

Extempore Prayer

M. P. Talling

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EXTEMPORE PRAYER

COMMUNION WITH GOD

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EXTEMPORE PRAYER

ITS PRINCIPLES, PREPARATION,
AND PRACTICE

BY THE REV.

MARSHALL P. TALLING, Ph.D.

“Κύριε, διδάξον ἡμᾶς προσεύχεσθαι.”



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May

DEDICATED
TO
THE MEMORY OF HER
WHOSE KNEE WAS MY EARLIEST ALTAR, AND
WHOSE LIPS AND LIFE WERE A
CONSTANT AND INSPIRING
EXAMPLE OF
COMMUNION WITH GOD
MY MOTHER

“MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER.”

Matt. 21: 13.

“THE DISCIPLES ASKED JESUS TO TEACH THEM TO PRAY;
AND THEY NEVER ASKED HIM TO TEACH THEM ANYTHING
ELSE—NOT EVEN PREACHING.”

Rev. W. H. Hincks, LL.B.

OF THE LATE PRINCIPAL JOHN CAIRD IT IS WRITTEN:

“HE WAS GREATLY INTERESTED IN THE EFFORT AFTER
GREATER BEAUTY OF HOLINESS, GREATER ATTENTION TO
FITNESS AND PERFECTION OF FORM IN THE EXPRESSION OF
RELIGIOUS FEELING.”

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PREFACE

Any treatment of the formal principles of prayer, however carefully the author may guard himself, is liable to leave the impression that he is recommending artificial aid to devotion. Nothing, however, could be farther from our purpose. The artificial and formal are fatal to prayer. Above all things we must avoid and abhor unreality in worship.

The object of this manual is not to offer substitutes for the spirituality indispensable to power, but to aid beginners to the knowledge which is also indispensable, and to guard against dangers which must be seen to be avoided. Our endeavor is to provide a brief but complete survey of all the principles involved in prayer, both public and private.

Chapter II was inserted, not because it is a part of our theme, but because it constitutes an instructive background for it.

The term "free" or "extemporaneous," as used herein of public prayer, means not the impromptu utterance of an unprepared person, but rather "conceived" prayer, which has received suitable premeditation as to its purpose, its substance, and its form.

In order to anything like a complete treatment of our theme it was found necessary to touch certain truths at different angles. This, however, has been done in such a way as to avoid unnecessary repetition. In some cases indeed care has been taken to mark references so that mutual support may be derived from varied presentations.

It is assumed throughout that the prayer-life is preceded by the new birth.

Scripture quotations are given in general in the Revised Version.

The collection of prayers herewith presented has been carefully selected from nearly two millenniums of the best recorded examples. Every prayer was chosen or indited for a special reason; and will be found either to illustrate some principle inculcated, to serve as a model of form or expression, or to suggest new lines of thought. They have been classified and numbered for convenient reference.

Grateful acknowledgment should be made, of counsel, encouragement, or assistance, received from Rev. Principal Caven, D.D., LL.D., Knox College, Toronto, President Pan-Presbyterian Alliance; Professor B. B. Warfield, D.D., Princeton College, Princeton, N. J.; Professor G. L. Robinson, Ph.D., McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Ill.; Professor F. R. Beattie, D. D., Louisville, Ky.; Chancellor O. C. Wallace, D.D., McMaster University, Toronto; A. C. Courtice, D.D., editor of *The Christian Guardian*,

Toronto; and Charles A. Eaton, D.D., pastor Euclid Avenue Baptist Church, Cleveland, O.

In making this humble contribution to a subject of so supreme and pressing importance, the author sends it forth with the prayer that its usefulness may be such as to show that he has been Spirit-led in the performance of a task to which he has felt himself Spirit-driven.

M. P. TALLING.

Toronto, April 10, 1902.

EXTEMPORE PRAYER

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This volume owes its existence to the conviction:

That in free-worshipping churches the weakest part of church service is generally public prayer.

That in many theological colleges the attention devoted to training men for the office of public prayer is inadequate.

That, as a result, the prayer-life of the church is affected; for the purpose of prayer, and its power in solving life's problems, are not well understood; and though the church is rich in the volume of its prayers, it is not so rich in the quality of its praying.

That, inasmuch as liturgical worship tends to formalism, public prayer—like preaching or pleading at the bar—should be the free expression of a suitably disciplined advocate.

That present-day tendencies conflicting with prayer, such as prevalent speculation, criticism, and freedom of thought, on the one hand, and a strong drift toward ritualism on the other, make it increasingly necessary to keep right in our vital communion with God.

That a study of this important subject will prove helpful to any Christian, but more especially so to those whose duty it is to lead others in worship. Well indeed has Andrew Murray said, "There is nothing that we so need to study and practice as the art of praying aright."

Every Christian prays, but few Christians make prayer a subject of study. Everybody knows something about prayer, but few know how to exercise the strength of its might.

Every age has had some souls great in prayer; and some ages have been made great by giants of prayer, who put to flight the armies of the aliens, and turned the world upside down. Ages these about which men write and speak and wonder, yet the power which made them possible awaits our possession. If the church had spiritual power proportionate to its numbers, wealth, and prestige, it could speedily subdue the world to Christ. As it is, the church is confronted by defeat just where most she needs victory. In amazement she beholds at both extremes of the social scale masses of humanity almost untouched; reverence steadily waning, and the Sabbath being secularized. In ill-disguised confusion she is asking why such a proportion of the Christian community never enter her doors, and why paralysis seems to have fallen upon the arm which at certain periods of the past wielded conquering power for God? No single answer could

make full reply to queries like these; but if it be true that closet prayer is neglected, that home altars are thrown down, that prayer-meetings are losing their grip, that in some pulpits prayers are read, and that in others the praying is poor, then some clue is afforded to the spiritual loss from which the church is suffering. To lay all the responsibility for this upon the pulpit would be unjust, but to omit mention of the pulpit's responsibility would be equally unjust. That the pulpit is culpable for the people's deficiency can scarcely be denied, because that is consequent upon the relation supposed to exist between pulpit and pew. For this fault, however, there is some palliation, inasmuch as the colleges have never seriously dealt with this problem. In some seminaries, truly, the office of prayer does receive considerable attention, but of the church generally it may be said that public prayer is given but a secondary place in our college training. Yet it is universally recognized that learning to lead in public prayer is a difficult task; that efficiency therein is a high attainment; and that in no exercise of public worship is the novice more quickly detected, or poverty so readily felt. For the highest exercise of the office something more than heart culture is necessary, it requires also a special mental training. What is needed to-day, if the church is to cope with world-forces, and mould them for God, is men of giant mould, great of heart and intellect, and every fiber in liv-

ing communion with God. Never was it felt as in this enlightened age that religious development must keep abreast of the tide of progress. To lag behind means irreparable loss. To keep in the lead means heroic struggle. But nothing less than this is laid upon the consecrated intelligence that would win the world for Christ. Not the pulpit alone, but the pew also, needs counsel and inspiration to this mighty task. If, therefore, free prayer, and power in prayer, are demanded of spiritual leaders (and all leaders must learn) it is imperative that the best aids procurable, and all the help available, be provided for them. Even in individual experience this is an important matter, but when viewed in the light of possible influences upon untold multitudes of worshippers, the responsibility assumes vastly greater proportions. It is a serious responsibility to lead an audience in prayer, but it is a much more serious matter to fail in that holy function.

✓ The leader who draws his hearers into the conscious presence of Deity, enabling them to realize His glory and their own unspeakable need, and then conducts intelligent meditation, makes worship at once a glory to God and a means of enrichment to human life. Nevertheless all worshippers know from experience that the prayers of some men do lead them out and up into another world, a higher life, a new experience; impelling thoughts they have never before conceived and creating an atmosphere of glory

hitherto unknown. To be so lifted into "heavenly places with Christ Jesus" is to return to earth with new ideals. Old things lose their glamor and release their grip of the soul. New things become ours, for we are transformed in that central desire which orients the soul and enables us to lose our will in the Will Divine.

Is it not true, on the other hand, that you have heard from the same lips a sermon orderly, clear, virile, and a prayer rambling, indefinite and vapid; the former being a presentation of well-considered, well-arranged and important truth, felicitously expressed; the latter ill-considered, poorly-arranged thought, born of struggle so apparent, or following a rut so wearily worn as to destroy all sense of spirituality? And is not such disparity between power in preaching and in prayer as discreditable as it is unjustifiable? Whatever defects attach to other parts of public service, if the worshipper be lifted by prayer to true spiritual vision, where new ideals are born, and glimpses of new possibilities are attained, he will not only be better fitted to face the work and worry of the world, but will long to return to worship that the vision may be renewed and his spiritual strength augmented. Is it not true that in many churches the sermon is the strongest part of the service? In others the singing? Rarely indeed are the prayers. We know there are exceptions, but conspicuous exceptions throw the general weakness into stronger contrast. Did not

Jesus say, "It is written, my house shall be called the house of prayer"? Should we not expect, therefore, the delight of public worship to be more largely devotional? Over the whole service the prayers should cast a spell, bringing all minds into a reverent and devout mood, where they yield themselves to God and hunger for blessing. Prayer prepares the soil of the soul for the seed of the Word. Thus was it that the Saviour pronounced, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled," and it is prayer more than anything else that quickens the soul into stronger desire. An audience lifted, warmed, quickened, is brought within easy reach of influence,—a prepared people ready for prepared truth.

Nor has all been said. The influence of prayer upon the preacher himself is of primary importance. It is essential to the exercise of his prophetic office that the Gospel minister be strong in God, and in the power of His might; in other words, a man of prayer, acquainted with the heights and depths of the subject and empowered by its exercise. How can he be more than himself except as he is God-impelled? Giants there have always been, but never was there a great religious leader, from Abraham, the father of the faithful, to the living leaders of our own day, but was conspicuous for prayer. Never went forth a warrior at his own charges or a prophet in his own strength. All Spirit-filled men have come

by their power in the same way—by prayer and by a study of prayer.

In the Scriptures prayer-power is regarded as the universal inheritance of believers, the promised possession of saints, available to all and always available. It is not mentioned in the Decalogue, nor named among the New Testament gifts, but it is rather represented as an ideal condition to which the children of the King should aspire, an unceasing exercise which makes men the effective instruments of God. In fine, prayer as a spiritual power is possible to all, but for the office of teacher and leader, the minister requires, by spiritual endowment, natural gifts, and unusual culture, to become what is termed in other lines "a specialist" in his subject. May we, therefore, like His disciples of old, sit lowly at the Master's feet in loving filial reverence. May His Holy Spirit guide us—heart and mind and will—into all truth, and sanctify us unto all service. To that end may our study be a true "waiting on the Lord" in the hunger of expectant prayer. And may we tarry "until we be clothed with power from on high."

But on the very threshold of our study we are confronted by objections to the use of extemporaneous prayer in public worship, and though it may seem like a digression to refer to these here, it will not be fruitless to do so, inasmuch as we need, for an intelligent consideration of the subject, to have the whole field before us.

CHAPTER II

FREE WORSHIP *VERSUS* FORMULARIES

It is not requisite to our present purpose to discuss at length the relative merits of those types of service which rival free worship, yet they merit more than passing reference, since if we would apprehend the defects, or appreciate the merits of our own, we must examine the claims of superiority made by the other two types of worship. Free worship is rejected and criticised by two sections of the Christian church. Both of these use formularies in the service of the sanctuary, but one class is "ritualistic," the other merely liturgical.

RITUALISTIC SACERDOTALISM

The priesthood of this section of the church claim, in a peculiar way, to be an exclusive channel of regenerative grace, and to possess by divine commission a supernatural authority over laymen in matters of religion.

Possession of unique powers by the priest separate priest and people, elevating the former to a position of eminence. It is his duty to exercise some of the functions of religion for the laity. "Christ," says the Roman Catholic Catechism, "left to the pastors of His church the power of forgiving sins." Not only has the

priesthood the power of the keys "to bind and to loose," but men are deemed incompetent to think for themselves in religious matters, hence the necessity of a supreme and infallible "authority."

LITURGICAL WORSHIP

For any fair comparison of liturgical and free worship, it is essential to remember that the use of a formulary need not involve the doctrines which distinctively Protestantism lives to combat. Any church of any faith might adopt without modification of its tenets a fixed order of worship. As a matter of fact, many evangelical branches of the church, both in Europe and America, use a liturgy in the sanctuary service, not because their doctrines necessitate it, as in the case of sacerdotal ritualism, but because they deem a formulary preferable to free worship.

From the liturgical standpoint the case may be thus summarized. A liturgy has "a certain stateliness of thought and charm of style which satisfy the ear and cling to the memory." It "makes the worshippers independent of the officiating clergyman, so that his faults do not hinder their devotions." Affording a common and uniform means of worship, it serves to bind together all the members of the church into one fellowship and loyalty. It is "especially suitable for old people, because of its unchanging form of words, . . . and for young people, because their interest is sustained and they have some part in the worship." Negatively, it is urged against non-liturgical wor-

ship that it possesses no uniformity, the people take but little part in the service, and are exposed to the doctrinal bias and personal peculiarities of the minister. But chiefest among the objections is that lodged against "extemporaneous" prayer, by which is always meant unpremeditated prayer,—in Dr. Bethune's phrase, "the unchastened promptings of the mind or uncorrected effusions of the heart."

FREE WORSHIP

From the standpoint of free worship the case presents a contrast chiefly in three respects: In regard to the fixed uniformity of the service; in regard to its general cast or character; and in regard to prayer.

First, in regard to uniformity, both the types we have been considering are distinguished by having a service definite and exact which is constantly repeated. It is prescribed by authority, and is kept invariable by attached penalties.

In the ritualistic type the method of worship has doctrinal significance. Alteration of ritual would invalidate the sacraments, causing spiritual death to the worshipper, and bringing ecclesiastical penalty upon the priest. In the liturgical type, method has less significance. Its variation is not deemed fatal to the worshipper, but it constitutes a violation of church canons, and exposes the offending clergyman to ecclesiastical censure. By this exclusive restriction to a definite service, both types elevate method to undue prominence,

and give it a primary significance. In one case it usurps the place of spiritual power, and in the other competes with it. The contrast with free worship is apparent in two respects. Whereas they both to some extent identify the spirit and the form, free worship, by its genius, separates them. One it recognizes as essential, the other as non-essential. The spirit of worship is deemed all-important, the form but subsidiary.

Secondly, free worship is distinguished by keeping the forms and externals of worship elastic and variable. Any form may be adopted that commends itself as conducive to spiritual welfare. Recognizing God as sole authority, it accepts as divine the wide liberty of the Scriptures; believing that where the head and the heart are right the worship will not go far wrong. Indeed, trusting the true tendency of a renewed life, it assumes that people may as safely be left free in their worship as in their living.

If man were vacant of God, worship (if such it could be called) would need to be a prepared article offered by hearts incapable of real motion, but while God is above and within us, worship will tend to take on a suitable mood and a reverent expression. So far as doctrinal bias is concerned, if a minister be orthodox enough to preach he will scarcely endanger the faith of the flock by his prayers. So, while one side prizes uniformity, the other values freedom.

In regard to the prayers, we believe that saying

the words of others is not so valuable for growth in grace as expressing one's own thought. To follow a formulary requires no original thought; but if worship is to sanctify the whole life it must be an exercise in thinking, a personal fellowship with God. To this end free prayer is helpful. Because the worshipper does not know what the prayer of the leader will be, his mind is kept on the alert. He must make personal appropriation and application of the prayer to his own case. While guided in the general trend of his thought he is moved by the suggestion and inspired by the sentiment of the leader to think for himself. That this is done in silence makes it no less "taking part" in the service, and it has this further advantage that the worshipper prays with closed eyes in holy secrecy with God; not with open eyes—an unprayerful attitude. Free prayer may rarely possess the perfect exterior of a formula, but it has a fervor and warmth, a spontaneity and contagion unfelt in a constant repetition. Then the whole service, and especially the prayers, are born of the occasion to such an extent that occurrences of the week are brought into the breathings of the people with a tenderness and appropriateness impossible to prepared forms. Of course impromptu prayer is not recommended. That indeed is precisely what we are condemning. The chief purpose of these pages is the production of powerful prayer, first by preparing the man, and then helping the man to prepare for the office.

In brief, then, the use of a formulary tends to "formalism" and all that it involves of injury to the spirit and purpose of worship. Forms cannot be fixed and prescribed without destroying the distinction between the essential and the non-essential. As soon as they are *fixed*, they begin to impinge on the spirit. The adoption of even an optional liturgy would tend to displace extemporaneous prayer, and to disqualify the pastor for exercising that holy function. The use of a form is so easy that natural inertia would lead to the disuse of free prayer and to the pastor's enfeeblement. Of the most lauded liturgy of our day an estimate is at hand from a reliable source and so modern that its breath is still warm. Said the Dean of Canterbury in a recent sermon, "The emptiness of many of our churches shows the need of changes in our services. We alone of all churches go on reciting the Athanasian Creed, most unsuitable for public recitation, most uncharitable and most repulsive to thousands of those who hear it. Our liturgy, as many clergy testify, is what the people do not want, and cannot understand. It is too iterative, too long, too mechanical, too formal. And although fifty years ago Convocation agreed that some modification is needful for the people's spiritual necessities, we go on as if smitten with paralysis, and nothing is done."

A severer indictment could scarcely be imagined yet it is doubtless just, for where this

liturgy most flourishes is found the strongest drift toward ritualism; and ritualism is characterized by a passion for extremes.

Artificial services are a development of periods of religious calm, and are marked by religious decadence. Whereas, on the other hand, every great crisis of religious activity commonly termed "revival" or "reformation" has been marked by the casting off of religious paraphernalia and ceremonial. For the church, as for the individual, intense religious life takes on its own expression, and it is direct, simple and spontaneous. That it is often marred by indecorum is only proof that uncultured sinners are saved, and evidence that we should teach religious decorum, but nothing more restrictive.

The best method of resisting formalistic and ritualistic encroachments is the production of an improved free service—more perfect in external graces and more powerful in prayer—an educational process deserving the profoundest attention and unflagging zeal of the church.

CHAPTER III

DEFINITION OF PRAYER

What is prayer?

In seeking a reply to this question it is of first importance to realize that we are dealing not with a word or a combination of words, but with a reality, a living force. Phrases are lifeless; words are dead; no "word" can incarnate a desire—it requires a person to do that. Phrases are but the garments in which aspirations are clad. The prayer itself is alive; its home is the soul; its nature spiritual. It is the "motion of hidden fire that trembles in the breast." Prayer is the soul's uplook, and out-reach for pardon and help, for comfort and counsel. As a reality it subsists independently of speech.

Prayer gains nothing on the divine side by being framed into language. Word formularies can serve no part in interpreting man's wants to the Almighty. Those He already is acquainted with, "for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him"; but articulate speech helps to make more intelligible to man himself, his own end of the heavenly commerce. Prayer is communion with God; a spiritual experience in which man—a spirit—holds intercourse with the Father of Spirits. Not only is it on a higher plane than its expression, but it also

transcends reason. Moving in the same direction as reason, indeed, it is a hand that reaches far beyond its own body—the invisible hand of faith. In Browning's phrase—

"A man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a Heaven for?"

The implication in these figures, however, must not be interpreted in terms of distance, but in terms of difference; for, "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth" (Ps. 145: 18). God's Word and Christian experience are full of this assurance.

In the Scriptures prayer is described as "drawing near to God," as "lifting up our souls," or "pouring out our hearts unto Him." The term itself at one time freely used of petitions to men, courts, kings, etc., is now restricted chiefly to man's Maker; moreover, this change in the signification of words which accompanies and assists the development of language has affected "prayer" greatly to its enrichment. According to its proper or etymological meaning it signifies petition or request, but as used of Christian worship to-day its content includes also adoration, confession, and thanksgiving. Consequently definitions of prayer are made inclusive of these conceptions. To quote the Shorter Catechism:

"Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies."

The new Catechism of the Free Churches of England and Wales answers the question, "What is prayer?" thus:

"In prayer we commune with our Father in Heaven, confess our sins, give Him thanks for all His benefits, and ask, in the name of Jesus, for such things as He has promised."

Excellent definitions, both, though neither of them brings "adoration" into prominence, and the latter fails to make explicit the fundamental condition of effectual prayer, viz., that it must be in accord with the Divine Will. Wherefore we venture the following:

Prayer is communion with God, in which we adore Him, confessing our sins, thank Him for mercies received, and under the Holy Spirit's influence ask for things agreeable to His will; and all in the name of Christ.

In favor of this definition it may be said, that by defining prayer as "communion" attention is drawn to one phase of prayer that is always implied but often forgotten, namely, that communion is a mutual act—a receiving as well as an imparting experience. In it we not only commune with God, but God also communes with us. The mercy-seat is not so much a place of petition for "things" as a tryst for intercommunion. Thither we go to speak to the King, and there we should wait to hear His voice. The one is an easy thing, the other not so easy, not so common. We do not practice listening to God as much as

we do talking to Him. The receptive part of communion is the part least practiced, but the part most needed—because it is in the receptive act that faith is exercised, appropriating God's manifold benefits, wisdom, grace, etc. This should not only be implied in the definition, but it must be understood.

It may be well at this point to observe that for purposes of education, definitions have a place and worth all their own, since in the light of such systematic description one can justify or complete his conception of the reality thus symbolized. But a living conception is worth more than any definition; the one is the soul, of which the other is merely the body. This further truth holds, that an ultimate truth cannot be defined, and prayer belongs to this category. To be known it must be experienced. As a definition of light or color is meaningless to the sightless, or description of music futile to the deaf, so words alone can never convey the significance of prayer. Its chief characteristics may indeed be indicated, but beyond all definition and description is the mysterious reality of which words can only be symbols and thought but shadows.

Still more, to know is not to know in full, for ever-widening experience deepens and enriches knowledge. Therefore open wide the heart; let the intellect exercise its finest powers to attain a true conception of that spiritual reality about which we are speaking, for, standing in the light

of revelation and science, it may be asserted there is no force equal in compelling power to the dynamic of a great thought. Grant it admittance into your life, and it goes to work silently, secretly, successfully; "as resistless as gravitation, as tireless as time, as silent as life, as deathless as truth, this great idea moves on, downcasting and upbuilding with a magic of method and result more wonderful than the springtime." A great thought, blending with the life whose stream it augments, becomes eternal; it swells the forces by so much new life, and where, as in prayer, the soul is linked to God, it is His life that flows into the widened channels of being. Our life is fed and developed and transformed by intercourse with its Author. Prayer is the vital stream between God and man. What are called "prayers" are the word-crafts that float on this spiritual stream.

CHAPTER IV

THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF PRAYER

One of the most helpful means for avoiding confusion in prayer and for making our thought intelligent to others is to remember that what are called different "parts" of prayer correspond to different mental attitudes. When we contemplate what God is, that is adoration; when thought is turned to what He has done or provided for us, that is thanksgiving; petition is seeking benefits for ourselves; while pleading for the sake of others is called intercession; but when the mind is bent upon our own condition and we acknowledge sin, that is confession, and the mental act in which fealty is pledged to Heaven is called consecration, or, more properly, dedication.

A few words on each:

Adoration comes logically first, and in the Model Prayer occupies the foremost place. "Our Father, which art in heaven; hallowed be thy name." Adoration is that approach of the soul to God which, sensible of His love, majesty, holiness and infinite greatness, feels, and seeks more fully to feel, the awe, reverence and holy affection due to His great name; transcending admiration and wonder, it is a blending of love

with the fervent desire that all the world should know and magnify the glory of the Lord. A poet's fine frenzy or a scientist's noble enthusiasm may fall far short of this; for to the fullest tide of feeling and the highest reach of reason, adoration adds something partaking of personal allegiance. Not in petition nor intercession, not in confession nor thanksgiving, is found the highest altitudes of worship, but in adoration and consecration. Its act is self-surrender to the King, and its language, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name." Adoration lives not as a separate thing, comes not always to definite expression, but is present in all reverent invocation of God and flows like a permanent undercurrent in all true prayer. It is often felt when unvoiced, and should make itself heard in all audible prayer as an undertone.

Praise is not usually denominated prayer, since its expression is ever associated with music, but the heart's desire, of which psalm and song are but the utterance, is truly communion with the Eternal. In one respect also praise joins adoration in a contrast over against all other acts of devotion. In confession, petition and thanksgiving, the worshipper's attitude is that of human need, consciousness of self mingling with the thought of God; but in adoration and in praise it is otherwise; here no thought of self remains; but the spirit soaring on glad wing to God dwells in rapture on His all-glorious perfections; sense

of self is lost in that divinest joy a human heart can know.

We mention "praise" here for two reasons: first, because the "adoration," which comprises too small a proportion of public prayer in general, is compensated for in part by the volume of adoration resident in praise; and next because praise falls logically between adoration and thanksgiving (our next head), since these two forms of prayer comprise the chief factors of praise.

Thanksgiving is that department of prayer which makes grateful recognition of the fact that "every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the father of lights" (Jas. 1:17). Although not enjoined explicitly in the Lord's Prayer, it is present there as an atmosphere, and, indeed, as such should permeate all worship. The very petition, "give us this day our daily bread," recognizes God as the All-Giver to whom man must look for blessing, and to whom, by all the worthy instincts of his nature, he is taught to return thanksgiving. Not merely like the flowers, unconsciously exhaling the incense-sweetness of a fragrant life, but, because man is more than a flower, he is enjoined by Scripture as well as prompted by intelligence to give glad utterance to his gratitude.

"Offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving and pay thy vows unto the Most High" (Ps. 50:14).

“With thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4:6).

“Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving” (Ps. 95:2).

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; give thanks unto him, and bless his name” (Ps. 100:4).

Endless are the phrases of similar significance: “created to be received with thanksgiving,”—“abounding therein with thanksgiving,”—“watch in the same with thanksgiving,”—“abundant by many thanksgivings to God,” etc.

But why lengthen the list? All examples, human and divine, reveal the law that gratitude for past bounty is the best preparation for future benefits. Acceptable petition presupposes appreciation. Any feature of prayer conveying the impression that God gives with reluctance stultifies the soul.

“The Sun, and every vassal star,
All space beyond the soar of angel wings
Wait on His word; and yet He stays His ear
For every sigh a contrite suppliant brings.”

The injunction “pray without ceasing,” is not to be interpreted as though it read “ask without ceasing,” but rather in that Pauline spirit which “in everything” gives thanks, for that is the will of God.

Confession. In accordance with the contrast above noted we now turn our gaze from the contemplation of Jehovah, to bend it on the soul. Self looks at self, and feels its sad condition.

Confession may be said to be the soul's endeavor to tell its sense of sin. But what it tells, and all it tells, must first be felt; and all the virtue in confession is to feel the sinfulness of sin as it ought to be felt by him who sins. To say we have sinned and not to realize the deathly guilt of sin, its horrid stain, is but to play at prayer. Then how can man, imperfect man, a perfect sense of sin obtain, or see himself as God beholds him? That may not be; but this is plain, man's knowledge is by contrast; the clearer his vision of God the greater his sense of sin. It was in the light of that vision, when Isaiah beheld "the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up," that he became conscious of his true condition and cried: "Woe is me for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips; and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 6:5). And Peter, too, discovered what he was by nearness to his Lord, and marvelling pleaded, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8). To this experience the Word helps a man. In this experience the agent is the Holy Spirit; convicting him of sin, convincing him of righteousness, and impressing upon him the certainty of a judgment to come.

A realization of sin is the prerequisite to confession, confession to pardon, and pardon to both happiness and fitness for service. So far from being a matter of words, confession is an expe-

rience of the soul too deep for expression. At this point it is that the Holy Spirit helpeth our infirmity and maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. But the confession of sin which cries we are miserable sinners, yet falls short of true "heart-searching," serves to cover instead of "exposing" sin; an injury to him who would worship and a profanity in the sight of Heaven.

Petition is that department of communion with God which "makes known" our wants, and "asks" that we may receive. It is the expressed hunger and thirst in response to which blessing is promised. Matt. 7:7, 8: "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you."

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6).

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

Intercession is that department of our devotions in which sympathy for our fellow men goes up to God in quest of benefits for them. This kind of interest on behalf of others is frequently enjoined in the Scriptures and by our Lord is laid as a solemn duty upon all His followers. Not only are we taught to "pray one for another" (Jas. 5:16), as friend for friend is fond of doing, but also for the heathen. "Ask of me and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance and the

uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps. 2: 8). Further still for our enemies, "Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5: 44). And more widely still, "I exhort therefore . . . that supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men" (1 Tim. 2: 1).

Dedication accompanies all real prayer, as a strand in the cord which binds the redeemed to the Redeemer, and though not of necessity always expressed, is present as an intention to new and higher obedience. Where consciously we bring our purpose into prayer the act may be denominated as vowing or dedication, for a definite pledge or contract is made with God binding to fulfillment by actual deeds as implied. Ps. 116: 14: "I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people."

Before leaving this theme, a word incidentally. Consecration is not mentioned in our definition of prayer. The reason for this is that a line must be drawn at some point, as there is no desire to make the term prayer synonymous with "worship," although so closely akin. In the famous maxim, "*laborare est orare*," this has been done; but a margin should be observed; for worship, the wider term, includes not only devotion but also the reading and expounding of Scripture, observance of the sacraments, and all self-sacrifice, martyrdom, and fealty to God.

CHAPTER V

PUBLIC AS DISTINGUISHED FROM PRIVATE PRAYER

Unless the student becomes seized of the characteristic distinction between public and private prayer, he will neither properly discriminate between them, nor realize why so much preparation is necessary for the one that is not needed for the other. In all heart qualities there is no distinction; prayer, public and private, are alike in relation to God; but in extraneous circumstances, in purpose, and in expression, public prayer possesses elements absent from private prayer, and this because of its influence, not upon God, but upon men.

In private prayer the individual in secret bares his heart before the Almighty, tells his own story of want or worship in his own way; he may use words to voice his longing, or allow inexpressible yearning to feel its way to the Heart Divine, but whatever the mode of expression it affects no other worshipper. This condition ever obtains; private prayer is between the soul and its Maker alone—God understands, and no other person needs to.

The term "public prayer" is applied to all devotion in which one voice leads the worship of

others. More strictly it is used of regular church service where the numbers are large, but as a distinctive term is applicable likewise to social and domestic devotion. But beyond all difference of time, place and circumstance, is this feature, that the leader's prayer affects, and is expected very much to affect, the devotion of his fellow-worshippers, who amidst more or less silence, add the weight of their own thought or passion to the audible prayer. This responsibility resting upon the leader, who must resist the disconcertment incidental to the presence of numbers, conquer his own subjective feebleness, and intelligently and impressively represent a congregation in prayer, is by no means light. Without disturbing the student we may say it is enormous. All the more readily does it become apparent therefore that to accomplish so lofty a purpose effectually the pastor requires mastery of the principles involved in the forms and expression of audible prayer.

The purpose of public prayer, it will be observed, so far as it affects human auditors, is not primarily instruction or persuasion as in preaching, but to inspire devotion. It is not sufficient for the leader to pray alone; he must impart uplift to his audience; he must move the people. This is patent; either he leads his hearers or he leaves them. If the latter, he fails in the very office he is called to fulfill.

So far as the leader is concerned, therefore, he

begins with a definite design. He is sensible, not only of God and self, as in private prayer, but has upon his heart the varied interests of the congregation and sets himself to lead their thinking through appropriate channels up to penitence, confession, aspiration, adoration, and that resolution to obedience which chains the soul to new endeavor. Now to plan prayer for the capture of the unworshipful, and then to conduct them through the various phases of worship necessary to high attainment and nobler ideals, requires an intelligent view of what worship includes, and also a knowledge of the principles involved in gaining and guiding the thought of men. Even to realize what may be done is a matter of no small moment.

