Prayer Availeth Much

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FOREWORD

The brief messages on prayer contained in this little book have been written for the purpose of stimulating a greater interest in the importance of praying without ceasing.

I am convinced that the people of God have not explored the boundless possibilities of prayer.

We evidently believe that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, but we are often aware of the fact that very little has been accomplished by our own prayers.

It has not been possible to present a complete study of the subject of prayer revealed in the Holy Scriptures. For one to undertake such a task would be like an attempt to measure eternity by a span.

It is my sincere desire to encourage God's people to pray without ceasing. When once they understand the fundamental principles of prayer, they will not find it difficult to accomplish some amazing results through effectual fervent intercession.

Your Servant in Christ Jesus,

T. M. ANDERSON

CHAPTER 1

THE FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." — Phil. 4:6

This timely exhortation stresses the fact that God's people should consult with Him in every matter pertaining to life. Unless they see the imperative necessity of prayer, and give it an important place in daily life, they cannot expect to be maintained by the ample resources of a generous Saviour. It is apparent that we cannot obtain the things essential to life unless we make everything pertaining to life a matter of earnest prayer. It is impossible to live a consistent Christian life in the sight of God by praying occasionally. Praying intermittently is certainly not praying incessantly and importunately. Such careless praying is not consistent with the exhortation to pray without ceasing.

Persons praying spasmodically are like men that gorge themselves with food and drink on special occasions and starve themselves between the feasts. We do not live from feast to famine when we enter into a partnership with Christ in prayer. We are not disturbed by doubts and defeats when we make everything a matter of earnest prayer. We enjoy an un- broken fellowship with Christ when we make our requests known unto Him in daily prayer. He imparts to us the necessary strength to cope with the temptations and trials incident to life in this benighted world when everything relating to life is made known unto Him in prayer. When the inspired Apostle said, ". . . Let your requests be made known unto God," he was obviously emphasizing the importance of revealing to the Lord everything required to sustain us in life. We find it necessary to reveal both our spiritual and our temporal needs unto Him in prayer.

Nothing pertaining to our life in this world is unimportant in the sight of God. He is inter- ested in everything that concerns us in life.

The Lord would have us understand that we obtain rest of soul when we enter into the fel- lowship of prayer with Him. When Paul said, "Be careful for nothing . . . ," he revealed the true rest of soul to be found in the covenant of prayer. He is urging us to lay aside our troublesome cares and anxieties lest they hinder us in making our requests known unto the Lord. Paul was saying in substance, "Be not anxiously solicitous; do not give place to trouble, no matter what occurs; for anxiety cannot change the condition of things from bad to good, but will certainly injure your soul if you give place to it." It is certainly true that we must cast our burdens and earthly concerns upon the Lord before we can make our requests known unto Him by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving.

Perhaps my personal testimony will enable others to perceive the value of entering into the fellowship of prayer with Christ, for I found true rest of soul and quietness of heart when I entered into the partnership of prayer with Him. "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

I was teaching in the department of religious education in Asbury College when I entered into the covenant of prayer with Christ. It had been my purpose for several months to prepare some written messages on the Epistle to the Hebrews. In order to have time to devote to this work it was necessary for

me to arise early in the morning and do the writing before the hour I was scheduled to meet my classes. I began this work during the first week of 1950.

I was suddenly awakened about midnight on January sixth. Knowing that I had a full day of work before me, I felt it necessary to sleep a few hours lest I be too weary in mind and body to do the writing and teaching. At that moment the Saviour spoke to me. He asked me if I were willing to sacrifice some sleep in order to give Him an opportunity to speak with me in the quiet hours of the morning. He told me that it was necessary to deny myself of sleep in order to prevail in prayer. I realized for the first time that denying myself of sleep was a form of fasting. For five hours I waited before the Lord in sacred worship and holy communion. My soul was greatly revived, and I felt refreshed in mind and rested in body.
After this remarkable manifestation of the Saviour I was constrained to examine my prayer life. I was impressed to consider the time spent in prayer during the average day. I was humbled before the Lord when I discovered how little time had been given to Him in prayer and meditation. It had been my daily practice from the day I was saved to spend some time in prayer morning and evening. I had established the family altar in my home. I had spent time in secret prayer during the years of my ministry. I had never knowingly overlooked the importance of prayer. I am now aware that I had never discovered the pos- sibilities in prayer like they were revealed to me when I waited five delightful hours before the Saviour that memorable morning.

When I entered into the fellowship of prayer with Christ, I solemnly promised Him that I would not allow my plans and pursuits of daily life to infringe on my time to pray. I vowed to take sufficient time to commune with Him in prayer no matter what duties of the day demanded my attention. When I made this covenant with Christ I emptied myself of earthly possessions and concerns. I placed my ministry, my teaching, my writings, my vocation, my travels, and my home in a heap before the Lord. I separated myself from these interests as completely as I ever expect to be separated from them in death. I deliberately put these earthly concerns in a place of secondary importance in my life. I counted all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of the fellowship with Christ in prayer. I fully realized that Christ was speaking to me when He said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.” I was reminded of how much I had lost through the years because I had not known the value of fellowship with Christ in prayer.

When I entered the fellowship of prayer with the Lord my soul was immediately relieved of the burdens and cares of life. I found the place of His rest in the covenant of prayer. My duties are many, and my body is often weary from my labors in the ministry, but my spirit knows no weariness for my soul dwells at ease in the haven of perfect peace. There were times in the past when the responsibilities of the ministry were almost more than my mind and body could endure. The many concerns of preaching made me restless in the night and disturbed during the day. It is clear to me now that I had not discovered the secret of resting in the Lord. I was pushing and pulling in my own strength. I was not trusting the Spirit to bring things to pass.

I have the same burdens and cares of the ministry today, but I have discovered how to cast my cares upon the Lord in the fellowship of prayer. The yoke of the Meek and Lowly Christ is easy, and His burden is light. He has given me rest of soul and quietness of spirit in the covenant of daily prayer. It is now my daily practice to keep the morning watch with the Saviour.

“My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and look up.” — Psa. 5:3.

The hours between midnight and six o’clock in the morning are the most peaceful. The duties and distractions of the preceding day have ended, and the activities of the new day have not begun.

It is apparent that Jesus made it a practice of His life to pray in the quiet hours of the morning. It is written, “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.

The duties of the coming day demanded much from the Saviour. The virtue that went out of Him to heal the hearts and hurts of the people was replenished in the place of prayer. His physical strength was constantly renewed through His ceaseless prayers. Before the dawn of the busy day our Lord went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. We are not told where He found this peaceful place to pray. He may have found a place of sacred seclusion to pray beneath the overshadowing boughs of a towering tree where nature re- mained speechless with reverence and the morning star looked down in solemn contemplation. The Lord may have longed to pour out His sinless soul with strong crying and tears in some voiceless valley filled with holy hush. It could be that He sought a solitary place among the friendly hills where the silent shadows of the departing night lingered until hastened into hiding by the light of the approaching dawn. Perhaps He found rest for His burdened heart in a sequestered place in a lonely desert carpeted with shifting sands where the sighing winds ceased to whisper while He prayed.

The example of our Lord enables us to perceive the value of unburdening our hearts in the quiet hours of the morning. It is difficult to pray when the mind is filled with the confusion and rush of the day. We can pray in the quietness of the home while the day is young if we are willing to sacrifice some sleep. The Saviour admonished us to enter into the closet and shut the door. We must shut the door of our mind and exclude the cares and burdens of the day in order to prevail with God in the secret place of prayer.

One will be astonished at the results obtained in the quiet place of prayer. I have seen the Lord work wonders in answer to prayer offered before Him in the early hours of the morning. I have known Him to heal people in homes and hospitals hundreds of miles from the place where I was praying.

CHAPTER 2

OUR REQUESTS MADE KNOWN UNTO GOD

". . . Let your requests be made known unto God." — Phil. 4:6.

Paul, the pattern saint, would have us see the value of revealing our needs to God in prayer. We must not presume that the things required to sustain life will be granted without making our requests known unto God. Our requirements on earth and God's resources in heaven are meant for each other. If we ask, we shall receive. When we fail to ask, we fail to receive. The Word declares, "Ye have not, because ye ask not." There would be no point in exhorting Christians to make their requests known unto God unless He had made a sufficient provision to supply all their need. The apostle revealed the abundant riches of God when he said . . .

"My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."— Phil. 4:19

This assuring promise discloses the resources God made available to His people in answer to prayer. In the clear light of this certified promise they have no justifiable excuse for spir- itual poverty.

We can think of God's promise to be a certified check made payable to us the moment we present it for payment. No matter what gracious spiritual and temporal blessings the promise contains, we cannot receive them until we make our requests known unto God in prayer. It is possible to have an all sufficiency in all things by claiming the riches of God made available to us by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. When Paul said, "My God shall supply all your need," he is saying, "Christ is all you need." We are enriched in all things pertaining to life in time and in eternity when we possess Him. Christ is all we ever need to cope with the difficulties and dangers confronting us in the path leading to the Father's house of many mansions.

The temporal blessings received from the Lord are not sufficient to supply all our need in this world. Jesus stated this fact when He said,
". . . A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."— Luke 12:14

The fertile fields cannot produce true riches. A man is truly rich toward God when he pos- sesses the resources of Christ contained in His certified promise to supply all our need. When Paul said, "My God . . ." he disclosed the amazing fact that a man can possess God. It is written in the covenant of grace, ". . . I will be their God, and they shall be my people." — 2 Cor. 6:16.

The paramount purpose of Christ is achieved the moment He gives Himself to us in the covenant of God. The Scriptures reveal that the Saviour has given everything to redeem us, and provided everything to supply us, and wills to give all that He is in His divine nature to satisfy us. If a man has not received the indwelling Christ in answer to prayer, he has failed to obtain the grand objective of all praying.

We do not find it difficult to make our requests known unto God when we are fully aware of His

presence. Paul stated this fact when he said, ". . . The Lord is at hand." — Phil. 4:5

This amazing revelation is evidently an essential part of the admonition to make our requests known unto God. The inspired apostle focused attention on a great truth when he said, ". . . The Lord is at hand." He is saying in substance, "The Lord is handy. The Lord stands ready to give aid and comfort to His praying people." No matter how we interpret the statement, ". . . The Lord is at hand," we are fully aware of His nearness when we make our requests known unto Him. Jesus confirmed this truth when He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." He evidently knew that we had the mental and moral capacity to sense His presence at all times and in all places on earth. If we cannot know that He is at hand when we pray, then His promise has no place of value in our profession of faith.

To offer a prayer without realizing the nearness of the Lord would be like speaking mean- ingless words into empty space. How could we know that our requests had been made known unto God unless He responded by assuring us that our petitions had been heard? I am per- suaded that it is not possible to pray with confidence toward the Lord without being aware of His presence. The inspired apostle said, ". . . This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing 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." — 1 John 5:14, 15

John is saying in substance, "If you know that God hears you, then you know you have the answer." It is apparent that we must first know that He hears us before we know that we have the answer. Knowing that God hears us when we pray is something vastly more than a beautiful theory about prayer. Spiritual perception in prayer is the norm of spiritual life. We rejoice in prayer when we perceive that the Lord is at hand. Paul said, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, rejoice." The realization that the Lord is near is the cause of constant praise.

If His abiding presence with us in this troubled world is not the only source of lasting joys, then let us hope that someone will come to guide our footsteps toward the place of endless happiness. God's Word reveals that the Lord will direct our weary feet into the path of praise.

"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." — Psa. 16:11.

It is apparently true that the measure of our joy is always in proportion to the measure of our praying. One must pray without ceasing in order to have joy unspeakable and full of glory. God's praying people discover that the joy of the Lord is their strength, and His abiding presence is their shield. Perhaps Paul was in prison when he uttered the immortal words of praise. The dark and dingy prison was not so carefully guarded, and its rigid bars so firmly fixed that the Lord was prevented from entering its dismal confines to give comfort and courage to His suffering servant.

If Paul had been asked what he had found in the dank cell to cause him to sound such a note of praise, he would have said, ". . . The Lord is at hand." His consoling nearness caused the prisoner to praise, and His assuring presence inspired the suffering saint to sing. The dreary confines of a prison cannot stifle the songs of the soul girded with the gladness of God. The righteous may be incarcerated in dungeons, and the redeemed fastened in the stocks, but their achieving faith is not fettered, and their supplications are not shackled. From the inner cell of the common jail the singing servants of God shook the foundations

of the earth, and caused hardened sinners to seek salvation.

