at that very period had entered upon a new experience in the life of prayer.

"But, brother," said he, "it has cost me much to get there; and had I only had sense enough to heed the promptings, the road need not have been so severe. I had a splendid business and a lovely wife. I adored my wife, and immersed myself in my business for her sake, hoping, as soon as I had made enough money, to be able to retire, and then it would be different. It seemed to me that I did not have the time to pray. How could I spend time praying when the pressure of business was so heavy. It was not long before even Sunday was too important to be set aside, I needed it for work on my books at the office. But suddenly there came a crash. In a totally unexpected manner I became bankrupt overnight. On hearing the news my precious wife collapsed and died of heart failure. There I stood among the ashes, a heartbroken man, and there I began again to pray."

Better start to pray among the ashes than not to pray at all; but there are many among us today concerning whom it may be said, they will never reach a close prayer relationship until driven to cry to God from among the ashes.

Dear chastened heart, your Lord loves you far too well to allow you to dry up in your spiritual life without a desperate effort to pull you into His heart. He is determined, if it is at all possible to secure your cooperation, to teach you to pray.

II. Concerning the Art of Prayer.

We must be taught how to pray.

The soul having been brought to the place where it wants to pray, something further now becomes necessary. The prayer force now awakened needs to be directed, therefore the great Master Teacher must instruct us as to the how of praying.

The what can only be governed by the need of the moment as we remain under the control of the Holy Spirit, for it is written: "We know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the

Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us... and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Rom. 8:26-27.

The how might be called the technique of praying; the art of using so mighty a weapon at the Throne of Grace.

In response to the disciples' request the Master gives them a model prayer which He links with a prayer parable. The prayer itself has been the ground of much controversy. We have learned to call it "The Lord's Prayer." Some have insisted that it should be designated "The Prayer which the Lord taught His Disciples." It is not the Lord's Prayer in that it is a prayer which He never prayed and in which He never joined. He said, "When ye pray, say..."

Then too, there is much difference of opinion as to whether the present day believer should actually use this prayer at all. It is contended by some that it was never meant for actual use in constant repetition, but rather as a prayer guide.

These things every believer must settle for himself, but of one thing we are certain, and it is this, the prayer which Jesus gave to His disciples in response to their request, and the parable which follows it, are the embodiment of the great spiritual principles by which all true prayer must be guided.

1. The basis of our praying must be conscious spiritual relationship. verses 2, 13.

"Say, Our Father." His Fatherhood. Our Sonship. The Brotherhood of those who are sons.

Not everybody can pray this prayer. Only a soul consciously related to Him can look into His face and say "Father."

2. The purpose in our praying must be the Divine glory. verse 2.

Our concern must be threefold: a. The hallowing of His name. b. The coming of His Kingdom. c. The doing of His will.

Elsewhere Jesus called it possessing the eye that is single and thus possessing a body that is full of light.

This is to be the governing motive. We must pray with a heart solely set on the glory of God.

3. The attitude in our praying must be that of humble dependence, verse 3.

It is to Him we look for our daily supplies. Daily bread here is more than merely meals as the time comes around. It is the Divine hand supplying our need. And why not every need? There is a prayer spirit which, moment by moment, appropriates supplies. We must learn to draw upon Divine abundance. Paul said, "My God shall supply all..." Phil. 4:19.

4. The thought characterizing our praying must be that of our own human weakness which will bring consideration for the weakness of others. verse 4.

We ourselves have needed forgiveness, and even now we are not placed beyond the possibility of having to seek it again. We cannot and dare not withhold our forgiveness from our fellows.

To tell God in prayer, "We also forgive everyone that is indebted to us," and at the same time to cherish an unforgiving spirit, would be to lie while at the Throne of Grace.

Then too, the only measure of forgiveness for which we are encouraged to pray for ourselves is that which we are to tell God we are extending to others.

To cherish an unforgiving spirit in the light of the prayer taught us by our Lord is to assume the horrible position of liar and hypocrite in the holiest exercise in which a human soul can engage.

5. The spirit of our prayer must be that of persistency and intensity. verses 5-10.

In the story of the friend who came at midnight, the Master painted a vivid picture of the reward of importunity, but let us beware lest in emphasizing this we inadvertently convey the impression that God is reluctant to give, and that we, like the midnight caller, must overcome that reluctance by continually hammering and calling until we have prevailed upon Him to do something contrary to His own desires.

Praying in the Holy Ghost is not persuading a grudging God against His will and pulling out of Him something He would rather not give. Any delay in answered prayer has other reasons with which elsewhere we hope to deal.