CHAPTER VI

PREPARATION FOR PUBLIC PRAYER

So important is it to realize the need of proper preparation for the office of public prayer that in addition to the argument presented in the Introduction, and before we enter upon the theme itself, we invite respectful attention to the impressive statements of several acknowledged authorities on this subject. To commence with Professor Dabney, he observes: "Some affect to think that the spiritual nature of the exercise ought to preclude preparation; that because it is the Holy Ghost which teaches us to pray, we should not attempt to teach ourselves. This argument is a renewal of fanatical enthusiasm. Should we not also *preach* with the Spirit? Why, then, do we not extend the same sophisms to inhibit preparation of the sermon? The answer is that the Holy Spirit does not suspend the exercise of our own faculties. He works through them as instruments and in strict conformity with their rational nature. He assists and elevates them. He helps us also in prompting us to help ourselves. Bethink yourselves, my young brethren, that it is no slight undertaking to guide a whole congregation to the throne of heavenly grace and to be their spokesman to God. To

to speak for God to man is a sacred and responsible task. To speak for men to God is not less responsible, and is more solemn."

Accept also this counsel. A minister—and more especially a young minister—should "no more venture into the pulpit with an impromptu prayer than with an impromptu sermon."

On the same subject Professor Broadus writes: "He who leads a great congregation in prayer, who undertakes to express what they feel, or ought to feel, before God, to give utterance to their adoration, confession, supplication, assumes a very heavy responsibility. We all readily agree, and sometimes partially realize, that it is a solemn thing to speak to the people for God; is it less so, when we speak to God for the people? Whatever preparation is possible for performing this duty ought surely to be most carefully made. And yet, while very few now question the propriety of preparation both general and special, for the work of preaching, it is feared the great majority still utterly neglect to prepare themselves for the conduct of prayer."

Another kind of argument is introduced by an equally eminent author, Prof. W. S. Blaikie, who says of public prayer: "It is undoubtedly a grave charge, for which there is but too much occasion, that in our churches the devotional part of the service is often conducted with little care and preparation. It may happen that if a preacher has fluency enough in the language of

prayer to carry him on for the usual time without difficulty, he does not think of what he is to pray for, until he rises with the congregation to begin the exercise . . . it may possibly be an excellent prayer, but is it conscientious, is it respectful to God, is it fair to the congregation, for the man who is to be their mouthpiece at the throne of grace to rush into so solemn and momentous a service with hardly a thought of it beforehand? He may do it well enough, remarkably well, in the circumstances, but can it be that he will do it in the best possible manner? And is this a service that a conscientious servant of God should be content to do except in the best possible way? . . . Will the prayer be free from repetition, clumsiness, circumlocutions, and other incumbrances, which Bible prayers never contain? Who can say that it will? Or who can say that it is right to trust all to the Spirit helping our infirmities at the moment if we neglect what we might do beforehand towards the more thorough performance of the duty?"

Enforcing the need of preparation for public prayer, Washington Gladden affirms:

"Inspiration is not caprice; it must follow the law which conditions all divine intervention in behalf of men. The gods help those who help themselves. The grace of God is not given to relieve us from effort or to discourage us from responsibility, but to supplement our powers, and to stimulate our activity. Luther said that prayer

is study, and it is true—*bene orasse est bene studuisse*; but it is not less true that study is prayer. The diligent preparation of the mind for the heavenly gifts is the indispensable condition of the bestowment of these gifts.”

If you cannot correct your defects without becoming artificial, better blunder in earnest than say prayers without soul. If you cannot increase your knowledge of the subject without sacrificing yourself to rules, better—far better—remain in ignorance and let your zeal burn. But why should acquaintance with your theme reduce your efficiency? Rest assured it will not. The widest and profoundest preparation of head and heart, by private prayer and holy living, by reading and much meditation, will reveal itself in the power of your ministrations at the altar.

Preparation for public prayer is of two kinds:

A. Subjective.

B. Objective.

A. Subjective preparation includes all those qualifications of heart, and mind, and personal power, which enable a man to enter deeply into communion with God and to exert a profound influence upon men. It falls, therefore, into two branches. One of these, that is, the relation of the heart towards God as an essential condition of effectual prayer, is dealt with under “Conditions of Prayer,” Chap. VII. The other, the influence of personality as it tells upon an audience in prayer, is what we are more especially concerned with here.

When a minister enters the pulpit he takes thither more than a prepared sermon—he takes himself. And he ought to take a prepared self; for what he is counts mightily in his business there. If his life endorse his counsels, a silent but immeasurable force is added to his message. On the contrary, if doubt obscure his fair name, inestimable is the loss. And his task will become utterly hopeless should his people feel, though they say it not, “What you are thunders so loud we cannot hear what you say.” Howbeit, personality must be taken to include more than moral character, though, fortunately for the world, moral quality represents the core of the larger power. Using the term in its popular, rather than in its metaphysical, sense, it stands for a force over and above speech and action. Neither seen, nor felt, nor heard, it is inferred from what is seen and felt and heard. As personal worth it adds weight, and as personal peculiarity it puts the stamp of individuality upon a man’s every word and deed. In no place is the personal factor of such moment as in the pulpit. This we know will not be denied, yet the practical worth of the principle involved is much reduced by a common and discouraging misconception. It is assumed that personality is an unalterable quantity fixed by natal endowments, and consequently beyond individual control.

So damaging an error must contain some moiety of truth in order at all to float. How

comes this half-lie by its weight? The truth is, that God who bestows talents upon us, does determine their upper limitations. Beyond his highest register a man cannot go. By no amount of effort could an ordinary man make himself a Plato, or Napoleon, or Shakespeare; nor could a Plato make a Napoleon, or Shakespeare of himself. The number, the nature, the variety, the combination of our gifts are divinely determined. A power, not ourselves, decides who are to be artists, inventors, mechanics, poets, prophets, etc. In other words, the sovereignty of God is not handed over to humanity.

But who ever discovered the immense range of his possibilities? Who ever among the sons of men developed his powers to their full capacity or became all he might have been? We live to feel our limitations at a few points perhaps—every aspiring soul does that—but what areas of undeveloped territory, what latent powers unknown, lie dormant in every human soul? Every gift, like life itself, has a germinal or initial power capable of growth. Man is a miracle of potential forces awaiting more than mere human culture—awaiting also divine development. So mighty, so inconceivably great, are the possibilities of personal development, especially when made the channel of this renewed spiritual life, that the servant of Jehovah, who would influence men for God, should make “personal power” the first object of his solicitude. Happy the man

who is richly endowed. He stands a giant among men. His initial advantage is great. But his great strength may become his weakness. The lesser man may well rejoice if his deficiency impels him to intelligent application and closer alliance with the Author and Completer of personality. Moreover, the less highly endowed man ought to remember: (1) That success depends upon no single gift. (2) That different individuals possess diverse gifts in varying degrees, the possession of some compensating for the lack of others. (3) That fidelity in the use of few talents may accomplish more than a less faithful use of many. (4) That every talent cultivated develops to higher power; for practice makes perfect, growth is the law of life. (5) That different types of personality are necessary, and the peculiarities which differentiate one from all others are not "accidental," but rather special, intended for special development, so that a unique personality shall find its distinct place in God's definite work.

It may be further observed that our "education" is as peculiar to each as our natural endowments; no two are alike in either respect. Education begins in the cradle, proceeds through the home, the schools, and "the world,"—experience being the great teacher. Beyond physical and mental development is the heart-life, and personal grace wrought forth by the refining fires of suffering or adversity, and which finally give

character its richness, sympathy, and fitness for leading. Such alone is true education, because, as distinguished from simple acquisition of knowledge, *education* means developing the potential powers of a person into actual personal power. Thus out of the crude stuff of his original nature a man constructs for himself a character, as did, for example, Saul of Tarsus. So far we are on the human plane, but higher possibilities await us. Man is capable of a divine experience like this same Saul whereby he becomes a new creature, holding such a relation to God that he acquires new power and new possibility of power. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," and that new creation is but the beginning of a process of vitalization which God has indicated should be great because He "giveth not the spirit by measure," and we are encouraged "to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." In other words, when we implied that natal endowments determine the caliber or capacity of a man we were but partially correct because God is not through with his life. By the new birth he not only becomes a new creature but also a channel for increasing spiritual force, so that his highest powers have not their limits fixed by human weakness, as we supposed, but they rise and blend in co-operation with illimitable power. Not what he can do is the limit of his force, but what God can do through him. Says Dr. Marcus

Dodds: "There is no power on earth like the power of a holy, consecrated life, because he who is leading such a life is already above the world and belongs to a higher kingdom."

Martyrs and prophets, saints and sages—a thousand voices—attest that Paul's experience was typical—not singular—namely, that divine strength is made perfect in human weakness.

As electricity needs a medium for transmission, and by its presence changes a dead into a "live" wire, so the baptism of the Holy Spirit makes the right kind of weakness a channel for effecting very miracles of power. Many of the world's great prophets have, in early life, been timid, shrinking men. Were not Moses, Jonah, Jeremiah? Yet, Spirit-driven, they have risen to exercise surpassing power. What is the eleventh chapter of Hebrews but a paean to men of Spirit-filled life "who, through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness," etc.?

Hath not God chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty? Has not God made apostles and saints, martyrs and heroes of men and women that the world would have thrown aside as rubbish? Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings has He not ordained strength?

Let it be repeated, personality is not an unchanging quantity. Though constant as compared with its moods, it is nevertheless variable. Capable of indefinite development, its growth is

marked by change of cast, flavor, and quality, as well as of power. Know this also, O man, that it can suffer loss and diminution. Its sweetness may be embittered; its strength may be paralyzed. By leaning towards the divine intention a man gains two advantages: (1) He enables the same God who bestowed peculiar endowments, to perfect these to their appointed ends, and (2) he preserves his true individuality; and a new individuality wrongs itself by playing the part of imitator instead of developing resident originality. The weak imitation of a great man is weakness personified. Be yourself—a great or lesser original.

But the study of personality is a first-hand problem. Each must solve it for himself. This I would impress. Personality can grow. The creature who is crown of creation is capable of greater growth than anything below him in the scale of life. Because this is so, and because God has chosen personality as His especial agency and is waiting to make His “ministers a flame of fire,” every minister does himself an injustice who does not prize the individuality by which he is fitted to take a unique place in the world, and who does not expect mightily to increase in personal power. How to make the most of those potential elements embodied in every personality is a theme too great to be attempted here, but having indicated the untold possibilities of personal power open to all, the student will have an incentive to renewed study of himself.

A MINISTER'S MOODS

Not only is a man's effectiveness in public prayer conditional upon his personality, but also upon those transient phases of feeling commonly known as moods. If personality be represented as the set current of life, its moods may not inaptly, yet very inadequately, be likened to the waves which agitate its surface. The one is what it is because of its constancy, the other because of its variableness. On this account the former generally receives insufficient consideration, while the latter has attracted undue attention. As a disturbing element in public address, especially of that kind denominated extemporaneous, moods deserve consideration. Their power for evil has, I think, been exaggerated, yet nothing is to be gained by ignoring or denying the range of their influence. If we would do justice to our theme we must recognize that the greater the man, the more multiplied his endowments, the greater will be the possible range of his feelings. The great man is an instrument of many strings, the lesser man of few. One is exposed to suffering at more points than the other; and while this apparent disadvantage is usually compensated for in normal manhood by the increase of self-control and superior power accompanying unusual endowments, yet an Augustine, or Whitefield, a Wesley or Guthrie, may suffer depressions unknown to little men; but sometimes through these, and even by the fact of their occurrence a

new glimpse of the man's power is gained. It were a mistake to suppose that even disturbing moods are an unmitigated evil. In two ways they may be beneficial: (1) They are the means of introducing unconscious variety into our ministrations. Yesterday's prayer was full of light and thanksgiving; to-day's prayer is an echo of last night's struggle, and its cry of pain will voice the sentiment of some portion of the congregation. As our feelings rise and fall they bring us within range of different classes who would never be reached at all if the minister lived always above sky-line. (2) These "unfortunate" depressions are the necessary preparation for the birth of that sympathy by which one human being can enter into the experience of another. Being touched with the infirmities of others we are fitted for bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ.

Nevertheless moods are a recognized source of disturbance, and their causes are legion. Does not a preacher's health or indisposition, weariness or rest, peace or perplexity, sorrow or joy, indeed every phase of experience he undergoes, bring some influence to bear, helpful or otherwise, upon his public office? Even when a man of uncommon endowments stands at the altar, does he not often fall far below his wonted power, and is not this perfectly natural? The practical question is, How can we defend ourselves from the occurrence of baneful moods? Or occurring, how con-

quer them? Or if not wholly subdue, yet turn them to some kind of advantage?

Without minutely discussing physiological, psychological, and spiritual causes it is still necessary to indicate that because he possesses a three-fold life a man is liable to suffer from disturbing physical conditions, depressing mental states, and untoward spiritual experiences. Moreover, the close association and interdependence of physical, mental and spiritual conditions must receive due recognition. Thus will it be seen why care of the body and habits of mental discipline enable us to foster those spiritual conditions which make for power, and light, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Many damaging moods are due wholly to physical causes. Against these there is a large measure of protection. Regular habits for labor and rest, diet and sleep, will afford deliverance from some of them, while at the same time fostering strength to meet unavoidable shocks. Of all persons he who gives himself to the service of Christ should guard that tabernacle so fearfully and wonderfully made. "What, know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?" (1 Cor. 6: 19). Observe the penalty attached to neglect and injury of the body: "If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3: 17). Neglect of the body is sin. Multitudes are culpable; in deed, in dress, in work. In some cases

the *student* kills the man and a crime is perpetrated.

Against moods arising from mental perplexity there is much less defence, because so frequently due to events beyond our control—bereavements, losses, disappointments. But, again, obedience is the key to mastery. Mental laws can be violated only under penalty, and so great is the peril that we recommend every student to devote some attention to the study of psychology. Two practical suggestions are offered. It will be found that an experience which, viewed by itself, may cause depression, loses much of its force, when brought into relation to other truths and made part of a more comprehensive view. This, indeed, is precisely what "experience" enables people to do. Because of his relation to his flock a pastor's service should be a ministry of sympathy. Accordingly he should cultivate such sympathy by reviewing his parish and dwelling upon the woes, and wants, the sins and sorrows of his people, as well as upon those greater issues which affect communities and nations. In this way he takes on the feelings of others and gains a peculiar fitness for presenting their claims at the throne of grace. This touch with the living needs of others profoundly modifies his personal moods. Self is lost sight of in the larger issues pressing at the gates of Heaven. This kind of preparation makes a man representative in feelings, as well as in thought, of the constituency

he represents, a condition which cannot be simulated.

“Thou must be true to thyself, if thou the truth would'st teach,
Thy heart must overflow, if thou another heart would'st reach,
It needs the overflowing heart to give the lips full speech.”

Another class of moods arises from disturbing spiritual causes—temptations, unfaithfulness, sin. And spiritual paralysis is the most damaging of all the enfeeblements that cripple the exercise of prayer.

But for the conquest of unhelpful moods, whatever may be their cause, only one power can be supreme, and that is spiritual. Physical and even mental distress may be made the very point of display for spiritual power, whereas no compensating qualities are found to take the place of spiritual famishment and coldness. If a man would avoid morbid moods and prove helpful in his ministrations of holy things, his own life must be constantly refreshed from the hidden springs. The final key to the conquest of untoward conditions is communion with God. Prayer itself is the best preparation for prayer. He who is in the Spirit on the Lord's Day is prepared by his own inspiration to inspire others. The best means to attain this condition is undoubtedly contemplation and prayer in the closet immediately before undertaking the public service. He who descends to the pulpit from the Mount

will have upon him something of the Shekinah glow which will reveal that he has been with God. Moses' physical hunger prevented not its shining, nor did Stephen's mortal pangs in death. Spiritual power alone being superior to all human conditions, subjective preparation, passing all other care, is at its best in self-examination and private communion with God.

One other point before closing this section. We are told that individuality should be excluded from the service, and that extemporaneous prayer suffers from the moods and peculiarities of the leader. We reply, individuality *cannot* be excluded from service. Whether extemporaneous or liturgical, it is there. To quote Van Oosterzee, "Even the best precepts with regard to liturgical matters and liturgical actions run the risk of failing in their object unless powerfully supported by the liturgical personality, . . . In the words of Goethe, 'Say what one will, everything turns in the long run upon the person.' The liturgist, too, must be not merely a something, but also a some one; no speaking trumpet merely of the Holy Ghost, but His inspired mouthpiece and living organ" (*Practical Theology*, p. 443).

The personality behind the message makes a world of difference to the service. "One prays and thanks, consecrates and blesses in a wholly different manner from another, and he is free to

do so, inasmuch as he is really a different man from his more highly or less highly endowed brother."

So far as moods are concerned, it must be acknowledged that they do affect free, more than liturgical, services. But that fact emphasizes the truth that the former is the better channel for personal power. The more room for morbid moods to make their influence felt, the more room is there also for all the excellences of personal power to find play. If all, or even the majority, of men entrusted with the divine message were inferior men, possibly a form would tide them over as crutches do cripples. But God has ever chosen for His prophets men of power. What is wanted in public prayer is consecrated ability—the highest attainable, prepared for the office as fully as possible; and then with freedom unlimited to influence men for God. It is a prophet's mission; it needs a prophet's mantle. And would it not seem superfluous to add, so high a function needs preparation?

B. Objective preparation falls into two branches: (1) General; (2) Special.

Reversing the logical order, we will dispose first of the minor subject that our after course may be uninterrupted.

Special preparation: Special preparation is necessary for each occasion. We who would represent aright the interests of a constituency so wide and so diversified as those of a congregation

require intelligent acquaintance with their experience; therefore thoughtful consideration of the special condition and needs of his people constitutes part of a leader's preparation for public prayer. In this respect the faithful pastor is a better advocate at the throne than his more gifted brother, who is not acquainted with the personal joys and sorrows and ambitions of his fellow worshippers.

The events of the week usually produce changes in the homes of the people and the lives of individuals which should give direction to the Sabbath prayer, and sometimes even lend to it a unique character. Less frequently national or international matters of special moment press for appropriate mention at the throne. Of necessity, too, the purpose of a meeting should to some extent govern the cast of the prayer, as e. g., at a missionary meeting, the prayers should induce all to realize their own wealth of blessing, and the great spiritual poverty of unevangelized peoples; thus impressing them with such a sense of responsibility as would awaken sympathy and greater generosity.

In a similar way, thanksgiving, temperance, education, Sabbath observance, etc., should receive such special consideration that our prayers shall be appropriate and profitable.

To this end, therefore, there should be such special preparation for every service as shall reveal personal interest in and thoughtful remem-

branch of the peculiar necessities of our people. See also *Architecture of Prayer*, p. 114.

General preparation: General preparation refers to that training for public prayer which every theological student should receive in college. It is deemed necessary to teach him grammar, logic, elocution, etc., and rightly enough he devotes two or three sessions to the study of homiletics. Similarly there are principles underlying effective prayer which every man who assumes ministerial responsibility owes to himself, to his congregation, and to Him whom he should worship aright, to make as thorough a mastery of as possible. Some one has said, and said truly: "This is the day for young men and especially for young preachers. The young lawyer must prove his ability before he is trusted, the young preacher must disprove his before he is not trusted." But if responsibility must fall early upon our "preachers," is it not imperative that all provision shall be made for their equipment that they may be thoroughly furnished unto service? It is to this branch of the serious business of preparation that we now turn, and which constitutes the chief burden of the chapters immediately following. As the needle to the pole, may our hearts be kept true; and our spiritual vision undimmed; that the progress of our study may be tributary and auxiliary to our souls' pure intercourse with God.

CHAPTER VII

PRINCIPLES OR CONDITIONS OF EFFECTIVE PRAYER

Since it is important for the student to realize fully what is meant by "principles of prayer" we can afford to dwell for a moment upon that term. Vast is the difference between availing and unavailing prayer. But all the difference between success and failure depends upon observance or neglect of certain divinely revealed conditions of prayer. By principles of prayer therefore we mean those fundamental conditions which, observed, make prayer effectual; but disregarded render it unavailing. Holy Scripture puts the case briefly and strongly. "Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss" (Jas. 4-3). There is a right way of asking which is never failing. There are wrong ways of asking which must always fail. The conditions or principles which govern true prayer fall naturally into two broad classes according as they represent.

A. On the one hand, the vital spiritual relations existing between God and the worshipper; or

B. On the other hand, those qualities of prayer by which a leader is able to influence the worship of his hearers. The former are essential and spiritual; they make prayer what it is, and

govern all prayer, secret or public. The latter are secondary in rank (if it be safe to say so) as referring to the form, expression and practice of prayer in public worship.

A. PRIMARY OR ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS OF PRAYER

What, then, are the essential principles of prayer? It may make our response to this inquiry more intelligible if we remark that whatever may be the inherent characteristics of prayer which fit it for the purpose it is divinely intended to serve, these will be what they are, because (a) God is what He is; and (b) man is what he is. In other words, the nature of communion will depend upon the character and relation of those who commune.

And, further, since prayer involves *two* parties—God and the petitioner—there will be a divine as well as a human side to worship. The conditions will face both ways, towards God and towards man. Accordingly a skeleton statement of the conditions of effectual prayer may be thus formulated. The worshipper must recognize:

a. On the divine side: (1) The Sovereignty of God; (2) He must approach in the name of Christ; (3) under guidance of the Holy Spirit.

b. On the human side, availing prayer depends upon: (1) Man's condition or state of heart; (2) the matter of his prayer.

a. On the divine side: (1) The Sovereignty of God:

The one principle out-ranking all others—first

and supreme—which governs prayer is God's purpose. The petitioner is placed by the nature of the case where he must recognize the sovereignty of God. Every prayer must conform to the Divine Will. We are living in God's universe and are part of it. His we are by right of creation, preservation and redemption; placed here not to interrupt His plans, but by co-operation with Him to accomplish His purpose. In proportion to our fidelity we reflect His glory, but detract therefrom by negligence, disobedience, and insubordination. He is sovereign—man is subject. Omnipotent, omniscient and all-loving, God's absolute perfection ensures man's welfare. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him, for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." Created in the divine image (Gen. 1: 27); a little lower than Elohim (Ps. 8: 5); and entrusted with dominion over nature (Gen. 1: 28); man is nevertheless the child of his Father, and is taught to pray. Now prayer implies subordination and submission. Embodied in the very nature of the thing itself is the principle we have pronounced paramount. A petition is *de facto* recognition of superiority. Inferiors we command; superiors we obey. Prayer, therefore, is not dictation, is not advice,—but the request a child makes of its parent, trusting superior wisdom, reposing in undoubted love, and desiring success in no particular petition which

may be inconsistent with general and permanent welfare.

Declaring God's sovereignty, therefore, the Scriptures are careful also to reveal the Divine Character—those attributes which make sovereignty beneficent.

"God is Love." He is, "Our Father which art in Heaven." His purpose is immutable and benevolent because He is eternal and benignant. "The counsel of the Lord standeth forever" (Ps. 33: 11). "I am the Lord, I change not" (Mal. 3: 6). The universe and its events are not fortuitous but "predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. 1: 11) and "according to the *eternal purpose*" (Eph. 3: 11).

Eternal decrees would be truly frightful if not dictated by omniscience and eternal love.

"But," it may be asked, "is not man's sin an interruption?" Undoubtedly! but not an unforeseen rebellion capable of establishing lasting anarchy and dethroning Deity. God still rules, and not only rules but overrules, for even "the wrath of man shall praise Him." Also, He uses the adversary as an unwitting agent to further His designs.

Sin has undeniably been instrumental in bringing a new element into prayer, but is not the original occasion of its inception. All worship is communion expressive of the sense of the divine supremacy in His own universe. That

prayer which teaches to pray makes this very plain. Jesus taught His disciples after approaching God with adoration as "Our Father which art in Heaven," to pray first, "thy kingdom come." Why? Because that is God's great purpose among men. Heaven's business, to use the term with reverence, is to effect this one end, and men are not only invited but expected to become co-workers with God for the establishment of that Kingdom. But how is it to be established? The next petition indicates the means. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." The divine purpose is effected by the Divine Will. If therefore man would acceptably approach the Father, he must recognize the nature and the will of God.

In other words, the conditions of effectual prayer are divinely fixed, and the first demand made of the worshipper is that he shall humbly pray in accordance therewith, and where, as is frequently the case, he is unaware of God's will, not to press his own preference peremptorily. To venture upon self-assertion is not only to meet failure and leanness, but is violation of the first essential of worship, viz., recognition of the Father's will and wisdom.

"Go to now, ye that say, to-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city and continue there a year and buy and sell and get gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away.

For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that" (Jas. 4: 13-15).

On God's part, therefore, before man comes in prayer at all, the principle which imposes divine limits to effectual prayer is laid down. All too frequently the truth we are endeavoring to make prominent is so far neglected that men pray as though success at Heaven's Court depended *in chief* upon a petitioner's persistence and self-willed resolve to urge his own preference.

Oh, what wild praying results from this crude misconception! Oh, how often the holy office has been abused before men and angels by inconsiderate petition and unblushing advice! Is it a wonder thoughtful men marvel at what seems to be, and truly is, irreverent, or perchance impertinent, even to the verge of impiety? If printed prayers were entirely free from this blemish their adoption in preference to extemporaneous prayer might be more strongly advocated; but they are not.

If, however, limits are eternally imposed on our petitions, is not prayer made the poorer thereby? Not so. "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" Granting the good, shall He not also refuse the unwholesome, and reject both the improper and the unjust?

"The Power above who makes mankind His care,
May bless us most when He rejects our prayer."

PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE PRAYER 67

Human ignorance exceeds human folly. Both trespass on our best intentions; and it is not uncharitable to say that even man's meanness creeps into his prayer. Myself bulks larger than my neighbor at the throne. My own outweighs the general weal. Self is too much in evidence for either my own or my neighbor's good, or for God's glory. These are not different things, but the play of thought upon them confirms the conviction that man must trust God for more than an "answer" to his prayer; he must trust as fully and gratefully for the rejection of his unworthy and biased requests.

Everybody will not be able to acquiesce in Emerson's pronouncement—"Prayer that craves a particular commodity, anything less than all good, is vicious"; when, however, he adds, "Prayer as a means to effect a private end is theft and meanness," everybody can see that what he condemns is illegitimate and selfish prayer. But surely there are ten thousand private ends that will help to grace my immortal life!

A little reflection on the character of God and the nature of worship may put windows in our wisdom and new charity in our petitions; but as long as the pilgrimage continues man must guard against a possible unconscious element of distortion in his approach to the Almighty, and feel ever grateful that all that is good for the individual may be granted without infringement of another's rights, since in a divinely ordered

economy what is best for the whole community is best in the fullest sense for the individual. In prayer selfishness is not necessary; from prayer selfishness is excluded. No man can get the start of his fellow at the court that dispenses justice for all. Besides, the motive which impels to such a desire precludes its own effect, for God knoweth the thoughts and intents of the heart.

As between man and man no encroachments are possible at the divine throne. Let us feel grateful that limits are fixed which preclude man's interference with God's justice; He will shelter men from the evil effects of their own ill-advised prayers as well as from the imprecations of their enemies. Divine limitations narrow the area of prayer only to preserve its quality and deepen its benefits. God's sovereignty is man's safety. Man's welfare is widest where His will is unopposed. "Thy will be done" if properly understood, can only be prayed, however, by a wholly consecrated believer. Not every man, not every believer, realizes the significance of the expression. He alone can know it, who has passed through his Gethsemane and come forth ready, unreservedly, to do and to suffer the Divine Will—even though that, as in the case of his Master, leads to crucifixion.

Gethsemane and Calvary taken together interpret the significance of "Thy will be done,"—not mine own will or feelings would I consult; but I

crave such joy and brightness, or such pain and darkness, toil and discipline as shall best fit me to fulfill Thy purpose.

Let it be observed that to pray with this intention is quite a different thing from merely submitting to discipline. It is a glad acquiescence which cries with the Psalmist, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart" (Ps. 40:8); or with Pauline heroism exclaims, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in distresses, in persecutions, for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:9 and 10).

Such prayer is the renunciation of self-will (wilfulness) that true self-hood may be divinely developed within us.

THE NAME OF CHRIST IN PRAYER

How much Jesus has helped believers in their communion with God is something we are not very well able to appreciate. Before He came, God was variously conceived, but among the Hebrews He was commonly regarded as King and Judge. By altering our conception of the Almighty, Jesus has transformed our attitude to Him. Having shown us that God is our Father, all prayer becomes changed; having in it new elements of confidence and tenderness. God still remains King and Judge, but we are His children and He loves us. He is still august,

majestic, omnipotent, but distance sinks into nearness and fear is lost in affection.

Hitherto, also, men had more or less imperfectly groped their way to God through symbol and sacrifice,—feeling that their nearest touch to Deity was found in a dying sacrifice at a smoking altar. But now the veil is rent and direct spiritual intercourse instituted.

When, therefore, men object to “asking in any other person’s name,” and argue that Enoch and Noah, Abraham and Moses prayed directly to God, and that “prayer is now made poorer if we have to come to our Father indirectly through a mediator,” the whole beauty of our Saviour’s place and aid in the economy of prayer is misunderstood and misrepresented. For through Christ the world has discovered its kinship to God. By the way in which God has made Himself known to man, man can best come to God. Between the Infinite and the finite Christ is the “door” in both directions. In this there is nothing arbitrary or peculiar. There must be a psychology as well as a theology of worship. In order to intelligent prayer, where one can worship “with the spirit and with the understanding also” the creature must in some sense partake of the nature of the Creator. The necessity of the case is inherent. This truth constitutes the basis of Paul’s argument in Cor. 2: 10-16, which he drives so much further. Affinity with God enables man to understand God. Our oneness of nature is

close enough to make communion possible, but our difference of nature is so great that assistance is needed to make communion intelligible and helpful. Accordingly there is "one mediator between God and man, Himself man, Christ Jesus." Between man and God stands the God-man, and "through Him" we "have access by one Spirit unto the Father." If man's nature were wholly spiritual this would not have been necessary, but now it accords with the nature of things, that Christ, the Incarnation of God, who revealed the Father to man in terms of man's own language and experience, should be our Advocate. Pre-eminently is He qualified for the office; Son of God, He is also Son of Man. "Tempted in all points like as we are" our High Priest can be "touched with a feeling of our infirmities," and the argument continues, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4: 15, 16).