The infirmities of the body may imprison a saint like the formidable walls of a federal prison; but the afflictions of the flesh and the trials of life cannot prevent the saints from singing in the shadows like those that sing in the shining. It is written, ". . . He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart." — Psa. 32:11.

CHAPTER 3

GOD'S PEACE OBTAINED IN ANSWER TO PRAYER

". . . Let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." — Phil. 4:6, 7.

When we make our requests known unto God by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving we are assured of receiving His peace through Christ Jesus. When we enter into the sacred Presence of the Prince of Peace, we enter into the place of perfect peace. The house of prayer is the sanctuary of peace.

Paul would have us understand that Christ imparts a measure of His own peace to our worshipping hearts when we make everything pertaining to life a matter of prayer. We can readily comprehend the possibilities of prayer when we perceive that mortal man can obtain a measure of the peace which the God of Peace possesses in His divine nature. It is not ne- cessary for the children of God to enter heaven in order to enjoy the priceless possession of peace. Christ wills to give the heavenly heritage of His Peace to all the sons of God. He re- vealed this truth when He said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." — John 14: 27.

It is obviously true that Jesus has purposed that His own peace shall give His praying and believing people untroubled hearts in this world of trouble. He would have us understand that His own perfect peace shall confirm us in hope, and comfort us in heart. It is apparent that this heavenly heritage of the heart can be obtained in answer to prayer. God's peace is an essential quality of His divine nature. We saw His peace manifested in Jesus Christ, The Prince of Peace. Jesus was never excited and perturbed by the trickery and hypocrisy of the religious leaders of His day. He never lost His spiritual poise when persecuted and slandered by His enemies.

Jesus was always calm and composed in the time of trial. He was never intimidated by the threats of violence. He had an indomitable courage that confounded His critics. He never compromised truth to gain favor with men. His sublime silence in the hour of His trial caused the multitude to marvel. A faithful witness of the Saviour's sufferings said: ". . . Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." — 1 Peter 2:21-23

Peter's testimony enables us to see how the peace of God behaves in this world of turmoil and strife. The quality of God's peace was exemplified in the sinless character and conduct of the Saviour. His life revealed the inherent nature of God's peace which passeth all under- standing. God has designed that His peace shall keep our hearts and minds. He would have us understand that His peace shall be our guard when we make our requests known unto Him in prayer. When once we grasp the truth about this, and give it an important place in daily life, we will know what it means to possess the peace of God which passeth all under- standing.

The heart is the center of man's spiritual being. It is the citadel of his immortal soul. The ambitions, the aspirations, and the affections reside in the heart. The will, the conscience, and the desires dwell in the heart of man. The Word says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." — Prov. 4:23

It is God's purpose to expel the indwelling sin of the soul by the power of the indwelling Spirit, and impart peace to man's heart. ". . . The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." — Isa. 32:17

When Jesus said. ". . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," He implied that it was possible to be delivered from the perplexing troubles and agitating fears incident to life in this world. The peace of God can banish all our burdensome bewilderments and fill our yearning hearts with comfort and contentment. God is willing to make the citadel of our souls the stronghold of His garrison of peace. He wills to make our hearts an impreg- nable fortress of spiritual power. His peace will mount guard over our hearts and minds like a sentinel appointed to keep watch over a city. Paul added to our comfort when he said, ". . . The God of peace shall be with you." — v. 9.

He is saying that we can have the peace of God within, and God of peace without.

When Paul speaks of the mind he is evidently speaking of the intellect, the feelings, and the understanding. We have the capacity to think and to reason about the things of God. We are capable of having the truth of God revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. It is not possible to comprehend the peace of God without the help of the Spirit. We cannot analyze the peace of God in the laboratory of the human mind to ascertain its true nature; neither can we discover the component parts of God's peace by the methods of modern science and philo- sophy. His peace passeth all human understanding. There are times when our minds are sorely perplexed by the problems confronting us in this uncertain world. There are times when we cannot depend on our reasoning to find the answer to life's trials and tribulations. Jesus said, ". . . In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." — John 16:33

Life has no fears and death holds no terrors for the soul fortified by the eternal peace of Christ. He is our peace and our protection. The peace received in answer to prayer does not prevent the problems of life from perplexing us; but His peace does prevent these trials from triumphing over us.

There will be times when our feelings will contradict our faith. Sickness can depress our emotions to such an extent that we are disposed to doubt our relationship to Christ. When we are sick, when our nerves are tense, when we are constantly on the verge of tears, our faith will be submerged by our feelings. In such times of trial it seems that the joy of the Lord has departed, and we are tempted to think that for some unknown reason we are suf- fering the displeasure of the Lord. Our confused state of mind is caused by our illness. The loving Lord has not been grieved by our infirmities of body and mind.

There will be times in life when we seem to stand on the brink of an impassable gulf which the human understanding cannot cross. When we come to the place where reasoning ends and despair begins, we will discover that Christ's protective peace is like a bridge that spans the gulf which our own limited understanding cannot cross. The infirmities of the body can cause the imagination to run wild. Sickness

can cause many fantastic ideas and strange im- pressions to disturb and confuse our minds. Some unhappy people imagine they are being tormented by evil spirits. Some think their nervous disorders are caused by some strange power of Satan. These distressing nervous disorders and groundless fears are caused by their physical condition. A just and holy God will not allow His praying and trusting people to become the unwilling victims of satanic power. He has provided a peace to garrison their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

A few devout individuals have been tormented by the fear that they have committed the unpardonable sin. Some have been so completely engulfed by this terrifying thought that they have abandoned all hope. These misguided persons have allowed themselves to become victims of their own confused state of mind. The terrifying thought that they have forfeited all hope of salvation exists only in their overwrought imaginations. If these troubled souls will exercise faith in a merciful and faithful Christ, and humbly ask Him for help and hope, their groundless fears will immediately pass away, and the peace of God will comfort their troubled hearts.

The Saviour has paid a great price to redeem us from all iniquity. He will not withhold His saving mercy and grace from any seeking soul longing with all the heart to please Him in all things. The peace of God will prevent us from becoming the hapless prey of our distraught minds if we will pray without ceasing, and continue to believe on the name of the Son of God. When Jesus said, ". . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," He inten- ded to impress us with the fact that we can prevent the fears and troubles from entering our hearts and minds. He expects us to keep our minds stayed on Him. The inspired prophet saw this fact when he said, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee." — Isa. 26:3

The Psalmist said, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." — Psa. 55:22. . .
If we continue to make our requests known unto God by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, He will not suffer us to be moved by the forces of evil in this disquieted earth.

CHAPTER 4

THE PRAYING THAT GLORIFIES GOD

". . . Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." — John 14:13

Jesus revealed His purpose in answering prayer when He said, ". . . That the Father may be glorified in the Son." In order to achieve His exalted purpose to glorify the Father, the Son has bestowed on His redeemed people the inalienable right to ask anything in His Name. In the clear light of this remarkable truth it is not difficult to perceive that the possibilities in prayer are as great as the purpose of the Son of God. It is likewise apparent that every prayer offered in the Name of the Son must be offered for the specific purpose of obtaining the things which glorify the heavenly Father.
The Saviour was near the close of His public ministry with His disciples when He delivered His parting address preserved for us by John. In His closing address He speaks to the men whose training time has about ended. He instructed His messengers in the "Sermon on the Mount" to pray, believing and trusting the Father to give them all good gifts; but in His closing discourse He points to something higher to be accomplished through prayer and faith. These faithful men were to go and perform His works, even greater works than He had achieved during His ministry in the world. The Master disclosed to them that praying in His Name was to be the channel through which the enabling power was obtained to perform the works which glorify the Father in the Son.

When Jesus said, ". . . I go to my Father," He was obviously speaking of His ascension to the right hand of God. His exaltation to the right hand of the Majesty on high began a new epoch in the praying and working of the disciples. The Saviour had imparted power to His chosen disciples while with them in the world, and He now purposes to enable them to do greater things for Him. He has promised to impart the power from heaven to accomplish greater works for Him in the world. He ordained His chosen apostles to go and bring forth fruit, saying, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."— John 15:8.

The indomitable courage they had to witness for Him, the miracles performed in His Name, and the sufferings endured for His sake, were living testimonies of the power received through the fervent prayers offered in His Name.

What is true regarding the Saviour's works achieved by His faithful disciples is likewise true regarding His works to be accomplished by His faithful people in this present age. The same Christ who worked in them and through them in that day, is the same changeless Christ who wills to work in and through His people in these last days. If the people of God expect to perform the works of Christ which shall glorify the Father, they must believe on Him for the very work's sake, and pray in His Name.

We can perceive our responsibilities to Christ when we consider His words regarding the greater works to be accomplished for Him in the world. Apparently the greater works to be performed are not works more excellent in quality, but works greater in quantity. Perhaps the ministry of Jesus did not extend

beyond the borders of the land where He lived and died. But it is obvious that He fully intended that the whole world should feel the spiritual impact of His invincible power through the preaching and praying of His ransomed people. Therefore He filled His faithful witnesses with the Holy Ghost and power and sent them unto the uttermost part of the earth to perform the works which glorify the Father in the Son. Let us ever be mindful of the fact that power to achieve the greater works for Christ is obtained through prayer and faith. A man cannot achieve the works of Christ through his eloquence and education; he must fervently pray in the Name of Jesus, and receive power from Him in order to accomplish the works of God in this pleasure loving age.

As long as Jesus was in the world, He performed the works of the Father; devils fled at His word of command, the sick were healed, and the poor had the Gospel preached unto them. When He returned to the Father, His works from the throne of grace must be performed through His praying and trusting people. The oneness between the Lord on His mediatorial throne in heaven and His people on earth is so divinely perfect, that He meant it as the lit- eral truth when He said, ". . . Greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

It is for the express purpose of accomplishing the works of Jesus in this present world that such great promises regarding prayer have been given to His people. But His people are not at liberty to claim the Saviour's promise, "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it," in order to obtain something very special for themselves. His certified promise does not authorize us to make him a servant of our own comforts in life. The Master has assured us that the Father is mindful of our personal needs, and wills to give good things to His children, but our creature comforts are not the things which matter most in this life. Our chief concern should always be to obtain power through prayer to achieve the greater works for Christ.
A careful study of the Saviour's words reveal that it is His purpose to glorify the Father through the life and love and labors of His redeemed people. When once we fully comprehend this amazing truth it will not be difficult to understand the meaning of the praying that glorifies the Father in the Son. When Jesus said, ". . . He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also. . . ," He revealed the obvious fact that a man has both the mental and moral capacity to perform the works of God in this world. It is apparently true that all men do not have the same natural abilities to serve God in this world. The Master disclosed this truth in His parable relating to the Kingdom of heaven.

"Unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability . . ." — Matt. 25:15

Jesus would have us understand that each man shall be rewarded according to his faithfulness in performing his assigned task. The Master will not require more than any man is capable of doing for Him. It is impossible for any man to accomplish the works of Christ unless he first possesses the works of Christ in his own heart. We must not overlook the fact that moral character and moral conduct are so intimately related that one does not exist apart from the other. A man's character is always exemplified in his conduct. The Saviour said, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good . . ." — Luke 6:45

Jesus revealed the effective cause for achieving His works when He said, ". . . The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." — John 14:10
Paul stated this sublime truth when he said, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of

his good pleasure."— Phil. 2:13

It certainly is possible for Almighty God to impart the inherent qualities of His divine nature to a redeemed soul, seeing that He did impart His image and likeness to the first man in the original creation. When Jesus said, ". . . I go to my Father," He was speaking of His death on the cross and His ascension to the throne in heaven. If we sincerely believe in the provi- sional sacrifice of Christ on the cross, we must believe that the inherent graces of mercy, truth, and holiness together with the fruit of the Spirit can be produced in the heart of mortal man.

When we request Christ to perform His works in our hearts we are devoutly praying that the Father may be glorified in the Son. We must open the doors of our hearts and extend to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit the right to rule us for ever, when we truly pray that the Father may be glorified in His Son. Jesus assured us that the heavenly Father would make His abode with us in answer to prayer. Surely a people so signally blessed would be able to exemplify the greater works of Christ in their diligent labors. It is apparent that our Lord has not limited the power made available to His people through prayer in His Name. When He said, ". . . I will do it," He placed His unlimited power at our disposal. He reveals himself to be an Almighty Servant standing ready and willing to do anything and everything pertaining to His works in answer to prayer. While meditating on these amazing promises it is necessary to keep in mind that the primary purpose of Christ in answering prayer is, "That the Father may be glorified in the Son."