The thought behind this Friend at Midnight parable seems to be that of contrast rather than of correspondence. If an unwilling and reluctant person would ultimately respond simply to relieve himself of a nuisance, how much more will an ever willing God meet the need of a persistent soul.

Therefore ask -- and keep on asking; seek -- and keep on seeking; knock -- and keep on knocking. In the will of God you cannot be denied.

Are you in the School of Prayer? Does the Master Teacher find in you an apt pupil?

* * * * *

11 -- THE FAITH THAT WITHERS IT AT THE ROOTS

"And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry; and seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon and when he came to it he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever. And his disciples heard it.

"And when even was come, he went out of the city. And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, calling to remembrance, saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily, I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

"Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." Mark 11:12-14, 19-26.

This is one incident in our Lord's life on which critical minds have ravenously fed. They have come to it as vultures to carrion. Finding in it what they have deemed to be a flaw in His holiness they have gloated over it to their own damnation. Here, they charge, Jesus manifested a fit of temper. He wanted figs, but found none, and in His disappointment He stood and cursed the tree, then He left it to wither.

A divinely illuminated mind, however, sees farther than this. Christ's real concern was not for figs but for His disciples. Some truths dawn gradually on the soul as they are quietly taught, while others are so staggering and radical that they are only apprehended as the soul is shocked into realization by a practical exhibition. An event in personal experience will illustrate this.

We were conducting meetings in Battersea, London, and at the close of the service were leaving the Tabernacle with Mr. David Thomas, a London dry goods merchant, who was also the founder of the Movement in which we were working. Suddenly his son, panting and breathless, rushed up the steps, saying, "Father, the store is on fire." The attitude of Mr. Thomas amazed me. Instead of becoming excited as most people would, he quietly asked, "Are the firemen at work?" On being assured that they were, he put his hand on my shoulder, saying, "Let us pray about this." The prayer he prayed was as simple as anything I have ever heard. Standing there on the steps leading to the street he said, "Lord, it is not my store, it is Thine. Put Thy hand upon that fire and do it now, for Jesus' sake." Then quietly he said, "Now let us go to supper." "But, sir," half a dozen voices cried, "what about the fire?" To which he replied, "Didn't we commit it to the Lord? If we were to go, what more could we do? He will take care of it."

We went to his home for supper and the fire was not mentioned again until halfway through the meal his son came in and Mr. Thomas inquired, "Well, what happened?... Happened?" replied the young man, "It seemed as though a miracle happened. When I left the store to come to you it looked as though nothing could save it from being completely burned out, but when I returned, in some mysterious manner the flames had been arrested. The firemen themselves cannot understand it. It looks like an act of God." I shall ever praise God for that definite fact of faith on exhibition.

That is exactly what Jesus is doing here. Of set purpose, He is putting on exhibition a truth He wants to drive home. He is seeking to awaken the disciples to a realization of the possibilities within the sphere in which they are now learning to walk.

"In the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots." He knew they would see it. "And Peter, calling to remembrance, saith unto him, Master, behold the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away." That was the reaction He sought. It was this point to which He had been leading, and was now able to proceed from the visible to the verbal, disclosing one of the deep secrets of the soul's life in God.

Here two thoughts claim attention:

1. The enormous possibilities of a soul in vital union with God.
2. The revealed secret of this power as the soul consistently walks with God.

1. The Possibilities

Too often men fail to realize that the experience of Full Salvation has two distinct aspects:

- a. That of a full deliverance -- which is distinctly negative.
- b. That of bestowed inheritance -- which is directly positive.

"But now being made free from sin," -- "That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Rom. 6:22; Eph. 3:19.

Far too many live on the thought of the negative side alone; failing to realize that the purity bestowed is the foundation on which much more was meant to rest. It was never meant to be an end in itself, but rather a standing ground for faith; the road on which the warrior saint must fight, conquer, and make progress. At our disposal are spiritual forces, divine laws, which, if recognized and obeyed, will bring us into a realm of power and victory utterly beyond our dreams.

II. We are an, are, of course, that there have been fanatical applications of this truth.

If the devil cannot make us lose the love-glow he will do his utmost to loose upon us the wild-fire.

2. Then, the assertions of the text are all the more arresting, in view of the Modern Cults around us.

These make for themselves some extraordinary claims, and we are bound to admit that in some cases they produce some astonishing results. These need not be named, they are well-known to us all. It would be idle to say that they do not have results to show. The charge that some of them are fakes does not account for all. If this were so, they would quickly lose their hold upon their adherents, but rather than this, they multiply. Moreover, our denunciation of their results does not help us. We sometimes wonder whether in some cases that very denunciation might be a matter of "sour grapes"?