This brings us to our next step. Much has already been done, but further, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." Herein we are made aware that we have present and living help in our approach to God. The implication of course is not that some unwillingness or reserve on the Father's part has to be overcome by the pleading of the Son. This would misrepresent the Father who so loved us as to give the Son for our redemption, and appointed Him to that office

whereby He has displaced all symbolism, instituting for us direct spiritual communion—the new inheritance of the Christian age. Once indeed the term “advocate” is used of this office (1 John 2: 1), but the Greek is “Paraclete,” the same word used of the Holy Spirit in John 14, and there translated “Comforter.” Literally it signifies one who “stands by” to help us. Not only is the same term *παράκλητος* used of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, but Jesus identifies Himself with the Spirit in this living service; on one hand the Spirit—as the abiding “other comforter”—is to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us; on the other, Jesus says, “Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

By yet further counsel, however, Jesus helps our praying. For in addition to ease and confidence of approach, He graciously reveals the key to successful appeal. “Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name,” but now “whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.” “If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it,” etc. But what precisely does it mean to pray in the all-availing name? Well! first, it is not a matter of words. Nothing divine is a matter of phrases. Its significance is spiritual; something real is implied. The phrase “in His name,” or “for Christ’s sake,” appended to a petition cannot convert an unholy into a worthy desire, or a selfish into a Christ-like longing. To

attach the expression "for Christ's sake" to a selfish request is a contradiction in terms. Nay, more, it is sacrilege. A hypocrite might use the phrase, but venturing to do so only darkens the stain of his sin. This is no cheap "sesame" to open doors for all; no mere password that can be spoken by the enemy. It is a key to the true motive of prayer. Our prayer regulations read, "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." In other words, according to the economy of prayer, petitions to be availing must first have the sanction of Christ for only such prayers as He can endorse may pass current to Heaven. With endorsement, recognition; without it—failure. No, not failure, rather the best success; for a petition unworthy of Christ's endorsement were better rejected. Only a spirit of light can soar so high as Heaven. Prayers with unclean spirits, like men with unclean souls, cannot pass thither without cleansing. All slant and bias, all stained and shadowed wishes are debarred. That fact guarantees the petitioner's safety. Grasp firmly this truth; there is nothing artificial in making successful appeal conditional on approach through Christ. Any prayer offered in the same spirit in which the Master prayed is truly in His name, whether the verbal passport be used or not. If my desire is as His desire, it is worthy; that is the heart of the matter; if it be not, then the phrase is inapplicable, and neither

the "desire" nor the "phrase" should find expression; the wish is not holy, it should be suppressed. If your motive is Christ-like, your purpose worthy, your desire right, then alone is it verily presented "for His sake," or in His name. So that we may say that to pray in His name is equivalent to "as He desires us to pray," or as Jesus would pray were He in our place.

This is the sentiment Andrew Murray quotes from Jukes: " 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name,' that is, 'in my nature,' we ask in Christ's name, not when at the end of some request we say, 'This, I ask in the name of Jesus Christ,' but when we pray according to His nature, which is love which seeketh not His own, but only the will of God and the good of all creatures. Such asking is the cry of His own Spirit in our hearts."

"Christ," says W. L. Walker, "in so far as His Spirit dwells in us, places us in His own relation of Sonship towards the Father. This is prayer 'in His name,'—'I in them, and thou in me.' "

Not the words but the spirit of prayer makes it availing or renders it "asking amiss." He who entreats the Father as the Son has instructed us, both by precept and recorded example, can never fail in his request, because the heart of his desire is God's glory, the sole purpose of the worshipper to attain the Will Divine. In true prayer man identifies his own good with God's will, as God has identified human good with the divine purpose. Both Deity and petitioner are then seeking

the coming of the Kingdom among men. As a practical fact, every Christian can test the specific gravity of his prayers, or measure them by certain Scriptural gauges.

If a prayer contemplates partial good, it is too light. If it craves aught for self, regardless of others, then it is too heavy; it is self-weighted. That overweight of self must be eliminated. Again, if its cry be forgetful of the Kingdom, it cannot rise; if its purport be for God's glory, then appropriately it may be offered "for Christ's sake," because it is for Christ's sake; but oh! how often we arraign all the forces of human importunity to gain from God something which, so far from being for His sake, is craved wilfully for our own. Thus questionable ambition, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, intrude at the throne, eagerly clamoring for royal endorsement; and rudely pressing unholy claims, as though God would lend Himself in evil alliance. A prayer which is truly offered for Christ's sake cannot fail, but a prayer which closes with that phrase while its spirit is un-Christlike, is defective and must prove unavailing.

Another phrase, helpful as a test, because indicating the divine purpose and privilege in prayer is "and unto thee be the glory for ever and ever." All such expressions round a prayer into modified proportions; are equivalent to saying, "If aught of selfishness or unworthy desire has crept into my petition, then, Lord, forgive the weak-

ness of Thine erring child; answer in wisdom, for my heart's desire is wholly for Thy glory. 'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thought; and see if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting' (Ps. 139: 23, 24)." But has man no right to preferences? Has his desire for self and family no place in petition? Are not business and pleasure included in prayer? Most assuredly! All legitimate requests, all wholesome desires, all worthy ambitions, are native there. Man's preferences are undoubtedly consulted within the prescribed conditions, and these are large enough to include every real good for man.

"Whatsoever," "anything," and "what ye will," teach us the range of our all-sufficient privilege. Whatsoever is asked consistently with God's will. Anything for our real good. What we wish in line with God's glory may freely be granted. Rash indeed is he who would venture beyond! Blessed in sooth is it for His foolish children that God saves them from the disaster of their own unwise desire.

But all has not been said; all cannot be said; only with widening and deepening experience can a saint apprehend the profound import of access to God through Christ, for what Jesus is to man, is "true to the true; truer still to those who are more true, and truest to the truest." With ever-growing significance God's Christ is also man's Christ. Between the finite and Infinite

stands our Daysman, to whom is given all power in Heaven and in earth. He is man's way to God as well as God's truth to man. Christ is the "way" in whatever direction there is commerce between God and man. Because He is God's revelation to man, He is man's way to God. Moreover, above all that erring creatures can ask or think He adds weight by His endorsement to every penitential prayer and holy aspiration. "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father even Christ Jesus the righteous," who increases the human hunger, presses and perfects our claims, and then satisfies not to repletion but with a satisfaction that enlarges capacity and kindles anew all holy thirsting for larger growth and purer life. He in whom I live, lives also in me. Crucified with Him, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. Our Priest and Mediator is also our Prophet and King. Accepted as Saviour, He dominates as Lord, making us perfect in every good work to do His will, and working in us that which is pleasing in His sight.

For prayer as for practice, our instructions read, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 11:5). At that point the discovery comes that by giving Christ the right of way in my life, my prayers find the right of way in God's programme. This indeed is the significance of making prayer in Christ's name a condition of success.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN PRAYER

Speaking in general terms, the Holy Spirit exercises upon man a threefold influence—life-imparting, sin-convicting, and spiritual-awakening.

The Spirit is God's agency in imparting life, both in nature and in grace. By creation God imparted to man His own Spirit, and by re-creation He restores the sinner. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Again, the Spirit is God's agency in awakening a sinner to a consciousness of sin; for when He is come He will convict, or convince, the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment to come.

Moreover, the same Power which originates life and convicts of sin is the same Power that stimulates and develops life through all stages of religious experiences up to sanctification. In other words, man's life is God's life lent out to him, and the Spirit's power is always quickening in its influence; is a life-increasing, thought-exalting force. Coming upon holy men of old, it moved them to speak God's revelation, "For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." Descending upon the disciples at Pentecost, exalted "gifts" were imparted to them,—all their normal powers being illuminated; and this is the true influence of the Spirit.

He increases love by divine augmentation, "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:5). He is our abiding Comforter that we may not be desolate. Our Paraclete, who will guide us into all truth. Our steadfast assurance, witnessing to us that we are sons of God.

Advance in every department of truth is due to His movement upon man; as well in mental, as in moral life; for He who created nature, and the intelligence which cognizes nature, is the life impulse of both. Spiritual momentum is the Spirit's work. But the especial fact here to be emphasized is the office of the Holy Spirit in prayer itself, which is declared to be a distinctively Christian privilege, the inheritance of this age, for we read (John 16:23): "In that day," and verse 26, "At that day ye shall ask in my name," etc., where the reference clearly is to the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit. Again, with similar instruction we are told that through Him we have "access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18). It is in worship indeed that we place ourselves consciously under the Spirit's influence and "praying in the Holy Spirit" are accepted in the Beloved. In Old Testament language, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Is. 40:31).

In brief, the Spirit's power quickens man's whole

being, physical, mental and moral, into higher activity. He makes conscience sensitive to sin. He takes of the things of Christ and reveals them unto us. He illumines, inspires and sanctifies us; quickens faith; deepens love; and arouses aspiration for closer kinship with God. This is much, but not all, for beyond all the influences cited, Paul opens the revelation still further (Rom. 8: 26) by showing that man's infirmities in prayer are overcome by the Spirit. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered."

To pray according to the will of the Father, to pray in Christ's name, and to pray in the Spirit, are scarcely "identical expressions," as Saphir maintains, but, more accurately speaking, they present various phases of one truth, viz., that in acceptable worship, man—a spirit—identifies himself with the Triune God. As Andrew Murray beautifully expresses it, "The Spirit's breathing, the Son's intercession, the Father's will, these three become one in us" (*With Christ*, p. 203, note).

Lest any student should fall into the common error of conceiving God as tripartite and separated in feeling, he is reminded that God is *One*, in a sense altogether different from that in which He is *Three*. Supremely He is *One*, but as revealed to, and as worshipped by us He is *Three*,

and could not be revealed to us otherwise. The Son and the Spirit reveal the Father, but it is the Father they reveal. There are two sides to this truth. God cannot be known, or worshipped, until He is revealed. This is inherent in the circumstances of the case. But the converse truth is equally obvious. He can be worshipped only as He is revealed, i. e., as Triune.

b. On the human side—the worshipper's spiritual condition:

On the divine side we have seen that success in prayer is conditioned upon God's nature, purpose, and ever-present influence upon men. Now, turning our attention to the human party in this heavenly intercourse, we must inquire what personal conditions are necessary to effectual prayer.

In Chap. V, Sec. A, we were dealing with personality as it appears to the eye of men; here with what it is in the sight of God.

Personal conditions necessary to effectual prayer:

Sincerity. The first requisite I would mention is sincerity. "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." Sincerity presupposes the soul's sense of need, and then puts the weight of man's whole being behind the request. It is hunger undisguised and unrestrained; "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." And so of every kind of prayer—of adoration, confession, thanksgiving, etc., sincerity represents the reality of the soul's inner desire. We are to guard against self-deception, inasmuch as it is possible for us to intensely desire something which is not the highest good. We may be sincere about its attainment, but not sincere in the spiritual sense which "seeks first the Kingdom of God" and believes that all other particular good things will be "added" according to divine good pleasure. A sincere worshipper distinguishes between trooping passions, desires, and ambitions which press for expression, and that profound purpose which like an ocean current, beneath all its varying waves, moves straight towards God. Such movement of man's spirit towards the Eternal makes him a true worshipper, and the Father seeks such to worship Him.

Thus, indeed, is the first lesson regarding prayer inculcated by our Saviour, and revealed in His teaching of the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. True worship is spiritual in contrast with all that is insincere, unfeeling and formal. God is holy, and they that worship must to some extent be in harmony with God. Until that harmony begins there is no true worship; in the completion of harmony is found the perfection of communion.

But effective prayer demands more of the worshipper than sincerity; it exacts also faith. Faith is an unshaken trust in the wisdom and goodness of God which reposes with confidence

upon Him, accepting as a certainty that in response to our particular prayers what is fullest and best will be granted. The attitude of faith is that of looking away from self and "casting all your care upon Him," in unreserved assurance that He careth for you. In Scriptural language, "Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he *is*, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (Heb. 11:6). "But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting, for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed, for let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord" (Jas. 1:6 and 7). But, "All things are possible to him that believeth."

Repentance. Repentance is also requisite to effectual prayer. It is at this point that the regenerate and the unregenerate meet. The prodigal, however unworthy his past, finds acceptance with the Father when truly repentant, while the child of God, however faithful, needs nevertheless to acknowledge his faults, and finds pardon for daily misdoing. Sin causes separation from God; repentance is the turning back which is necessary to full communion.

And with repentance must be joined its twin-sister virtue, humility.

"Still to the lowly soul
He doth Himself impart,
And for His dwelling and His throne
Chooseth the poor in heart."

Purity of heart represents that higher stage of Christian development extolled by Jesus in the beatitudes, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Forgiveness. To mention forgiveness as a personal heart-condition prerequisite to acceptable communion adds nothing to the above; it merely specializes by instancing a case in point. But for most Christians it is the crucial point in experience. No other test so severe; no other strain so readily exposes the weakness of humanity. Assuredly "to forgive is divine." The climax duty of the Christian life is to love your enemies, to bless them that curse you, to do good to them that hate you, and to pray for them that spitefully use you and persecute you, (Matt. 5:44), for only by so doing can we show that we are "the children of our Father which is in Heaven" (v. 45). Have you ever noticed that forgiveness constitutes the refrain of Christ's sermon on the mount? Four times repeated! With divine variations! "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12). Then having ended His prayer, Jesus returns to the crucial duty. Verse 14: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will also forgive your trespasses; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Again (Matt. 5:23), "If thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave

there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift." But the pinnacle is reached (Matt. 5:44). Not only shalt thou forgive thine enemy, but thou shalt love him. Love is the transmuting power in all redemption; accordingly, love, as a personal prerequisite to effective prayer, is enjoined not as a separate qualification but rather as the spirit which pervades all others and constitutes the heart-touch with Deity. "God is love," and man is then most like his Maker when his being is aflame with a holy passion for souls. Earthly affection as we experience it in filial and parental, social and conjugal love, are but "echoes heard on a far-off shore," echoes of an original, known at its divinest in our love for God. Love ever constitutes heart-wealth, and without its presence other virtues are valueless, for, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal, . . . and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing, and if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor. 13).

Other qualifications, you will observe, must await the sanctifying touch of this divinest gift before life can have its full worth, or communion with God its full power.

“He prayeth best who loveth best
 All things, both great and small,
 For the dear God who loveth us,
 He made and loveth all.”

Obedience is likewise essential to true prayer, but it is not needful to dwell on this qualification, since it is but the practical manifestation of that sincerity of which we have already said so much. Must not the agriculturist labor as well as pray? Was not Hesiod moved of God, when he exhorted the husbandman to pray for the harvest, but to do so with his hands upon the plow? In short, prayer is not something apart from one's life, but is that life in its attitude to God. To be effective the whole personality must move in the direction of our search.

Not what you say, is what you pray;
 It's what you are, and fain would be.
 God knows the intent of the heart,
 And feels your importunity.

THE MATTER OF PRAYER

In dealing with this division of our subject we shall be helped by remembering that to be availing the petition of man must be in line with the will of God. Now it is the will of our Father that all the legitimate wants of our nature should be satisfied. A comprehensive survey of the needs of mankind would unduly tax our space and take us beyond the purpose immediately before us. Let it suffice to indicate that each individual has a threefold nature—physical, mental and moral; and that he holds social and reli-

gious, economic, commercial and innumerable other relations to his fellow men. Each of these relations must affect his personal rights, and still further, no individual ought to trespass upon the rights of a fellow being in prayer. Indeed, he cannot do so without "trespass"—without wrongdoing.

We have a right to crave satisfaction for all the proper wants of our nature, no less for the moral and spiritual, than for the intellectual and physical. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." Blessed also are they that obeying the Master's injunction cry, "Give us this day our daily bread," for "whether therefore ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do," ye should "do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10: 31).

The general truth, "Ask and it shall be given you," is capable of manifold particular application. Why should any department of human life be excluded from prayer? Indeed, it cannot be! Prayer not being a matter of words, but of wants, of heart and physical necessities as well as of mental decision, therefore the silent craving is *de facto* the prayer, and is not excluded. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye." "Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." The line of cleavage between what may, and what may not, be made a matter of prayer falls between the good and the evil. Prayer for any good cause is legitimate, but that for the evil is excluded. The highest is to be sought—always the highest.

If now to the reader it should appear that the powers of prayer have been reduced and its area narrowed, let us explicitly state that the caution we have observed in this matter is taken expressly to eliminate from prayer all doubtful requests, all questionable ambitions, all selfishness and willfulness; and at the same time to emphasize the true power of prayer, that divinely-appointed avenue by which man may enter into and appropriate, up to the full limits of his capacity, all the riches of God. How true it is that "man is straitened in himself" we are each ready to acknowledge; but it is equally important for us to realize also that we are not straitened in God, for He "giveth not the Spirit by measure" (John 3: 34); on the other hand it is written, "The Lord will give grace and glory and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Our charter reads: "In nothing be anxious, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4: 6); for, "God is able to make *all grace* abound towards you; that ye, always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Cor. 9: 8).

But enough; the Ocean of divine grace is before us, the Heaven of God is before and above us, and underneath are the Everlasting Arms. Satisfaction is assured; but we shall not be satisfied, till we awake in His likeness.

Mighty is our plea for the heathen because they pray to stocks and stones and hideous idols of their own devising; but mightier far is our plea because the craving of their nature and their eager cry are often for the vile and degrading. Cruelty and wrong are fostered and fed at their altars; repeating sensual desires stimulates passions which should be suppressed, and whose utterance is sacrilege; yet this perversion of worship—at once death to the worshipper and dishonoring to God—is cultivated as religion.

B. SECONDARY PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER

Now we descend to a lower plane and move amidst a new set of forces. Hitherto we have dealt with spiritual relations existent between God and man; now we are to consider those psychic and sensuous influences by which one person can affect the thought and feeling of others. Both classes are divine in origin—they are of God's making, not man's, and are therefore equally legitimate, neither can be neglected without loss. Let us here speak, then, with freedom, and endeavor by deserved emphasis to overcome the disgraceful indifference to form which long has marred the holy office, and brought free prayer into disrepute. Sacrilegious violation of the divinely-fixed laws by which man moulds the feelings of his fellow man is as dishonoring to God as prejudicial to man. Great has been the direct loss to the church! Terrible the indirect

results! Feebleness instead of might! Declension in place of increase!

“Had free prayer been universally of a higher order a liturgy would never have been thought of, and to-day forms of prayer have no better apology than the feebleness of extemporaneous devotions” (Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, First Series, p. 55).

In general the rhetorical principles of prayer are the same as those governing effective address of any sort—from pulpit, bar or platform. This difference, however, must be noted. The purpose of sermons like the pleading of counsel is persuasion; both pulpit and platform aim to instruct—the latter often to amuse—but the special object of a leader in prayer is to induce devotion. He would influence his audience to self-examination and contrition; he would bring them into a worshipful mood and then guide their worship. His purpose is to inspire adoration, to cultivate thanksgiving, and to elicit from hearts naturally unsatisfied a strong craving for fullest satisfaction.

Now the object to be attained determines in part both the matter and the form of address.

For a sermon the text strikes the keynote. The preacher plans first to catch the attention of his hearers, then to lead them along a deliberately ordered line of thought to the desired conclusion. Moreover, all the forces of argument and illustration, of tone, gesture and personal

overflow are marshalled to make that impression indelible, to "burn it in," so to speak, and compel it to mould character. And his preaching is effective in proportion to his ability to accomplish this end.

Now in public prayer, the aim is equally definite and the means similar. The result furthermore is fully as well worthy of study and preparation.

A. FORMAL PRINCIPLES

Whether a prayer be printed or simply spoken it must nevertheless have some form. One of the chief objections—in sooth, the stock objection—to free prayer is that its form usually is poor, its language inelegant, its periods ill-rounded or not rounded at all. In brief it is not, and, we are told, cannot be expected to be rhetorical in form, logical in thought, or finished in expression. Too often, indeed, extemporaneous prayer is "formless," chaotic, "long strung out," rhapsodical, disconnected, a sort of medley of phrases devoid of intelligible order; whereas it should be as orderly and consecutive in thought as a discourse, as complete and well-proportioned as a story, as carefully developed as an argument, and always expressed in graceful and appropriate language.

Lest such exacting demands should frighten the student let us hasten to explain, first, that no novice need expect perfection in his earliest attempts; and next, that no person, save an occasional adept, without long practice, can pray

thus without preparation. With us, "extemporaneous" does not mean unprepared. It means the free utterance of digested and pre-arranged thought, just as in what is termed extemporaneous preaching.

Having guarded this point, we are now prepared to outline the principles which, because they govern the form in which thought is expressed, are termed formal.

As a piece of composition, therefore, a prayer should possess unity, movement, and development. Unity affects its form as a whole; while movement and development refer to the order of its contents.

Unity. Any communication between persons ought to possess unity or completeness. If it be partial, fragmentary or incomplete it is unsatisfactory. In this sense unity is as necessary in a prayer as in a sermon, lecture or story. Story, lecture and sermon are expected to round up the entire theme treated. If any part be omitted which an interested listener expects, he is disappointed, and rightly so. Reason as the "faculty of the absolute" intuitively feels round a subject; reaching forward it endeavors to complete inferences, and feels unsatisfied with the fragmentary. All minds detect and resent the lame utterance which skips from one imperfectly expressed idea to another and ends with no definite impression, and the more cultured your hearers the higher their demands.

Wherefore, as an ideal, endeavor to give unity to the various parts, as well as to the whole prayer. You must guard, however, against supposing that in order to have unity a prayer must include a great deal. Not that! a prayer may be complete, and yet at the same time short; as for example the Publican's cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," but if that prayer had introduced some other theme in a fragmentary way, its unity would have been marred.

How often in extemporaneous prayer one hears many subjects introduced, none of them completed, nor the whole rounded in such proportions as to have a distinct effect—a bundle of scraps, no more like an organism than a parcel of legs, arms, fingers, and ears resemble the human body!

While unity in prayer is as desirable and as easily attained as in telling a story or preaching a sermon, it must be remembered that you must know your story before you can tell it, you must prepare your sermon before you can effectively preach it; and for a similar reason you must conceive more or less fully your prayer before you utter it. More freedom, I imagine, is permissible in prayer than in discourse, nevertheless a general plan of the whole prayer, present to the mind at its commencement, is necessary to attain unity. Beginners will find it helpful to prepare careful plans of prayer. This subject, for another reason, is of such capital importance that

we devote a chapter to the Architecture of Prayer, *vide* Chap. VIII, p. 114.

2 Movement. The Lord's Prayer is an excellent model of movement. Thought is first carried up to our Father in adoration, then contemplates the world's condition of sin and cries for the coming of the Kingdom, acknowledges God's will and asks for its enforcement, then turns on self and craves bodily sustenance, pardon for sin, ability to forgive others, etc.

By movement is meant that "travel" of thought from point to point, and from subject to subject, producing change "of scene" and alteration of feeling. Movement should be rapid enough to hold attention, and orderly enough to be easily followed.

Development is something more than movement. It is that kind of coherent thinking which leads up by easily followed stages to a climax, a definite culmination in some important truth or effect to which the rest of the prayer has lent weight.

3 Order. Various are the influences that tend to move the secret springs of men and kindle the flames of holy passion. He who can mass the most and the mightiest of these forces will wield the greatest influence. Now all forces cannot be brought to play quickly and at once on the mind. But, beginning low, and while progressing, introducing new and increased pressure to bear on an attentive hearer indifference may be changed to

anxiety, coldness to glow, death to life. In order to produce intense feeling the progress must be gradual and continuous. It will not do to allow irons partly heated to drop out of the fire. Hold them still and increase the flame. In other words, there must be in prayer, as in discourse, a natural, intelligible and effective order or arrangement of thought to produce a powerful result. Prayers, like sermons, then, should have a clearly defined plan. The audience may or may not be conscious of the plan, but the leader knows and the audience is swayed by the consecutive thought and rising emotion of the leader.

Let it be supposed that no plan is laid, no definite effect contemplated, then the leader does not know where he is going, or where he is. If he be lost, the audience certainly will be. If he wanders, they will cease to follow and "worship" drops to "waiting," waiting till the leader stops. Power over an audience in prayer may be attained as easily or more easily than in preaching. Neglect, gross, unpardonable neglect, has been the cause of unspeakable loss to worshipping mankind.

Truth spoken is to truth written as the torrent to the rill; it is a combination of many forces, throbbing with the warm life of a personality; but all mighty effects of one mind upon another is the result of growth, is the culmination of a process, and "process" is another term for development, the root germ of which is order.

Clear thinking is the track along which troops are mustered whose combined attack wins the victory. Keep the line of march clearly open to view, that all arguments marshalled, all illustrations used, and all fervor felt, may fall in aggregation. It is the massing of effects that carries the fort. Another point to be noted just here is this—order may be varied and ought to be varied a good deal. The structure of prayers like the language of their phrases must be free from obtrusive sameness, must be ever fresh; by no other means can less than willing attention be held and helped.

B. PRINCIPLES OF EXPRESSION

Thought and feeling are capable of many kinds of expression. In public address five or six languages should be spoken at once; words, emphasis, inflection, rhythm, rest or pause and gesture. These are combined in a threefold appeal to the ear, the eye and the intellect.

Everybody knows the pleasing effect of graceful motion. Instinctively the eye follows and interprets the significance of movement. It is a native human gift, that of taking on the feelings of others; and in this process the eye more than any other organ is the instrument of communication. Smiles provoke smiles; frowns produce scowls; gravity promotes solemnity. That touch of nature which makes the whole world kin enables human beings to understand each other by a multiform language—facial and corporeal, in

stillness or movement — communicated wholly through the eye. John B. Gough's reputation as an orator depended largely on his command of gesture and facial mimicry. In the last lecture I heard him deliver the very climax of his most effective passage was "capped" by a peculiar fling of the foot; that single movement told in a flash what endless words could never express. Clay owed his success in meeting Calhoun largely to this effective weapon of debate.

We study the face of a speaker and see more than we hear; for the flash of the eye, the curl of the lip and the contortion of the body transcend in expressive power the range of spoken language.

It would be out of place here to dilate upon the never-to-be-neglected worth of visible motion as an auxiliary to audible language, since as a means of communication it is not available in prayer. Never too strenuously can it be insisted that in devotion all eyes should be closed, all heads bowed, all worshippers closeted with God in a seclusion attainable only by shutting out the world. The invisible is best seen with closed eyes. Let it not be thought either that our loss is great in confining prayer to audible communication of thought. What were gain—unspeakable gain—in forensic or platform oratory were here but an intrusion, for in devotion stillness is impressive. Relief from distraction is necessary to complete surrender to the Spirit's power. Only

when the outward eye is closed to the surface of things can the inner vision clearly behold the unseen realities. Stillness and quiet are helps to absorption and introspection. Either to see ourselves as we are, or the Eternal as He is, withdrawal from all else but self and God is helpful. Excluding the garish light of earth is necessary to see "the light that never was on sea or land." Thus, then, in the loss of motion is found that gain of seclusion and stillness in which man can best worship.

Still further, however, must the limits be narrowed before we find the true language of prayer—for humor, wit, caricature, mimicry and all the paraphernalia of ridicule, scorn, sarcasm, etc., the very weapons of debate, the ornaments of the platform and forum, should be rigorously excluded from the altar. The voice, almost wholly and only, is the vehicle for the expression of public prayer—but it is the human voice, and the human voice far and away above everything else is earth's most exquisite music; the product of an instrument "fearfully and wonderfully made."

The commonest of all faults, the arch sin of all public speaking, is misuse of the voice—and it is parent to a progeny of vices whose name is legion. Its results are beyond computation, but consider three effects: First, it destroys the very instrument by which a speaker's triumphs are to be won; and while ruining the voice, exhausts the speaker, inducing nameless ailments. Next,

misuse of the voice wearies the auditor—even to the point of distress. And, third, in addition to all the above misery it neutralizes the message, defeats the aim of speech, and renders the very attempt void. As you prize your life, your reputation and the truth you would inculcate, have regard to the music, health and power of your voice.

THE INSTRUMENT OF EXPRESSION—THE VOICE

Vocal organs require protection and control. Control is acquired by training. Training is a process by which the voice is brought to meet the demands of the ear—that conscience and final arbiter of vocal expression. Accordingly our program is laid out before us: (1) Protection; (2) Training.

(1) Protection. Sensitive and delicate, the vocal organs are in danger of injury from violent changes of temperature, from indigestion or any derangement affecting the general health, and from misuse, overuse and non-use.

Nature's economy imposes upon respiration a dual function, for the same stream which sustains life is made to carry the voice; it follows as a consequence that protection of the voice is protection of health. Air may be inhaled through the mouth or through the nostrils. The former channel is short and wide, the latter is long, narrow, tortuous and fur-lined. The difference between mouth and nose respiration is therefore very great. Passing through the winding, nar-

row, hair-lined nostrils the atmosphere is warmed and filtered. It neither chills throat or lungs, nor can it carry in a freight of fine dust particles to irritate the organ. Health demands nostril, and condemns mouth, breathing.

(2) Control of the Voice. A speaker's duty to his audience makes a threefold demand on the voice. (1) He must be heard; (2) he must be heard with comfort; (3) he must be heard all the time. His first duty is to make himself heard. This is a necessity; but, further, he must enable his audience to hear without straining on their part. His success as a speaker depends very materially upon their comfort. Whatever detracts from that militates against his influence. Loud and vociferous speech offends sensitive hearing, wearies all ears, and is to that extent ineffective; a thoroughly bad habit to be sedulously shunned. It is not the loud but the distinct voice that carries.

Again, the speaker owes it to his auditors to sustain the voice. Never, even though he whisper, must the voice fall so low as to be inaudible. Extremes are to be avoided; so also is monotony, but the comfort of the ear will dictate the legitimate limits of vocal variation, while skill acquired in actual service will discover to a speaker his most effective range.

Beyond the plain "duties" we mention, however, lie the immense possibilities attainable by the finished speaker. Control of the voice means

control of the instrument or organ of its production. These we need not mention or describe further than to classify the ear as an organ of voice. The deaf-born are mutes, only because lacking this necessary auxiliary to speech. Accordingly, since voice control depends on the ear, therefore the first prerequisite to voice culture is ear culture—or rather the possession of a sensitive and intelligent ear.

In extemporaneous speech, so easy is it to be absorbed in the thought-purpose of address as to neglect the pitch and modulation of the voice. At all costs educate the ear to hear your own voice. Simple as that task may seem, it is a difficulty over which legions have stumbled. How often a speaker's voice, musical at the outset, is lifted into a forced, harsh monotone as soon as he gets well into his subject, and holds that ear-wearying tone to the end. The ear, like the conscience, must never sleep. An alert ear is the necessary monitor of graceful and musical speech. It devolves on the ear to adapt the voice to the peculiar acoustic qualities of the auditorium—no easy task where these are defective.

The ear must also determine the appropriate "pitch" with which to begin address, must modify the force, dictate the volume, follow the modulation and rhythm of speech, and correct excesses of every kind.

Of course it is universally recognized that nature provides the timbre and musical qualities of

the voice; but whatever these may be at the outset they may be damaged by misuse or developed by care. In all practice, therefore, fix yourself as high an ideal as you can conceive and steadily labor towards that, assured that your natural gifts will be strengthened and improved by exercise.

Orotund Voice. In ordinary conversation the tone is light and appears to come from the lips. In serious and impressive speech it is formed farther back. This deeper formation of the voice so rich in power and pathos, the conspicuous gift of celebrated orators and actors, is not always "natural," but may be acquired. If we can trust tradition, the greatest of Greek orators overcame vocal deficiencies by long practice before he became possessed of volume and depth of voice. Demosthenes had also to conquer an impediment in pronunciation. Now, what he did may to some extent be done by all who are willing to pay the price, namely, practice, practice, practice. Imitation of a good deep voice will enable an observant student to learn the proper use of the vocal organs for producing the desired tones. Other method there is none.

Low Key. To acquire strength and distinctness in this key is a real and rare accomplishment; and so far as prayer is concerned no other register is so effective. The difficulty of being distinct and audible in a low key may at first be discouraging, but the attainment is worth labor.

High Key. Shrill, piercing notes and all

screaming should be banished from public prayer. However effective elsewhere, they must be eschewed when addressing God.