The measure of our faith and the fervency of our prayers determine the effectiveness of our labors for Christ. If our faith is weak and our praying passionless we cannot expect to achieve much for Him. A man can ease his accusing conscience by explaining that he failed to ac- complish the works of Christ because of adverse conditions where he lives and labors. When a man is willing to face the facts, he may discover that he failed because he had not believed in Christ for the very work's sake, and prayed fervently in His Name. We cannot justify our failures by pleading our lack of natural ability. I am persuaded that God does not impart a greater measure of natural ability to us when we are saved by grace, but I do firmly believe that He releases the powers of our souls when we give ourselves to Him. Only the Creator knows the latent forces and inherent potentialities in an immortal soul.

When these spiritual powers are released by the indwelling Spirit of God the whole world can feel the dynamic force of a living Christ.
When Jesus said, ". . . Believe me for the very works' sake," He was pleading for a faith that would not fail to give the message of redeeming love to the whole world. He was thinking of the generations yet unborn when He gave us the right to ask anything in His Name. While Jesus was in the world, mankind could see His miracles, hear His messages, and be blessed by His ministry. The astonishing fact is that the people of yesterday saw Him crucified, dead and buried, but cared very little about Jesus of Nazareth, the penniless preacher of Palestine. They were too engrossed in their own affairs of life to be impressed by a suffering Saviour. The world of today is too busy to be bothered with thoughts of life eternal. It is God's will to reveal the Son's works to a perishing world. He has willed that the works of His Son shall be accomplished in this present world through the labors and consistent living of His people.

Let us heed the pleadings of the Christ, and believe His promise to answer our prayers that the Father may be glorified in His Son. Let us continue to believe on Him for the very work's sake and pray in His Name for power to achieve the victory for Him on earth. No matter how sorely we are tried, nor how

dark the hours may seem in times of sufferings, we must continue to pray that the Father may be glorified in the Son through our services and sacri- fices in His work. Let us ever keep in mind that the countless years which have fled into the dateless past have not outmoded the works of Christ, neither shall the oncoming ages overthrow them. His glorious works of grace performed in our hearts and exemplified in our living and labors shall glorify the Father in the Son throughout all ages, world without end.

CHAPTER 5

PRAYING WITHOUT DOUBTING

". . . 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." — Mark 11:23

These interesting words are a part of the Saviour's discourse on the power of faith. The disciples were greatly astonished by the power manifested in the Master's words which dried up the fruitless tree from the roots. When Jesus arrested the attention of His disciples by this unusual miracle, He obviously intended to reveal the power of God made available to His people through the prayer of faith. When Peter called the Lord's attention to the withered tree He said, ". . . 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."

In order to understand truth about praying without doubt in our hearts it is necessary to consider the Saviour's opening statement, ". . . Have faith in God." The remarkable discourse following His opening words reveals the fundamental fact relating to the prayer of faith. Our Lord would have us see that we can possess the faith of God. He revealed this fact when He said, "Have faith in God." It would be utterly impossible to believe that those things which we say in prayer shall come to pass unless we had an implicit faith in God. When Jesus said, ". . . Have faith in God," He revealed the Source of the priceless possession of the faith which enables us to pray without a doubt in our hearts. His admonition to have faith in God implies that all men have an inherent faith derived from God when He created the first man in His own image. The quality of inherited faith was not destroyed in the fall although it was greatly impaired as a result of disobedience. Jesus disclosed the amazing fact that we can possess a measure of the faith which Almighty God possesses in His own Divine Nature. This fact should not seem incredible since it is true that God did impart a measure of His own faith to man at the beginning of creation.

We do not hesitate to accept the fact that God imparts a measure of His life and love to His redeemed people. Surely it is not impossible for Him to impart a sufficient measure of His faith to His people to sustain them in life in this world of doubt and disbelief. If His people are not able to accomplish His works in the world because of the littleness of their faith, there is no valid reason to doubt that He can and will increase their measure of achieving faith. When the disciples said, ". . . Lord, Increase our faith," we have reasons to believe that He granted their request. (See Luke 17:5.)

The Saviour did not imply that we could possess the same measureless degree of faith which the infinite God possesses in His Divine Person. But He did encourage us to believe that we can receive a measure of God's faith to enable us to accomplish His purpose in redemption. The Saviour would have us see that we can enter into the faith of God and become workers together with Him in achieving His eternal purpose in His beloved Son. It is obviously true that God works in His people and through them according to the degree of their faith. He cannot do great things unless His people can believe Him for great things. Christ is made invincible in this world through the unwavering faith of His praying people.

The Scriptures reveal that Christ works according to His own faith, and His people enter into His faith and work with Him in accomplishing His purpose in redemption. The fact that He works according to His own faith is as understandable as the fact that a man works according to his own faith. A man can plan to build his house long before he lays the first stone in the foundation. He can plan for the happiness of a family before a child is born to gladden his heart. It is also true that a man's family can enter into his faith and assist him to achieve his purpose in life. Surely it is possible for the redeemed family of Christ to enter into His faith and participate in His eternal purpose to achieve the final victory over sin and death. The Son of God is not limited by circumstances, neither is He lacking in adequate resources to supply the need of His family on earth. Nothing shall prevent Him from bringing many sons unto glory according to the will of the heavenly Father.

We can pray without a doubt regarding the power of God. We can perceive the truth about Christ's eternal verities when we consider His statement about removing the mountain at the word of command. We are aware that the mountain has no power within itself to obey the word of command, ". . . Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea. . . " It is also obvious that the mountain is not removed by the efforts of man. Therefore we must conclude that the person speaking the words that remove the mountain has access to a power sufficient to remove the mountain and have it cast into the sea. The words of Jesus warrant us in saying that this power is made available to His praying people through faith. If this is not the truth then we must conclude that the words of Christ have no meaningful application to the perplexing problems of daily life. We are aware that the Master's words are figurative yet they are factual. The mountain evidently represents something that God will remove in answer to the prayer of faith.

Let us assume that the mountain represents the mass of human misery caused by sin in this troubled earth. It is certainly true that no man has power within himself to remove the mass of physical and mental sufferings caused by sin in this world. It is likewise true that no man has the strength of will to remove the mountain of iniquity which stands between himself and a holy God. Sin rests on his guilty soul like the weight of the hills. A man's load of depravity gives him a heavy heart and a burdened spirit. When we look at the mass of human suffering resulting from sin, we can visualize the insurmountable difficulties confronting humanity in this distressed earth. The bewildering sufferings caused by the sins of men constitute a mountain of misery and woe more formidable and forbidding than all the precipitous heights and impregnable rocks of earth's tallest peaks.

Christ is our only hope for deliverance in this disconsolate world. If faith in Him cannot bring the power necessary to surmount these difficulties, then faith has failed utterly to achieve the victory we have a right to expect in the light of God's unfailing promises. The imperishable Word declares, ". . . The just shall live by faith." How can we obey this funda- mental law of life unless we can avail ourselves of a power sufficient to overcome every op- posing force? We cannot doubt God's willingness to impart to His praying saints a sufficiency of spiritual strength to cope with the trials incident to life. The Scriptures record the victories achieved by the saints of God who were made immortal in sacred history by their dauntless courage and unwavering faith.

Let us pray the prayer of faith, not doubting in our hearts, but believing that strength shall be given day by day to surmount our difficulties in life. Let us not falter in the way as we journey toward fadeless dawn of the eternal day.

We can pray without a doubt regarding the purpose of God. The Scriptures reveal that it is God's eternal purpose in Christ to save all men from all sin on the condition of repentance and faith.

Christ has faith in His own ability to accomplish the Father's purpose by restoring a fallen man to the moral image of God. Nothing shall prevent Him from fulfilling His eternal purpose as revealed in the divine plan of salvation. There is not the remotest possibility that His perfect plan of redemption shall fail. We are assured that the gates of hell shall not prevail against Christ's invincible church, purchased by His blood, endowed, and endued by His Spirit.

We do well to ponder Paul's immortal challenge, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"
— Rom. 8:31.

When once we have a proper concept of God's immutable purpose as revealed in His Word, it will not be difficult to pray without a doubt. Let us look again at the Saviour's words, ". . . And shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass. . ." For the sake of clarity, let us underscore the words, ". . . Shall come to pass . . ." When shall those things which we say in prayer come to pass? When may we reasonably expect every prayer to be answered? The things we have said in prayer shall come to pass when everything spoken by the Lord shall come to pass. When God's plan of salvation has been consummated, then all things spoken by the Son of God, and all things spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets, and all the things spoken in the prayers of His faithful people shall come to pass.

The Scriptures affirm that it is God's purpose to save them to the uttermost that come unto Him through Christ. God's utmost ability was required to save us from the utmost extent of our sin. To be saved to the uttermost according to the purpose of Christ, means to be delivered from all sin in this present life, and delivered from the effects of sin in the body and mind in the life to come.

We can pray without a doubt in our hearts regarding a complete deliverance from sin in this present life, and it shall come to pass. But we must patiently wait until Christ's final triumph over sin and death before we can be delivered from the results of sin in our bodies and minds. We can pray without a doubt in our hearts regarding our final deliverance, and it shall come to pass according to the purpose of God. When Christ has fulfilled His eternal purpose in redemption, then the mountain of human misery and woe shall be removed from the earth. When we perceive this truth as revealed in the Scriptures, we can understand that every prayer offered without a doubt in our hearts shall surely be answered in full.

The things we say in prayer are powerless and meaningless unless we have Christ's authority to say them. But if the things we say in our prayers are the things which He has said, then we can pray without a doubt in our hearts.

We find this truth revealed in the Master's words concerning the mountain being removed at the word of command. Take note of the fact that Jesus first spoke the words, ". . . Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea . . ." Assuming that the mountain symbolizes the mass of human woe and suffering caused by sin, we perceive that it is possible to have this mass of human misery removed by speaking the living words of Jesus in our prayer. It is apparent that we can enter in to His faith and engage His omnipotent

power to achieve victory over sin and death. When we pray without a doubt in our hearts, we share Christ's faith to achieve the purpose of the Father. When we speak His words, we have a valid reason to expect the things we say to come to pass.

Our prayers can embrace every word of promise and every word of purpose spoken by our Lord. Our faith and prayers can join His faith and prayers and assist Him in the final fulfill- ment of His Father's will and work. When applying this gracious truth to the things which Christ has spoken in explicit terms of eternal truth, it is not difficult to see that our prayer of faith becomes an integral part of the whole plan of redemption. We are assured that every word spoken in prayer shall be answered in the final restitution of all things. It is written, "And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Acts 3:20, 21

Paul vividly revealed the final triumph of Christ when he said, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." — 1 Cor. 15:24-26

Our hope and expectation for final deliverance from all effects of evil in our bodies and minds shall be realized when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day. When He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. We shall share in His final victory over disease and death. We shall hear Him say to the mountain of sufferings, ". . . Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea. . . ," and it shall come to pass.

In view of this consoling hope let us continue to pray without a doubt in our hearts. Let us rest our faith on the enduring love of Christ, asking nothing more than to be counted worthy of His pleasure throughout all ages, world without end.

CHAPTER 6

PRAYING WITH DESIRE

". . . What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." — Mark 11:24.

These inspiring words of Jesus disclose that He has obligated Himself to satisfy the incessant and insistent desires of His praying people. His words leave no doubt in our minds regarding His willingness to answer our requests. He makes it plain that whatsoever things are required to satisfy our spiritual and temporal needs shall be granted according to the measure of our faith.

We must obey the fundamental law of faith by sincerely believing that we receive the things desired when we pray, otherwise they shall not be granted. It is necessary to do some clear thinking regarding our Lord's promise to give us the things desired when we pray in faith.

Some unwise persons have interpreted Jesus as saying, "When ye pray, believe that you have the things desired, and you have them." It is difficult to accept this concept of the Master's teaching about the prayer of faith. No intelligent man can believe that he has received the things desired unless he has received them. It would be absurd to make such a claim in the light of truth.

It is misleading to tell a sincere seeker after a pure heart to believe that the blessing has been received when that person knows in his own heart that it is not true. This absurd teaching leaves a man confused and disappointed. A man must receive the witness of the Holy Spirit to confirm the work of grace performed in the heart. An honest man cannot affirm that he has obtained the things desired unless he knows that he has received them from God.

We must not assume that we have the things desired. Our faith does not rest on an assump- tion; our faith rests on an assurance imparted to us by the spirit of truth. When Jesus revealed His provision to satisfy our desires, He disclosed the incentive to pray. He is saying, "Whatsoever things you desire, when you pray, believe that God has provided them, and you shall have them."