Our approach to this problem must be of a very different character, and in making it there is likely to come a deep sense of humiliation so far as we, as God's people are concerned. The conclusion to which we are forced is threefold:

(1) Many of the claims which these errorists make are in no way beyond what is promised to and practiced by believers in Jesus in the New Testament Scriptures.

(2) The basis of their procedure however, is entirely different from that so clearly set forth in those Scriptures.

a. The divine inspiration of the Bible as the full and final revelation to man is not recognized by them.

Should a simple-minded believer insist that the Bible is inspired, these people would smile indulgently and say: "Why certainly it is inspired, along with all the other great religious books; also all the wonderful new light of modern teaching is part of the one great revelation of God."

b. The essential deity of Jesus as the Christ, and the value of His atoning death as the only hope for the salvation of a ruined race is not so regarded by them.

Say they, "Of course, He was divine, so are we all; it is only a matter of degree. He was one of the world's great saviors, as was Moses, Mohammed, Buddha, Saint Germaine and the rest. He died; but so did they all. His death was a great example of devotion and willingness to suffer for the cause of truth."

These people use the Bible -- with other books "just as good." They eulogize Jesus -- with other teachers, "just as divine." They insist, "What Jesus and His disciples did, we may do," and point to the Bible as their authority.

The trouble, meanwhile, is this: many of God's professedly orthodox people are not measuring up to Bible standards of power, by reason of which many young believers are sorely perplexed.

3. To all this, the answer is evident.

The Church has gone to sleep, and while she has slept, the devil has stolen the very promises of God which are the Church's exclusive possession, and with a subtle psychic energy as a counterfeit for spiritual power has applied their value to an unregenerate world.

Thus, today, the Church is meeting the challenge of the centuries, and the all important question is, can she maintain her superiority?

This is not the first time that such a challenge has been hurled. The magicians of Egypt faced Moses and Aaron in the same insolent manner. When Aaron cast down his rod before

Pharaoh and it became a serpent, the magicians immediately cast down their rods and the same thing occurred. In the case of these old-time warriors, however, there was this difference. The rod that was Aaron's swallowed up the rods of the imitators and left them hopelessly defeated. Exodus 7:10-12.

Here, then, we are face to face with the question of the divinely endynamited life and surrounding Satanic imitations. Everything now depends upon our manifested superiority. In view of all this, what does the fig tree exhibition with its accompanying explanation mean to us today? Does it not mean that the soul in vital union with God, possessed of the divine life, and utterly abandoned to the divine will, may expect to exercise a divinely given authority, and by a divinely authorized word of command may wither opposing spiritual forces which stand in the way of the accomplishment of the will of God?

II. The Secret

"Master," said Peter, "behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away." That was exactly what Jesus was waiting for -- the exclamation of surprise; and immediately He hastened to impart the secret, speaking first of all in general terms and then going on to more detailed instruction.

1. By Way of General Direction.

"And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God."

A more literal translation seems to be, "Have the faith of God." Here, evidently, is something not only exercised toward God, but inwrought by Him. We might well call it an inwrought disposition of faith. It is something to be both claimed and cultivated -- a faith disposition; a faith habit; a faith outlook. This all conquering faith quality is not something which may be miraculously generated by a doubting heart in crisis time; it is the priceless possession of the believing soul who under all circumstances rests in God and steadfastly refuses to doubt Him.

True faith is not emotional, it is volitional. The will must go into our believing.

True faith is creative. It does not take too much stock of what it sees, but rather sets itself, in union with its risen Lord, to bring into being what God has revealed shall come to pass.

True faith refuses to be discouraged. It has never been taught to retreat. It thrives in storms and difficulties saying, as it stands:

"I will not doubt, though all my ships at sea
Come drifting home with broken masts and sails;
I will believe the Hand that never fails
From seeming evil worketh good for me.
And though I weep because those sails are tattered,
Still will I cry, while my best hopes are shattered, I trust in Thee."

2. By Way of Detailed Instruction.

"For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore, I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, forgive if ye have ought against any; that your Father which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." Ver. 23-25.

It will be noted that here our Lord begins at the circumference with what the disciples see, and works His way backward to the center. It is there that we must start.

(1) Within the praying spirit, there must be an entire absence of whatever would hinder the divine working.

"When ye stand praying, forgive if ye have ought against any." ver. 25.

Old grudges, the memory of past hurts, whatever would come between the soul and another must be renounced, put away; forgiven; you cannot pray the prayer of faith with a rankle in your soul.