Middle Key. As the key of conversation and of common discourse this register of the voice is capable of being rendered very effective in public address. A simple method of acquiring volume and strength in this key has been pointed out by Sheridan. "Any one," he says, "who has fallen into a weak utterance cannot hope suddenly to change it; he must do it by degrees and constant practice. I would therefore recommend it to him, that he should daily exercise himself in reading or repeating in the hearing of his friend, and that, too, in a large room. At first his friend should stand at such a distance only as the speaker can easily reach in his usual manner of delivering himself. Afterwards let him gradually increase his distance, and the speaker will, in the same gradual proportion, increase the force of the voice." By this process the vocal organs are strengthened, and if sufficient care be exercised, increasing control of the voice will also result. Avoid straining; that is permissible neither in practice nor in address. A well-formed middle key is capable of filling any ordinary auditorium, and the neglect in strengthening the voice in this key leads a speaker to adopt that high shouting note so often heard in the pulpit; a note, it may be remarked, as injurious to the speaker as distressing to his hearers. Invariably

followed by exhaustion and hoarseness, its very difficulty is accompanied by a kind of vehemence unfitted for the expression of all delicate feeling, and often out of harmony with the sentiments to be inculcated.

Articulation is the business of lips, tongue and teeth chiefly; accordingly the rule runs, "Articulate as near the lips as possible." Every word, and every syllable of every word, should have distinct and finished utterance. How can auditors understand, much less find delight in, the half-born, clipped and distorted sounds of sloven speech? Obey the injunction of Shakespeare, "Speak the speech, I pray you, trippingly on the tongue." Vowels are in little danger of suppression, but give consonants a chance for their lives. The key to cultured and distinct articulation rests with the consonant. It may appear perhaps extravagant to say so, but it is nevertheless true that if you "take care of the consonants the vowels will take care of themselves." Accordingly cultivate the habit of giving full "life" to your d's, t's, s's, eth's, ing's, etc.

Pronunciation. In order to be effective your address must be free from the blemish of mispronunciation. Provincialism, brogue, vulgarisms and all unworthy peculiarities should be suppressed. Various causes are assignable for defects of pronunciation:

(1) Hearing. An ear insensible to shades of

sound may be the unconscious source of deficiency.

(2) Uncontrol. Again, and commonly, a poor control of the vocal organs results in all sorts of clipped, distorted, and offensive mispronunciation. Perfect control alone insures perfect utterance.

(3) Imperfect Education. Undoubtedly the commonest source of mispronunciation is defective education. The blunders and habits of youth have become ingrained. How to conquer this army of enemies, ever lying before us in treacherous ambushes, is a problem of no little moment. Each separate word-foe must be killed or caught and trained by itself—a slow process perhaps, but clearly the only path to success.

THE ART OF EXPRESSION

General Rule. I know no general rule for speaking which surpasses the epitomized wisdom of the following lines:

"Begin low
 Speak slow
 Rise higher
 Take fire
 When most impressed
 Be self-possessed."

In other words, allow yourself range and room to increase your force, speed, and activity; take possession of your audience with skill. A tide of feeling is a growth that must be developed, and must grow as the speaker's own emotion in-

creases. Therefore let the pitch of the voice be most pleasant, its tones gentle, and not too rapid. The reason for this is obvious, since the voice has a limited range, and since the progress of prayer or address requires increasing energy; the higher the keynote at starting, the narrower will be the limits of expression. Moreover, shrill notes and screaming being intolerable to the hearer and trying upon the vocal organs, it is but prudence to begin with all possible advantages on your side. Moreover, nothing secures the attention of an audience like a gentle beginning. As in music, the particular key to begin with depends on what note you wish to attain as your highest—or as your lowest. You know your range; you know your subject, and you know or can estimate the size and acoustic qualities of your auditorium. Like a skillful vocalist, choose your keynote with a view to the final effect—or to the climax, whatever and wherever it may be deemed advisable to attain it.

Climax. In the treatment of the majority of themes the climax is naturally attained in the peroration. As the counsel goes, you “sit down in a storm,” but many subjects are more effective, if after climbing to high feeling and rapid action, the emotion is allowed to subside and the closing words are slowly enunciated with subdued impressiveness. I think this is particularly true of devotion. The rhythm of address demands high tide at some part of the prayer, and appropriately

it may often be placed in thanksgiving or intercession on some such theme as patriotism, missions, etc.; but a slowly falling cadence, as in confidence one recounts the mercies of the Lord and dwells upon them as ground for increasing faith and larger love, makes not only a suitable closing but induces the corresponding feelings.

It were a mistake to suppose that because the climáx occupies a distinct place in every address that therefore but one climax is permissible. Nay! let the voice rise and swell and fall in graceful cadence throughout the entire progress of your speech as naturally as in conversation, but for effect's sake practice restraint, that when nearing the supreme moment of your "grand argument" you will have reserve force to take it without straining; for effort on the speaker's part taxes the nerves of the hearer. Graceful speech, like a flowing sea, is marked by ripples, and waves, and billows (a few), and occasionally a tidal wave. Accordingly the greater portion of an effective speech is characterized by perfect comfort and sensible reserve. Neither speaker nor audience can stand on tip-toe for two hours, but our auditors relish being held in breathless suspense for long delicious moments.

THE SWELL AND VANISH OF THE VOICE

In prayer perhaps more than in any other kind of address do the swelling notes of solemnity and dignity add power. Further, the nature of the subject and all surroundings lend themselves to

the adoption of this expressive medium. For man is speaking to God; therefore address will be measured and reverent; its tone deep; and under appropriate emotion it will swell to exultant power (in thanksgiving and triumph) or gently move in adoration and confession to subdued and vanishing tones. In private conversation may often be caught examples of impressive vanishing tones. Where two in perfect heart accord tell of trust and appreciation in mutual understanding the voice takes on naturally the note of the sentiment. So should it be in prayer. So will it be unless bad habits have been acquired under nervousness or unfortunate example.

Dangers to Be Avoided. In order to attain power you may be tempted to use abrupt explosive notes like those of command—a sad defect in prayer. Rather let the voice hold the note long enough to let it “swell,” something to be acquired by practice. On the other hand guard against acquiring artificial softness in reducing the voice which will give the impression of effeminacy and weakness.

Rhythm is the result of regularly recurring accentuation, and has a physical basis. It has been found that the sound-current flows through the vocal passages much as blood pulsates in the arteries; and that this natural pulsation in the music of speech meets the demand of the ear. Its disregard is inartistic; while its graceful flow is very gratifying. “Not only do the poet and

musician arrange their clauses and melodies so that the prominent words, rhymes, swells and runs shall be rhythmical, but the orator, both as rhetorician and elocutionist must do the same" (Raymond).

Of course rhythm must be made subservient to the sense.

Emphasis. The music of speech depends upon pitch, rhythm and modulation; its sense, on emphasis. Emphasis must always be expressive of thought, or feeling; otherwise being artificial it will be offensive. A sentence or proposition, like an arch, has one word of keystone importance, all accompanying words are but builders to sustain its weight. The thought-import of that word may be made conspicuous, prominent, startling; or, in other words, be emphasized by peculiar *stress* by pausing before or after its pronunciation, by repeating it, or by separating its syllables. Increased time, increased force, or emphatic gesture give a thought-term prominence.

Time. Time, as the term is used in elocution, has a threefold application to rate, quantity and pause.

Rate refers to the time occupied in delivering a certain number of words—and varies from very slow to rapid. "The part played by rate in the true expression of thought is great. Now it lashes words to their utmost speed; now it applies the brakes to them till they scarcely move"

(Pinkley). The rate of delivery should vary in harmony with the ever-changing tide of thought and passion. Rapid utterance expresses joy, intensity, impetuosity, etc. Deliberate expression is consistent with solemnity, caution, reverence, etc., and is particularly appropriate for worship. Study the effects producible by increasing and by diminishing speed. Any variation is better than none—monotony is deadly; while truly wonderful effects result from skillful changes of rate.

Power. He who brings to pulpit, platform, or forum a musical voice and magnificent physique has what may be termed physical power. If to these natural endowments he adds mastery of oratorical and elocutionary principles he possesses also æsthetic or artistic power, but there remains a type of power higher than either, where the purpose of address is the advocacy or exposition of truth, viz., personal or moral power. It is that something, readily felt by a listener, born of transparent honor. Its nature is spiritual, and it appeals to the highest motives. Every speaker may not possess physical, but he ought to possess artistic, and be the personal embodiment of moral, power.

The power of pathos finds more ample scope in prayer and preaching than in any other type of address. The soul of both is burdened with the sorrows of the world, its sin, its awful tragedy. Redemption and eternity are themes which live in prayer. The door of hope swings widely open

for despairing man, and help is offered—crowned with life immortal for the lost. The gamut of a prayer runs from night's blackest soul of sin to the heart of the Eternal; death to life, the limits of the scale; with all infinitude of suffering falling in between; nothing of pathos in the complete round of life falls outside the subject we are treating. Pathos is feeling, emotion; the tide that surges in the soul when the soul is like the sea—deeply moved. Not in words it finds expression, but it tells its presence surely. Like a teardrop on the hand, it may be felt. Words may sob and sigh with feeling; words may drip with human sorrow, just as words may laugh like summer ripples or congeal like winter ice. But how command this feeling? How use its power to subdue the sinner and bring solace to the sick? Well! first, feel it, then express it. There is no other way. Not so simple either, but the secret lies right here. Be sympathetic, and allow your feelings to surge and flow. Stimulated feeling will not do. It must be real. Then, again, there is a vocabulary of feeling just as there is of mathematics, geology, botany, etc., and symbols meaningful to all who think. It is needless to say that in addition to having feeling, you must know the language of feeling.

The true art of expression is comprised in this: "Be natural," but be natural with all the combined powers of your being under sensitive control.

Be natural, but be natural at your wide-awake best. Cicero justly observes that there must be a glow in our style if we would warm our hearers. It requires a certain energy of the mind to arouse activity of thought; certain animation of expression to kindle enthusiasm. Emotionless speech is ineffective speech. It needs a live wire to carry a message. What is true of telephony is equally true of the electric current which can flow from man to man through audible and visible speech—a battery must be provided. It is the speaker's place to supply electricity. No better field can be found for its generation than a sympathetic audience—and in prayer the people are always ready to be at one with the leader—waiting to be "en rapport."

"Sympathy," to quote Blair, "is one of the most powerful principles by which persuasive discourse works its effects;" and all that this master of sacred rhetoric so impressively asserts in this regard is equally true of prayer. "The speaker," he continues, "endeavors to transfuse into his hearers his own sentiments and passions, which he can never succeed in doing unless he utters them in such a manner as to convince the hearers that he really feels them. The proper expression of tones, therefore, deserves to be attentively studied by every one who is anxious to be a successful orator. Form, then, your tones of public speaking upon the tones of sensible and animated conversation." Grasp this wholesome concep-

tion, "animated conversation," in a pitch and volume of voice to comfortably fill the room, is *natural* speech.

Prayer should not lack the conversational tone, which betokens nearness, but must be free from all suggestion of familiarity. "Filial fear," humility, love, reverence, adoration, all holy passion which the sense of God's greatness, holiness and love shall kindle are appropriate and native in prayer. No word of caution is necessary to point out that communion with God is on a higher plane than conversation with a fellow mortal, and yet the soul of one affords a clue to the spirit of the other.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ARCHITECTURE OF PRAYER

When a young convert under the inspiration of his new life desires to take part in public prayer, he naturally asks himself two questions: "What ought I to say?" and "How should I express myself?" This is a critical period for the student, because it is here he is liable to lay the foundation for future faults; here it is also that he ought to lay broad and deep the foundation of a correct style; for however right his heart may be, he is exposed to two dangers—two kinds of ruts. You have heard men who prayed the same prayer over and over again and were unable to break the bondage of their fixed habit. They could neither think along any other line, nor express their thought in any other language. They were like an amateur builder who could make only one kind of a house, and yet kept on sedulously building row after row of one-story frame houses, always square, always white, always good, but the same unvarying thing, till the monotony grew wearisome. No caricature is intended; every church has in it good men whose public prayers are like a line of one-story white houses extending as long as their experience. Simply, they made a rut and wore it so deep that it was next

to impossible to get out of it. This is so easily done that we warn the beginner against what at first seems to be no fault at all. The mind will run along an old track more readily than make a new one, so that it is necessary to lay new tracks until the mind finds it easy to construct new lines of thought; in other words, forms the habit of original thinking. The mind has wings, but must nevertheless learn to fly. An architect is more than a builder, he understands the science of construction; he is able to plan and erect houses of different sizes, shapes and styles. So should the thinker learn construction of thought and its expression. He must be more than a "builder," he must be an architect. This is especially important in prayer, where defects so seriously mar, and where excellences so greatly assist the worship of others. Once you have the right conception it will be comparatively simple to form the habit. Once the right habit is formed you will be in little danger of falling into any rut, although it is well to remember that set phrases and old lines of thought constitute dangers which always threaten.

But how is the foundation of a good style to be laid? We answer, at first be mechanical, that later you may be natural in the most effective way. When a novice is learning to shoot he is instructed how to bring the eye, the sight, and the target into line, and then pull the trigger without losing the bull's eye; but at a later stage the

hunter handles his weapons "without taking sight." This principle is true of using the violin, playing the organ, striking a note or expressing a passion. So also is it of forming lines of thought. Write a map of your prayer—that is, mechanical—follow it as nearly as you are led of the spirit when in actual worship. For your next prayer write another plan, then casting yourself upon God follow it more or less closely as you are led. Then lay out another line of thought for the next, and so on until your mind learns to leap ahead and see the outline of a whole prayer in an instant. It is wonderful what joy the soul finds in its new exercise when once it begins to feel its new wings.

The mechanical writing of outlines will soon be unnecessary, but until that stage is reached, practice the construction of prayers. The simplest outline for a prayer is to follow the different parts of prayer—adoration, confession, thanksgiving, etc. For example, the order suggested by Broadus is as follows:

1. Invocation, adoration, thanksgiving.
2. Confession, and prayer for forgiveness.
3. Renewed dedication, and prayer for help.
4. Intercession, for all general or special objects.

Beginning with the thought of God's character and mercies, we are naturally led to think next of our own sins; and hence the order named.

But only in a general prayer is it necessary to

introduce all the parts; and even though this be done, yet very often some one "part" will so predominate as to give its cast to the whole prayer, making it a prayer of confession or of thanksgiving, etc., just as the keynote is sounded.

If you adopt the above plan at first, do not follow the same order every time; wage war against ruts; even though you stumble, persevere in taking a new line; e. g., begin with confession and end with adoration, or begin with thanksgiving and end with intercession, etc.

The difference in mental attitude will make this all the easier if fully understood. (*Vide* Chap. III, p. 32.)

But the above suggested forms of prayer follow lines so general that it may be helpful if we come to something more special. In adoration, for example, the worshipper dwells upon the nature and attributes of God, His majesty and wondrous deeds in creation and redemption. A natural "form," therefore, for a prayer of adoration would be to follow the order in which the Trinity is usually named:

1. Father.
2. Son.
3. Holy Spirit.

More fully:

1. God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, etc.; being familiar with the Shorter Catechism, the line of that definition will guide your thought.

2. The Son is the Revealer of the Father, Redeemer of man and our great Exemplar.

3. The Holy Spirit is God's spiritual presence indwelling in the believer. Convicting of sin, comforting in distress, guiding at all times.

Now if the ideas here outlined be amplified but very little, the heart has had opportunity of expressing its appreciation in a somewhat elaborate way. Under ordinary circumstances either of the above sub-outlines would afford scope sufficiently wide for prayer.

Do not follow forms of construction indicated by any other person. Think out your own. The advantage of so doing is that each key-word will stand for a whole group of ideas for which it is the natural nucleus. Suppose, for example, you write for the map of a prayer:

Creation.
Redemption.
Preservation.
Heaven.

Each word will call to mind a separate body of truth, and excite different trains of feeling; and because the plan governs the sequence of these, their expression will be orderly.

By making the outline short and general, much more scope is left for flight of the imagination and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. At times you will be led away from your "plan" up into a higher plane of thought, but having the plan in

mind you will never fall below it, or wander away into inanities or perplexity of thought.

The following outlines are sketched not so much to be used as to suggest to the student possible variety when he comes to work out plans for his own public prayers:

1. The Sabbath, the Bible, the Gospel.
2. The individual, the family, the congregation.
3. Infancy, youth, manhood, age.
4. Springtime, the season of promise. Summer, the period of production. Autumn, the time of reaping. Winter, the age of rest.
5. Revelation through nature. Revelation through Christ. Revelation through the Holy Spirit.
6. Sin, suffering, repentance, pardon, or other experiences of mankind; e. g., think along the line of the varied conditions of men, poor, rich, high, low, wise, foolish, good, bad, etc., or along the line of various doctrines taught by the church, or follow a definite portion of Scripture, amplifying the thought therein contained, e. g.:

The Lord's Prayer.

The 23d Psalm.

The 27th Psalm, etc.

This is fruitful experience, for you will find that the prayer constructions of Scripture afford many easy and helpful examples. What could surpass the beauty of the 107th Psalm, or what

could be more simple in form? It is a prayer of thanksgiving. The line of thought followed is the course of Israel's history—broken at short intervals by the refrain: "Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men."

If you would use this Psalm for a model, you might follow the history of a congregation, or of a family, or of a nation, introducing a suitable refrain of your own composition or quoting that of the Psalm.

The first Psalm is even more simple. In verses 1-3 thought is focused on the good man; the rest of the Psalm contrasts therewith the wicked man.

Prayer No. 66 furnishes an example of similar structure:

Part 1—Spiritual, as compared with natural light.

Part 2—Christ, as the light revealing the Father.

Another model with simple movement is that of David's confession after his great sin (Ps. 51). There are three stages in it:

1. Consciousness of his sin confessed (vs. 1: 5).

2. Consciousness of God's demand acknowledged (v. 6).

3. Consciousness of what He fain would be expressed, and the desire to have the joy of salvation restored in order that he might win others for God (v. 13).

Another "plan" often used and in itself excellent because focusing attention upon other parts of the service in hand, is to follow in your thought the circumstances which make the service special. If you once get the idea, and can go to the meeting with a mental map clearly before your eye, the mind is sustained, your thinking and speech possess a strength impossible to one who prays without knowing "where he is going, or when he will stop."

So far from quenching spontaneity, this plan affords the mind a sense of support or confidence which leaves the imagination free for all inspiration. Should the Spirit's power lift your flight above the limits of your pre-arranged plan, the impulse will carry your auditors with you, and should you so desire, or perhaps need to, you can fall back on your "plan" without the sense of being lost for appropriate thought, but unless something of immediate importance remains to be mentioned, close your prayer with its highest flight, while every heart is in a spiritual glow.

But enough. To print instruction of this kind is much less satisfactory than to explain it *viva voce*, where questions may be asked and misapprehension corrected. I hope, however, the reader will not think this mechanical plan for avoiding the rut habit is intended to take the place of spontaneous inspiration. The "guides" may be laid aside when once the mind gets its bearing. So much to protect you from falling

into one kind of rut—i. e., the same line of thought.

Now a few words regarding another kind of rut, namely, identical expression. Every day your prayers will contain adoration, thanksgiving, petition, etc., and though you follow different lines in prayer construction, if you always use the same phrases for confession, or do so too frequently, you will be rut-weak in prayer. Better far to vary the language sufficiently to give freshness and new inspiration to worship, for ruts are as deadening to him who uses them as they are wearisome to those who listen.

Now, having learned how to strike out on new lines of thought, the next thing to do is to enrich your vocabulary. See section on "The Vocabulary of Prayer," p. 163.

Sameness may result from.

1. Repeated use of single words, for example, always addressing the Deity by one name,—O Lord! O Lord! O Lord!—instead of using many different names.

2. Or frequent use of set phrases; of which it is quite superfluous to quote examples.

3. A third cause of this kind of defect is the frequent repetition of a few Scriptural texts. Once formed, either of these habits may cost considerable pains before being conquered, but conquered they must be if your worship is to be a delight to those you lead. But the danger is easily met by a beginner who sees from the start

what wealth of beautiful phraseology is open for the expression of his devotion. Day by day add some new name or phrase descriptive of God's attributes, which hitherto has not formed part of your vocabulary. Then as passages of Scripture are memorized attach them to some kindred text until you have "clusters" of texts at your command.

There is no other way. The wider your experience, and the fuller your treasury of expression, the richer will be your offices of devotion. In all this I have said nothing of the deep joy to be found in enlarging one's experience in spiritual thinking and feeling; yet that is the soul of private communion. The man whose "delight is in the law of the Lord" meditates therein "day and night," and shall be like a tree planted by rivers of waters (Ps. 1).

Our Lord spent whole nights in prayer, and saints of all ages, great in influence and name, have grown mighty by secret communion with Omnipotent God.

CHAPTER IX

COMMON FAULTS IN PUBLIC PRAYER

Almost all the objections lodged against free worship are urged, not against the service as such, but against the mistakes which mar it. These are legion, and their very pain and prevalence constitute an admonition to renewed endeavor to purify "the perfect type" of worship by their discovery and removal. To that end the student is recommended occasionally to review the list here given lest mere neglect should permit some insidious fault to sully his prayers, and by repetition to become habitual there.

Unmanly Prayer. Much of the prayer we hear is devoid of the "heroic"; its spirit is obsequious or cringing, or even cowardly. It is not courageous enough to pray with Robert Murray McCheyne, "If nothing else will do to sever me from my sins, Lord, send such sore and trying calamities as shall wake me from earthly slumbers."

About such a prayer as this there is a ring of honesty that appeals to the best in one's manhood. Pastors should have a care lest their people gain the impression that prayer is a means of soft escape from the consequences of sin rather than an exercise bringing us up for judgment and correction therefor, as well as for redemption

therefrom. What we *need* is discipline; what we cry for too often is pardon—without discipline.

If a pastor permits a cowardly sentiment to permeate his prayer he wrongs the people he ought to educate. If he prays in heroic strain, asking grace to bear divine chastisement “whereof all are partakers,” he helps men to “endure chastening,” not as though it were Satan’s infliction, but as imposed upon those “whom the Lord loveth” (Heb. 12:6).

Again, the difference between public and private prayer imposes need for seasonableness and modesty of expression. In private Peter rightfully weeps bitterly, and no language of his, however measured, adequately expresses the range of feeling surging in his penitent heart, but in the public office extravagant utterance may excite suspicion of insincerity.

Dr. Samuel Miller, in illustrating extreme expressions of humility, says: “Often have I heard ministers leading the public devotions of the sanctuary pray for divine assistance in preaching the Word. This is very proper, and may be so expressed as to be at once delicate, acceptable and edifying, but suppose the petition on this subject to be expressed in some such manner as this, which I have actually and repeatedly heard, ‘Lord, assist Thy servant, one of the most weak and unworthy of men, a very child in spiritual things, in attempting to open and apply the Scriptures,’ etc.”

Sound judgment and correct taste will forbid anything approaching extravagance to divert thought from the prayer, to the person who is leading. But while self-depreciation can easily be overdone, there is a whole realm of aspiration so elevated that language is incapable of overexpressing it. There is no need for mistake. Be true to the best that is in you. Avoid all cant phrases or terms that outstrip your real feeling. Language which was soul-full of meaning when used by saints wrestling under stress of peculiar trial sounds "fustian" and unreal when glibly uttered in ordinary worship. Be true to your own heart. Say what you feel. Under tense feeling and illumined by the Holy Spirit no mere words can overstate a soul's experience. Climb the ladder into the very Heaven of heavens if you can—and take your audience along into the higher region. But high language and cold feeling go not well together.

Of the genus known as "preaching prayers," there are several species, vitiated in common by one fault, they are addressed not to God, but obliquely at the audience.

In hortatory prayers communion with God is interrupted while the minister devotes attention to exhorting saints to fidelity or sinners to repentance. No reflection is cast upon his earnestness, but however worthy his purpose, such diversion is a fault in prayer.

A kindred error is indulged in when prayers

are made too doctrinal. We have heard a favorite belief so unfolded and elaborated that it sounded more like a sermon than a prayer. That doctrine must underlie and appear in devotion is inevitable, but what should be sedulously shunned is the introduction of didactic matter in such a way as actually to talk past the Lord at the audience.

Historical prayers are at fault in the same way. Jehovah may be assumed to be familiar with the past, yet for the benefit of persons supposed to be unacquainted with certain references the leader is sometimes tempted into supplying this deficiency.

It is a pastor's duty ever to remember great national evils and mightily to cry for his people's deliverance. Perhaps no other means is so efficient for awakening sympathy with the suffering, the oppressed, the submerged; and of inspiring indignation against the inhumanity that makes countless thousands mourn. But again be warned against that denunciation which forgets the office of devotion. On no account must "communion with God" be converted into lecturing the people. One of the very worst types of this evil is to make prayer a covert attack upon individuals or an occasion for scolding our people. Personalities are out of place in public worship. Attack is cowardly. Flattery is servile. All diversion of thought from God is injurious. Devotion should be instrumental in drawing the auditor

nearer to God, but chastisement at the lip of a minister must have the opposite effect. Sarcasm and wit are sedulously to be shunned. It is wicked to make pretended worship an act of slander or the occasion of reproof. Prayer should prepare the hearer for the preached Word, but hints and innuendo provoke resentment. Preach when you preach; *pray* when you pray.

If the minister wishes to retain his influence in spiritual things, let him keep *party politics* out of his prayers. Personal feeling on a subject which divides his congregation will but effect cleavage. His duty to God and to himself makes it imperative to stand four-square to all the winds of passion in matters of moral principle. Patriotism must be fostered and sanctified and prayer is one of the potent influences for accomplishing this; yet the strong leader will be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove. Party issues brought into the pulpit will throw their shadow on the spiritual exercise by exciting passions which need no fanning. Follow the inspired counsel. Avoid exciting animosity, by praying on a high plane. Suppress personal predilections. Use broad terms and bear on general principles. Make God's glory and the national weal the plaint of your prayer, and though at times you may be misunderstood, let no fear of "politics" quell your fervid interest in national and international affairs.

Another abuse of prayer, less obvious perhaps

but far more common, is to make it an occasion for paying compliments to our fellow men. Flattery anywhere and at any time is most reprehensible, but above all other places it is most out of place at God's throne. Yet something like this is frequently indulged in, for example when a brother minister is present or assisting in services of a special nature and prays for "this large and intelligent audience," or the pastor thanks God "for the eloquent and powerful sermon to which we have just listened," or pleads for blessing upon "our gifted and beloved brother," etc. Appreciation of God's servants at home or abroad has a rightful place in prayer, but is no warrant for fulsome praise in their presence. It is to be hoped, however, that condemnation of "indirect compliment" will create no over-fastidiousness or chill the sympathy so native to holy desire. Prayer for the pastor offered at the family altar or in the prayer-meeting may foster a regard for the man and his office, and so impress youth with the responsibilities he bears as to weave ties of affection and esteem between their young hearts and his, as immensely to increase his influence for good. Every pastor knows something of the support and encouragement found in the consciousness that his flock bear him in remembrance at the throne of grace. I fancy, too, that subtle telepathy enables a minister to interpret a parishioner's prayer on his behalf so that the words uttered or left unsaid convey an over-meaning.

Not every prayer rendered for him in his presence is an inspiration—but I am persuaded that where sincere desire is felt its influence will reach two hearts—the Lord's and the pastor's. In spiritual things spiritual interpretation is deeper than mere language. What is true of the pastor's feelings will be found equally true of other persons borne in prayer: the afflicted, the bereaved, the perplexed, the unsaved. Let pastors remember, there is an over-tone of human sympathy that goes to the heart. If that be lacking no forced sentiment can take its place.

Familiar prayers move on the plane of human intercourse. They lack the qualities of reverence, awe, and humility which ought to characterize man's communion with his Maker. Such hallowed feelings are produced by a true sense of the difference between the worshipper and Him whom we worship. To worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness we must not forget our own sinfulness. As Spurgeon says: "Familiarity there may be, but holy familiarity; boldness, but the boldness which springs from grace and is the work of the Spirit."

Sectarian prayers introduce the bias and provincialism of a mind not large enough to *feel* that all the faithful are equally dear to God. True prayer is a solvent in which denominationalism and class prejudice dissolve and disappear. Uncharitableness may so manifest itself in public prayer as to breed positive resentment in the

minds of auditors; and what must there be in the heart of a man to prompt such a prayer?

Irreverence may be as apparent in demeanor and tone as in choice of language. Hauteur and over-confidence are offensive and quench the very feelings prayer ought to inspire. Carelessness is painful; flippancy impious. A grave and solemn tone becometh prayer and will never sound "mock" if based on real feeling.

"Our prayers must never grovel; they must soar and mount. We need a heavenly frame of mind. Our addresses to the throne of grace must be solemn and humble, not flippant and loud, or formal and careless. The colloquial form of speech is out of place before the Lord—"we must put off our shoes from off our feet for the place whereon we stand is holy ground" (Spurgeon, *Lecture to My Students*, First Series, p. 55).

"It is little short of blasphemy to make devotion an occasion for display. In the presence of the Lord of hosts it ill becomes a sinner to parade the feathers and finery of tawdry speech with the view of winning applause from his fellow mortals" (Idem, p. 56).

Wandering. Rambling in prayer is distracting to the auditor, discreditable to the leader, and disrespectful to the Most High. To be intelligible, prayer must be definite. If you know what you mean, and what you want, your prayer will be coherent, and you ought to know before you

undertake to conduct others in worship. (*Vide* Chapter VIII.)

Foolish Petitions. It is not necessary to cite examples, but this fault may be detected even in printed prayers. It behooves one, therefore, to guard zealously against a fault, which, in extemporaneous prayer, is so much more easily committed.

Terms of endearment. "Another fault equally to be avoided in prayer is an unhallowed and sickening superabundance of endearing words. When Dear Lord, and Blessed Lord, and Sweet Jesus come over and over again as vain repetitions, they are among the worst of blots" (Spurgeon).

"Never say 'dear Lord,' 'dear Jesus,' it is not Scriptural (*Idem*).

Misquotation of Scripture. No prohibition is intended against paraphrasing Scriptural conceptions. A change of form is often necessary to adapt a passage for prayer, but excuse there is none for the grotesque mixing of passages and plain misquotations of God's Word.

How often do we hear: "Thou art the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity and the praises thereof," — a mixture; "Hast Thou not said wheresoever two or three are gathered together in Thy name, there am I in their midst and that to bless?" It is not so written, nor does the truth of the conception save the expression from fault.

"Thou canst not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance."

"That the word of the Lord may have free course to run and be glorified."

"The Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world."

Many examples might be given but to what profit? Shall it be deemed a breach of literary taste to misquote the classics and shall ministers of God trip in their use of the Word without rebuke? But many who would blush to misquote Shakespeare or Browning are careless with the words of Jesus and John.

Too frequent use of the divine name is an error to be shunned. This is a habit usually contracted by beginners before "nervousness" has quite been conquered. It is caused by disconnected thought. When once the student attains a clear conception of the ground he wishes to cover in prayer, unless still a victim to habit, he moves forward, untrammelled in his expression. The name of God should be used only when and where its use adds emphasis.

Avoid minuteness of definition and description—neither is necessary either for the Almighty or for the audience, and to the latter prolixity detracts from the concentration helpful to "mounting upon wings."