We must first believe that the resources of God are made available to us through prayer. If we entertain the slightest doubt in our hearts regarding this fact, we cannot obtain the things desired to satisfy us in life.

While seriously meditating on the remarkable words of Jesus concerning the things desired in prayer, let us not overlook the fact that He is speaking about the mountain being removed at the word of command. If it is God's purpose to remove all sin and sufferings from the earth at His word of command, then it is likewise true that everything required to accomplish His purpose on behalf of His people is made available to them in the provision of redeeming grace. When we see this truth we can understand God's purpose in establishing the throne of grace. Is it any wonder that we are told to come boldly unto the throne of grace? We can readily understand the real incentive to pray when we know that our legitimate desires will be granted when we pray for things pertaining to the plan of redemption as revealed in

Christ. There is no provision made to gratify our desires unless the things desired are directly related to Christ's plan of salvation.

The primary purpose of the Saviour's sacrifice on the cross was to save us from sin and sufferings. It is His purpose to present us faultless before the presence of the Father with exceeding joy. It is our Lord's purpose to dry our tears for ever, open the gates of pearl, and give us an abundant entrance into the City of God. It is permissible to interpret Jesus as saying, "Whatsoever things are required to satisfy you and sustain you in this holy way of life, when you pray, believe that you can obtain them, and you shall have them."

It has not required one tear of sorrow, nor exacted one drop of our blood, nor cost us one night of sleep to provide the things required to save us from sin and sufferings in this world. The unsparing God gave His only Son to provide the things we need for time and eternity.

There are no unholy and selfish desires in the heart of a Christian. A true Christian is mo- tivated to pray by the normal desires of spiritual life like a hungry son is moved to ask bread of his father. The child's desire for food does not spring from force of habit, it is a desire springing from the natural requirements of daily life. The incentive to pray is as normal as the desire for food and drink. The very fact that the desire exists is positive proof that it can be satisfied in a natural and legitimate manner.

There is an intense longing after Christ like the hunger and thirst of a person requiring food and drink. Such a desire cannot be satisfied with anything less than a manifestation of the living Lord. There is a desire to know more about His enduring love. There is a desire to linger long in sacred worship and holy communion with Him in the quiet place of prayer. A Christian says, "My soul followeth hard after thee . . ." — Psa. 63:8
The inspired writer voiced his desire when he said, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" — Psa. 42:1, 2

A man can earn his daily bread by the sweat of his brow, and allay his thirst at the springs flowing out of the earth, but a man that hungers and thirsts after Christ must have the bread from heaven to satisfy his hunger, and drink the living water from the fountain of life to slake his thirst.

We desire a freedom which cannot be obtained while we live in this body. We long to be delivered from our earthly bondage into the glorious liberty of the first resurrection. In this human body we yearn, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.

"For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." — 2 Cor. 5:4

When the eternal purpose of Christ has been completed, the saints shall be delivered from the presence of sin and sorrows which have troubled them in this unhappy earth. In that glad hour they shall experience the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

God's redeemed children have no continuing city in this world. They look for a city which hath

foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Their citizenship is in heaven; from whence they also look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change their infirm bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working wherewith He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. When these things shall come to pass, then shall we obtain the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.

CHAPTER 7

A MANIFESTATION OF GOD IN ANSWER TO PRAYER

". . . When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." — Acts 4:31.

This remarkable manifestation of God reveals the effectiveness of prevailing prayer. It vividly discloses the fact that prayer can accomplish much. It is apparent that neither the apostles, nor the assembled company of devout believers were astonished at the marvelous visitation of God. They had assembled together in one place for the express purpose of achieving victory over the opposition of wicked men, and they fully expected the Lord to answer their united prayers in His own way.

Perhaps the shaking of the place where they were assembled together was an extraordinary occurrence, but receiving a direct answer to their importunate praying was neither unusual nor unexpected. The believers had assembled for the specific purpose of producing a miracle in the spiritual world, and not for the purpose of producing a phenomenon in the natural world. We do not need a manifestation of the supernatural to arrest the attention of a pleasure seeking world. God does not often shake the shackles off His imprisoned saints, and open the doors of the jail with an earthquake. He can do the unusual and the unexpected when necessary. We do not need the Lord to do something to astonish us, but we do need Him to do something to alert us to our dangers.

We cannot ignore the fact that we desperately need a startling manifestation of God to shake us out of our spiritual lethargy and selfish complacency. We cannot substitute a program for power and have the least semblance of hope that the unsaved will be attracted by it.

The believers were praying in a desperate crisis when they said, ". . . Lord, behold their threatenings . . ." We are aware that some of the most enduring results recorded in sacred history were obtained when some devout person prayed in an hour of crisis. Abraham pre- vailed with God in prayer when the angelic messengers told him about the destruction of Sodom. The holy Scriptures reveal that Moses prayed importunately for the people when they incurred the fierce anger of God by worshipping the golden calf. It was a critical time in Israel when Elijah prayed earnestly on Mount Carmel. Jesus was praying in an hour of crisis when He said, ". . . Father, the hour is come . . ." The believers were confronted by a desperate situation when they said, ". . . Lord, behold their threatenings . . ." With them, it was a case of life or death, victory or defeat. The odds against them were tremendous, but the God that was for them was Almighty.

There is nothing in the sacred records to show that they had the slightest intention of com- promising the truth in order to have favor with men. They did not call a meeting of the of- ficial board to discuss ways and means of evading the fundamental issues involved. They did not take refuge in a stupefying pessimism saying that nothing could be done to remedy the situation confronting them. Neither did they deceive themselves by saying that things would work out satisfactorily to all parties concerned. They were willing to accept the conflict that challenged their faith and hope in God. They did the most natural

thing in the sight of the Lord when they assembled together with one accord in prayer, and lifted up their voice in one concerted petition to Him for help.

The believers in this day of grace should be impressed by the victory achieved by this praying company of saints. There are many things which threaten us today. We are confronted with serious situations that cannot be overcome unless we keep our strength renewed through prevailing prayer.

It is written, ". . . They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." A gracious infilling with the Spirit of God is the only solution for our spir- itual difficulties in this age of the world. The Lord's holy prophet said, ". . . When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." — Isa. 59:19

We cannot hope to escape the flood of evil which threatens to overwhelm the believers today unless we are constantly refilled and re-invigorated by the Holy Spirit. When Paul said, ". . . Be filled with the Spirit," he was stressing the necessity of continuing in the fullness of the Spirit in order to achieve the victory for Christ in this world. This remarkable filling with the Spirit was evidently different in some respects from the epochal filling received on the day of Pentecost. This gracious enablement of the Spirit was obviously one of the times of refreshing to be expected from the presence of the Lord. (Acts 3:19.)

Unless the believers in the church today have their spiritual strength replenished repeatedly by the Spirit they will not be able to overcome the increasing power of spiritual wickedness threatening them today. The church cannot cope with the menacing threat of worldliness except the company of believers pray for power to meet the insidious threat. The company of believers cannot withstand the subversive teachings of modern Liberalism unless they pray for strength to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.

It will require much prayer to prevail against the creeping paralysis resulting from meaning- less programs and pointless plays promoted by the worldly-minded leaders in the church. Unless the company of believers today are girded with the power of the Holy Spirit they will not be able to cope with the crisis confronting them in this day of formality and unbelief. God did not answer their impassioned prayer in the hour of crisis by miraculously changing the attitude of the determined opposition. He did not remove the threat which endangered them, neither did He destroy the ring-leaders responsible for the persecution of the church. It is interesting to note that the company of believers did not ask the Lord to change the at- titude of their enemies. They accepted the fact that such persecution had been foreseen and foretold.

". . . Thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ." — Acts 4:25. (Psalm 2:1-3)

The Lord would have us understand that suffering persecution for His sake is the price to be paid in blood and tears for the unspeakable pleasure of serving Him in the holy way of life.

Our young people should be impressed with the fact that they cannot expect the Lord to change the attitude of their unsaved friends and associates. When once the young converts discover this truth they will not find it difficult to overcome the hardships of life. Pastors find it difficult to get the young people established in the faith because they apparently believe that God should change their environment in

answer to prayer. It is apparently difficult for them to understand that a change in their surroundings is not the solution of their spiritual problem. It is likewise true that a change in the moral conditions which environ the church today is not the solution of its spiritual problem.

The company of believers found the solution of their problem when they lifted up their voice with one accord in prayer to God. The answer they received enabled them to cope with the rising tide of spiritual wickedness in high places. The Lord fortified them with a spiritual power that no combination of evil forces could withstand successfully.

The embattled believers were praying with an unwavering faith when they said, "Lord, thou art God." The indisputable fact of God was the basis of the unshakable confidence which inspired them to pray. It is remarkable how impotent and insignificant the feeble efforts of wicked men appear when we realize that God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1.)

The imperishable Word declares, "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" — Psa. 118:6

God gave us a certified promise when He said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." The Lord has never deserted His faithful people in the time of conflict. We need to have this blessed truth imbedded in our consciousness, impressed on our minds, and indelibly inscribed in our hearts by the hand of God. When once we grasp the fact of God it is not difficult to pray.

God's everlasting kingdom will never be destroyed by the combined forces of the ungodly. Almighty God is never in jeopardy. He has no fear of mortal man. He shall remain immutable in purpose and invincible in power for evermore.

Consider what the praying company said about God's enemies, "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel de- termined before to be done." — Acts 4:27, 28

The conscienceless Herod, and the cowardly Pontius Pilate are dead, and their vicious op- position to Christ is dead and buried in the sepulcher of the ages. The aggressive agnosticism and sneering atheism that ran rampant less than a century ago has ceased to occupy a prominent place in the world today. The vicious Liberalism which afflicts the church today will soon be dead, buried together with modern infidels who have advocated its pernicious views.

Perhaps the sands have been washed in the footprints of the Stranger of Galilee, but the world has not forgotten that He lived, loved, and labored to save lost humanity from eternal death. The countless centuries which have hurried into the dateless past have not impaired His strength to save us to the uttermost. The marching millenniums will not erase His matchless Name from the annals of sacred history. The last desolate day of time will not find Him buried in the sepulcher of the ages. The fleeing ghost of eternity will never discover the grave of God. Of Him it is written, "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remain- est; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." — Heb. 1:10-12.

When we fortify our faith and underscore our thinking with the words, “Lord, thou art God,” we can prevail in prayer and overcome the combined forces of evil which threaten us in these trying times. Almighty God will not abandon His eternal purpose because a few wicked men have lifted up their voices against Him. Our God has assured us that all things work together for good to them that love Him, to them who are the called according to His purpose. His imperishable promises give a strong consolation to lay hold of the hope set before us. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful that promised.

The assembled company prayed that the messengers of the Word might have courage. They said, “. . . Grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word.” — Acts 4:29

The voice of prayer was heard in heaven and the answer granted when the assembled com- pany of devout saints prayed this importunate prayer in the time of crisis. God’s people were not praying for boldness because they were moral cowards. They were fearfully aware of the danger which threatened them; but they were not too cowardly to face it with God’s help.

The rulers of the people, and the elders in Israel had called Peter and John before the council, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. (Acts 4:18.) God’s called servants could not heed this diabolical command and be faithful to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. To comply with such an unjust demand, not to speak at all nor teach in the Name of Jesus, one must compromise the truth of Christ, and cease to emphasize the central theme of the Gospel message. The very essence of the Gospel is con- tained in the Name of Jesus.

It is interesting to notice that the believers were praying for the message of divine truth. They said, “With all boldness they may speak thy word.” The emphasis is placed on “Thy word.” The Christians wanted to hear God’s Word declared with firm conviction and un- wavering confidence. They evidently wanted to be edified and enlightened by the message of saving truth. They obviously believed that the Gospel was the power of God unto salvation to every one that believed it. It is indeed blessed to discover a people who desire to hear the message of redeeming grace, a people who do not want to be entertained with cheap programs and silly plays in the church, a people hungry for the bread of life which Christ only can give.

The assembled believers prayed for the messengers of the Gospel, saying, “Grant unto thy servants.” It is well to notice that the Christians said, “Thy servants.” They evidently recog- nized that the apostles were the servants of God. They were not considered to be servants of an institution, or an organization. They considered the apostles to be the called servants of God, who had commissioned them to serve His redeemed family. These godly men were not hired promoters; they were Christ’s holy messengers.