(2) It is out of this spirit of pure love that there will be born an intensity of desire, which will express itself in prevailing prayer.

"Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire... " ver. 24.

The quality of the desire is governed by the condition of the heart in which it is born. A heart where old feuds rankle is not capable of giving birth to pure desires; these offsprings will partake of the nature of the parent. Now, however, the source has been made clean and that which springs up in it will be such as can be used as prayer material to present to a holy God.

(3) The nature of that prayer will be such as to obtain a faith-witness as to having received.

"Therefore, I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray believe that ye have received them... " ver. 24.

There is a faith contact in the spiritual realm which lays hold of that for which we seek. In that moment it becomes ours. "We have received." There has been a spiritual appropriation which has linked that which we have desired with our very soul. The moment of its delivery rests with Him Who knowing all things has timed it for our good and His glory, but an answer to prayer in God's hand is far more secure than in our own, and He has said, "Ye shall have."

(4) There now must come an unfaltering challenge to whatever would stand in the way.

"Say unto this mountain be removed." Ver. 23.

The attitude now changes from supplication to that of authority. First you spoke to God about your mountain, asking that He would deal with your difficulty. Now you talk to your difficulty and tell it to go.

Challenge Your Mountain.

It will be noted in the object lesson that the next day the fig tree was seen to have withered from the roots. Root withering is not always immediately manifest, but it is none the less real. Say to your mountain, GO. Dare you do it?

To go straight to your mountain would be unwarranted presumption. Neither mountains nor fig trees will show any tendency to obey you. Difficulties will not move simply because you tell them to go. But if you learn to approach them via the Throne and in the authority of a Divine mandate, you must prevail.

"He shall have whatsoever he saith!"

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12 -- THE REFLEX OF THE MOUNTAIN GLORY IN THE DETAIL OF THE COMMONPLACE

"And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount." Ex. 25:40.

"For see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." Heb. 8:5.

It is immediately evident that these two Scriptures are identical, although between them there is a time distance of more than fifteen hundred years.

The first passage is the Divine caution to Moses concerning the elaborate detail of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. Alone with God in mountain top communion, he had received instructions concerning its plans and measurements with a minuteness which was almost embarrassing. So explicit were they that they could quite easily be reproduced today.

The second passage is the New Testament annotation and application. The thought here urged is that all Moses was commanded to make was not original in its creation, but a copy, a shadow, a reflex of something in heaven itself. The things faded because they were shadows, but for us the substance has come; the reality has appeared. Christ and His Gospel in all its issues and implications are the true fulfillment of what God revealed to Moses while alone in the Mount.

We do no violence to these Scriptures therefore when we use them concerning the inner spiritual experience of the believing soul and the consequent reaction upon daily living. In this connection three thoughts here suggest themselves.

1. Every believing soul has its own spiritual Mount.

There, the things of God are clearly seen.

2. That Mount has its own distinctive pattern. This is there made known to the communing soul.

3. Such revelation brings corresponding requirements.

These become obligations which we cannot shirk. They are altogether our own.

Some people do not have any Mount. Consequently they are never conscious of a revealed pattern. They muddle through as best they know how, but they do not know the best. Our human best is very second rate, however good it may be. These, therefore, work out the things in life and service which are the product of their own ideas, and are far below anything which has been Divinely revealed in the Mount.

1. The Experience of the Mount

That distinctive attitude which comprehends the things of God.

It will be noted that we have designated it an attitude, and that because the experience of which we here speak does not have to do with geographical location but with spiritual condition. Here, attitude determines altitude.

I. There are spiritual marshlands in which some souls perpetually dwell.

There, visibility is limited and pestilences breed. A Biblical example of this would be the Corinthian Church; saved people, but low level Christians. The epistle written to them might be termed the Epistle of the Marshlands.

In it the apostle Paul declared: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men?" I Cor. 3:1-3.

Studying the epistle, two things will be noted among them;

(1) Poor visibility.

They could not see far and they could not see straight. They were both shortsighted and cross-eyed in their souls.

(2) Pestilence.

This was not far to seek at Corinth as some of the chapters of the first epistle will show. You who are Bible students let your minds go back over those chapters, and what do you find? Chapter three -- Envy, factions, strife. Chapter five -- - Looseness in moral relationships. Chapter six -- Threatened legal actions. Chapter twelve to fourteen -- Gross spiritual extravagances.

What was their trouble? They lived too low down.

2. There are spiritual uplands in which other souls constantly delight.

There, the atmosphere is wholesome and rare, and the vision clear.