In prayer as in preaching "the faults most glaring are: too rapid utterance on the one hand; and on the other, apathy, a sleepy monotone;

indistinctness, drawling, the straining monotone, sing-song, mouthing, artificial mannerisms, pomposity, flowery unreality, self-consciousness." Wild gestures, pounding the desk, clapping the hands, loud speech, or stamping with the feet, are extreme crudities which scarcely need mention. "Let everything be done decently and in order."

Other faults almost too common for mention here are grammatical errors and mispronunciation; yet a word on mispronunciation of the divine names may not be out of place. I have heard "God" pronounced variously as though it were spelled Gaud, Goode, Gad, Gode. "Jesus" as though spelled Jesis, Jesas, etc. So painful is it to dwell on this theme, that no more can be said, but the careful student will train his ear to attentive observance of his own pronunciation, for doubtless faults of this nature are committed unconsciously. We note peculiarities of speech in others; but remain insensible of our own. All "provincialisms" attest this unfortunate fact; thus also it comes to pass that inelegancies of early habit intrude upon later culture.

CHAPTER X

SOME EXCELLENCES OF PUBLIC PRAYER

Without repeating what has already been indicated in Chapters III and VII, regarding desirable qualities of prayer, it may be well to consider three excellences which a congregation has a right to expect in the office of their spiritual guide.

First, public prayer should possess a pervasive quality that may be termed "prayer life." There is a flavor of devotion like the quality of fruit, which tells of much sunshine and abundant showers. The life of the saint enriched by communion with God provides the only chemistry by which prayer can come into possession of this excellence. Without this there may be formal accuracy and much copiousness and variety, much rhetorical beauty and little room for fault-finding, yet much poverty in what is most soulful and divinest. Our people have a right to look for and to be disappointed if our prayers lack that quality which more than any other makes devotion helpful. This prayer quality of which we are speaking, is more easily felt than described; so that whether we call it "fervor," or "the grace of prayer," or "the unction of the Spirit," or any other name, all will apprehend

what is meant. This indefinable quality constitutes the chiefest excellence of prayer.

But further, a public prayer to be excellent must be appropriate. No two days are alike, no two conditions are the same. Every occasion has in it circumstances that are special. Ready-made prayers, however well assorted, but poorly fit peculiar occasions, and when they do fit formally, are devoid of the spirit of the living growth. Almost all Scripture prayers grew out of special circumstances and are rooted in them. Such prayers have a nascent potency; their life is apparent; their influence heart-felt.

Now our people have the right to expect men, educated and ordained to the office, intelligent and sympathetic, to be real advocates at the court of Heaven, able to present the needs of a new and trying hour when such shall arise, and capable of making the various dispensations of Providence stepping-stones to the throne. A real prayer, born of the occasion, declares its life by availing itself of all contributory influences, and appropriating them for good. On the other hand, to omit the very subject uppermost in all minds because helpless, or negligent, or because confined to a liturgy, is to lose a golden opportunity. When, some years ago, Edward VII., then Prince of Wales, was ill, and a call for national prayer on his behalf was issued late in the week, the only church which failed to respond on the following Sabbath was the national Church. Pres-

byterians and Methodists and Baptists—all Dissenters—poured out from loyal hearts fervent prayers for his recovery, but because the Bishops of the Anglican Church had not time to send down “prayers” for the use of their clergy, there was silence in Anglican Churches that day upon the very theme which most occupied the British heart.

Again, to use a general prayer, for a special occasion, is to lose a precious opportunity. To omit the very point of need, and introduce a score of other things is a weakness in the leader, and to the people loss and disappointment.

Recently I heard two of America’s greatest preachers on the Sabbath immediately preceding “Thanksgiving Day.” The prayer of one was simple, trustful, beautiful, but its range was narrow. Thought was not carried beyond the limits of the congregation. But the other minister’s prayer was as wide as humanity and linked his hearers in sympathy with all to whom the Gospel is sent. He felt and made us feel, that America rested under God’s greatest blessing; that our gratitude should be shown by sharing with others His manifold benefits. He did not forget national blots, nor did he fail to mention those great national problems and international issues, upon the solution of which depends the future progress of Christianity. His prayer was at once a tonic and an inspiration; an educational force

and a spiritual uplift. It took us to a higher plane, permitting a wider vision, and imparting a new sense of responsibility. The first prayer omitted a signal opportunity and by that left the people poorer; the second made that Thanksgiving season a pinnacle point from which for many days many people could look backward and forward with new light and higher living.

Another quality which may justly be looked for in the general or long prayer of the pulpit is comprehensiveness. If it is to be representative of the vast variety of interests which center in a congregation it must be comprehensive. The faithful pastor who keeps ever in touch with his people is not so liable to fail in this qualification of prayer as the eloquent preacher whose reputation is supposed to rest upon his pulpit ministrations, but both will find it to their advantage to prepare lists of interests which should live in the sympathies of Christian congregations. How many congregations feel an interest in miners, seamen, railroad employees, factory hands, the unemployed, the submerged, the inmates of asylums, hospitals, "homes," prisons; the victims of war, pestilence, disaster; and the unevangelized peoples of the earth; national and international issues; political, commercial and industrial interests; the educational, social and spiritual life of the people; intemperance, Sabbath desecration, and all those evils which haunt the home and threaten the state?

The list is continued and the minister's responsibility thus represented by Dr. John Watson:

“When the church of Christ of any branch assembles a congregation of her people together for divine service, and commits its conduct to the absolute discretion of one man, she undertakes an enormous responsibility. Has she not entered into a covenant with those present that this man shall be their mouthpiece, and that all the ordinary and general wants of a body of human beings will, so far as it is possible, be presented before the throne of grace? Suppose, through the carelessness, or forgetfulness, or ignorance, or idiosyncrasy of this minister no prayer is offered for the country or its rulers, or for the sick and dying or for the sorrowful, or for those in danger on the sea, or for distant friends, or for little children, or for those who have lost the kindly light of reason, or for prodigals or for those who have secret trials—suppose there be no thanksgiving for the gifts of Providence, for deliverance from disease, for succor to the soul, for increase of light, for the coming of Christ, for the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, for the victory of the departed, for the life everlasting—will there not be hundreds who entered the church laden with the weight of care or gratitude, and who hoped to the end, but hoped in vain, for relief? Can any service, where such petitions and thanksgivings are absent, be called public worship?”

I cannot, in this connection, forbear quoting also from *The New Directory for Public Worship* a few sentences on the need for wide thinking in regard to thanksgiving:

“There must be many in every congregation who come to church in a spirit that can hardly be called devotional; and perhaps the least common mood even for a devotional spirit is that of thanksgiving. We are all more or less conscious of our sins and of our wants; but it is with an effort that we recall our mercies. One of the difficulties therefore of public prayer must be to evoke gratitude in the heart of the worshipper.”

Continuing, it is stated that “a prayer of general thanksgiving” cannot effect this for all. “In order to do like service to the less devout we must mention and dwell upon the special mercies of God, we must touch those points of their life where they cannot but acknowledge the hand of a loving Father.” Thus we awaken memories and touch responsive chords in hearts that would be grateful if but led to realize how great their mercies are.

These three prime excellences of prayer might possibly be absent from a particular service without exciting much comment, and yet their presence would change the tone, alter the effect and make more lasting the influence of worship. Highest among them would we place the flavor of real life, indefinable yet uplifting—the very vital breath of devotion. Appropriateness must rank

next, for when prayer is part of a living circumstance, warm with the excitement or stress of the hour, its life blends with our life and that union is powerful. And lastly when it is possible without disturbing the special cast of prayer offered on a definite subject, let your prayer be comprehensive enough to enlarge the outlook of the worshippers and kindle their wider sympathies.

CHAPTER XI

GENERAL PRACTICAL RULES

ATTITUDE IN PRAYER

Kneeling and standing are both Scriptural attitudes. Someone has said, kneeling denotes submission; standing, service; but sitting, positive disrespect, for who would venture to sit while making his request of an earthly potentate? Different opinions obtain regarding the most appropriate attitude to be adopted by congregations; as a matter of fact, customs widely different prevail, and much that is not very creditable is very common.

Let it be granted that the important matter is not wholly one of sentiment, but very largely of practical effect. To stand too long becomes wearisome. Weariness, or any other physical discomfort interferes with complete absorption in worship, and in almost every audience there will be found persons of age or infirmity, tired enough to need physical rest. For these it is scarcely answer sufficient to say, "prayers never should be wearisomely long" (*vide* p. 156), for as a matter of fact prayers are often unduly prolonged.

Standing is probably the better attitude for the minister especially where the building is large;

but for the audience kneeling is more restful and more appropriate than standing. Here, however, we are met with an architectural difficulty. Many churches are not provided with suitable rests for the knees. And why not? Is it because space cannot be afforded? No. For the church never before commanded so much wealth. Then why? Simply because of dishonorable neglect. We have ignored the dictates of reverence and sacred propriety until a slovenly and unworshipful habit has been formed, and our people have not yet given the matter serious consideration. When they do, the reproach will be removed, and a better order of things instituted.

In the meantime what can be said in defence of the "hateful" habit of sitting at prayer? Well, in the first place it is pointed out that many congregations actually do follow this custom; next, that it is not objectionable as a matter of physical discomfort; further, that bowed heads are as expressive of homage as the bent knee, that whatever aids absolute surrender of the mind to spiritual contemplation is helpful and not to be discarded without good cause; all of which though plausible enough will not bear examination. Kneeling with bowed heads and closed eyes is the attitude most conducive to worship, as witness the universal custom in private devotion. If any posture more than another can tempt the thoughtless to forget devotion and indulge in peeping, staring, whispering, and other

impieties, it is sitting at prayer. No one can give this subject careful consideration without praying that the time may soon come when all Christian people will "kneel before the Lord our Maker."

Note. Gesture is not entirely precluded from public prayer, inasmuch as the introductory "Let us pray" is generally accompanied by gesture of some kind. In this little act, moreover, there is room for error as well as room for excellent influence. Customs vary widely, and personalities carry such peculiar weight that each must learn for himself what is most effective and must guard against unfortunate, ungraceful or unmeaning mannerisms. Some place the extended hands palm to palm, and hold them thus throughout the prayer. In the case of certain ministers this appears seemly, but in others it looks childish. Some lift one hand, others both, as they call the congregation to prayer. I have seen a pastor bend his head over the Bible and commence to pray without giving the people any notice whatever—indefensible conduct surely; strangers in the audience being quite at a loss. Neither is it appropriate to act suddenly in any invocatory act. Nor, again, should the voice take on the tone of command.

Attention to matters of this kind is well repaid in its influence on worshippers, and is comely before God.

Another matter. A minister owes it to him-

self, his people and his Lord, to know how the congregation deport themselves during prayer. Having learned that; when he makes prayer a theme of the pulpit, he has opportunity to correct abuses and drop timely counsel in regard to all worship. It is his business in conjunction with the church officials to inform himself, and then wisely to reform, or judiciously to commend his people. Neglect in these matters is culpable.

SILENT PRAYER BEFORE AND AFTER SERVICE

Silent individual prayer upon entering church, the all but universal practice among church members, is highly to be commended, but who ever knew a pastor to take advantage of that healthful custom by indicating to his parishioners the scope such prayer might well attain? What constitutes the burden of these voiceless breathings? It is not necessary any pastor should know. Each heart led by its own hunger cries its own want, and rightly so, but might not wise suggestions enlarge our people's vision of the need? If some pray simply for self might they not be glad to extend the weight of their fervent and effectual plea on behalf of him who in his own strength is unfitted to bear the eternal message? How many think of the unsaved, the sick, the children, etc., and yet why not? A few words of counsel—not of interference—would perhaps enlarge the volume and increase the influence of the congregation's silent prayer.

How impressive the silent pause after the benediction has been breathed, only those can realize who have enjoyed it long drawn out. What can be more unseemly, what more destructive of worthy emotion, than the cap and coat rush observable in some places of worship? Who has not seen men plunge into their coats as the Doxology rose, or heard them shuffle down the aisle while the benediction fell, a display of inconsiderate rudeness deserving censure and needing correction? The pastor more than any other individual or than all others put together is responsible for such an irreligious exhibition. He can stop it, if not by a single appeal to the congregation, yet by enlisting the thoughtful sympathy of the devout. One of the chief offenders in the modern church is not infrequently the organist. It is thought appropriate to strike an heroic strain, in *forte*, the moment the "Amen" is pronounced, but such vicious taste could be corrected by asking the organist to employ the solemn silence for musical effect. To wait till the stillness is felt and then to break it with organ notes as soft as falling light, swelling to volume and power, is at once more appropriate and effective than a deafening crash of sound. The "crash" may be startling, but for that reason should be discarded.

THE BEGINNING OF PUBLIC PRAYER

Here, as elsewhere, much depends upon present circumstances and the object of the service.

Individual judgment and spiritual leading will determine the appropriate terms of approach.

God has many attributes and many names. Every name has a significance peculiar to itself. Use therefore the title most suitable for the cast of the prayer or the special petition presented. Is your cry for pardon? "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions." "The Lord is merciful and gracious . . ."; accordingly pray "Gracious and merciful God, our Heavenly Father, have compassion upon thine erring children," etc.

Is the dominant note thanksgiving? Then we think of God as Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, Bountiful Benefactor, Our Father, etc.

Is our cry for protection or help? It is natural to think of God as Almighty, or Omnipotent, Immanuel, Our Refuge, Rock, Tower, Deliverer, etc.

At the sick bed it is helpful by appropriate terms to attract attention to divine love, tenderness, pity, etc.

Enough. A little attention to this conception will be fruitful of good. Avoid using the same term, ever and always. One of the greatest preachers of the age begins almost every prayer with "Almighty God." Variety is better. For this purpose cultivate taste, and enrich your vocabulary by making ear and thought familiar with many names of Deity.

THE ENDING OF PUBLIC PRAYER

Two mistakes commonly mar the closing of public prayer.

- (1) A prolix, long drawn-out closing.
- (2) Constant use of the same phrase.

In general it is well not to prolong a prayer by using many phrases of the same significance in closing. If a prayer has been definite and the feeling deep, it is a mistake to dissipate its intensity by dropping into a line of conventional phrases before stopping.

Do not close every prayer with the same expression. Avoid the merely mechanical. Avail yourself of the wonderful variety of encouragements and incentives to prayer, and permit your people to profit by your thoughtful application of these to your devotions. Variety helps to hold the attention, and to that extent is of itself good, but something more than variety is possible and desirable. To close a prayer for the sick with "And our plea is in the name of the Great Physician," attracts attention to a special power of Christ. A prayer for pardon may well be plead "for our Redeemer's sake," or in the name of Him who died for our redemption," or "for the sake of our Great High Priest."

A prayer for missions might appropriately be offered "in His name who came into the world to save sinners," or "for His sake who gave His life a ransom for us all."

A prayer for children may end thus: "and all

our pleading is proffered in His name who said 'Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven,' Amen."

The thing to be noted is that just as some forms of address are more appropriate than others because of the subject of the prayer to follow, so also some closing expressions are more suitable than others because of the nature of the prayer just offered. A few minutes' study of the "closings" here given will aid the student to a true conception of the principle involved and the endless variety attainable:

"For Christ's sake. Amen."

"In the all-prevailing name."

"Since all we ask is for the Saviour's sake."

"Unto whom be glory, both now and forever."

"In His name we cry."

"In the name and for the sake of our Adorable Lord."

"For Jesus' sake."

"We come through Him who is the ever-living way."

"Beyond the smallness of our asking, answer in accordance with thine abundant grace."

"And this we ask, not for our sakes alone, but for His sake who taught us to pray, Our Father——"

"Accept us, Lord, and all that is worthy in our worship, for Christ's sake."

"In the name of the Beloved. Amen."

“In the name of our Redeemer, and ever-living Intercessor Christ Jesus our Lord.”

“Our approach, O Lord, and all our prayer, is in the name of the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.”

“So satisfy our holy longings that we may daily grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.”

Stop when you are done. That means, before the spell upon you loses its definite power. The audience knows as well as the leader when that point is reached. Audiences usually are very tolerant, and the worshipful pray past their leader's deficiencies, but this one defect need never mar a service. Disappointment and unrest are caused by coming almost to a stop, and then starting off again, once, twice, thrice. A short prayer that takes you near to God is good. A long one that becomes tedious does more than present harm, it tends to make worship less than a joy.

THE PROPORTIONS OF PRAYER

No general statement can dispose of the question, what proportion of prayer should be devoted to adoration, thanksgiving, petition, etc., because at times a prayer may be confined almost wholly to one department, e.g., Ps. 51 is penitential, Ps. 103, a song of thanksgiving, and Ps. 148 to 150 are pæans of praise. In any particular case it is a matter of personal judgment, but the following considerations have weight.

Too frequently public prayers are marred by an undue preponderance of petition; as though worship were an occasion for alms-begging instead of a sacred service of homage and thanksgiving. Again we have heard prayers which seemed too replete with self-depreciation. Confession of sin is one thing, "calling ourselves names" in public, is another. Much that "fits the case" in private prayer may be an offence and defect in public worship. Confession should be so expressed as not to conflict with good taste or to suggest the incongruous. Dignity as well as humility becometh the worship of God. Let our prayers be rich in adoration and thanksgiving.

"Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

"O, give thanks unto the Lord for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever."

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name."

"Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

The Psalms, more than modern devotion, overflow with sentiments such as these; while Paul lays down the canon, "Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks" (1 Thess. 5: 17); and again, "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving" (Col. 4: 2).

As men and women become more saintly they really do make fewer petitions to God, though

they actually commune with Him more and more. The "less asking" is consequent upon the "more trusting." And just so surely as growth in grace alters the complexion and the proportion of our private devotions, so surely will increasing intelligence and growing taste modify public prayer.

TO WHOM SHOULD PRAYER BE ADDRESSED?

Should prayer be addressed to the Father alone, or also to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit? The answer to this question depends upon the thought or intention of the worshipper. As prayer is a spiritual act the vital matter is to think aright of God. For that end Christ came to reveal the Father, to do the Father's will, and to be man's way to the Father. Accordingly we are taught by our Saviour's example and His definite precept to address "Our Father who art in heaven"; the divine intention being that the Father may be glorified.

The general rule, therefore, is perfectly clear: We should pray to the Father; in the name of the Son; and by the aid of the Spirit, given to help our infirmities in prayer. But is it to be implied that we are never to address Christ or the Holy Spirit? By no means. God is one—Triune, not Tripartite, and we are to worship Him as He is. The cry of faith often rises to the Great Physician. Our natures crave the Spirit's presence. What seems needful is to have an intelligent conception of the Deity, then the heart will go out

aright to Him. Where address is habitually confined to "Jesus" the impropriety amounts to disregard of His own command and the purpose of His coming. A further error is apt to ensue, namely that kind of familiarity which forgetful of the majesty of God indulges itself in inappropriate terms of endearment. Whatever floods of uninterrupted feeling may enrapture private meditation, nevertheless public worship should be characterized by dignity and reverence. All public worship is educative. Thither come the children and the unworshipful. There, too, may be found those "who came to scoff," but who may remain to pray. Accordingly for man's sake as well as God's glory public service must be appropriate, and the loftiest ideal as well as the clear intent of revelation is that we should address God the Father when we pray.

Prayer No. 27 is an excellent example of prayer addressed to the Son.

HOW MANY PRAYERS IN THE SERVICE?

That will depend upon the nature of the service. In the general church service there should be at least four prayers. The invocation, a general prayer, a special prayer, and the benediction.

The invocation, as a call to worship as well as an appeal for the sensible presence and blessing of the Lord God, is often general in its tenor, but not infrequently should strike the keynote of the rest of the service. Two points only need to be noticed here: one, that worship should commence

with invocation. Even where, as is now so frequently the custom, a Doxology issuing, yet that should be in response to the pastor's call, "Let us worship God!" It should not be the first selection on a programme in which the choir takes leading place. Thus the Doxology becomes part, so to speak, of the invocation, which is pronounced while the audience remains standing. Next, the invocation should be frequently changed. A new invocation for every service would probably be the ideal—an ideal difficult, however, of attainment—but difference of opinion does and probably will continue to prevail in this regard.

Where the Lord's Prayer is used in place of an "Invocation," as in some places is regularly done for one of the services, the people soon learn to expect it, especially where they join in its audible utterance. More appropriately it may be reserved for a special place in the service.

* The general prayer, often called the long prayer, should not be too long. Its contents and cast are partly determined from the fact that it should include all those "parts" of prayer, which are not provided for by special prayers. As a matter of fact it is often devoted largely to intercession (on behalf of our rulers, our country, the sick, the heathen, etc.). And this brings us to the special prayer. In almost every Sabbath service there should be a special prayer. In the ordinary service it may be (a) a plea for inspiration imme-

diately before commencing the sermon; or (b) it may be remembrance of some special case at the throne, e. g., a dying member, a sick sovereign, a prayer for rain, etc., or (c) it may be in a fuller sense intercessory. Where the last becomes customary, then there may be less of intercession in the general prayer.

The advantage in having a special prayer is that during the week events may dictate some peculiar need which is emphasized by being given a distinct place.

Where there is no objection to increasing the length and variety of service, a special prayer can be used to good effect immediately after the "offering." Indeed, in any church service where the "collection" is allowed to become a thing of itself, dropped in as a necessary intrusion—a slice of business at fault with devotion—real harm is done the worshipper. Any conception that "business" or "support" is an unfortunate necessity is injurious. Worship is defective which does not include gifts unto God. "Sacrifices" ought to form part of our worship, but if taken apologetically or at the point of coaxing or begging, the divine effect is lost—the wine is spilt between the ewer and the altar. Let the offering be consecrated by a brief prayer, of import somewhat similar to No. 82.

Nothing has, as yet, been said of the prayer immediately following the sermon, and nothing so appropriately follows the sermon as prayer;

but where it can be arranged there may well be five prayers in the regular Sabbath service, and this particular prayer should hold the attention to truths expounded; and seek grace to put into practice the principles enforced, or to escape the sins against which warnings have been pronounced. A sermon which does not affect the conduct or mould the character of a hearer is a failure, and prayer may make this truth prominent. (*Vide* Prayer No. 79.)

THE LENGTH OF PRAYERS

Never brief enough to be abrupt—never long enough to be wearisome. Effective prayer is characterized by an energy of the soul—an intense concentration of all man's mental and spiritual forces. This cannot be long sustained. Even the spiritually-minded man in his best mood sinks back to earth again from his sublimest flight, and more quickly is this the case in public than in private prayer. But if the holiest and most devout find a limit to intensest thought, then it must be remembered that others less spiritual, and less experienced, will fail even sooner in devotion. Prayer should be helpful to children, and to others who cannot "keep pace with" or "hold to the end" a protracted prayer. It requires grace and wisdom for a leader, if he be in prayerful mood, to restrain himself so as not to prolong his prayer beyond the point of intent attention of his audience. Dr. Charles Brown of Edinburgh has laid it down as a law

that ten minutes is the limit to which public prayer should be confined. Many in our day would consider a ten minute prayer unduly long. Quality is a more important element than quantity, accordingly your working rule runs, "Cease before the spell breaks." When the solemn stillness of wrapt attention fails, accept that as evidence that interest is waning on the part of the people. Beyond that point effectiveness is reduced by continuance. "He prayed me into a good frame of mind," George Whitefield once said of a certain preacher, "and if he had stopped there it would have been well; but he prayed me out of it again by keeping on." Let it be remembered the leader is not praying for himself, his position lays upon him the duty of conducting the worship of the people. If he fail in this, he has failed in the office. Private prayer has none but subjective limits, but a different canon governs public worship.

Again, vary the length of public prayers. This as much for your own sake as for that of the audience, for to continue in prayer beyond your mood or the inspiration of the hour is as great a mistake as to transcend the endurance of the congregation. Besides variety effects the "shock" of thought and redeems from death-producing monotony.

POETRY IN PRAYER?

Should poetry be used in prayer? To answer no, would be misleading. All devotional liter-

ature is poetical; even when written in prose as are our modern prayers, it is permeated by poetical thought and richly garnished with poetical phrases borrowed chiefly from the Psalms. In its highest flights prayer becomes rhythmical and clothes itself in highly figurative language. Exalted thought tends to apparel itself in appropriate phraseology. Hence the distinction between poetry and prose. The same flight which carries a soul beyond ordinary experience gives birth to the language of its expression. In this is discovered one of the differences between the prayer and the sermon. The former because it is what it is tends toward the poetical in thought, feeling and expression. But should poetry other than Scriptural be quoted in prayer? This is a different question. Generally speaking, no. It is especially bad taste to introduce long quotations, e. g., whole verses of poetry. The effect is usually weakening. There are rare exceptions which prove this rule, but these require a strong man, and an exceptional quotation, to redeem them from effeminacy. While, however, long quotations are to be avoided as unsuitable in prayer, yet phrases taken from poetry—the great mint in which gems of thought are coined—may be freely adopted. The cultured mind will reveal itself in cultured language. This is a virtue, not a fault. The fault is dragging in verses for artificial effect—one of the weakest errors a student can fall into.

CHAPTER XII

TRAINING FOR PUBLIC PRAYER

Success in training depends to a considerable extent upon having (1) a worthy ideal, (2) correct methods.

But how can the student obtain a high and true ideal? That depends in part upon his own spiritual gift; in part also upon the living examples he has opportunity of hearing. No other teaching equals *viva voce* example. The disciples heard the wonderful voice of Him who spake as never man spake. His prayers revealed the mighty power of worship, and kindled their desire to pray as did their Master. Their ideal was divine. True, we must rest content with human examples, but many have gifts of singular excellence. I have heard Charles H. Spurgeon and Dr. Joseph Parker, and a good many others less famous but scarcely less talented leaders of public devotion, and feel still the impulse their worship imparted. Get near the best living models you can find. Permit their influence to leave its deepest impress upon your soul—so that it will stay with you. Surrendering yourself to the Holy Spirit, live over and over again the holy emotion at your own private altar. Encourage the development of feeling. An ideal is a growing thing; it will

change and vary, but its alterations will be marks of a real *development* in your experience. If you have as yet no very definite ideal, then make the attainment of that a matter of prayer. Its importance is too great to be ignored. Cherish the desire for great power in prayer.

Next, what methods are best? That depends first upon the person in training and next upon his circumstances. Happy is he who finds himself in the hands of a good professor or personal friend of ability, who can and will deal kindly and judiciously with him. To discover one's own deficiencies is no light matter. We all realize to some extent our defects. These we attack and have hope of conquering, but how can we overcome unconscious faults? These blemishes may be life-lasting unless some true friend, at the risk of wounding our vanity, wisely brings them to our notice. Again, even to a professor, duty of this nature is a delicate business, because the individuality of the student must not be eliminated, and it is all the more a difficult duty because hitherto insufficient attention has been devoted thereto by theological teachers.

But assuming the case of a student of prayer who is not at college and has no regular teacher, what methods should such an one adopt?

First, in your own private devotions pray aloud. This you can do unhampered by the nervousness usually caused by the presence of auditors. Audible prayer exacts of you more orderly con-

structed sentences, more consecutive thought, and choicer language. By this method also you will gain practice; and without that, you will never attain efficiency. An eminent authority says: "If it be true that the 'only way to learn to preach is to preach,' it is still more emphatically true that the only way to learn to pray is to pray." With increasing ability will come also increasing joy in the exercise. Then, also, embrace every opportunity afforded for participating in public prayer. There is a difference between praying alone and in public, and the latter "trial" must be met until trepidation changes to real pleasure.

Further, read and meditate upon model prayers. The model prayer dictated expressly for that purpose and forever the standard is the Lord's Prayer. But in addition to Scriptural prayers there have come down to us a rich legacy from saints of other days—recorded prayers revealing their aspirations, penitence, love and devotion. To study these is to partake of their spirit, to think their thoughts, and to share their holy emotion. A classified collection of prayers is provided for the student's use in this volume. Where reference is made to prayer-examples, he is recommended to examine the "example" referred to, and master the principles therein set forth. But, at any time, to read such prayers (as are here given or may elsewhere be found, is a most excellent practice. Men need soul culture as

well as mental training; by combining these, the highest exercise of both is attained. Moreover, the practice just recommended of familiarizing yourself with devotional literature will help you in acquiring another highly desirable qualification for the office of prayer, namely, command of appropriate language. The standard of excellence in prayer-expression is the Psalms,—the very thesaurus of devotional terms. The language of prayer when at its best will always be largely Scriptural, but not exclusively so. Let your prayers breathe the atmosphere of the day in which they are born. In thought and in phraseology they should belong to their age and represent its highest excellence. The following quotation from Dr. Broadus states what prayer-language should and should not be: “The language of prayer must, of course, be grammatical and free from all vulgarisms and oddities. It should be thoroughly simple, not low and coarse, but not learned and inflated. We must avoid elaborateness and prettiness, which is extremely offensive to good taste and painful to truly devout feeling, but must not avoid, when deeply affected, the natural language of emotion, which is apt to be figurative and sometimes very highly figurative. Where this is really natural, it will never strike one as finery.”

Grace and elegance of expression depend so largely upon the possession of a rich vocabulary that your training may be more effective if

we indicate how one's vocabulary can best be enlarged.

A choice and discriminative use of words results from clear thinking, and the observation of shades of difference between kindred words and phrases. As soon as the distinction between words of similar import is brought definitely before the mind, both words become more useful to us, and will never become mixed or confused again. Each comes forward at the right moment to do duty in its appropriate place. For example, to "comprehend" is to have a complete and exhaustive knowledge, while the word "apprehend" implies "to perceive" without denoting complete knowledge. Man apprehends God—although the finite cannot comprehend Him. Once the distinction is seized the error of using "comprehend" where we mean only "apprehend" will never be made. It will pay well to ponder the following instructive reference to this subject by Professor Vinet:

"Whence the poverty of our vocabulary? Is it from unacquaintance with our tongue? No; but we are not accustomed to distinguish between words of a similar signification, that is to say, words which express the same general idea in a particular shade of meaning. From not noting carefully the shades of meaning, we use for each of them either the generic term which embraces them all, or a special term taken at hazard. This word rather than the others almost always recurs,

the others remain unused; our vocabulary is contracted, our language is poor. Attention given to propriety of expression will contribute not only to the perspicuity and force of our speech, but will add richness and beauty to our language."

It will be found most helpful to examine the synonyms of the chief terms used in worship. Merely to read them over is instructive. Take the word "pray"; which some repeat over and over again in devotion, whereas many kindred terms are available, the use of which would be more expressive and graceful, and exhibit much richer thought. Look at this partial list: We pray, beg, ask, petition, request, solicit; we entreat, beseech, supplicate, implore, invoke; we cry, crave, hunger, thirst, long for, etc. A similar list of synonyms for "give" might be cited, such as grant, bestow, confer, impart, etc. But a hint is enough. A few hours devoted to this exercise early in life will enrich a man's entire subsequent ministry. Especial care should be given to the significance and use of the different names and various attributes of the Deity. Some there are who use but few names of God, of Christ, and of the Spirit, and apply even these inappropriately, whereas appropriate reference to the various attributes of the Eternal calls forth from the heart of the worshipper different emotions.

We regard with awe the Omnipotence of the infinite and unsearchable and invisible God, eternal and immutable, the Creator, who is King

of kings and Lord of lords. We rejoice in His love and justice, His mercy and long-suffering compassion, and it elicits our affection and gratitude to call Him our Father, our Preserver, "the Giver of every good and perfect gift," etc.

And so of the Son, He is named Jesus, Saviour, the Christ, and Lord, Immanuel, Redeemer, Revealer, the Light of the World, our Elder Brother, the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, the Good Shepherd, our ever-living Intercessor, etc.