It does not require moral courage to promote a program to entertain a group of nominal Christians. Neither does it require courage to give a book review, or speak on current events; but it does require boldness to press the claims of Christ on men, and demand that they repent of their sins and yield themselves to Him.

It does not require spiritual fortitude to organize a campaign to raise money for the general interests of the church; but it does take much prayer and faithful preaching to precipitate a genuine revival of full

salvation.

To raise these issues does not mean that one is indulging in hurtful criticism of God's faithful people and preachers. It does mean that one is gravely concerned about the praying of God's people, who are members of the body of Christ. It is apparent that a devout minister can perform his work for Christ more efficiently when he knows that the Christians want to hear the Word and are supporting him with their prayers and faith. The record shows that Peter and John had joined the company of saints in the fellowship of prayer. This fact discloses that the messengers of Christ realized the necessity of prevailing prayer.

It is not unusual to hear some ministers say they are so burdened with the work of the church that they have very little time to spend in earnest prayer. This is a startling admission for any man to make, especially a minister of the Gospel. It is a serious matter in the life of a preacher when he allows himself to be cumbered with much serving. The results of his neglect of prayer will be revealed by the poverty of his preaching. It is possible for a minister to become so preoccupied with his duties that he will give prayer a place of secondary im- portance in his life. God's servants should consider that nothing pertaining to the church of Christ is more important than waiting before the Lord in the secret place of prayer. The man of God loses his passion for souls when he willfully neglects to pray. He must wait until his soul is aflame with holy zeal, and his mind stimulated with fresh news from heaven. When he takes proper time to pray, his preaching will edify and enlighten the Christians, and the fruitfulness of his ministry will be increased.

The writer disclosed some remarkable results from this ministry of prayer when he said, "And with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all." Acts 4 v. 33.

The assembled company prayed for miracles to be performed in the name of Jesus.

"By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus." — Acts 4 v. 30.

It is obvious that the Christians expected miracles to accompany the preaching of the Word. It is interesting to note that the prayer for boldness to speak the Word included the petition for healing, and signs and wonders. The order of the prayer places preaching the Word first before the performing of miracles in the name of Jesus.

Our Lord placed more emphasis on preaching and teaching than He did on His gracious ministry of healing the sick, and showing signs and wonders. However, we are not to conclude that such miracles cannot be performed through the power of prayer in this age and gener- ation. The healing of the sick, and the signs and wonders performed in the name of Jesus accompany the preaching of the Word.

This fact is clearly observed when we give thoughtful attention to the import of the prayer. The prayer for miracles reveals the true concept regarding the power of Jesus to heal. They said, "By stretching forth thine hand to heal . . ." The presence of Jesus was so real to praying saints that they asked Him to stretch forth His nail-scarred hand and heal the people.

Jesus did stretch forth His hand and touched the diseased bodies of men, and they were in- stantly healed. The fact that Christ has ascended to heaven has not changed our concept of His Divine Person. He is willing and able to stretch forth His hand and heal our broken bodies today like He did in the days of His flesh.

I am persuaded to believe that the professing Christians would see more miracles of healings performed by the hand of Jesus if they would spend more time in earnest prayer for the messengers of the Gospel.

I am convinced that the Lord will work wonders in this age of indifference if we will cease to limit Him by unbelief, and accept the fact that miracles can be performed today by the outstretched hand of the Holy Child Jesus.

CHAPTER 8

THE INTERCESSORY PRAYERS OF CHRISTIANS

". . . Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me . . ." — Luke 11:5, 6.

There is evidently a ministry of prayer even as there is a ministry of preaching. The teachings of Jesus contained in the parable show us that praying and preaching are integral parts of the plan of salvation.

Preaching is God's way of speaking to man, and praying is man's way of speaking to God. Preaching is God's way of appealing to the will of man, and praying is man's way of appealing to the will of God.

Our Lord's teachings relating to intercessory prayer are clearly revealed in the Epistles. John's Epistles reveal the amazing power made available to God's people through intercessory prayer. Peter assures us that the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers. James said, ". . . The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up . . ." The inspired writings of Paul disclose the astonishing possibilities in the ministry of intercessory prayer. In one of Paul's Epistles the ministry of prayer is con- nected so closely with the ministry of preaching that it is difficult to tell where the prayer ends and the preaching begins. (Colossians 1:9-17.)

Note the boundless possibilities revealed in the prayers of a faithful minister of Christ. "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." — Col. 4:12.

It is obvious that the fervent prayers of a servant of Christ can enable the believers to stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. Perhaps it is difficult for us to understand how our praying for the children of God can establish them in the faith, nevertheless it is true according to this Scripture. We are convinced that our fervent prayers can obtain power from the throne of grace to preserve some struggling saint in an hour of severe trial.

The man said, ". . . A friend of mine in his journey is come to me . . ." Our Lord focused at- tention on the responsibility to pray for others when He uttered the stirring words in this parable. It obviously was not the man's own personal need that compelled him to request the three loaves; it was the imperative need of the tired traveler that moved him to ask for bread at midnight.

No man can be a faithful follower of Christ and not recognize his responsibility to pray for others. The spiritual life received from Christ motivates a Christian to present the needs of others at the throne of grace, where mercy is obtained, and the promised grace is found to help others in a time of urgent need.

Our personal responsibility to intercede for others is made more apparent when we emphasize the words, ". . . Is come to me . . ." What strange combination of circumstances caused the man to seek help from his friend?

Perhaps he had taken the wrong road in the confusing darkness of the night. We are aware that the parable does teach the disturbing truth that men are lost in the darkness of sin, and that it is our duty to lead them to Christ. But the pitiful plight of the pilgrim is not the only startling truth contained in our Lord's teachings.

The statement, ". . . A friend of mine in his journey. . . ," persuades one to think that the traveler knew before he started on his journey that he could find rest and comfort in the home of his friend. It was his faith in his friend's reputation for hospitality that encouraged him to continue on his journey through the enveloping darkness of the night.

The parable reveals that men will come to us when they are convinced of our ability to obtain help for them through intercessory prayer. The news that a certain man can prevail with God in prayer will soon reach a multitude of hopeless and helpless people. Some distressed soul will soon be knocking at the man's door seeking help and comfort.

It was the good news that Christ was giving help and comfort to all men that caused the multitudes to seek Him day and night. The disciples had a boldness in their preaching and a power in their praying that drew broken and burdened humanity to seek the Saviour.

Paul expressed his thanks to God for the church when he said, ". . . From you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing." — 1 Thess. 1:8.

Lost men do not seek Christ by mere chance; He draws them unto Himself through the convicting and convincing power of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit performs His office work in the world through Christ's witnesses. Jesus said, ". . . The Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the begin- ning." — John 15:26, 27

It is obvious that the Spirit enables the Christians to attract lost men by faithfully witnessing to the Saviour. Our Lord has not commissioned all of His people to preach, but He called all of them to pray.

The great revivals born in the hours of agonizing prayer attracted the attention of the civilized world. People came for the express purpose of obtaining spiritual help through the preaching and praying of God's servants. The great revival that began at Asbury College in 1950 was born in seasons of importunate praying. Some of the students prayed all night for a great spiritual awakening. Many of the teachers prayed earnestly for a gracious visitation of God. My own soul was in great agony of prayer. The burden was so great that I confessed the sins of the world to God. In some peculiar manner I had been made aware of the condemnation that rested on the souls of lost men.

During the Chapel service I exhorted the students to seek the Lord. I realized that it was God's appointed hour to answer prayer. At that moment the Holy Ghost moved mightily on the entire student body. Wave after wave of deep conviction swept over the audience. Many were moved to seek the Lord with diligence. It was an hour of triumph for the faithful few who had tarried through long seasons of intercessory prayer before the Lord during the quiet hours of the morning. The news of this marvelous visitation of God spread all over the nation. It was broadcast by radio to several foreign countries. People came hundreds of miles to receive spiritual help. Perhaps more than five thousand people were directly

influence by this glorious spiritual awakening born in the hours of intercessory prayer.

I am thoroughly convinced that a great spiritual awakening will come to this benighted world if the people of God will deny themselves of sleep and seek God in the peaceful hours of the morning. It is my firm conviction that the great Asbury revival set the pattern to be followed in order to have a great revival in this day and age of the world. God will hear His people when they see the importance of praying for others. Our Lord revealed this fact when He said, "Because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth." The man's plea for bread was so insistent that he did not heed the protest of his sleepy friend. The need of the traveler who had come to him out of the night was more important than the rest needed by his friend's entire family.

Is it possible that we are too indolent and indifferent to pray? Is there no passion for souls? Is there no sincere concern for the lost? Can it be that we are too sleepy to watch with Christ in the Gethsemane of prevailing prayer? Are our physical comforts more important than our praying for others?

Perhaps our Lord will draw some weary wayfarers to our door asking for help through our intercessory prayers. If He is pleased to trust us with such a responsibility, let us not fail to feed the famishing soul.

The man made an amazing confession when he said to his friend, ". . . I have nothing to set before him." It is evident that Jesus is not calling attention to the man's embarrassing poverty. He is showing us that our sufficiency is not of ourselves. Paul stated this fact when he said. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." — 2 Cor. 3:5.

We are woefully wanting in natural ability to help others spiritually; we have nothing to set before them. Unless we avail ourselves of the abundant resources of Christ through prayer, we will never have anything of spiritual worth to set before a starving world.

It is not difficult to imagine that the man had an easy chair and a comfortable bed to offer the tired traveler. But furniture is not a substitute for food. The welcome at the door, the furnishing of the house, and the entertaining conversation, cannot satisfy the hunger of the human heart. It requires the bread of life obtained from God to save a famishing soul from death.

Jesus encouraged us to avail ourselves of His resources when He said, ". . . He will rise and give him as many as he needeth." We have nothing of ourselves to save a lost soul, but we have a faithful Friend, who will give us as much as we request in intercessory prayer.

Jesus would have us understand that our importunate praying can overcome our discour- agements and difficulties. He disclosed this fact when He said, ". . . He from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee." He is not saying that our heavenly Father is unwilling to grant our requests for others. The Master is teaching us not to cease praying when we encounter some opposing forces in life. There are times when it seems that our earnest requests have been denied. Let us keep in mind that our heavenly Father is willing to give the bread of life in answer to our intercessory petitions for others.

CHAPTER 9

THE THREE ESSENTIALS OF PRAYER

". . . Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." — Luke 11:10.

The plain teachings of Jesus accord us a valid reason to believe that every sincere prayer offered by His people shall be answered.

Jesus stated the three essentials of prayer when He said, "Ask, seek, knock." He disclosed these three essentials of prayer in His parable about the man asking his friend for three loaves. It is quite obvious that he was asking, seeking and knocking when he made his request for bread in the middle of the night.

The Master's words revealing the inherent principles of effectual praying confirm our faith, enlarge our understanding, and enable us to appropriate His certified promises. It is apparent that His promises relating to prayer are as vast in scope as the extent of His promises per- taining to salvation. It is written, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things." — Rom. 8:32.
This Scripture reveals the possibilities of prayer to be as great as the boundless measure of redemptive grace. The unsparing God places no limit on our praying because there is no limit placed on His giving. If we believe that Christ was sacrificed to save us to the uttermost, we must likewise believe that He is able to supply our needs to the uttermost.

The lamentable fact is we have been exceedingly slow to comprehend the unlimited possib- ilities of prayer revealed in Christ's plain words. When we fully understand His instructions about praying, and grasp the promises by faith, we will not find it difficult to pray the effec- tual fervent prayer of achieving faith. We certainly owe it to ourselves and to all men, to consider seriously the fundamental principles of prayer disclosed to His disciples in answer to their request, ". . . Lord teach us to pray . . ." The very essence of this request is in itself a prayer to know how to pray.
It is necessary to consider Christ's teachings regarding our daily bread in order to understand the three essentials of prayer. He has focused our attention on the requests for bread in His entire discourse on prayer. Our daily bread is contained in the first direct request revealed in the Lord's prayer, "Give us day by day our daily bread." The request for bread follows the prayer of worship. ". . . Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done. . ." The request for bread also precedes the prayer for pardon and preservation. Bread is obviously the central theme of the Lord's prayer, according to the teachings of Jesus.

Our Lord emphasizes the need of bread in the parable of the man seeking the three loaves at midnight, and concludes His discourse by arresting our attention to the son asking bread of his father.

It is apparent that Christ's teachings about asking for bread contain something much more important than

our temporal needs in this life. He evidently intended to stress the fact that we needed spiritual food in order to live in time and in eternity. We recall that Jesus aston- ished His disciples when He said, "I am the bread of life." When He uttered these words He made it clear that we cannot live without Him, for He is as essential to spiritual life as bread is essential to physical life. (See John 6:48-58.)