A Biblical example of this would be the Ephesian Church. The epistle written to these people might well be termed the Epistle of the Uplands. There, the spiritual altitudes are enjoyed, and the life thus lived is located as being "In the heavenly places in Christ." The five references to this, Ch. 1:3; 1:20; 2:6; 3:10, 6:12, are worthy of careful study. Here, in the altitudes, comes ability to comprehend. Who would not be attracted by passages such as these:

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love; may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." Eph. 3:17-19.

Do you know anything of life in the uplands? Moses did. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up unto Me into the Mount, and be there; and I will give thee... that thou mayest teach them." Ex. 24:12.

Paul did. On one occasion the communion became so ratified in its character that he declared himself to have been caught up into the third heaven, into paradise, and to have heard unspeakable words, not lawful to utter. II Cor. 12:1-4.

Hence, in his poem Saint Paul, F. W. H. Myers has made the apostle speak thus: "Oh, could I tell, ye surely would believe it! Oh, could I only say what I have seen! How shall I tell, or how can ye receive it, How, till He bringeth you where I have been?"

I am not arguing here for a duplication of Pauline ecstasies and visions, these things do not concern me. I am pleading, however, for altitudes which become altitudes in the Holy Ghost where God can reveal Himself to the soul. Such an experience is beyond any crisis act in which special blessing is claimed; it is an attitude of soul communion, attuned to the Blesser.

II. The Pattern Which Is Seen in the Mount

We mean that peculiar spiritual consciousness which possesses the soul while there communing with God.

There are Divine unfoldings, the soul entering into the eternal solitudes where earth things fade and Divine life patterns become clear.

God has a pattern for your life, and this He wants to show you. Concerning it, three things may be noticed.

1. It is exhibited in a Person. God's Son.

When God would show a soul what He wants it to be, He puts His Son on view.

He did it before the world for thirty-three years.

"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14.

"We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. 4:15.

He did it before a chosen few at the Transfiguration. Matt. 17.

There, on a mountain apart from the rest, while in the attitude of prayer, the glory shone.

He does this very thing every time a sincere soul will seek His face in communion on the Mount.

The pattern for your life and mine is seen in the life and character of the Lord Jesus. To gaze on Him is to see God's ideal for our lives.

2. It is embodied in a Principle. God's will.

"That good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Rom. 12:1, 2.

The devout life is not a blind trying; it is an intelligent reproducing of a pattern seen, and a plan made known.

God's will for your life! That is the thing that matters. He will communicate it to you in the Mount. You need not go through life a blind blunderer. God will make you an intelligent co-worker in life production, with Himself.

3. It is imparted by a Power. God's Spirit.

"It is God that worketh in you..." Phil. 2:12-13.

It would be impossible to spend time in the Mount without two things happening. There, I get a consciousness of what I ought to be, and there I receive a confidence as to what God can make me. The Holy Ghost may come upon me. I may be Divinely possessed. The anointing of God

may be upon me. I may receive an unction from the Holy One. God shows me all that He is prepared to make me as I commune with Him in the Mount.

III. The Obligation Resulting from the Experience of the Mount

There is a resultant spiritual requirement which comes by reason of received revelation, for God in no case makes us recipients of spiritual light for personal pleasure alone.

All mountain light must be translated into commonplace life. What is visualized in mountain communion must be actualized on life's ordinary levels and that in the fullest measure received.

We have already suggested that the most amazing thing about the Tabernacle is the revelation concerning detail, and the insistence that it be scrupulously observed. That is exactly what God demands of you; and that is exactly of what life is made up detail, one small thing after another. There are few great occasions but many ordinary days, and those are the real test of character after all.

"As he which hath called you is holy so be ye holy in all manner of living." I Pet. 1:15.

Holy in all manner of living; making all things according to the Divine pattern of the Mount of Prayer. Carrying it down to the kitchen, the counter, the factory and the street.

This life of prayer is by no means the detached thing that some would assume. It is rather the dominating factor by which all else is governed. It is useless to talk about our acquaintance with the Mount unless we are known as men and women of practical piety on the plane below.

"For see, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."

* * * * *

THE END

Intercessory Prayer: How Prayer Really Works. Author Dutch Sheets. The Ministry of Intercessory Prayer. Author Andrew Murray. Principles of Revival.Â In prevailing prayer you rise to your full potential as created in the image of God and as exalted to the heavenlies to share with Christ His intercessory throne (Eph. 1:20â€21; 2:6). Think of it: The very God who raised up Jesus to heaven after His death and resurrection, placing Jesus at His right hand on the throne of the universe, has also raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms (Eph.