Any exercise, or meditation, which results in developing our appreciation of the diversity and wealth of significance in the variety of the divine names or the varied offices of the Triune God, will enrich both our experience and our devotions. Further, take steps to protect yourself from falling into common faults. The worst of these, and at the same time the most insidious, is "ruts"—(1) following the same line of thought, and (2) using identical language for expressing the same recurring desires.

The best protection against the former is acquaintance with prayer-architecture. (*Vide* Architecture of Prayer, Chap. VIII.) Make maps or outlines for public prayers. This practice is recommended merely as provisional help for the novice who may soon outgrow their use, but occasional exercise in the writing of prayers—not to be read in public, but for the sake of training—will be found beneficial.

To protect yourself against the second order of ruts nothing is better than vigilance and a growing vocabulary.

Training is a stimulation of nature's processes. It conquers evil habit by development along the line of nature's intention. Training is conscious and deliberate evolution by means of which the potential in man is made actual. It presupposes the possession of native gifts and powers, which may indeed lie latent, or by misuse become distorted; but in place of such misfortune, training brings to light unknown capacities and makes the most of them. In this process man need not work alone; he cannot, dare not, work alone. The only teacher of prayer is our Saviour; and the only school is experience. The only power by which we can breathe prayer is that which is first inbreathed by the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER XIII

TEACHING PRAYER

Every parent bears responsibility for imparting to his or her child some conception of God, or rather of developing and perfecting the innate conceptions of childhood. That these should be true, goes without saying. Too little is it realized to what an extent human beings are governed by conceptions. These are the fundamental springs of action. Often they lie for years unexamined and unjustified. Not rarely, indeed, do they constitute the unconscious background for a course of action held sacred because of wholly inexplicable sanctions implanted in childhood. Oh, the prejudices and hates that mar men's lives because of errors in parental judgment, or foolish outbursts of passion in the presence of a child! Unholy seed dropped in the passionate heart of a youth grows and may long grow, without examination. Oh, what battles we have to fight with these demons of the soul, and how often even after we become conscious that we are victims of prejudice do we find it difficult to rid ourselves of their evil influence! On the other hand, what noble native support is embodied in the life of that man who finds his fundamental conceptions of God, and man, and the world, capable of justification at the

bar of his riper judgment. Such an individual is equipped with native strength foreign to the man whose mental life has from youth been deformed by misconception and prejudice. What higher office can a parent perform for his child than to give him a true conception of God and of truth? His future even unto eternity depends to no small extent on this matter.

Upon mothers generally falls the task of teaching children to pray. Graciously has God endowed motherhood with heart-power and spirituality, conceded generally to be superior to those of the opposite sex. Her nearness to her child enables her to mould its life as no other force can do. We have nothing but approval for the teaching of those little prayers, sacred with age and long use, which we all learned at a mother's knee. Especially should the Lord's Prayer, and the 23d Psalm be early employed; but we have no desire to treat this theme here further than to enjoin, do not permit on the one hand the levity that "plays" at prayer. On the other extreme, do not allow a false and severe gravity to mark worship, for children may be made afraid of God—to their irreparable damage.

Pastors, too, are under obligations to teach prayer, and by implication, of course, to teach their people how to teach it also. This they constantly are doing by example; therefore, let the example be of a high order; and beyond this, as your young people assume vows of loyalty to

Christ and make a public profession of their faith, endeavor to bring them into training for Christian service. Already various societies organized among the young have accomplished much in this regard, but work of this nature never ends.

How should a pastor approach the task of teaching the youth of his congregation to take audible part in prayer? In addition to enlisting the intelligent co-operation of parents, let him solicit the aid of Sunday school teachers. It is an excellent plan for the teacher of each class to spend a moment or two in prayer at the commencement or at the close of the lesson. With all heads bowed, let the teacher first, and then each pupil, utter a short prayer—it may be but a sentence, but let it be original—the child's own thought, clothed in his own language. Classes there are where this procedure would be unwise. Teachers there are wholly unfit to assume this responsibility; but pastor and teacher, or superintendent and teacher, must decide matters of this nature. Personal attention is always necessary to matters of such moment. Next, "sentence prayers," as practiced in young people's societies, make an easy and helpful beginning. Much has already been done when a youth "breaks the ice" by beginning. There is certain improvement before the youth who once makes the effort. A nervous person can sometimes be induced to quote a passage of Scripture who would not venture to formulate a prayer of his

own. In a case of that kind real aid may be given by indicating passages appropriate for utterance as a complete prayer. It is wonderful what delicacy must be exercised in the case of nervous beginners.

Another educative expedient is responsive prayer, where the pastor or leader is followed, sentence by sentence, audibly by the society. It will be found helpful also to repeat audibly in concert passages of Scripture. Members become accustomed to hearing their own voice, and find it afterwards easier to venture alone.

A practice of real value to Sunday school or Christian Endeavor societies also is concert response to the leader's call for passages, e. g.:

Leader—"What is John 3: 16?"

Sunday school—"For God so loved the world,"
etc.

Of course only such passages should be called for as the school or society knows. This kind of drill becomes very interesting when once adopted, and may be varied by the leader quoting Scripture verses or phrases, while the school in response names chapter and verse.

Now this excellent custom may be made contributory to prayer-training, by drilling on passages particularly suitable for devotion. It is quite legitimate for the leader to indicate why he chooses special verses. He may link together a line of verses all bearing on a common theme, so that the quotation of one of them shall suggest

the others. All Scripture students know the value of having a nucleus for a group of proof texts.

But a pastor, like a professor, can best help a student by private personal contact. Such aid can carry only on mutual confidence, which realizes at once the importance of the object to be attained, and the solemnity of the duty. To pray together, after a personal talk, and then by gentle remarks on the part of the teacher, and candid questions on the part of the student, to feel the way nearer to excellence and nearer to God, does more than educate the student. Such an experience links two lives with almost parental love.

Where classes can be organized for training in prayer general rules are applicable, but in individual work each case is specific and must be dealt with in its own peculiar way. Both plans may be adopted simultaneously.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ALTAR IN THE HOME

The home is commonly, and rightly, recognized as the citadel of the state. In the purity of one is found the strength of the other. With the decay of the one comes the decline of the other. They stand or fall together. The home, the church, and the school represent stages in the development of society. Out of the first arose the second and third. As a permanent condition also divinely reposed in the constitution of the family, the home precedes church and school. Neither the splendid development of educational systems, nor the prestige of the church which tends to eclipse the home, can displace it as the primary factor in the making of character. Upon home influences depend to a great extent the subsequent success of both church and school. That the relation between church and home are relations of mutual dependence is clearly perceived, however, in the influence exerted by the former upon the parents. But in some respects the church depends more on the home than the home on the church. Religious foundations are laid in earliest life. No altar is holier than the knee of a pious mother. "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not

depart from it." If the springs of life are kept pure the stream will flow clear. From a pure home youth enters the church to be its strength; from irreligious or non-religious homes come a progeny which need the strength of the church. One has a life that is "upward tending," the other a tendency to fall. As a matter of history, too, home-worship preceded public worship. In patriarchal times the center of worship was the home; and the head of the household was the priest, and minister in holy things. The story of Job has its setting in this stage of religious development. When his children were feasting, "Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said: It may be that my sons have sinned and renounced God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually" (Job 1: 5).

We read also that, "God spake unto Noah and to his sons with him." Again, Abraham received a special call and blessing in which all the nations of the earth are to be blessed, for Jehovah said: "I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment," etc. (Gen. 18: 19). Here is the charter for domestic worship. Not only was the home a religious center, but it is destined so to be kept. God's revelation of Himself to the father of the faithful is declared to be "to the end

that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord." The charter was repeated and amplified by Moses and impressed upon all God's Israel (Deut. 6: 3-9).

Parental authority is properly exercised, therefore, in the institution of the home altar; and it follows also that the altar stands as the symbol and recognition of another authority. He who has no authority in the home higher than his own assumes an awful responsibility. The day may come when that will break. But when father and child bow at the same throne, that act instills a reverence and regard in which the parent shares, and a true conception is inculcated of both parental and divine authority. Where parents recognize God, the children usually do so—and in about the same manner. Childhood is always religious. If youth be not, it is because some good thing has been frost-bitten or famished. The spontaneous love of children goes out for sympathy. Their intuitions of God run along the line of their affections. They are prepared to love and fear God if they get encouragement. It is this very proclivity of innocent childhood which makes it so often true that "a little child shall lead them." How much then is lost to the child whose religious promptings are hunger-bitten in an irreligious home. How mightily the strength by which childhood is entrenched, whose life has been normal in a home of wholesome

piety! Parentage is a solemn responsibility. Much more upon the example of parents than upon their precepts depends the destiny of the child. At the fireside character is shaping for eternity and, it is feared, much of the actual shaping has not God's approval, has not even the sanction of human conscience. Every prompting of the parental heart towards the welfare of the child is an argument in favor of erecting the altar in the home. He is more God's child than yours. Only secondarily and by permission are you his parent. Though your authority may fail he has still to deal with God, and it is your place not only to instill this knowledge, but so to do it that his acquaintance with God shall be beautiful; a friendship—not a terror; a true acquaintance—not a distortion. Children are born in the home to be brought up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

As of old, parents are expected to bring their children to Jesus that He may bless them. There is a reason why our Saviour wants a place in every family. In the home are cast those lines of destiny from which a child can never escape. By constituting the family as He has, God has built the altar into the structure of the home. It is there in the divine intention. If it be not actually "erected" it is because a divine institution is rejected. And its neglect exposes one to the admonition of conscience and the leanness of disobedience. As truly as the

individual intuitively communes with God, and instinctively loves his child, and intelligently desires its highest welfare, just so surely is family worship a divine means provided to help fathers and mothers to a worthy discharge of the solemn duties of parentage. It is not enough to pray for the children, it is necessary to pray with them. Where religious duties are shared by parents and children, both are led to truer life and higher blessing.

INFLUENCES OF DOMESTIC WORSHIP

Of course religion in the home is not confined to the particular service now under attention. Children gain conceptions of God and religion, of life and duty, from the parental regard for the Scriptures, observance of the Sabbath, attitude towards the church; from their general bearing and manner of imposing discipline. All these things tell powerfully on a child's notion of invisible and eternal verities. One of the most potent spells ever cast upon the impressible nature of a child is that which comes through a mother's prayers, and early teaching of prayer. This is altogether unique. Another good religious influence resides in the custom of asking grace at table. Where this is reverently and wisely done it exerts a power, none the less because not easily traced. Whatsoever fosters true conceptions of God and our relation to Him, has real spiritual worth. How carefully, then, even the simplest religious act should be done!

But nothing can take the place of that institution which is distinctively called family prayer—an institution which holds its place from infancy to age, through all the varied stages of life without losing its peculiar helpfulness.

To all who take part in it, peculiar benefits accrue.

To parents. On account of the difficulties that face members of the family, and dangers that threaten, especially the children, because of the foes unseen and events unknown, which menace the home, the business, and life itself, it is a good thing for the household in the morning to take an outlook over the day. To the parent this is peculiarly helpful, since he does it in the light of interests, not simply his own, but theirs also. Then this is done under the best circumstances and in the best frame of mind to see things in their perspective and to realize their real worth. God is invited into that day's operations, and all are committed to Him for safety—an impressive thing for both parent and child. The evening prayer is a solemn review of the day and its doings, in the best mood to appreciate its mercies, to correct its wrongs, to ask forgiveness for its sin and to seek grace and counsel for the day to come. Again, the parent who prays with his household, reinforces the strength of his position as head of the house. All who have had very pious parents attest the sanctity which crept into their conception of father or mother while listen-

ing to their communion with God. Christian biography is full of examples.

Further, prayer with the family makes the exercise of discipline easier. It imparts a good influence all round. It removes the ragged edge of anger; gives chastisement a new sanction, and correction more tenderness.

Better still, by conducting devotions with his whole household the parent places himself under wholesome restraint, and fortifies himself against slips and misdemeanors which would rob him of his influence. When he openly places himself in divine relations his sense of consistency moves within, and the eternal fitness of things hedge him without. He has put himself where he has got to be what he ought to be; a daring and noble thing to do. Furthermore, he has not sacrificed himself by a small weakness at the point where a little strength can effect more, and bring richer returns than anywhere else in the world. The family altar is a parent's throne, regal with the royalty of the Higher Presence associated with him there.

To children. By giving "Our Father which is in Heaven" the crowning position in the home, the children gain true conceptions of Him and their universal obligations to Him. So also their views of life, of men and things, are corrected and adjusted. Through your prayer they learn your relation to impending events, joyous or sad, and take on your feelings. Your gratitude enters

their thought; your anxiety lodges in their mind, your solicitude for them kindles their sympathy. Your tenderness towards the sick and bereaved, the tempted and tried, the lost and sinful, and your importunity for salvation, tell upon them. Unconsciously they will adopt your sentiments. Moreover, at the family altar you have the opportunity of communion with God about matters in such a way that they learn in a sacred atmosphere what you could not so well tell them directly. There is an immense leverage there.

Then the fact that your son, or daughter, or employes, learn through prayer that you feel deeply about a matter opens the way for direct discussion of it later. They have learned three things about it: (1) That it is important; (2) the direction of your thought about it; and (3) that you are anxious to be right and to act wisely in the circumstances. In other words, prayer together opens the way for rational, sympathetic and prayerful counsel together about the same thing.

Again, domestic devotions exert a kindly influence upon the heart life of the household. Your love is cultivated by the expression it gets at the altar, and your child's love grows in that sunshine. In short, their practical and emotional life is defended and developed, and that in such a way as to link together all the household in fuller sympathy and holier affection.

Friends and domestics. But in many homes there are relatives, visitors, employes, etc., and

these all share in the benefits of worship. Their presence gives devotion a special cast, and it is in this special way that peculiar benefits result. Old age is a benediction when held in deference. Such regard breeds more good in a young life than the kindness of youth can confer upon age. And the lambs of the fold must not be forgotten, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. The whole household should worship together since they must live and labor in domestic relations; and these should be relations of peace, harmony and mutual regard—all of which are sanctified by prayer. Furthermore, it is to be observed that all these benefits attach to domestic worship apart from the supremest blessing, namely, actual, personal communion with God, and the answers divinely sent in response to the soul-hunger. But further still, besides prayer, family devotions include also the reading of Scripture; and one of the richest increments of profit is the increased knowledge of God's Word. As a fortification of life, as an inspiration in human struggle, as a guide in earth's pilgrimage, the knowledge of the Word of Life is inestimable. And what a host of the white-robed throng owe their redemption, humanly speaking, to influence brought to bear upon them at the family altar! As a place to meet God there is no place like home.

DIFFICULTIES AND EXCUSES

As a matter of fact, notwithstanding the divine warrant for family worship and the incalculable

benefits attending it, still this holy institution seems to be losing its grip on the Christian community. Many causes are assigned for its decay. But whatsoever influences conspire to reduce its power must be ranked as baneful. Nothing can take its place; the best substitutes are far inferior. God has invested the parental relation with unique sanctity, with original love, and singular influence for good, which if not exercised on the child's behalf the child must remain eternally poorer.

However, it would be unfair to ignore the fact that there are many practical difficulties to face in instituting the altar in some homes. Only an intelligent and sympathetic appreciation of these facts will enable a pastor effectively to meet certain excuses presented for neglecting domestic worship. Even to ourselves we need to be honest, so that the amount of time, the nature of the service, its frequency, etc., shall be the best in the circumstances; and not that all shall be lost because perfect regularity and a certain ideal are impossible of attainment. Many cases will be so peculiar that no general advice can be of much avail. Prayer and counsel in the home, planning and co-operation will be needed to evolve the best method. But where two Christian people live together some plan can, almost without exception, be found for worship in consort. The best time to begin is when the home is planted—at marriage. If only one is a Christian, that one,

even though it be the wife, should endeavor to have God recognized in the home by Scripture reading and prayer. It may tax his or her courage, but it will be easier to start then than later—unless some great catastrophe or dispensation of Providence should prepare an unexpected way for it.

Excuses. Humanity is prone to excuses. Many believers who really would like to adorn the doctrine of Christ, will, just through cowardice, warp the living truth and bevel the edge of duty, if they can find refuge in an excuse,—a habit thoroughly pernicious. We cannot deceive God, and to deceive self is folly, and may be death. In other words, excuses are not allowable—only explanations are valid.

“I have no time.” Lack of time is a valid reason for omitting household prayer in certain exceptional circumstances, but is no reason for not establishing it as the custom; for other men as busy as you actually have the altar. Again, if you really have important and pressing business, you of all men ought to seek the guidance and help of God. His blessing maketh rich and addeth no sorrow; but without it all your endeavors will prove fruitless.

Another question is in order: Have you any business of greater importance than the eternal interests of your family, and your own growth in grace? Is it not true that the real cause of our neglect is oftener not because we are so busy, but

because we are extremely idle? To have time for the morning paper, pipe, or stroll, and not for worship, is a condemning circumstance. To Him whose time we are spending, and who knows the heart of the whole matter, to Him we stand or fall; He is the God we worship, and to Him we owe every good and perfect gift. Twenty-four hours every day for labor, rest and enjoyment; and not five minutes, ten minutes, fifteen minutes, for worship? You do not mean it; it is not true.

“I am too timid.” Too little sympathy is felt for nervous people by those who are constitutionally strong. Under many circumstances the introduction of family worship into a home is a trial, and to timid people a great trial. There may be cases indeed where this infirmity may be a valid bar to the ordinance—but these will be few. Even timid people love and marry and in life’s fierce struggle play a noble part. The same courage would stand them also in this circumstance. Grace also will be provided for difficult duties. Bravely therefore make the attempt and learn that, “My grace is sufficient for thee.” “As thy day, so shall thy strength be.” No one so needs supernatural help as the man who feels his own feebleness in the face of the world. To such an one the altar is an especial need. “Yes, but what about failure?” We reply, early failure may be fruitful of much good. If you break down in your first attempts, two things will be

apparent: first, the cause of your failure; and, second, the manliness which overcomes it. If your heart be right, everything else will come out right, and your place in the esteem of your fellow worshippers will be enhanced. They know what it is to be nervous, and they know how to respect the man who does the right thing bravely.

"I have not the ability." Once again we have to recognize that men are differently endowed, that the office is much more difficult for some than for others, and that in some cases, possibly, men are unequal to the duty. Again, however, this class must constitute the exception, not the rule. Only a few can urge this honorably as a deterrent. Prayer is not an exceptional but a universal gift. Speech is an almost universal endowment, and where a heart has been touched into new life by the baptism of the spirit, vocal prayer comes within the range of attainment, to any man who wants it, and is willing to pay the cost. Like the timid man, the man "slow of speech" manages to talk with his family about domestic affairs and to men outside about business; proof that he can, after some fashion, conduct devotions if he sets himself to it. More, men who are not your equal in mental or vocal endowments do it every day. And if you but undertake it, experience will soon make your service acceptable. Whereas in the meantime you are under the finest discipline. Not only preparation for future church work, but also

ability to think orderly and give expression to thought on secular subjects will result from this beginning. A man can do more when he puts himself under the Spirit, than in any other way. But prayer is not recommended merely for its educational value, but for the stability of the home and the precious treasures opened thereby.

No man ever proffers the excuse, "I am too proud," yet false vanity, a foolish weakness, often keeps a man from being manly enough to take a father's place in his own family. In the sight of Omniscience, how must such a man appear? What is he in his own eyes? in the eyes of his friends? The root difficulties are perhaps never expressed, because if a Christian wills to do it he can. "Where there's a will, there's a way," and if at first he does not succeed he will do so by attempting again. The two greatest hindrances to this duty are cowardice and inconsistency. If conscience can truly call any man "coward" he's the man who needs help. For his own sake he needs it, regardless of everything else. And prayer is the very channel to power. The same thing may be said regarding the very greatest of all obstacles to erecting the family altar, namely, consciousness of inconsistency between practice and profession. Under "Benefits of Family Worship" this point has already been touched, but one point of great moment remains for mention. When a father has conducted devotions in the morning, but has stumbled

in the eyes of his children or employes during the day, that constitutes no valid reason for discontinuing the office. It constitutes the very place and opportunity for correcting his fault and fortifying him against another failure. For example, suppose an unseemly outburst of temper has been the error. Your confession of sin and earnest pleading for grace to live worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, will reveal your penitence for your misdemeanor and your desire to correct your failing. Others will understand; you and your household will think of the same circumstance, and the persons who observed your mistake will recognize your manliness in your new endeavor. This needs no argument. You have put yourself right with men, in putting yourself right with God. In this and in kindred occurrences, meeting at the throne in communion with God is the very best means for righting wrong and gaining power. All Christians are more or less inconsistent; only the best of them, however, make their failures stepping-stones to higher things in such a way that they help others up the same steps. The family altar enables a father to do that.

HOW TO CONDUCT DOMESTIC WORSHIP

The question how to conduct family devotion is scarcely as important as how not to conduct it. For there are many ways that are right and good; and but few ways in which it should not be done. So long as worship is a delight, a refreshment, or

even so long as it remains interesting, it will be helpful, and its value will be largely in proportion to the present impression made upon the worshippers. But if the service be tedious, and tiresome, either because uninteresting in its nature or prolonged until weariness ensues, a grave danger threatens, a danger so serious that it compels consideration. Many sad examples attest the possibility of converting this naturally enjoyable service into an irksome duty, so distasteful as to create a lasting dislike for worship. Especially is this true where a kind of severity is exercised to compel unwilling attendance. In early life authority can be, and ought to be, exerted in this matter. Where the service is not made wearisome it will as a rule hold its grip through life; but in cases where a youth becomes restive, even when he himself is wholly at fault, it may be wise to relinquish compulsion. In such a case a father can hold his place of reverence, and make it even more sacred, by appealing to the son's religious sense. If he fails for the present, it may be only a passing failure; he still holds his boy's regard. But if that be lost at the point of a quarrel, recovery is made more difficult. The transition period, from childhood to youth, from under-authority to shared-responsibility, is the very time when parental love must hold filial affection. If that holy regard holds, minor matters will right themselves. Parents and children must remain good friends. What-

ever else may arise to test parental authority, attendance at family worship should not, and certainly will not, if two faults be avoided. The commonest of these is making the service too long. Children soon weary of any occupation in which they are kept still. Where there are children, their presence should dictate brevity. So long as their attention is held they are profited. When that breaks, further continuance will not profit them; and the altar is chiefly for their religious development. Do not spoil the service by a fault so easily corrected.

The other serious fault is unnaturalness. The holy whisper, the loud rant, the peculiar whine, the artificial gravity or sanctimoniousness—anything that gives the impression that the leader is not exactly himself in worship—is injurious. Besides, children are apt to infer that to be religious they must feel “like that,” and you cannot afford to mislead a child. If the whole day is to be wholesomely religious, the worship must be wholesome, too. There is no need of making a mistake. One can be as natural in his reverence and devotion as in his business or pleasure.

Avoiding these two extremes, almost any method will be good.

How often? “When thou liest down and when thou risest up” is the language of Scripture. In some homes once a day is all that seems very well possible. Where the father’s employment takes him from home before the rest of the house-

hold has arisen, and in certain cases, returns only in the evening, the only time when the whole family can assemble is at the close of the day. A practical problem this, to be settled by the nature of the circumstances. Where the father is away from home all week, he should not fail to gather the household at the family altar on Sabbath. A single service per week stands for a good deal.

Where? It is well that some one place should be recognized as the "altar." In time it will take on sacredness. Where there is time, and where there is talent, praise will add much to the life and enjoyment of family devotions. Moreover, the habit of song imports sunshine into a home. Children love singing, and even where little talent be present, this may become the favorite part of the worship. Jesus and the disciples sang in the upper room. Praise will fill the Home above; and for the present it is written, "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord," and, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me." If a musical instrument be available, it will improve this part of devotions.

Reading. In prayer we speak to God. But in the Scriptures God speaks to us. Teach the children to listen as to the Word of the Lord. The supreme purpose is to excite and maintain true interest so that "worship" will become increasingly a joy. This dominant truth will determine several problems in regard to both reading and prayer. Since neither must be too long nor

tedious, do not let the chapter division of our English Bible govern the length of the lesson.

Reading the Bible through by course is a good plan. It sustains the interest, and the whole family know what you are doing and the place of reading. Also, "the whole counsel of God" is brought to bear upon them. But not only must long chapters be divided into suitable portions, but where there are children genealogical tables and certain other chapters are to be omitted. When they become older they should read these for themselves, but now you are winning their love for the Scriptures and must use the Word wisely to that end.

Bishop Bickersteth recommends reading from the Old Testament in the morning, and the New Testament in the evening, so as to keep both constantly before the family. The Gospels and Old Testament narratives contain the most fascinating reading for a child. Prophecy and Epistles have more interest for maturer minds. Some read courses in the parables and the miracles, while others follow the International Sunday School Lessons. No plan should be adhered to which becomes tiresome. On the other hand some intelligent purpose should give order and consecutiveness in the lessons. To open the Bible anywhere and read anything is to sacrifice the interest that always attaches to an intelligible process. Moreover, every member of the household should have a Bible, and take part in the

reading. To read a verse each by turn may tax some poor readers, but is a good plan. To read responsively, alternate verses, is also good—anything to enlist the sympathy and deepen the impression upon the younger worshippers.

Prayer. Let the prayer be simple, direct and short. It should not attempt the wider scope of a pulpit prayer, which is weekly. It will include confession of sins, so expressed as to touch the conscience of the children. It will express personal and family wants; the interests of the school and business, etc. There will always be intercession for friends and relatives, the sick and sorrowing, etc., but only part of the field that lives in our sympathy should be mentioned in any one prayer, because our prayers should not be too much alike, and no prayer must be long. Where no peculiar circumstances determine the nature of your prayer, the tenor of the reading lesson may well give cast to your devotion. Then, it will be found a good custom to close each prayer with the Lord's Prayer in concert.

Now, as to exceptions. It will be necessary to recognize "exceptions," otherwise the regular custom will become disorganized and perhaps discontinued. Perfect order is impossible, but breaks must not interrupt the institution. Sickness may disarrange a household for days, but let it be talked of as an interruption. Some morning the household may "sleep in" or some one must catch a train. What is to be done? Never omit

worship entirely if avoidable. But how have it briefly? A practice of real interest is for each person at the table to quote a verse of Scripture; then kneel and unite in the Lord's Prayer. Or the 23d Psalm may be recited in concert, or any other brief passage of Scripture, or the Apostles' Creed. Anything that recognizes God helps to establish the house.

Again, there will be individual exceptions. A child must run a message, or hasten to school before the rest of the family are ready for worship. Let it be a rule that such an absentee shall ask to be excused from devotions. It will keep the institution constantly in mind as important. The presence of visitors should on no account be allowed to interfere with worship. An irreverent or inconsiderate visitor should be spoken to in private lest harm be done—a difficult duty, but necessary. When a father dies, and a widowed mother is left alone with her little ones, should she assume the duty of conducting family prayer? With all sympathy and tenderness, we reply, Yes. She taught the children first to pray. Perhaps she has led in prayer already, sharing the duties with her husband—a good custom—and possibly her prayer will prove more helpful than a father's devotion. It frequently is the case that a mother's prayer holds a child with peculiar power. It often has an element of love and sympathy vibrant in it that is not so fully felt in a man's worship. And after all, families, like

friends, are tied by heart-strings. All prayer should be tender and simple rather than formal or pretentious. Yes, let the widow strengthen her shattered home at the altar of prayer.

One other point: Where extemporaneous prayer is too severe a tax upon the head of the home, what should be done? Use books of prayer. These are readily available, and constitute a substitute that may lead the way to closer communion. Anything is better than neglect. The supreme end is a closer walk with God, and a daily growth in grace. No lovelier sight can meet the gaze of the angels, than a family group bending in adoration and spiritual hunger before God. In communion with Him are found wisdom, and peace, holiness and security. They that dwell in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

CHAPTER XV

THE PRAYER-MEETING

The mid-week service, by whatever name it is known—and the name should signify the nature of the meeting—may be made an invaluable auxiliary to the life of the church; or, alas! may sink to a stage at which it becomes a discredit to the congregation.

So numerous are the elements entering into its success, so many the causes of failure, and so infinitely wide the possibilities of variation, that we venture nothing more than to mention points.

A live meeting needs a live leader.

Punctuality is a virtue; anything else is a provocation to people accustomed to punctuality; anything else is an interruption of the service. Be punctual yourself; for you that is imperative; moreover, your example will be helpful—if not, it will be positively damaging. What right have you to teach a whole community that an engagement can be broken by five minutes without harm? Moreover, the negligence manifest in habitual tardiness breeds disrespect.

“The meeting on Wednesday will commence promptly,” announced a minister one Sabbath. “Will it?” mumbled a man on the back seat. And another smiled. The back seat had struck the pulpit. A pulpit should not be so vulnerable.

Come, if possible, before the hour of opening. You may not be able to meet all at the close of the service. Make it a point to see some before. People like this; they will come expressly for that purpose if they desire counsel. Pastoral work is thereby lightened, or made more intelligent and helpful. At the same time, and this is an important point, your meetings are made more sociable. Social influences of the right type widen the avenues to spiritual enjoyment.

Let the room be well ventilated—to breathe atmosphere a week old is neither healthful nor inspirational. See that the temperature is as nearly comfortable as the season and the circumstances will permit. Cold feet are not a means of grace; nor are draughts conducive to devotion. Practice economy in anything but light; have plenty of it; a brilliantly lighted room is an inspiration, darkness is depressing.

Let the praise selections be prepared before the service. Discussion and hymn-hunting in the presence of an audience interrupt the stillness so helpful to worship.

That introduces another matter, viz., should early-comers make a social occasion of the moments before service begins? Yes, undoubtedly; and no, decidedly. Yes, if it be done in an undertone of reverence; no, if it be in loud tones or accompanied by laughter. One is unseemly; the other may be done in such a manner as even to cultivate reverence; to make the stillness felt.

The pastor's manner and tone will strike the keynote. If "the hush" is upon him, it will be upon the people, or, if not, a hint as to the seemliness of quiet will be effective.

So far, so good; but you may have all this and—a small audience. The real difficulty is not yet reached, viz., how the meeting itself is to be conducted. Before touching that, however, let us pause over the attendance.

What proportion of a congregation ought to be expected to appear with reasonable regularity at the mid-week service? "That depends." In the country at certain seasons few are free; sometimes roads are bad, and the weather inclement. In towns and cities other conditions prevail. Mothers must care for young children. The sick, their nurses, and all "shut-ins" are honorably excused. Travellers, railroad men and others are "on the road." Then there are meetings, municipal, political, literary and social too numerous to mention, not forgetting the "lodge" and "initiation night," all competing with the church. Legitimate claims ought cheerfully to be recognized by the pastor and acknowledged. Scolding is useless; besides, it is always in bad taste, and reacts on the scolder. But having made all due allowance, the proportion actually attending the mid-week service is often culpably small. Illegitimate claims have to be combatted and negligence overcome. How is this to be done? Not *en masse*, not by the wholesale. First make

the meetings as helpful and attractive as possible. Next, by a systematic, personal campaign capture individuals. This is a task that never ends; but it pays. Do not expect enough to cause heart-break if unattained; but unless you expect much and allow your people to feel you expect much, you will fail. The right kind of a conception is worth more than tongue can tell—either in the home, the business or the church. Adults like children are governed by conceptions and impressions. We all are.