The three essentials of prayer are readily understood when applied to the Saviour, who is the living bread from heaven. When we sincerely ask for the Lord Jesus, we shall receive Him; when we earnestly seek Him, we shall find Him; and when we knock at His door, it shall be opened unto us.
The three fundamental principles of prayer apply to the entire scope of life in this world, and in the world to come. I am thoroughly convinced that the redeemed family of God will ask, seek, and knock in prayer throughout all eternity. Their request will not be hindered by their infirmities of body and mind as they are in this world. We are daily aware of the fact that we know not what we should pray for as we ought. We will be able to make our requests known unto God in that holy place with a clear mind and a glorified body.

It is quite evident that our Lord would have us understand this startling fact seeing that He made the request for bread the central theme of family life. It is certainly true that as long as we live in the Father's house we must depend on Him to sustain us. There is no valid reason to believe that this relationship shall end when we enter heaven. There is nothing in the Master's teachings to show us that we ever become self-sustaining in life, either in this world or in the world to come.

I am fully persuaded that the fundamental principle of asking and giving will continue to all eternity. God stated this fundamental rule of His household when He said to the Son, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee . . ." — Psa. 2:8.

This astonishing principle of asking and giving was clearly an integral part of the Saviour's ministry on earth. We find the same basic principle revealed in the amazing fact that He ever lives to make intercession for us.

The three essential principles of prayer are revealed in nature. Every living thing in creation must be fed. Every plant, insect, and living creature on earth must ask, seek, and knock in order to obtain food from nature. We accept this obvious fact without question.
We have no reason to believe that eternal life in heaven will be sustained independent of our relationship to Christ. He supplies our needs in this world in answer to prayer, and He shall continue to supply our eternal requirements in answer to prayer. If this is the rule of the Father's household on earth, it will continue to be the rule for ever.

CHAPTER 10

ASKING AND RECEIVING

". . . Every one that asketh receiveth . . ." — Luke 11:10.

When our Lord uttered these immortal words He gave to every child of God the inalienable right to pray. He impressed His disciples with this fact by asking them some pertinent questions:

"If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" — v. 11-13.

If the father loves his son it would be utterly inconsistent with his nature to give his child a stone, or a snake, or a stinging scorpion instead of bread. The father's answer to his son's request will be granted according to the measure of his love for his child. It is the most nat- ural thing in all the world for a father to listen to the requests of his family. When Jesus said, ". . . Any of you that is a father," he compares a man's love for his children to God's love for His children. He asks us to look up from our earthly fathers, and calculate how much more the heavenly Father will be moved to give good gifts to His children. Jesus is teaching us to understand that as much as God's goodness exceeds the goodness of mortal man, so much greater is our assurance that He will grant our childlike petitions.

Every child of God from the youngest to the oldest has a right to ask the Father for the bread of life. Every child, irrespective of age, sex, or race, can come boldly to the throne of grace, and find grace to help in time of need. There are no underprivileged children in God's family. The crippled, the weak, and the sick children have a right to ask the heavenly Father for the living bread from heaven.

The Saviour would have us perceive the imperishable truth that, ". . . Every one that asketh receiveth . . ." It is utterly unthinkable that our loving Father would ignore our earnest peti- tions. He will not remain silent and unmoved when His own children are weeping before Him in earnest petitions.

A missionary was telling about the sufferings endured while a prisoner during the war. He said that the crying of his starving family caused him to suffer more than all the cruel and barbarous treatment received at the hands of the savage and inhuman guards. When we understand how this godly man was moved by the constant crying of his famishing family, we can comprehend how our heavenly Father can be moved to answer the unceasing prayers of His family. It was not possible for the faithful missionary to grant the urgent requests of his children, but it is possible for our heavenly Father to grant the requests of His children.

Jesus teaches us that prayer has a human side and a divine side. The human side is the asking, and the divine side is the giving. The two halves which make up the whole of prayer are the asking and the receiving. Our asking and the Father's answering belong to each other. Our requests on earth and the

Father's answer in heaven are meant for each other. If we believe that the Father has made an ample provision for the needs of His children, then we must also believe that He will surely give them all good gifts according to the promise.

Jesus teaches us to come to Him day by day to receive the bread of life to sustain us in this world. He wills day by day to do for us what we ask in simple faith.

When the Master said, ". . . Every one that asketh receiveth. . . ," He stressed the fact that we are not to rest without an answer to our petitions. He is saying that it is the Father's will, and the rule of His house to grant the requests of His believing children.

When no answer is received we are often disposed to say that it is not the will of God to give us the answer. We will find it much easier to yield to our own false reasoning about the an- swer to prayer than it is to shake off our lethargy and seek God until the answer is obtained. There are so many persons who rest content without the distinct experience of answered prayer. This distressing fact reveals the serious deterioration of Christian life in these last days. These unhappy souls pray daily, they ask many things, and devoutly hope that some of their prayers will be answered. They apparently do not know that it is the norm of spir- itual life to receive definite answers to prayer. They obviously do not know that the heavenly Father wills day by day to do for us what we ask in faith.

We must take the words of Jesus just as they were spoken. We must not allow human reas- oning to weaken the force of His teachings about our asking and receiving. We owe it to ourselves to take sufficient time while praying, to listen to His voice, and believe the truth that "Every one that asketh receiveth."

We should not make our many failures of the past the measure of our faith for the present. We must hold fast the assuring fact that the effectual fervent prayer of God's obedient child availeth much.

The son's request for bread is based on his relationship to the father. It is by virtue of this relationship that the son has the inalienable right to expect his father to answer his requests. When Jesus speaks of the son asking bread of his father, He is speaking of an obedient son. The son that finds no pleasure in obedience to his father and presumes that he can still ask and receive what he desires will certainly be disappointed. A son who loves and honors his father will find it is the father's good pleasure to answer his daily requests.

Consistent living on the part of God's people is the condition for obtaining the answer to prayer. God's precepts requiring obedience in our living, and His promises relating to our praying are inseparable.

We can certainly count on God's fulfilling His promise to answer prayer when we obey His sovereign will in all things. We should take time to meditate on the tenderness and love the heavenly Father has for His obedient children.

Much of our difficulty in praying is removed when we think on the happy relationship ex- isting between an obedient child and a loving heavenly Father. When He sees His child with sincere purpose and steady will seeking diligently in everything to be and live as a child, then our prayers will prevail with Him as the prayer of an obedient child.

It requires considerable time to comprehend fully the teachings of Jesus regarding the inher- ent principles of effectual praying. If God's people will take sufficient time to meditate on the essentials of prevailing prayer, they will be rewarded richly for the hours spent in the school of Christ. When once we grasp the gracious truth contained in the words of Jesus, and take a firm hold on the promises relating to prayer, we will then realize the meaning of His words, ". . . Every one that asketh receiveth." We firmly believe that the Master stated the truth when He said, ". . . Every one that asketh receiveth . . ." Nevertheless we are con- fronted frequently with the startling and disconcerting fact that we do not always receive definite answer to our prayers. We find it exceedingly difficult to reconcile these disturbing facts with the explicit statement of Jesus regarding the answer to our prayers.

When we consider the Master's teachings about prayer, we must not strive to make them conform to our wishful thinking regarding the answer to our prayers. It is possible for us to set our heart on obtaining something we greatly desire for our own personal gratification, and then express our keen disappointment because the request was not granted.

The answer to our perplexing questions about prayer will be found when we study the Master's words about the son asking for bread. We are fully aware that the son cannot live without bread; he must have it or perish. However, there are many things the son may ask which are not as important to life as food. He may ask his father for money, or fine clothing, or toys. The father may consider it wise to give his son these good gifts; and again he might deem it best for the son's own good to withhold these things requested; but when the child asks for food it is a different matter of life, because food is a necessity.

There are many good gifts which our heavenly Father may deem it wise to bestow upon us, such as good health, prosperity, and financial security. If He wills to withhold these things we must submit to His sovereign will without complaint. Perfect health, prosperity, and earthly goods are not essential to life in this world. Our relationship to God does not depend on these creature comforts. These things cannot impart to us the moral strength we need to cope with the trials incident to life in this evil world. It requires the "Bread of life" to give the spiritual strength to sustain us in these last days. We are fully assured that our Father will give us the living bread from heaven to keep us strong in faith, undaunted in courage, and invincible in hope.

The grand climax of our Lord's discourse on prayer was reached when He disclosed the Father's promise to give the Holy Spirit to His praying children. He would have us understand that our urgent requests for the bread from heaven are answered by the Father's gift of the Spirit.
He is teaching us that the Spirit is given to the children of God for the express purpose of sustaining and satisfying life. Our incessant demands for spiritual food are supplied by the indwelling Spirit. Our daily prayer should be, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." The answer from heaven is, ". . . Every one that asketh receiveth . . ."

CHAPTER 11

SEEKING AND FINDING

". . . He that seeketh findeth." — Luke 11:10

When Jesus said, "He that seeketh findeth . . . ," He disclosed the second fundamental principle of prevailing prayer. His immortal words assure us that we can make some import- ant discoveries through prayer.

His brief statement presents the greatest challenge known to mortal man. His teachings about prayer are a direct challenge to our profession of faith. If we believe that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, we must believe that some very important discoveries can be made regarding these essential facts about Him.

It is astonishing what men will do when inspired and motivated by the hope of finding the things of earth they so ardently desire. They sail uncharted seas, endure the scorching heat of the desert, scale the ice-covered mountains, and brave the dangers of a trackless wilderness in hope of discovering the things they diligently seek.

It does not require a chart, or compass, or costly equipment to find the things of God. We have no stormy seas to sail, no blistering sands to cross, no snow-clad mountains to scale, and no pathless wastes to encounter in our efforts to find the things we seek from God. We are not haunted day and night by the tormenting fears that we will not obtain the answer to our sincere petitions. We have not the slightest reason to doubt the validity of Christ's statement, ". . . He that seeketh findeth . . ." Our faith to seek the things of Christ is based on His integrity and veracity.

When Jesus said, "Seek, and ye shall find . . . ," He was evidently speaking about finding the possessions of our heavenly Father. We are assured that His provision is as great as the manifold needs of His children. The weary can seek and find rest. The weak can seek and find strength. The sick can seek and find health. The Father wills to grant the various requests of His praying and trusting children.

When Jesus revealed the Father's promise to give the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer, He obviously intended to impress His trusting children with the fact that the Spirit would enable them to seek and find the treasures of truth. He later confirmed this remarkable fact regarding the ministry of the Spirit, saying, ". . . When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth . . ." — John 16:13.

We do not discover the things of God by mere chance; neither can we find them by a process of human reasoning. The things of God are revealed unto us by His Spirit. The Word declares, ". . . Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." — 1 Cor. 2:9, 10.

Prayer is like the telescope that enables a man to discover remote stars, blazing suns and whirling worlds in outer space. We may think of prayer as a microscope which enables a man to look into the realm of

small things.

The Holy Spirit makes visible the invisible things of God. He enables us to pray so persistently that we can focus the light of Christ on the resources of God, and discover worlds, wealth, and wisdom unknown and unseen by the natural man. The inspired Apostle said,
". . .We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." — 2 Cor. 4:18.

We discover the eternal things of God in direct proportion to the measure of our seeking in prayer. The man who seeks diligently to know the things which God has prepared for them that love Him, will be rewarded by a greater measure of knowledge than the man who is casual and indifferent in his seeking.

It is necessary to deny ourselves of many things in order to seek and find the possessions of the Father revealed in His Son. The Apostle disclosed this truth when he said, ". . .What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord . . ." — Phil. 3: 7, 8.

It is impossible to obtain a more perfect knowledge of Christ until we count all things loss for Him. We must lay aside the things we count gain. To be aware of Christ in daily life is of greater value than all earthly knowledge to be obtained in this world. It is written, ". . . Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."— Jer. 29:13.

We cannot comply with the conditions stated in this promise unless we divest ourselves of all cumbersome cares.

When Jesus gave us the parable about the son asking daily bread of his father, He fully in- tended to impress us with several salient facts about prayer. The fact that the son seeks and obtains the things provided by his father is not the only truth contained in the parable. A son worthy of such a loving father would consider him to be more than a generous provider; he would rejoice because of his father's presence with his family. The presence of the father means much to an innocent child in this passing world.