Furthermore, knit the various portions of the congregation by ties of sympathetic prayer. Express sympathy from the pulpit for the "shut-ins" of all descriptions, and for the "shut-outs." Let them know it is understood that all the praying force of the congregation will unite at the mid-week service; the absentees as well as the presentees. At the service, prayer will be made for the sick, the dying, the aged; for infants, travellers, for absent ones, to the uttermost ends of the earth. Ask for the sympathetic co-operation of the absent, wherever they may be, on behalf of Zion, and the responsibilities there resting. Then in pastoral calls ask if these requests are complied with. Any questions regarding the church work, and the personal interest taken therein are stepping-stones to the heart, peeps into conscience, awakenings of the sense of responsibility.

Where possible, it may be well to have not only

a special organist for this service, but also a choir chosen expressly for it, too. Quite youthful singers may be enlisted to advantage. The all-important point is to secure the right person as leader.

Good singing, hearty praise, enjoyable and inspirational, is a strong element towards success.

Difficult to attain? Perhaps; but the pastor can do much at this point, and a few pledged voices will be found greatly helpful.

Look out for the sentiment of your services. Never allow them to become "drearily perfunctory" or "sentimentally effusive." Here is Washington Gladden's counsel: "There is no necessity, however, that they should be formal and frigid; and no necessity that they should be emotionally extravagant; it is the pastor's business to see that they are not. When they are what they ought to be they serve an important purpose in the life of the church. The type to which they ought to conform is that of a free and informal conference of the members, upon the life of the Christian, and the work of the church. The demand is not supplied by a lecture from the pastor. What is wanted is that the people themselves should be trained to think and to express their thoughts on the great themes of the spiritual life. It is well, also, to connect with these devotional meetings conferences about the various charitable enterprises of the church, so that prayer and study may bear fruit in service, and

so that work may be informed by study and consecrated by prayer."

Dr. Blaikie warns against making it "a diluted edition of the pulpit service." A "conference" stands in danger from the "irrepressible talker," and the "coldness" of debate.

The experience meeting, rejected *in toto* by some congregations and intrenched by hoar custom in others, possesses a merit of its own. Objectors point to crude expressions, the temptation to insincerity, the margin between profession and practice apparent to the brethren, etc. True! But the church is a school as well as a hospital; its membership needs training and development. The church must use means to develop workers. Many congregations, strong in men of noble character and blameless life, are lamentably weak in workers capable of expressing themselves in lucid language. Practice is needed. The disconcertment of the novice must give way to the experience which can think on its feet. Then, too, the expression of thought perfects thinking. One scarcely knows what he really does know until he endeavors to express it. To teach a subject is the best way of mastering it. That confession of the lips attached by Jesus and the apostles to heart-life means something to the believer as well as to the world.

Bible readings introduce a most instructive type of meeting if well conducted; some pastors convert the service systematically into a Bible class.

Advantages and disadvantages attach to every kind of service. Which should be adopted? All. Every one of them, as occasion admits. There alone is found the needed room for variety. An immense scope for variety is found, too, in the subjects deserving treatment. Some years ago, in order to insure variety in my mid-week service, I prepared a list of possible subjects, which I give almost as originally written:

Sermonette.

Bible Reading.

Lecture.

Biblical Introduction.

Expository Reading.

Celebrated Hymns—History and Authors.

Course on Psalm 23.

Course on the Decalogue.

Course on the Lord's Prayer.

The Poetry of the Bible.

Occasionally read a poem by standard author.

Missions — Countries; Events; Distinguished Missionaries.

Apologetics.

Church History.

Doctrines.

Temperance.

The Church Courts, and Law.

Course on Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

Reports of Conventions, Synods, Assemblies, etc.

Conference on Some Phase of Church Work or Life.

This list I consulted occasionally in laying out my work, making selections with a view to appropriateness and variety. In the course on Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* each stage was sketched on the blackboard. Many subjects may be made much more interesting, and far more educative, by use of the blackboard, as I first found while giving a course on the "Books of the Bible." Each lecture presented an epitome of the contents of one book (or part of a book), and I discovered also that questions in review of past lectures were readily answered. Where the pastor has little skill in the use of chalk, a legitimate and perhaps fortunate excuse exists for enlisting the co-operation of some deft hand from the congregation.

The ability to keep forces wisely at work is simply invaluable in a church.

Another point. Let a meeting develop along its own line—if it will develop. Have your own plan ready so that no drag may be allowed. A perfectly open way must be felt if "conference" is to be indulged in.

Next, as to prayer—and this brings us to the crux of the meeting. Because, on the one hand, the devotional part of the service may be its most helpful and attractive part; or on the other, may become its most wearisome and uninteresting feature. Sad, but true! Two or three ten-minute

prayers, by the same monotonous voices, in the same fixed phrases, week after week, will make a desert of any meeting. A worse feature, too, of this "simoon" is that it often proceeds from the most excellent sources—pious men unconscious of harm-doing. The worst feature perhaps is this, that any meeting improperly conducted breeds this kind of desolation. Once a meeting falls into the hands of two or three experienced men—and is kept there for a few successive weeks—then a good deal of ice has to be broken before younger and "less efficient" persons will venture to intrude. And yet a successful prayer-meeting must have its whole atmosphere permeated by prayer. Its music, its address, its Scripture reading, should be characterized by a reverence at once prayerful and glorifying to God. In other words, must preserve its distinctively religious nature. If it descends to any lower plane, its import is lost. This is not saying that it ought to be stiff or unsociable; but everybody knows the difficulties. The question is, How can they be overcome? The long-winded brother is deaf to the request for "brief prayers." To stop him in the middle of his "mistake" is to offend him; nor will it be less offensive to expostulate with him in private. How stop the harm, without creating damage? Possibly the pastor may be able to convince him that the prayer-meeting fails in one of its noblest aims unless it be a school in which the young and new members

are taught to pray. If he can be brought to feel the force of this, and the desirability of having many trained to take part, he may consent to help the pastor in the work of training; to let every prayer be short, lest the novice be discouraged; and to curb his gifts, for his younger brother's sake. This will be more easily accomplished if he can be brought himself to introduce the subject to certain young persons, who are promising but backward, asking them to make a beginning. Perhaps, too, if the prayer-meeting were made a subject of discussion in which members are invited to point out defects, or suggest improvements, some light might dawn on everybody concerned. Why should not the pastor, or some one prompted for the occasion, read at such a meeting Beecher's or Spurgeon's treatment of this theme? Light from any quarter would be welcome. Even a little friction might contribute something to the "rousement." It goes without saying that the length of a prayer depends on its quality, and its quality will be felt in its effect. Absorbing worship seems almost timeless. We forget the flight of the minutes. But the fact remains, nevertheless, that under ordinary circumstances the highest heights are attained in flights that are not long-lasting. Accordingly, if it be found desirable that short prayers be the rule, then the pastor himself must not be the first delinquent.

"Sentence prayers" adopted so widely by

young people's societies, though discountenanced in some quarters, possess this merit: They afford the novice an opportunity of hearing his own voice with the minimum of fear. The original trepidation once past, his course is safe.

Patience should be exercised by older heads for the sake of beginners. Silent prayer may be made impressive. After stating that no *one* person can present at the throne all the matters that ought to be remembered in prayer, ask each silently to pray for that interest most pressing on his or her own mind. Also invite the sympathetic thought of the audience to certain cases of illness, bereavement or trial; to the war waging, or moral contest pending, etc., then before the stillness of the silent prayer breaks, let the pastor himself, or some one called upon, present these issues before the Lord.

The Lord's Prayer uttered in concert is enjoyed by many. Responsive prayers may occasionally, in some gatherings, be made very helpful; but this is a difficult kind of prayer to keep prayerful. It sounds like an exercise. With a class of beginners, however, learning to pray, it becomes an easy and helpful aid.

Reading the Scripture affords scope for profitable variety. Should the pastor do the reading himself? Yes, if the passage be difficult, especially if a few words of exposition or phrase-enlargement will magnify its meaning. But no; not always; nor always at the same stage of the

meeting, nor always a full chapter. Wisely, perhaps, a few verses at different parts of the meeting. Reading in concert awakens interest with some. Responsive reading is frequently adopted. Where such is the case it is sometimes advantageous to invite some young man with a good voice to stand by the pastor and lead the response. His voice fixes the time-rate for the audience. Further, it educates him. By changing "leaders," many young men may get a little training. Should the pastor always lead the meeting? Yes, unless he has rare wisdom in the pew. Even though he can command exceptional talent he should, I think, be the real leader. His presence on the platform, to counsel, or suggest, can give no offence to the nominal leader, may, indeed, afford real help, and will at least prevent "the unexpected" to cause disappointment.

"The ideal of the prayer-meeting," says Beecher, "is a family meeting,—a household coming together and telling, all of them from time to time, what God hath done for them, helped to it by the discriminating leadership of whoever presides at the meeting." The last phrase is significant.

Take this from the same author (*Lectures on Preaching*, Second Series, p. 82): ". . . the most difficult thing that you will have to do in your ministry is to maintain a live prayer-meeting. It is about the hardest work you will ever know. It

will tax your ingenuity the most; it will tax your resources, your power over men and over yourself, your administrative faculty."

In a similar strain writes Gladden (*The Christian Pastor*, p. 248): "The man who leads the meeting ought to be a well-equipped man, ready, prompt, resourceful, enthusiastic, with an abundance of tact and good nature."

On the ideal of the meeting the same author continues: "The life of the Christian is the first great theme of the mid-week service; the second which is like unto it, is the work of the Church."

The problem is to bring all phases of Christian life and work to the altar, and in so doing to develop the social and sympathetic potentialities of the people.

CHAPTER XVI

THE POWER OF PRAYER

The revelation of Scripture, like the revelation of nature, declares that "power belongeth unto God." Not only those individuals upon whom His Pentecost has fallen, have discovered that power comes upon men while waiting upon the Lord; but evidence to the same truth is available from a far wider constituency. By the common intuitions of the human heart; by the almost universal experience of mankind; by the literature of all ages; prayer is recognized as a positive power on earth. The sentiment of Lord Tennyson that

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of,"

expresses the faith of poets and sages everywhere. The man of science may nurse his doubt, and saturate his intellect with physical theories, but on occasion his heart will scale his theory and leap to the throne as naturally as the hart panteth after the water brooks. Neither the advance of science, nor the persecution of the ages have sufficed to stay the tide of prayer that flows upward from the human heart; for regardless of what the world says, the sainthood of earth goes

on praying; and this most enlightened of all the centuries beholds the profoundest learning and the ripest philosophy bowing the knee together in intelligent worship. And still swells into larger proportions, the growing volume of evidence that prayer is the key to God's treasury, a power continually working miracles, the means by which a supernatural force alters the current of nature's blinder forces for personal ends.

Two questions will occupy our attention: First, what is the nature of prayer-power? And next, what is the measure of that power?

I. The nature of prayer-power. There is no reason why so much misunderstanding should exist on this vital question. The scientist may very well approach the subject from a different standpoint from that of the saint, but both saint and scientist can satisfy the soundest reason as well as the profoundest faith. There is no contradiction in saying that prayer is "communion with God," and that "it is a force," because it is not so much a force among forces as a force above forces. In other words, the power of prayer does not belong to the same order of energy as the forces of nature—gravitation, electricity, magnetism and the like; and there is no power resident in the universe but upon that particular force prayer can lay its hand and call its might into service. This becomes possible because, in contradistinction from natural forces, prayer is a personal power. It has personal

intelligence to guide it, personal will to apply it, personal life to give it character and energy, and tenderness and love; and finally personal control on the higher side to prevent it from working awry from the purpose of God. Prayers in line with God's will move in the realm of moral certainty, because they are moral; in the realm of natural certainty, because they obey law; and in the realm of divine certainty, because backed by the promises of God. And these three are stages in one certainty. The energies of the universe are arranged in hierarchial order, God Himself being supreme—material forces, vital forces, mental forces, spiritual forces—the lower subject to the higher; and all controlled by a Person for the benefit of persons. For He who ruleth all things after the counsel of His own will maketh all things work together for good to them that love God. And more, the Creator of all things has delegated man with power akin to His own, and divinely charged him to "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over all the earth" (Gen. 1:26).

Clearly man shares with the Almighty the control of nature's stored-up energies. Her impersonal forces are uniform in their action, made uniform no doubt that they may be controlled. When once man discovers "the laws" of a force he can impose his will upon it, compelling it to effect his purpose. This is true of gravitation, of heat, of electricity and of every other known

force, chemical or mechanical. Of course man's "dominion" is limited, while God's dominion is absolute. But the first point to be seized is that unfree forces are actually controlled by human beings here and now. Modern material wonders would have been impossible were this not true. The engine, the dynamo and the camera attest this truth.

The other point, that God exercises free personal sway over the forces He has created, needs less enforcement, when the former truth is apprehended, and it becomes realized to what an extent man can do the same thing. Besides, if any one will read history or mark the progress of civilization he will need neither the revelation of Scripture nor scarcely the intuition of his own mind to see that God's control is both purposeful and beneficent. God through man has re-created the world which came from His Hand in the rough. It is at this point that prayer appears as a force intruding itself among other forces, or more properly becomes instrumental in supervening upon them a superior power. In so far as a person can control nature's powers for his benefit, as the farmer does, as the mechanic does, as the chemist and navigator do, he is expected to apply labor diligently to that end, and his industry is commended. But the moment he feels his own power inadequate or his own wisdom insufficient, he is invited to link himself to Higher Power, and promised that if he asks he shall

receive, that if he seeks he shall find. About this there is no unfamiliar mystery. Even the man who proclaims the "reign of law," and teaches the constancy of natural forces must recognize that he, a person, is continually so controlling these forces as to make them obey his will. And this he can do at the request of his child. Here for example, is a sand bank, and a child wants a cave or a house there, but he has neither the strength nor the wisdom to accomplish his purpose. So he expresses his desire to his father. And the father, howbeit he knows that gravitation holds the sand, and cohesion makes the roots tough, and perchance he encounters blocks of rock too heavy to be moved by his hands, yet he intrudes his personal intelligence and physical muscle, and perhaps introduces mechanical appliances, and finally the sand is delved, the roots severed, and the boulders removed and the boy's prayer is answered. Moreover all this has been effected without the violation of law. The reign of law was uninterrupted, not by being undisturbed but by being controlled. Lower forces yielded to higher types of force in perfect accord with law, the determining power being personal; the highest type of power in the world.

Carry the analogy higher and we have an illustration of the power of prayer at the throne of God. The saint desires what God wills he should possess, and straightway forces are controlled to that end by the Hand that rules the world. If we

being evil know how to give good gifts unto our children and being feeble are able to do so, how much more shall our Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him. Such an argument is irresistible. And both points hold. In very sooth a child's desire moves the father and through the father moulds events. In a similar way human prayer has motive power with the Infinite and Omnipotent God, our Heavenly Father, and through Him gives shape and direction to human affairs.

II. The measure of prayer-power. The question naturally arises, if the prayer that lives in a human soul can move the Hand which holds the universe towards that

"One far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves,"

what is the measure of its force? Can we determine the degree of power resident in prayer? To every Christian this is an interesting practical question, because, while we do not doubt the power of Omnipotence, we may well doubt that a human prayer has equal reach with the power of God. And yet, if what we have said is true, it will be seen that ultimately the power of prayer is limited only by the power of God. In other words, there is no limit except such as God places upon Himself by His character and eternal purpose. In every case prayer may be equal to the task assigned it. If it be not, it is because of some inherent fault crippling its force on the human

side. Unfortunately prayer rarely attains its full power. It is mixed or misdirected, or feels its way feebly, has no confidence in itself, or pulls contrary to the will of God, or conflicts with other graver issues; so that it may be said a prayer has no power, or little power, or much power, or irresistible power; according to qualities in the prayer itself. In part this phase of the subject has been dealt with in Chap. VI, where it is shown that a prayer has no power if the worshipper's heart is wrong—"If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me"; or, if the request is improperly made, "Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss"; or, if the asking be for a wrong purpose, "that ye may consume it on your lusts," etc. But more particularly, it concerns us here to show that there are degrees in prayer-power in a rising scale as we approximate God's will and become meet to receive His gifts.

(1) A prayer may be real and yet feeble in desire, or it may burn with ardor, and agonize with fervent longing. It may be a hunger, a thirst, an intense craving. Scripture phraseology pictures this graphically. "Strive together" in prayer; "labored fervently in prayer"; "and being in an agony he prayed more earnestly."

(2) Again, prayer-power is proportional to faith. The rule is, "According to your faith be it unto you." "All things are possible to him that believeth."

The paralysis of prayer is unbelief, but faith has mountain-moving power. (*Vide* Heb. 11 for a chapter of illustrations.) A prayer like the mustard seed must be the hiding-place of secret power awaiting larger life.

(3) But, further, a momentary desire, or a momentary act of faith, however intense, cannot represent the greatest potency of prayer. Our Saviour is careful to enforce by precept and example what believers are prone to forget, namely, that importunity is necessary to the exercise of supreme power in prayer. Long-continued, growing intensity of desire introduces into prayer a new quality and efficiency. So important is this element of power that Jesus spake two parables to illustrate and enforce it. The importunate widow and the unprepared host both personify the doctrine that God "is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." In other phrase, "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." "Praying always with all prayer." "Day and night praying exceedingly." Our Lord Himself spent whole nights in prayer and offered up prayer "with strong crying and tears." In addition it may be said, that if we reflect a moment we can readily apprehend how importunity in prayer does alter the character of the person who prays. He grows with his increasing desire, and he overcomes such personal unfitness as stands between him and the attainment of his prayer, until he actually reaches the condition of

fitness where he is meet to receive the blessing for which he has importuned God. The prayer is part of the preparation. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you," but for that power ye must "tarry" and the tarrying is a period of prayer.

(4) This brings us within view of another element in prayer-power. Our gracious Father, seeing the benefit it would be to His children, and the aid that would accrue to His Kingdom, has made provision for overcoming human inertia, and for stimulating our holy passion beyond the intensity of human possibility, by direct action of the Spirit. By this means man's worthy intention is reinforced, and his potential resources mightily increased in the line of God's working, "For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2: 12). Likewise, "the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered." Thus human desire is fostered, and schooled, and disciplined by divine agency to exercise itself; and then Omnipotence adds the power that humanly is lacking.

Israel cannot scale the walls of Jericho, but at the right moment an unseen Power levels them to the ground. God's people can march straight to the sea, and at the crisis-moment find that a dry path appears before them. The leprous and blind, and deaf and dumb can cry for help; and disease and pain, supposed to be incurable, disap-

pear. Cases of similar import might be cited outside of the sacred writings. God is always working miracles; always intervening in the routine of nature to perform the ministries of grace and to work out His sovereign will. Still He is casting down thrones and dominions. Still He is elevating peoples and establishing nations. Upon sufficient cause He can stay the coursing spheres or seal the heavens from rain; can quench the power of fire, or raise the stricken dead. This power is available through prayer, an exercise of the soul of the amazing possibilities of which it may be said few people dream; and so far as the church is concerned, we may reverently say, as is sometimes said of missions, it is merely playing at prayer.

And now let us pause a moment to see just where we are. By the slow steps of argument and illustration we have climbed to an altitude from which intelligence can dimly discern the sheer height which faith in its swift flight easily takes any moment in its transactions with God. The way may seem difficult for reason, but for faith is as natural as breathing, and far more potent than any other power in the world. But if we wish to attain anything like an adequate conception of the hidden resources and immeasurable possibilities of prayer we must change our point of view, and behold its operations not in terrestrial but in spiritual spheres. For not only is prayer a force supervening upon world forces,

but as soon as we reflect, lo! prayer is seen to be the only means to pardon, the only path to light, the only key to holiness, the only means to redemption and immortality. Without it there is no religion, and no sanctification. "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath." To change the figure, it is the faucet whereby the reservoir of heavenly grace is opened into a human life; it is the point of contact by which the circuit of power is completed between the Infinite and the finite. By the exercise of its mysterious might Moses, and Joshua, and Elijah, and Daniel, and David were enabled to prevail. And the same power to-day makes it possible for the sainthood of earth, like St. Paul, to "do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

One Son has God had upon earth, who lived without sin, but God never had a son who lived without prayer. The only sinless life that ever graced the earth was its most prayerful life. Son of God, and Son of Man, He communed with Omnipotence unceasingly. In prayer the Holy Spirit came upon Him; in prayer He was transfigured; in prayer the angel strengthened Him; in prayer He breathed out His soul on Calvary; yea, and He ever liveth to make intercession—prayer not for Himself—but for us. How true that Augustinian cry, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it find rest in Thee"! Peace is the fruit of power. It is in security that the soul finds rest—not in danger.

We may well rejoice that "God's greatness flows around our incompleteness, and round our restlessness, His rest." Weakness needs for itself the Rock of Ages; and for service the "all power" which was given to Him who has promised to those who go, "Lo! I am with you always even unto the end of the world." Oh! faint and weary one, fresh courage take; our feebleness is no index of God's power. Our very emptiness may be the necessary preparation for divine filling. It is for our sake that in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, all the fullness of the Godhead; and He ever liveth to minister in our behalf, that we "may be filled with all the fullness of God." For every believer, all the treasures of grace are as freely open as though no other being lived. Indeed, more fully, since by the divine economy human beings become channels of good to one another. Men do not stand in one another's way at the throne of heavenly grace. The highest good and greatest power of each is helpful to the supremest blessing of all. There is no place where personality gains poise and power and development as in the secret place of the Most High. In prayer it is that God imparts Himself to man in largest measure, for God can do more in a praying man than in any other, inasmuch as such a soul is more responsive to His grace. Prayer is as necessary to spiritual growth as breathing to physical life, and both must be unceasing. It is they who wait upon the

Lord, that renew their strength; and, mounting up with wings as eagles, run without weariness; and with unfainting power "press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

XVII

A COLLECTION OF PRAYERS

Invocations

I

EVER-LIVING and adorable God our Heavenly Father, we bow our heads in Thy presence and lift our hearts unto Thee in worship. Oh, enlighten our understanding that we have a true conception of Thy glory; and so quicken our spiritual vision that we may see The King in His beauty, and adore with awe and humility. O God, inspire our love we pray, that, ransomed by Thy grace from taint of sin, we may truly love Him who first loved us. AMEN.

II

OLORD our God, we invoke the divine blessing as we draw near unto Thee in worship. Thou only art the Fountain of life and peace, and in Thy presence is fullness of joy. Merciful Saviour who sittest at the right hand of the Father and makest intercession, fulfill now Thy promise to us who are gathered in Thy name and be in our midst. O Holy Ghost, the Comforter, help our infirmities and enable us to worship in the beauty of holiness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

III

WE BLESS Thee, O God, that Thou hast consecrated for us a new and living way and that with boldness we may enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. We entreat Thee, for His sake, to receive us graciously, and to visit us with Thy salvation. Be pleased to send down Thy Holy Spirit on all who are here assembled, that, being illumined by Thy grace, we may worthily show forth Thy praise, meekly learn Thy Word, render due thanks for Thy mercies, and obtain a gracious answer to our prayers, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

—Social Worship.

IV

O GOD, Light of the hearts that know Thee, and Life of the souls that love Thee, and Strength of the thoughts that seek Thee; from whom to be turned away is to fall, to whom to turn is to rise, and in whom to abide is to stand fast forever; grant us now Thy grace and blessing, as we are assembled here to offer up our common supplications; and though we are unworthy to approach Thee or to ask anything of Thee at all, vouchsafe to hear and to answer us for the sake of our Great High Priest and Advocate, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

— Book of Common Order.

V

LIFT upon us, O Lord, the light of Thy reconciled countenance and give us peace. Grant unto us the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may worship Thee who art a Spirit, in spirit and in truth. May our prayers be the crying out of the soul after Thee, the living God. May our songs of praise be the utterance of hearts that are glad in the Lord. Speak to us through Thy Word. Command our attention. Transform our lives. And to Thee, Father, Son and Holy Ghost will we ascribe honor and glory, world without end. AMEN.

—A. Gandier, B.D.

VI

GOD of peace and all comfort, who hast invited Thy children to come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need, unto Thee we come moved by the impulse of Thine indwelling love. Oh, satisfy our holy longings. Cleanse our hearts from sin. Enlighten the eyes of our understanding. Speak peace to the troubled and enable us all to dwell in heavenly places in Christ Jesus while we present to Thee the homage of our grateful hearts. AMEN.

VII

GRACIOUS and most merciful God who pardoneth all our iniquities and healeth all our diseases, unto Thee we come with praise and thanksgiving. Enable us to worship Thee in the beauty of holiness. Inspire our thinking, that worthily we may adore Thee. Inspire our love that we may love Him who first loved us. Inspire our speech that the words of our mouths and the meditation of our hearts may be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, our Strength and our Redeemer. AMEN.

VIII

ETERNAL God, our Heavenly Father, we approach Thy throne with strong desire. Our thought is bent on Thee; our hearts uplifted to Thee. O God of love, open upon us, we beseech Thee, the fountain of Thy grace, that, cleansed from sin and inspired of Thy Holy Spirit, we may worthily magnify Thy holy name. AMEN.

Benedictions

The following Benedictions should be memorized, and used variously, but not necessarily to the exclusion of extemporaneous Benedictions, which used occasionally may be very effective:

IX

THE Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace. AMEN.—(Num. 6: 24-26.)

X

THE peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus; and may the blessing of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest upon you now and forever. AMEN.—(Phil. 4: 7.)

XI

THE grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. AMEN.

XII

AND now may the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood

of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. AMEN.—(Heb. 13: 20-21.)

Worship may also appropriately be closed with ascription of praise to the Most High.

XIII

NOW unto the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen nor can see; to Him be honor and power eternal. AMEN.—(1 Tim. 6: 15-16.)

XIV

NOW unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus, unto all generations forever and ever. AMEN.—(Eph. 3: 20-21)

XV

NOW unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding

joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power both now and ever. AMEN.—(Jude 24-25.)

XVI

NOW unto Him that loved us, and loosed us from our sins by His blood, and made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. AMEN.—(Rev. 1: 5-6.)

Adorations

XVII

WE ADORE Thee, O God our Father, and hallow Thy holy name. Before the mountains were brought forth or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God. Thou art the blessed and only Potentate; the king of kings and Lord of lords. The heavens declare Thy glory and the firmament showeth Thy handywork. Enable us also, O Lord, so to live, and love, and labor, as to manifest Thy praise. AMEN.

XVIII

O GOD, Thou art the King eternal, immortal and invisible. Before Thee the angels veil their faces and cry Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty. Teach us, Thine earth-born creatures, also to worship and adore Thee. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive blessing and honor, and glory, and power, for Thou hast created all things. The earth is Thine, and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein; Thou openest Thy hand and satisfiest the desires of every living thing. O God, how shall we praise Thee as we ought, or serve Thee as we should? AMEN.

XIX

ALMIGHTY God, our Heavenly Father, who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment; grant us to-day that inner light by which we may see the King in His beauty and reverently adore Him. We rejoice that Thou art light and in Thee is no darkness at all; that Thou art love, and that all who dwell in love dwell in Thee; that Thou art our Father, and that we are the children of Thy love. May our worship deepen the impress of Thine image upon our nature, and may all our service redound to Thy glory. AMEN.

XX

OUR Father who art in Heaven, we desire to hallow Thy holy name. Thou art a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in Thy being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth. Thou hast created us for Thy glory, and hast made us capable of glorifying Thee. Accept therefore our grateful homage, our reverent adoration, and our pledge of loyal devotion; for, we believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ Thy only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; who descended into the grave, on the third day rose again from the dead and ascended into

heaven; who sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, and from thence shall come to judge the living and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit; the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Grant us in this faith to live, grant us in this faith to die; and having glorified Thee by a consistent walk and conversation here, call us, we beseech Thee, in Thine own good time to praise Thee evermore above. And so shall we be Thine now and forever. AMEN.

XXI

O LORD God, enable us to worship Thee with reverence and godly fear, with lively confidence and holy joy, according to Thy Word. Great art Thou, O God, and greatly to be praised, and Thy greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise Thy works to another and shall declare Thy mighty acts; and we will speak of the glorious honor of Thy wondrous works. Thou art love, O God our Father, and we love Thee because Thou didst first love us. Blessed be Thy name, most high and glorious King, Thou art just and holy. Thy Kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and Thy dominion endureth throughout all generations. Thou, Lord, art good, and Thy tender mercies are over all Thy works, for the Lord is gracious, and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy. Thou

openest Thine hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. Thou hast so loved us as to give Thine only begotten Son for our redemption, and Thine Over-present Spirit to move our hearts toward Thee. Grant us, O Lord, the joy of Thy salvation and enable us while we have breath to praise and magnify our God. Our worship and our plea we thus present in Thine own loving and living Way—Christ Jesus our Lord. AMEN.

XXII

PRAISE waiteth for Thee, O God, in Zion, and unto Thee shall the vow be performed. O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor, and power; for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created. Thou didst say let there be light, and there was light. Thou hast said "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works," for "Ye are the light of the world." To this end we come unto Thee, O God, our gracious Redeemer, that we may experience Thy renewing power, and be enabled by grace divine to show forth the praise of Him who ransomed us by His blood, and ever liveth to make intercession for us. May the glory of the Lord our God be upon us, and may we, and all we possess, be Thine now and forevermore, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

Confessions, Penitence and Pleading for Pardon

XXIII

HAVE mercy upon us, O God, according to Thy loving kindness; according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out our transgressions. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity, and cleanse us from our sin; for we acknowledge our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us. AMEN.

XXIV

ALmighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts; we have offended against Thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us. But Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us miserable offenders. Spare Thou them, O Lord, which confess their faults. Restore Thou them that are penitent; according to Thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for His sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous and sober life, to the glory of Thy holy name. AMEN. —Book of Common Prayer.

XXV

O GOD, our Deliverer, the Redeemer of men, we rejoice that Thou hast said, "Come now, let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool"; for we come, O merciful Saviour, conscious of our sin and desirous of feeling true contrition and of turning to new obedience. O, accept us for Thy mercy's sake; cleanse us, Lord, and grant us fullness of life—through Jesus Christ. AMEN.

XXVI

ALMIGHTY and merciful God, Fountain of all goodness, who knowest the thoughts of our hearts, we confess unto Thee that we have sinned against Thee and done evil in Thy sight. Wash us, we beseech Thee, from the stains of our past sins, and give us grace and power to put away all hurtful things; so that being delivered from the bondage of sin, we may bring forth worthy fruits of repentance. AMEN.

—Alcuin, A. D., 780.

XXVII

O LORD Jesus Christ, the King of glory, who art exalted at the right hand of God to be a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance and

remission of sins, Thou hast promised that where two or three are met together in Thy name, Thou art in the midst of them; enable us in faith to approach now unto Thee, and give unto us repentance and remission of sins. Thou hast invited the weary and heavy laden to come unto Thee, and take upon them Thy easy yoke and Thy light burden, that they may find rest for their souls; give us grace thus to come unto Thee and obtain rest. AMEN. —Bickersteth.

XXVIII

OUR Heavenly Father, God of all power and infinite love, we throw ourselves upon Thy tender compassion and plead for mercy we do not deserve. We have sinned and done despite to Thy Holy Spirit, bringing discredit upon the name we bear. Ofttimes we have vowed to do better and have broken our vows. Oh, how often we have stood at the bar of conscience, condemned, and in our own sight abashed! O God, have mercy upon us, for once again, drawn by Thy light and Thy love, we come in penitence and plead for forgiveness. Hear us, oh, hear us, and out of past feebleness bring forth by Thine infinite might a higher life and greater strength. Restore unto us the joy of Thy salvation, then shall we teach transgressors Thy ways and sinners shall be converted unto Thee. AMEN.