Jesus would have us understand that our heavenly Father is present with His family in this world. We know that our Father has provided good things for us, but He means more to us than a generous Provider. The fact that He is present with us at all times, and in all places fills our hearts with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Philip expressed much in his brief prayer when he said to Jesus, ". . . Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." When this faithful disciple made this request, he voiced the deepest longings of the human heart. We cannot be satisfied in this distressed earth without a clear revelation of our heavenly Father. Philip did not ask for the impossible when he made his importunate plea to Jesus. Perhaps he had heard Jesus say, ". . . He that seeketh findeth . . ." The Saviour answered Philip's request when He said, ". . . He that hath seen me hath seen the Father . . ."

If the Father revealed Himself in His Beloved Son in that distant day, we can expect Him to reveal Himself in His Son in this day. Our need is as great as the need of the pleading disciple. When Jesus said,

“. . . He that seeketh findeth . . .,” He had no intention of leaving us confused and in doubt concerning the things to be discovered through prayer.

The Master’s word affords us a valid reason to expect the Father to reveal Himself to us in His Son. This is obviously the truth He would have us see in the parable of the son asking bread. It is absolutely unthinkable that an intelligent child would not be aware that his father was present when he asked him for daily bread. It is likewise contrary to truth to suppose that the child’s father would be pleased to remain unknown and unseen by his family.

God’s infallible Word reveals that He did manifest Himself to His people in the ages past. If the dateless past is the only time God has revealed Himself, then we in this dispensation of grace have no truth to substantiate our claims that Christ was raised from the dead, and showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs.

We cannot persuade ourselves to believe that Christ has clothed Himself with perpetual si- lence, and cannot and will not reveal Himself to His people. If a seeking soul cannot be as fully aware of Christ’s presence as a child is aware of his father’s presence, then the Master’s words are utterly meaningless. When Jesus said, “. . . He that seeketh findeth . . . ,” He banished for ever our bewildering doubt and confusion of mind concerning the reality of the heavenly Father’s abiding presence with His happy family.

If our minds fail to grasp the import of the Saviour’s teachings about prayer, we should wait patiently before Him in humble submission and quiet meditation until our minds are clear and our faith strong. The prayer of faith can obtain the substance of things hoped for, and make real to us the evidence of things not seen by the natural eye.

It is not unusual to find reliable witnesses who will testify that Jesus has revealed Himself to them while they were devoutly seeking Him in prayer. These godly people are neither fanatics nor mystics. They consider the recurrent visitations of Jesus to be the norm of spiritual life.

During the peaceful hours of the early morning I was praying and waiting before the Saviour when He suddenly revealed Himself to me. I saw Him as clearly as anyone ever saw Him in the days of His flesh. I ceased to pray, and remained quiet and speechless in His Presence. The moments seemed too sacred for me to break the sweet silence by prayer. What could I have said to Him? Was He not the answer to all prayer?

I do not know how long He lingered with me on that memorable morning. I was not aware of the passing of time. To me, all time had ceased, and eternity had begun. No language can express my boundless joy and happy surprise when He stood before me. I shall never forget the beauty of His face and the glory of His garment. The glory radiating from His Person filled the room with a soft silent light. He spoke not a word to me. His attitude was as One who listens attentively when you speak. I realized as never before in my life that He wanted me to pray. My heart was immediately burdened to pray for a visitation of God. I humbled myself in His Presence and put my head between His feet and poured out my soul in the agony of intercessory prayer.

The vision of Jesus satisfied my heart and gave me perfect contentment of mind regarding His

willingness to answer prayer. I realized that He was the end of all seeking and the answer to all problems of life. I bowed low before Him, and opened my inmost being to welcome Him as my Lord and Master. I devoutly worshipped Him in spirit and in truth. To this gladsome hour He is as real as the flesh of my body and the earth beneath my feet. I have never had one doubt regarding His presence.

Perhaps some will ask if there is a scriptural basis for believing that the Saviour will reveal Himself to His seeking people. I was confronted with this question after the Lord manifested Himself to me. Could it be that the vision was nothing more than the result of my wishful thinking? Was I a hopeless victim of an overwrought imagination? Was I suffering from a serious mental disorder? Was it a fanciful dream? These were some of the questions con- fronting me after the Lord had appeared in answer to my prayer of faith.

In my diligent search for truth, I recalled that the Saviour had said, ". . . He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." — John 14:21.

The gracious words glowed with a new light, and disclosed a new meaning to my rejoicing soul. His assuring words were all I needed to confirm my faith and answer my perplexing questions. I found many promises in the Scriptures, but this one promise was sufficient to satisfy my heart and mind.

Some of my friends firmly believe that I am sick. Certain others are greatly concerned about my mental condition. Perhaps some have devoutly prayed for my immediate healing. I am thankful for their earnest prayers.

I have often wondered how some persons interpret the Saviour's own promise to manifest Himself to them that love Him. I wonder if they believe that such an experience is possible in this present age. I am convinced that many do not believe that the Saviour's promise ex- tends to anyone except the chosen disciples. They evidently consider all reliable testimony as being fantastic and fanatical.

If we allow ourselves to be hindered by the unbelief of this modern age we will surely fail to grasp the fact that frequent visitations of the Lord are to be expected in a normal Christian life.

When Jesus said, ". . . He that seeketh findeth . . . ," He intended to impress us with the fact that an obedient child of God would seek to please Him in all things pertaining to life. This truth is obviously revealed in the parable of the son asking bread. Surely the son would seek to please his father. A son worthy of the heavenly Father would seek to please Him in matters of life. The obedient son would also realize that the father was pleased with him. The perfect example of this is revealed in the Son of God. The Father witnessed to His pleasure in His Son when He said,
". . .This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." — Matt. 3:17.

The Beloved Son witnessed to this truth when He said, ". . . The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." — John 8:29.

We make the greatest discovery in life when we discover the secret of pleasing God. An obedient child of the Father that lives day by day with an awareness of His pleasure has found the pearl of great price.

Our human frailties and infirmities of body and mind will often hinder us in performing always those

things which please our heavenly Father, but there is nothing in the world that prevents us from being a pleasure to Him if we are willing to obey Him in all things relating to life. We can be a pleasure to our Father long before we are able to understand how to do the things which are well-pleasing in His sight. The favor of God rests constantly on the people who believe Him and diligently seek Him. It is written, ". . . Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." — Heb. 11:6.

When we obtain His approbation we have received the greatest reward known to mortal man. The earthly pleasures we leave behind when we come to the end of life's journey are not important, but the eternal pleasures received at the end of the way are worth all it costs to obtain them.

CHAPTER 12

THE KNOCKING THAT OBTAINS AN OPENING

". . . To him that knocketh it shall be opened." — Luke 11:10

These words of the Master reveal the third fundamental principle of the effectual fervent prayer that availeth much.

The Master disclosed the value of praying persistently in His discourse about the man asking three loaves at midnight. There is something much more encouraging in His teachings about prayer than we find in the words of the reluctant neighbor, who said, ". . . Trouble me not: the door is now shut . . ." Our Lord would have us understand that the goodness of our heavenly Father far exceeds the goodness of the sleepy man. The Master is teaching us that we can prevail in prayer in spite of the discouragements and difficulties confronting us in life.

The bread so desperately needed to satisfy the hunger of the weary wayfarer was on the other side of the closed door. Much depended on the importunate pleading and insistent knocking on the part of the man seeking bread. If he had been discouraged by his friend's gruff words, ". . . Trouble me not . . . ," he would have gone away defeated and empty handed. If he had believed that his drowsy friend had spoken his final word when he said, ". . . The door is now shut . . . ," he would have departed with a deep sense of frustration and failure.

Our heavenly Father will never rebuff his praying children, saying, ". . . The door is now shut . . ." Jesus is teaching us to pray with unwavering faith and firm confidence. He inspired us with dauntless courage to pray persistently when He said, ". . . To him that knocketh it shall be opened."
The Saviour's heartening words imply that a vast realm of truth will be opened unto us when we knock at the door of the Father's house. It will enhance our understanding concerning the possibilities of prayer if we will devote some time to study what the Saviour has said about the open door set before His people.

Jesus identified Himself as being the door when He said, "I am the door: by me if any man will enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." — John 10:9

His astonishing words enable us to comprehend more completely the truth about prevailing prayer.

Christ is the door. He is the only entrance to God, and the only entrance to salvation. When we put Him in the promise regarding our persistent knocking in prayer we can perceive the truth. We can interpret the assuring promise as saying, "To him that knocketh, Christ, the Door, shall be opened." In other words, Christ will open Himself to us in answer to prayer. This is a blessed truth to contemplate. Christ opens His loving heart to His praying people. He opens His eternal hope to His praying people. He opens His enduring holiness to His praying people. He opens His invincible strength to His praying people. In the light of this Divine revelation, one is constrained to say, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearch- able are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" — Rom.

11:33.

It has pleased the Lord to open His immutable purpose to His faithful saints and enable them to see His ultimate triumph over sin and death. He opens the gates of eternal life, the greatness of enduring love, and the glory of His likeness to His praying family. Through prayer we can enter into the joys of an uttermost salvation and delight ourselves in the abundance of peace. Through prayer we can escape the snares of Satan, and elude the evil purposes of the foe.

Christ is both an entrance and an exit. We can pray our way into the blessed realities of spiritual life, and pray our way out of the bewildering problems of life. Our Lord revealed these gracious facts to us when He said, ". . . To him that knocketh it shall be opened."

When Jesus opens Himself to His praying people He opens eternity to them, for He fills eternity with Himself and contains eternity in Himself. He is the First Cause and the Final Conclusion of everything in time and in eternity. Our concept of Christ is enlarged when He opens to us. The Psalmist was fully aware of this marvelous truth when he said, ". . . Thou hast set my feet in a large room." — Psa. 31:8.

Christ wills to open His Word to us in answer to prayer. He stated this fact when He said, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." — John 17:8.

Perhaps my personal testimony will encourage others to pray that Christ will reveal His words to them. During the quiet hour of the morning I was asking the Saviour to enable me to understand His Word. For many years I had made it my practice to study the Scriptures, but I was aware that the Scriptures contained a depth of meaning that I had not perceived. I sincerely desired to understand the Word of God. I realized my need of an enlarged concept of the plan of salvation. It was the one prayer of my heart to know more about God's invin- cible Word in order to preach the message of life to a perishing world. I was convinced that the Lord had heard my sincere prayer. Not many days after the season of prayer, He began to unfold His Word of truth to my heart and mind with a depth of meaning I had never known.

I was teaching in Asbury College when the Lord began to reveal His Word to me. I listened to my own lecture with great interest. I said things about the Saviour that had not been prepared in my notes for the class. The light of Divine revelation flooding my soul was not the result of my reasoning. The truth about redemption did not come from my own mind; it was coming from the mind of Christ. My soul was enjoying great peace, and His living words were like fire in my spirit. I was constrained to tell others of the Saviour's love for lost humanity. To this happy hour His truth abides within my heart and mind. His Spirit continues to reveal the Words of Christ to me day by day. I can say with the Psalmist, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."— Psa. 42:1.

God's imperishable truth will glow with a new light when we knock at His door in prayer. If we have failed to grasp the significance of Christ's plain teachings about prayer when He said, ". . . To him that knocketh it shall be opened," we should ask Him to open Himself to us. There is nothing more simple and understandable in life than knocking at a door. Even a little child can knock at a door.

Christ is the Door between the spiritual realm and the physical realm. When we are born of the Spirit we enter a spiritual kingdom, which is a spiritual realm. We live, move, and have our being in a spiritual

realm with Christ. We are in the world physically, but we are not of the world spiritually. God's Word declares that a righteous person is like a tree. A tree lives in two realms of nature; it lives in the earth, and it lives above the earth. Paul re- cognized this amazing fact when he said, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." — Col. 3:2.

Jesus revealed an amazing truth when He said, "I am the door . . ." We can enter into His presence and pray before Him in the same simple manner that we can go into another room through an open door. When we discover this amazing truth, we find it possible to take others into His presence and talk with Him about their needs. It has been my pleasure to take others into the presence of Jesus many times. I saw the truth of these things when I entered into a covenant of prayer with Christ. I do not find it difficult to enter into His presence at anytime.

When Jesus said, ". . . To him that knocketh it shall be opened," He meant to show us that it is possible for His praying people to enter the heavenly place where He is seated on the mediatorial throne, and present their petitions to Him. This fact is substantiated by Paul, who said, ". . .Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." — Col. 3:1.

The inspired prophet evidently perceived this wonderful truth concerning Christ when he said,". . . He shall be for a glorious throne to his Father's house." — Isa. 22:23.

God's children have a glorious throne in the Father's house. They have a perfect right to come boldly to the glorious throne of grace and make their requests known unto their heavenly Father.

Our Lord likewise disclosed a marvelous truth about the door when He said, ". . . And shall go in and out, and find pasture." It is apparent that a saved man can go from one realm to another and find spiritual food. Jesus has made an ample provision to sustain His people in both the physical realm and the spiritual realm. He cares for His people in the natural world and in the spiritual world. The Saviour would have us understand that the Good Shepherd will care for His flock while they are out in the field, even as He cares for them when they are in the fold. In other words, the Saviour will preserve us while we work and witness for Him in the world, like He preserves us when we are resting safely in the fold of His love. It is written, "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore." — Psa. 121:8.

The changeless Christ has spoken with absolute authority concerning the open door. ". . . Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." — Rev. 3:8

". . . To him that knocketh it shall be opened." It shall remain open to all eternity.

CHAPTER 13

THE IMMORTAL PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS

". . . Golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints." — Rev. 5:8.

Christ frequently chooses some unusual place on earth to reveal Himself to mankind. It is obviously consistent with His Divine Nature and eternal purpose in redemption to disclose Himself in some unusual place and in some unexpected manner.

He revealed Himself to Moses in a burning bush in a desert. He revealed Himself to be the long expected Messiah to a woman of unsavory reputation at Jacob's well. He revealed a measure of His effulgent glory to three chosen disciples on a high mountain. He revealed Himself and His purpose to give the Gentiles the Gospel to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus.

Perhaps the most amazing revelation ever given to mortal man was given to John when the Saviour revealed Himself clothed in His majesty and might standing in the midst of the seven churches. John said, ". . . When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. . . ." — Rev. 1: 17.

Christ chose to reveal Himself to John while in exile on the lonely isle of Patmos. This holy disciple was banished to this wave-washed and wind-swept pile of shattered stones and shifting sands, ". . . For the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." — Rev. 1:9.

The Saviour selected this faithful man to be the human channel through which His sublime truth could be given to His trusting saints. It pleased the blessed Lord to reveal the sublime truth about prayer in John's picturesque language, ". . . Golden vials full of odours . . ."

Our Lord would evidently have us understand that prayer is a part of worship. It is like the odours of sweet incense ascending upward to God. The heavenly Father is pleased with our fervent prayers when we fill them with the fragrance of our sincere worship.

The Saviour would have us understand that our prayers are kept in golden vials in His Holy Place in heaven like the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, were kept in the most Holy Place in the temple.

Perhaps God's praying people have not fully grasped the fact that all sincere prayers are immortal, and the Lord preserves these prayers like a sweet incense kept in golden vials.

We surely are aware that Christ's prayers are living petitions preserved for us in His plan of eternal salvation. He breathed the power of His endless life into His prayers. His prayers are immortal because He is immortal. His prayers will be answered because He is the answer to all prayer.

The prayers recorded in the Holy Scriptures are an immortal part of the Divine plan of sal- vation. These

petitions were made immortal by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Spirit enables God's people to pray with yearnings 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. 8:27.

It is clearly disclosed in this remarkable Scripture that every prayer empowered by the in- dwelling Spirit becomes an integral and immortal part of the entire economy of God as disclosed in the plan of redemption.

I am thoroughly convinced that every prayer offered according to the will of God shall be answered either in our lifetime on earth, or after we have entered our heavenly home. However, I cannot discover anything revealed in the Word of God to warrant anyone in believing that the translated saints can pray for persons living on the earth. Praying to the translated saints, and asking them to pray for us, is a modified form of idolatry. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. All prayers must be offered to Him, and in His Name only.

When I affirm that every prayer offered in the Name of Jesus shall be answered, I am not saying that God will overrule the human will in order to answer our prayers. He cannot and will not save any man against his will, but He will convict a man of sin against his will.

Perhaps an incident will disclose what I mean when I speak of an immortal prayer. One night during a camp meeting, a man came to the altar weeping with deep conviction for sin. After a season of earnest prayer, he was converted and gave a glowing testimony. His faithful father had preached for many years and had prayed often during those years for his unsaved son. He never lived to see his son saved, but on this particular night in the camp meeting, the loving Lord answered prayer and saved this erring son of the preacher.

It helps me to imagine that the Saviour called His sainted servant and said, "My child, I have many of your prayers in golden vials. They are like sweet odours poured out before Me. I have the prayers you offered for your erring son during your lifetime on earth. I am now ready to answer your prayers during the camp meeting where you preached My Gospel many years ago. My child, I have just now granted your son a pardon in answer to your prayers and prayers of My people." It encourages my heart to believe that God will answer every prayer.

While praying during the quiet hours of the morning in a hotel room some years ago, I was burdened to pray for a woman slowly dying with a cancer of the throat. She had been a successful missionary for many years and had returned home from the field broken in health, bitter and resentful in spirit. I knew her saintly mother during her lifetime, and I knew how she had prayed for her daughter.

While praying for this dying missionary, the Lord said to me, "I am ready and willing to answer a mother's prayer, and give her suffering daughter peace of heart and mind." I was so sure that the Lord had spoken to me about this dying woman, and about His willingness to answer her mother's prayers, that I wrote a letter urging certain women to go and pray with this suffering missionary. She found peace and comfort of heart and mind, and went home within a few weeks to be with her faithful Saviour and her rejoicing mother.

Many of the Lord's redeemed children will live and die without receiving the answers to many of their sincere prayers. When we live by faith and die in the faith, we can be assured that a Just and Holy God will not forget His certified promises regarding His willingness to answer the prayers offered in the Name of Jesus.

The ". . . golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints," shall be poured out before the mediatorial throne of Jesus some glorious day. When that gladsome hour shall arrive on the wings of time, we shall see the triumph of the tears we have shed in the hours of agonizing prayer. We shall see the Father glorified in the Son.

We are living in a passing world filled with fears and doubts; but we can live in this transient world and not be filled with its fears and doubts regarding the answer to our prayers. The inspired Psalmist said, "Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us." — Psa. 62:8.

God's certified promises relating to prayer give us the inalienable right to say, "Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I." — Psa. 61:1, 2.

The Scriptures encourage us to pray incessantly and importunately knowing within ourselves that God will answer our petitions in His own time, and according to His own will. Let us offer up prayers with strong crying and tears unto Him that is able to save to the uttermost. Let us pray without ceasing until the hour comes for our immortal prayer to be poured out like sweet incense poured out of golden vials.

CHAPTER 14

CHRIST PLEADS HIS WILL

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am . . ." — John 17:24.

Jesus presented the precious legacy of His prayer when He offered His intercessory prayer preserved for us by John. The Lord let His disciples have the pleasure of knowing what His intercession for them in heaven as their High Priest was like. The disciples had heard the Saviour pray for them many times, but they had never heard Him pray as He did at this particular time. They must have been deeply impressed by the simplicity of His approach to the Father. They heard Him pray with the implicit confidence of the Beloved Son, Who is co-equal and eternal with the Father. They must have realized that Christ breathed into His intercessory prayer the efficacy and power of His endless life.

Jesus presented the priceless legacy of His prayer to the Father when He said, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou gavest me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." These gracious words of Jesus reveal His final will regarding the blessed estate of the redeemed. His inalienable right to plead His will before the Father is based on His finished work in the world. He said, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." — v. 4.

Jesus made it clear that His intercessory prayer is an integral part of His redemptive work on the cross. His finished work and His final will are one in the Divine plan of salvation.

It has pleased the Saviour to disclose the final fulfillment of all He has willed and devised for His purchased people. The pleasing prospect of being with Him where He is shall be fulfilled to the glory of the Father and to the everlasting admiration and joyful acclamation of His adoring saints.
It was difficult for the disciples to understand the Saviour's avowed purpose to go away. Their minds were sorely perplexed and their hearts troubled by the disturbing fact of His sufferings and death. They thought that He was leaving them alone to serve and suffer in a world hostile toward all they believed and preached. Perhaps they had almost reached the point of accepting final defeat when Jesus revived their faltering courage, saying,

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." — John 14:1, 2.

Let us emphasize His gracious words, ". . . a place for you." Our Lord revealed the purpose of His departure when He uttered these immortal words. He lifted the veil between time and eternity to establish the faith of His troubled people. He enabled His ransomed saints to see the heavenly home of the soul with the eyes of their hearts. He would have His people rest their faith on His comforting words, "In my Father's house are many mansions . . ."

There will be no homeless children in the family of God. All shall dwell in stately mansions throughout the endless day. This unfriendly world has no permanent abiding place for the children of God. They

were born in this world, and many shall be buried in this world, but this passing world is not their home. They have no continuing city on the earth. God's people are citizens of the celestial City, the heavenly Jerusalem, which John saw coming down from heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Perhaps we are disposed to think of the eternal pleasure and ineffable joys to be obtained in the place prepared for His people. We try to visualize the beauty of the City whose Builder and Maker is God. We are inclined to wonder about the skill of the Infinite Artist who has blended the seven prismatic colors of white light to enhance the resplendent glory of the holy habitation of the redeemed.

While meditating on the blessed hope of heaven let us not overlook the fact that our expect- ations are based on the finished work of Christ. Jesus said to the Father, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." He made no mention of the price paid in blood and tears to prepare the place where we could be with Him to all eternity. He prays like One returning home after having completed an assigned task.

His vicarious sufferings on the middle cross provided the necessary fitness of moral character for us to share eternal bliss with Him in the Father's house. His intercessory prayer assures us that we can be sanctified through the truth. It is His will to cleanse us by His blood and present us holy and unblamable and unreproved in His sight. (Colossians 1:22.)

We have every reason to believe that we can avail ourselves of the blessed benefits of His finished work, and come to the end of life's journey and receive a grand welcome into the City of God. His finished work and final will are the sure foundation on which we rest our hope to be with Him where He is, and to behold His glory.

Jesus possessed a peculiar joy in achieving His Father's purpose in redemption. He had a peculiar pleasure in providing a place in the Father's house for His trusting people. His joy in bringing many sons unto glory enabled Him to triumph over His physical sufferings and anguish of soul.
The merciless mockery of the multitude, the scorning sneers of the scribes, and the reproaches of the riotous rabble could not turn Him from His fixed purpose to finish His work according to the will of the Father. The stripes, spittle, blood, and bruises could not defeat Him. The insults and indignities heaped upon Him could not overwhelm His fervent love for His homeless saints. Being numbered with the transgressors, He was crucified on a lonely hill called Calvary. He suffered, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

He was despised by foes, derided by fanatics, and deserted by friends, but He triumphed over sin and death, and returned to the right hand of the majesty on High, and ever lives to make intercession for His saints.

It would be utterly impossible to imagine the overwhelming despair and dreadful disappoint- ment that would sweep over the souls of the redeemed if Christ's prayer should not be answered. The black raven of despair would croak the dirge of eternal death on the graves of the godly. The living sons of God would lift up their voices in unutterable lament and bewail the day they heard the hope of the Gospel.

We have no fears and doubts regarding the final triumph of Christ's intercessory prayer. He has presented His petition as a legacy to be shared by His trusting people. His last will and testament has

been signed by His nail-scarred hand and sealed by the Holy Spirit. Every word uttered in His immortal intercession shall be answered in full.

The voice of His supplication has been heard in high heaven, and the language of His weeping has been interpreted before the mercy seat of pure gold. His tears shall triumph and His petition shall be granted.

It is almost unbelievable that our Lord can find pleasure in holy fellowship with His ransomed people to all eternity. His prayer shows us that it is His will to dwell with His people in the sacred bond of love throughout all ages, world without end.

The greatest pleasure to be enjoyed in heaven will be the unspeakable pleasure of being with the Saviour for evermore. The glory of His presence shall make glad the City of God.

We would find no pleasure in beholding the beauty of the Father's house of many mansions if Christ were not present to fill it with the light of His countenance. The brightness of His glory, and beauty of His Person shall enhance the happiness of the redeemed. The river of life, the fruitful trees, and the anthems of angels enhance the joys of the habitation of the holy people, but these blessed realities would fail to satisfy the citizens of the land of endless day unless the glorified Son were present to receive their eternal praise.

Let us continue to pray that our Lord will count us worthy to receive the legacy of His inter- cessory prayer presented to the Father. Let us not fail to obtain the spiritual fitness provided for us in His finished work. We must ever be mindful of the fact that without holiness no man shall see the Lord.
Let us take comfort in the Saviour's immortal prayer, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou gavest me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."