Vows and Consecration

XXIX

WHAT shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord, yea, in the presence of all His people. AMEN.—(Ps. 116: 12-14.)

XXX

RESTORE unto me the joy of Thy salvation and uphold me with Thy free spirit; then will I teach transgressors Thy ways and sinners shall be converted unto Thee. AMEN.—(Ps. 51: 12-13.)

XXXI

ETERNAL God, who by Thy holy breath of power makest us a new creation for Thyself, we beseech Thee to preserve what Thou hast created, and consecrate what Thou hast cleansed; that by Thy holy grace we may be found in that form, the thought of which ever dwells with Thee, and which Thou willest fulfilled in man. AMEN. —Howland Williams.

XXXII

GRANT us, we beseech Thee, almighty and most merciful God, fervently to desire, wisely to search out, and perfectly to fulfill, all

that is pleasing unto Thee. Order Thou our worldly condition to the glory of Thy name; and, of all, that Thou requirest us to do, grant us the knowledge, the desire and the ability, that we may so fulfill it as we ought, and may our path to Thee, we pray, be safe, straightforward, and perfect to the end. . . . AMEN.

—Adapted from St. Thomas Aquinas.

XXXIII

OUR God and Father, who hast invited us to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto Thee, we come that we may dedicate ourselves to Thy service: Accept our offering, we pray, and grant that with full consecration we may yield our wills to Thine, and submit all our desires and ambitions to Thy glory. Our time and talents, all we have and are, we lay at Thy disposal, and desire Thee, so to perfect our offering that the words of our mouth, and the work of our hands, may glorify Thy name and advance Thy kingdom. So renew us by Thy grace, so purify us by Thy love, that our vows of consecration shall be kept and our whole life be thine, now, henceforth and forever. AMEN.

XXXIV

BLESSED God, it is with the utmost solemnity that I make this surrender of myself to Thee. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O

earth; I avouch the Lord this day to be my God; and I avouch and declare myself this day to be one of His covenant children. Hear, O Thou God of heaven, and record it in the book of Thy remembrance, that henceforth I am Thine—entirely Thine. I would not merely consecrate unto Thee some of my powers, or some of my possessions, or give Thee a certain proportion of my services, or all I am capable of for a limited time; but I would be wholly Thine, and Thine forever. From this day, I would solemnly renounce all the former lords which have had dominion over me; every sin and lust; and bid in Thy name an eternal defiance to the powers of hell, which have most unjustly usurped the empire over my soul, and to all the corruptions which their fatal temptations have introduced into it. The whole frame of my nature, all the faculties of my mind, and all the members of my body, would I present before Thee this day “as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God,” which I know to be my most reasonable service. To Thee I consecrate all my worldly possessions; in Thy service I desire to spend all the remainder of my time on earth, and beg that Thou wouldst instruct and influence me, so that whether my abode here be longer or shorter, every year and month, every day and hour, may be used in such a manner as shall most effectually promote Thine honor, and subserve the design of Thy wise and gracious providence. And I earnestly pray that

whatever influence Thou givest me over others in any of the superior relations of life in which I may stand, or in consequence of any peculiar regard which may be paid me, Thou wouldst give me the strength and courage to exert myself to the utmost for Thy glory; resolving not only that I will myself do it, but that all others, so far as I can influence them, shall serve the Lord.

In this course, O blessed God, would I steadily persevere to the very end of life, earnestly praying that every future day of it may supply the differences and correct the irregularities of the former; and that I may, by divine grace, be enabled not only to hold on in that happy way, but daily to grow more active in it. AMEN.

—Philip Doddridge.

XXXV

O LORD; I know not what I should ask of Thee. Thou only knowest what I want; and Thou lovest me, if I am Thy friend, better than I can love myself. O Lord; give to me, Thy child, what is proper, whatsoever it may be. I dare not ask either crosses or comforts. I only present myself before Thee. I open my heart to Thee. Behold my wants which I myself am ignorant of; but do Thou behold, and do according to Thy mercy. Smite or heal. Depress me or raise me up. I adore all Thy purposes without knowing them. I am silent. I offer myself

in sacrifice. I abandon myself to Thee. I have no more any desire but to accomplish Thy will. Lord, teach me how to pray. Dwell Thou Thyself in me by Thy Holy Spirit. AMEN.

—Fenelon, 1651-1715.

XXXVI

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

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

—Andrew Murray.

Thanksgivings

XXXVII

OUR Father, unto Thee, in the light of our Saviour's blessed life, we would lift our souls. We thank Thee for that true light shining in our world with still increasing brightness. We thank Thee for all who have walked therein, and especially for those near to us and dear, in whose lives we have seen this excellent glory and beauty. May we know that in the body and out of the body they are with Thee, and that when these earthly days come to an end, it is not that our service of Thee and of one another may cease, but that it may begin anew. Make us glad in all who have faithfully lived; make us glad in all who have peacefully died. Lift us into light and love and purity and blessedness, and give us at last our portion with those who have trusted in Thee and sought, in small things, as in great, in things temporal and things eternal, to do Thy holy will. AMEN. —Rufus Ellis.

XXXVIII

MOST Gracious God, who hast been infinitely merciful to us, not only in the year past, but through all the years of our life, be pleased to accept our most unfeigned thanks for Thine innumerable blessings to us; graciously pardoning the manifold sins and infirmities of our

life past, and bountifully bestowing upon us all those graces and virtues, which may render us acceptable to Thee. And every year which Thou shalt be pleased to add to our lives, add also, we humbly implore Thee, more strength to our faith, more ardor to our love, and a greater perfection to our obedience; and grant that, in a humble sincerity and constant perseverance we may serve Thee most faithfully the remainder of our lives, for Jesus Christ's sake. AMEN.

—Charles Dow, 1661-1745.

XXXIX

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all mercies, we, Thine unworthy servants, do give Thee most humble and hearty thanks for all Thy goodness and loving kindness to us and to all men. We bless Thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for Thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace and the hope of glory. And we beseech Thee, give us that due sense of all Thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we show forth Thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to Thy service and by walking before Thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with Thee and the Holy Ghost be all honor and glory, world without end. AMEN. —Book of Common Prayer.

XL

ETERNAL God, our Heavenly Father, we rejoice that the Sun of Righteousness has risen upon us, and that our souls, responsive as flowers to the light, are lifting themselves unto Thee. O God of love, so magnify Thy power upon us, that we may worship Thee in spirit and in truth. We rejoice in the love that created us in Thy image; we rejoice that, when sin-smitten and rebellious we separated ourselves from Thee, still love followed us and provided re-creation through Jesus Christ; we rejoice in the love of Thy Spirit now playing upon us and quickening our love into hunger and thirsting. We rejoice in the promise which assures us that if we hunger and thirst after righteousness we shall be filled. Grant us, O triune God, the infilling of Thy Holy Spirit. Open between us and Thee that inflowing stream which shall make in us the upspringing well of the water of life, that our thirst may never again go unsatisfied. Enable us to rejoice in past blessings, the wealth of which is still rich upon us; for present mercies multiplied for our sakes; and in the knowledge that we shall be satisfied when we awake in Thy likeness.

We rejoice in the holy influences of these heart-powers which link us to one another on earth; for the subtle power which makes a child dear to its parent; and links brother to sister, friend to friend, with hooks stronger than tempered steel;

Supplications

XLI

LET the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, that so we may be enabled to worship Thee in the beauty of holiness. AMEN.

XLII

SO TEACH us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. O God, the Saviour of men, redeem our lives from destruction, we pray, and make us co-laborers with Thee for the redemption of the world. AMEN.

XLIII

O LORD, my God, Light of the blind and Strength of the weak, yea, also, Light of those that see, and Strength of the strong; hearken unto my soul, and hear it crying out of the depths. AMEN. —Augustine.

XLIV

LET Thy will be mine, and my will ever follow Thine, and agree perfectly with it. Grant to me, above all things that can be desired, to rest in Thee, and in Thee to have my heart in peace. AMEN. —Thomas à Kempis.

XLV

O GOD, our Father, who hast created us in Thine image and for Thy glory, we thank Thee that Thou hast inspired our souls to pray, our hearts to love, and our whole nature to hunger for Thee. Yea, Lord, we rejoice in Thy promise that whosoever hungers and thirsts after righteousness shall be filled. Oh, satisfy our worthy longings and may we never be fully satisfied until we awake in Thy likeness. AMEN.

XLVI

O GOD, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, we desire to worship Thee, a Spirit, in spirit and in truth. Oh, grant that our worship may be true spiritual communion in which there shall be imparted to us more and more of Thy being; endow us with Thy wisdom, and in our weakness make perfect Thy strength. May it be our joy through sanctification to attain unto holiness, so that in our dealings one with another our justice shall be seasoned with the goodness and the love of our Redeemer. O God, enable us to enter into Thy truth that Thy truth may make us free, and becoming exponents of that truth, may the grace of Christ make our characters luminous with His glory and so shall we share Thy life and our lives advance Thy King-

dom. And this we seek in the spirit of Thy Son, our Saviour. AMEN.

(Note the structure of this prayer follows the Shorter Catechism's definition of God.)

XLVII

WE THANK Thee, Eternal Father, that God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Enable us so to believe that in His life we may have life, and that the same mind which was in Him may also be in us.

May we so know Christ and His death that we shall glory in His cross and be crucified unto the world.

May we so know Christ and the power of His resurrection that as He was raised from the dead, we also may walk in newness of life.

May we so know Christ and His ascension that we may seek those things that are above and dwell in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

May we so know Christ and His second coming that watchfully and joyfully we may await the coming of our Lord with our lamps burning and our loins girt.

And may we so know Christ as Judge of quick and dead as to give in our account with joy, and receive His welcome "Well done, good and faith-

ful servant; enter ye into the joy of Thy Lord," and so shall we praise Thee forever. AMEN.

Prayer No. 47 is arranged on the following plan: Christ's life, death, resurrection, ascension, second coming, and judgship.

XLVIII

WE PUT our life into Thy care day by day. We know not where its last breathings shall be; help us therefore to be diligent with all care and filial anxiety to do that which is right in Thy sight, and to make the most of our day and generation. Deliver us from the torment of fear; save us from the hell of despondency; create in us that happiness, that overflowing joyousness which comes of complete trust in God. May we not give way to the temptations of the evil one; may our fears never multiply themselves against us to the extinction of our hope, and in the darkest night may we see some distant and trembling star; in the coldest winter may there come upon us now and again some gleam of light that tells of the summer that is yet to dawn. In all the way that we take give us guidance. Ensure unto us defence, then shall our steps be steady, and they shall all point towards the city of light and the city of rest.

Thou knowest what we need; grant unto us, we humbly pray Thee, in the name and for the sake

of Jesus Christ, that which our hearts most truly require. Wherein our words do not express our needs, do Thou not hear those words, nor answer them; wherein we are inspired to speak our real and vital wants do Thou command Thy blessing to rest upon us, even life forever more. Pity us when we are infirm and little in soul and in purpose; save us when we are most conscious of our aggravated guilt; fill our vision with Thy beauty when that which is of the earth and time would tempt us with its meaner attractions.
 AMEN. —Joseph Parker, D.D.

XLIX

O THOU, who art the true sun of the world, evermore rising, and never going down; who, by Thy most wholesome appearing and sight dost nourish, and make joyful all things, as well that are in heaven, as also that are on earth; we beseech Thee mercifully and favorably to shine into our hearts that the night and darkness of sin, and the mists of terror on every side being driven away, Thou brightly shining within our hearts, we may all our life long go without any stumbling or offence, and may walk as in the daytime, being pure and clean from the works of darkness, and abounding in all good works which Thou hast prepared for us to walk in.
 AMEN. —Erasmus, 1467-1536.

L

NOW we ask, O God, if there are those in Thy presence who are rejoicing before Thee, who have learned that Thou art gracious, who know of a surety that there is a life hidden with Christ, more blessed and joyful than any disclosed life of earthly pleasure or success, if to-day they offer up their tribute of thanksgiving and of gratitude, be pleased to accept it at their hands; and if they can prevail in prayer, may they not forget those round about them that are struggling as once they were. May their prayers to-day go forth for all their Christian brethren, for their more perfect emancipation and for a more perfect disclosure of the power of Christ in their souls. AMEN. —Beecher.

LI

ALMIGHTY God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto Thee, and who dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in Thy name Thou wilt grant their requests, fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of Thy servants, as may be most expedient for them. Grant us in this world knowledge of Thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. AMEN. —Chrysostom.

General Intercessions

LII

O GOD, who hast taught us to make supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks for all men, we beseech Thee to receive these our prayers which we offer humbly to Thy Divine Majesty. Remember in Thy mercy, His Most Gracious Majesty, the King; preserve his person in health and strength, his crown in honor and dignity, his dominions in peace and plenty; keep him perpetually in Thy fear and favor, and at last may he receive that crown of life which Thou hast promised to them that love Thee. May Thy rich blessing also be upon all the members of the Royal Family. We pray for His Majesty's Ministers and counsellors, for judges and magistrates, and for all who are in authority. Enlighten and guide them, and so direct the affairs of this nation that righteousness and truth, peace and contentment may everywhere prevail.

We commend to Thine almighty guardianship the army and navy and all who are exposed to danger by sea or by land. Remember in Thy mercy the poor and needy, the widows and fatherless, the strangers and the friendless, the sick and the dying. Relieve their needs, sanctify their sufferings, strengthen their weakness, and in due time grant them a happy issue out of

all their afflictions. Regard with Thy favor our kindred and all who are dear to us. Unite us in the bonds of a common faith and hope; and inspire us with mutual love, gentleness and forbearance, that we may walk before Thee in our homes with a perfect heart.

Eternal God, with whom do rest the spirits of just men made perfect; we bless and praise Thy holy name for all Thy servants departed this life in Thy faith and fear; and especially for those most dear to us who have fallen asleep in Jesus; and we beseech Thee to give us grace to follow their good example, that we may continue united to them in fellowship of spirit, and that finally we may be gathered together in Thy heavenly Kingdom, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN.

—Social Worship, adapted.

LIII

REMEMBER the young that are in our presence. Bless the parents that are endeavoring to rear up a generation to fear and serve God. Bless those that are as teachers who are endeavoring to co-operate with parents in the religious instruction of their children. Bless, we beseech Thee, those that are coming forth out of infancy into youth; may they not be imperilled in virtue; and those that are emerging from youth into manhood, we pray that they may not be tempted more than they can bear, but may

they walk from youth to manhood with honor unclouded, consecrating the morning of life to virtue and religion; may more of such dwell under our roofs; may peace abide in our households, and may there be more and more coming from the altar of the family and the altar of the church to bear public witness to the fidelity of the teaching of their parents. Bless us in the further work, labor, and joy of the sanctuary; and prepare us for all its sweet and solemn services. Be with us while we live, and grant that thus we may be with Thee in eternal life, and we will give the praise to Father, Son and Spirit. AMEN. —Henry Ward Beecher, D.D.

LIV

THE Lord hear us on account of those who never pray for themselves; those who are aliens and prodigals, who have broken every vow, and dishonored every covenant, and have gone far away into the bleak wilderness of iniquity—the Lord's Gospel flee after them like a saving angel and flash upon them some of the homelight or strike into their hearts some tender chord that will bring them back again, that there may be rejoicing on earth and in heaven. The Lord's light make our morning glad; the beauty of the Lord Himself be upon us, making our souls lovely with His presence and strong with His grace. AMEN. —Joseph Parker, D.D.

LV

HEAR us, when we pray for one another; when we pray for heads of houses that they may be clothed with wisdom, sobriety and grace; for children, that they may be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; for masters and servants that they may understand and help one another; for the sick and the afflicted, that in their weakness they may see the incoming of Christ bringing with Him health and immortality; for the distant and wandering, those from whom we are for the moment separated, that there may be no division of soul or distraction of love, but that though far apart we may yet be one in affection and godly desire. AMEN.

—Joseph Parker, D.D.

LVI

OLORD Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, who, when Thou didst ascend on high, and led captivity captive, didst give gifts to men—some apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ—we beseech Thee graciously to look upon all whom Thou dost call to minister Thy Gospel, and pour upon them Thy abundant blessing. Greatly enrich them with

spiritual gifts and endowments according to Thine infinite fullness and the multiplied wants of Thy church. Raise up sons of thunder to awaken the careless; sons of consolation to comfort the mourners; eloquent men to convince mightily the ignorant; good men full of the Holy Ghost, that much people may be added to the Lord; faithful men, like Timothy, naturally caring for the state of the people; and devout men, like Epaphras, always laboring fervently for them in prayer. And, O Lord, uphold Thy ministers and strengthen them, that their faith fail not. Make them wise to win souls. Endue their words with heavenly power; let them be like fire, burning away the dross, and like the dew strengthening, reviving and refreshing the hearts of Thy people. Send them help from Thy sanctuary, and strengthen them out of Zion; so that Thy word may have free course and be glorified in all the earth. Hear us for Thy name's sake. AMEN. —Prof. Wm. Gregg, D.D.

General Prayers

A MODEL PULPIT PRAYER—STRUCTURE, SENTIMENT
AND EXPRESSION EXEMPLARY

LVII

O GOD! eternal and ever blessed! known to us by many names, but best known by the name of Father; we, Thy children, born of Thy great earthly family, come to worship and to meditate in Thy presence. Give to us such recognition of Thy Fatherhood as shall move us to filial trust in Thee and to fraternal interest in each other. We give Thee thanks that Thou hast unveiled Thyself to our eyes and to our hearts, and made known the mystery without which our hearts were shrivelled and dead. We bless Thee for all Thou hast spoken of Thyself in Thy works around us, in the majesty and beauty of the hills and the beauty and fragrance of the dales. We thank Thee that Thou hast made Thy goings known in history and hast spoken through the lips and lives of men. We bless Thee, above all, that Thou hast crowned Thy revelation in Jesus Christ, showing Thyself to us in Him, and showing us in Him to ourselves. . . . We bless Thee for all that Christ was in our midst, for that childhood that has sanctified child-life in all lands and ages. For His words of wondrous grace; for His works of generous and large-thoughted care; for His life of patient endurance; for the joy that

rang beneath all the disturbance of His lot; for the calmness of His faith in Thee; for the constancy of His vision of Thy presence and love, we bless Thee, O God. And for the great mystery about which, and in the presence of which, we fall smitten with dumbness, the dumbness of a reverence that meditates, and ponders, and uplifts itself. We stand before His cross, the cross made dark for an hour by the concentrated guilt of men. Yea, the cross now made and forever made light by Thy grace, light by the promise of forgiveness and life for men.

May we this night stand before His cross, meditating on Him until the spirit of His crucifixion pass into us, and we with Him die unto sin, that we with Him may rise unto newness of life. We give Thee thanks for the gift of the Holy Spirit; we bless Thee for the presence of the Spirit in all the churches and in all the ages. We bless Thee for the presence of the Spirit outside the churches, working in the thoughts and the hopes and the aspirations of men. For all that has been accomplished by His presence and quickening, we give Thee thanks to-night. For the broadening vision, and all we have learned in these latter days of His presence, and for chastened and sweetened faith, we give Thee thanksgivings. And our prayer is, that as disciples of Him who came to save and to bless, we to-night may share alike the toil and the joy of His Spirit, feel the pain that He felt when He

looked on suffering and sin; and by it be moved as He was moved to go forth with light and healing. For lo! Thou hast blessed us where Thou, O Christ, Thyself dost walk amidst suffering and sin and darkness. Here, as around Thee on earth, are gathered all kinds and manners of diseases. There are blind men here, with their eyes wide open, who need to have the inner vision touched into sight; there are men who can run in the way of their own aggrandisement, but do not ever walk in the way of Thy commandment. Here are hands cunning enough and swift enough at handicrafts that make for gain, that are withered and paralyzed in the presence of the needs and calls of men. O Christ of ancient power! O Christ who didst send light into the eyeballs of the blind, and called the dead from the grave, and stirred new life into the hand that was paralyzed! Speak to us. Give us light; give us sight, give us quick responsive power when Thou callest, and make us a body of Thy men, of Thy women—not holding Thy name to blaspheme it, or to bring misery and shame before it, but holding it aloft in our life, a life consecrated and sanctified by the truths of Thy grace.

Look down upon us in this assembly to-night, we beseech Thee. We have come into Thy house that we may fit ourselves for life's battle, when we go forth to life's tasks and toils. Be very gracious to each of us; call us into that inner sanctuary which Thou hast prepared in Thy

heart, and in the stillness speak the word, which shall conquer passion and disturb the hard-hearted selfishness and put to rout the doubts and fears that are born of our contact with the earth, and shall fill us with the sweetness and the graciousness of the Christ whose name we bear. Let Thy blessing come upon this Church, O God. We give Thee thanks for the past of its ministry; for all the hours, sacred and elevating, which men have spent here together, thinking of Thee. For all the souls that have been quickened, for all lives that have been changed, for all children that have been trained to the knowledge of their Saviour, and for all those moving through the valley of the shadow of death whose last hours have been lightened and brightened by the truths and memories of this sanctuary. We give Thee thanks to-night, for the voices that have spoken here, now singing a better song and singing it in harmony, we bless Thee, O Lord. Let the past, with its rich memories, be a call to all who remain to carry forward Thy Word, to speak Thy message, to go forth to Thy wandering ones, and to make this place yet once again bright and beautiful with the presence of men changed by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, lifted into newness of life. O Christ, around us here, still throned the needy, suffering and sinful. Here, too, are dark places of cruelty in our own town and city. Here, too, are heathen, living without God; heathen in the slums; aye, and heathen in the

mansions. Help us to go after them all with the only light which Thou hast given, the only light that can reach and save and make this church yet a body of earnest, pious, devoted, successful workers for Thee, going forth in the power of Thy might and sharing the joy of Thy victory. Bless this whole city which sweeps round us; bless all the churches and ministers of all denominations, and all who, outside the churches, are seeking to elevate and rescue men and women. Speed Thou all, we pray Thee, and may the Kingdom of Christ be realized in our land as it has never been realized yet. May all the truths and hopes of our religion translate themselves into living forms of service and of life. And may the beauty of holiness come over our land, and may there be righteousness and peace and content within our borders. From us may there shine the light that shall bring peace to the nations, and hasten the completion of the Kingdom. Hear us in the prayers we have spoken, and in the larger and deeper prayers for which there is no speech nor language; and do for us far more exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

—Charles A. Berry, D.D.

LVIII

Note the high spiritual ideal and manliness which desires "to be as Christ was in the world,"

which longs to know and then to fulfill the wide measure of Christian duty.)

O LORD, we thank Thee for Thine infinite patience; we thank Thee that Thou sufferest long and bearest with us still. We would not presume upon Thy patience, but would seek to draw near to Thee now with reverence, remembering Thine infinite majesty, and how Thou art exalted above our knowledge. We seek to bow before Thee and to cherish some right thoughts of Thee, thankful that while Thy power in maintaining and upholding this physical universe is far above our thoughts, so also is Thy spiritual power, Thy light, and holiness and goodness. Teach us to pray, give us the spring of all true prayer. Give us a sincere willingness to be made holy and become Thy children indeed, to be loosed from the power of sin, to accept the responsibilities of spiritual life, to face all the arduousness and self-sacrifice of the spiritual life. Make us willing, O God, to be as Christ was in the world. We pray Thee, that what we know to be evil in us we may have resolution, through Thy grace, to repress and cast from us. May we be able to trust Thy goodness and Thy wisdom. May we be able to trust the light that is in us; grant that none of us may be found darkening that light so that we shall be left entirely in outer darkness. Lord, give us truer apprehension of our relation to Thee, and a sincere desire to apprehend

it. Grant that we may be willing to accept all the requirements that fall to us from our relationship to Thee. May we be willing to do the duties that fall to us as Christian people and followers of Christ. May we be willing to cast off the bondage which this world throws upon us. Grant that we may be able safely to pass through all its temptations. May our experience of life in this world tend only to our permanent good; may it in no one of us produce selfishness, hardness, or bitterness, or any evil spirit or temper. Grant that rather our experience of this life may lead us to a sincerer desire to be profitable to our fellows, to a truer dependence upon Thee, our God, to a sincerer acceptance of the duties Thou layest upon us as Thy children and people. Grant that we may have that higher tone in conduct, that truer and sincerer devotedness to what is good, that purer conscience, that deeper truthfulness that come from fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Give us some growth in the divine life that we may be encouraged in it, that we may not feel that in us are obstacles that cannot be removed. We pray Thee that Thou wouldst advance these ends in us to-day. May we believe Thy Word; may we accept the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ; may we rely upon it as absolutely true; may we yield ourselves to Him and so learn of Him. Bless Thou all who are now meeting as we are meeting Lord, we beseech Thee that Thou in Thine infinite spiritual

power wouldst draw near to men and cause them to know Thee and humble themselves before Thee. Grant, we beseech Thee, that men everywhere may listen to Thy Word with hopefulness and acceptance. Hear us, for Christ's sake. AMEN. —Marcus Dodds, D.D.

LIX

O GOD, our God, our Fortress and our Deliverer, with joy we turn our faces towards Thee. When we come to Thee our weakness is of service to us, for it teaches us to look to the Strong for strength. We are driven by our own insufficiency to fly to the all-sufficiency of God. We thank Thee for our sense of weakness. We do not wish to have it diminished, but rather increased, for we glory in infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon us. May we always delight in our Father's will, and though, for the present, no chastisement seemeth joyous, but grievous, we thank Thee, Lord, that when the rivers have been deepest they have never drowned us, and when the fires have been hottest, they have not kindled upon us. Here we are, the living, to praise the almighty preserving power of God. O Lord, Thou hast given us strength equal to our day, and oftentimes great difficulties have vanished before us. We have been like the holy women at the sepulchre. We have said, "Who shall roll away the stone?" and

when we have come to the place the stone has been rolled away.

“Streams of mercy never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise,”

and we would render them to Thee. If not loud, they should be deep. “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.” Thou art a good Master; Thou art a gracious Friend; Thou art all in all to us, there are no failures in Thee. Thou art the seed of blessedness; glory be to Thy thrice holy name. And now if there be any of Thy children present here who are in peculiar straits, let them enjoy peculiar deliverances. We do not know into what position Thou mayest have drifted Thy people. The vessel may be well nigh on the rocks, but Thou, the great Pilot of the Galilean lake, canst preserve the bark. Do so, we pray thee, and when Thy people cannot see their way, may they see their God; may they trust and not be afraid, and when the waters well nigh overwhelm, may they have the greater confidence in Him who rules the storms and never lost a vessel yet when He was Pilot, and never will. O Lord, give Thy people rest about everything to-night. May they bring every burden and lay it on the great Burden-bearer, and go away with no burden, except one of deep gratitude and solemn obligation to serve Thee better than ever. Our Father, forgive Thy children to-night if we have done anything that grieves Thee. May there be

no cloud between our soul and our God. Let us not stand outside in the outer court to-night. May we dwell in the secret places of the Most High. May our communion with Thee be deep and sweet. Bring us to serve Thee with a perfect heart, and to yield up our soul to Thee absolutely till we are completely reconciled to Thee and walk with Thee. Oh, for Enoch's life-unbroken fellowship and deep serenity. May we walk with God until we shall one day walk away with God, and shall not be here, for God hath taken us away.

O Lord, do Thou look upon any of Thy people who are hard at work for Thee, and give them fruit of their labor, or at any rate, may they work on even if they see no fruit; for the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience. Let us have long patience, too; but Lord, do bless us in the conversion of sinners. We pray Thee, that whether we preach or have fallen into the blessed habit of talking with individuals, we may be winners of souls. Whether we fish with the net, or with the rod angle for separate fish, may we be made useful by God. Bless every tract that we scatter, every book that we write, or that we give, every letter that we write to a friend. And hear the prayers we put up for ungodly relatives, children who are not saved, and near and dear ones who are not yet in the Kingdom. Lord, save souls. We do pray Thee that this church may be a

may be by its own members to draw us into the inner places

blessing to the neighborhood, and as there are many friends here from all parts of London, we ask that wherever they go they may be lumps of salt. May they be burning lamps, scattering light in the thick surrounding darkness. Lord, grant that no man among us may live unto himself; no woman in this house be spending her time upon herself, but may we live for Him whose we are because He has bought us with his precious blood. And oh! keep us, keep us from all evil; let us not fall, let us not fall. Yea, let us not even stumble. May our walk be close with God, such that others may safely tread in our footsteps. Make us holy, O God. This is our prayer. And then, Lord Jesus, come, come soon. Thy promise is to come quickly. The world is a weary place without Thee. Come quickly; come quickly, Lord Jesus. AMEN.

—C. H. Spurgeon.

LX

O THOU loving and eternal God, grant Thou unto us knowledge of Thy holy name. We thank Thee, Thou Father in heaven that Thou hast spoken unto us in Thy Son, Jesus Christ. But now grant that the spirit that is filial, the heart that is humble, may through Him speak unto Thee. Our Father, grant Thy blessing upon this church. Bless Thou all agencies of this church. Grant, Father, Thy grace to each and

to all severally, according as we need. Bless Thou, Father, the inmost thought of our heart, the outward expression of the life. Our Father in heaven, we are needy men, and all our needs do pray to Thee. Our deepest desires are dumb, but where man may not speak, Thou, the gracious God, can hear and give the needed answer. Oh, our Father in heaven, let Thy holy Word descend upon us through Jesus Christ our Lord. And if our way be troubled or our path perplexed, send Thou the light that shineth unto the perfect day. Bless Thou our old men; give them grace to bear their age sweetly, and do Thou help them still to be young, having the heart of youth within the aged breast. And do Thou grant that Thy Gospel may still abide with them, making not old, but keeping young, and binding age to age in natural piety. Bless Thou our young men and maidens. Preserve them, we beseech Thee, in very early springtide; make it beautiful with the dew of youth and grant Thou, gracious Father, that early promise may receive perfect fulfillment. Bless Thou our wives and mothers—Thou hast given unto them the greater sorrow. Give Thou them the greater joy. Grant that they in the midst of life may still possess the love that reigneth, and may make holier and lovelier and fuller of Thy winsome grace the hard and troubled life of men. Bless Thou, we humbly beseech Thee, the men who are in mid-time of their days, and keep them in Thy grace, in love and in work,

and in holy duty, that they may still serve Thee, and rejoice in Thy strength. And now, Thou loving God, whatever our vocation, give Thou Thy living truth to enlighten and to save. Bless, we beseech Thee, the men that make our laws; grant that they may be made enlightened makers of laws, and able to wisely administer the law that is made. Bless our physicians, and as they visit the sick, give them the keen eye, and the gentle hand and the swift resolve. Be with the nurses who wait upon the sick, and give them the gentle will and a readiness to serve and to sweeten the drear life of the patient. Be Thou with our teachers, masters in schools, tutors in colleges, professors in universities, that all may be men who love Thee and love Thy truth, and guide men into the knowledge of Thy holy name. Be with our merchants; give them, amidst commercial perplexity and distress, grace to find the more excellent way, the path of honor. Be with our workmen, and help them as workmen to be diligent and faithful, realizing that the service is unto God and not unto men. Be with our judges and our lawyers, and grant that they may cause justice to reign between man and man, honor and truth to prevail. Be, we humbly ask Thee, with all men who write for the press. Speak to the people who make books, who seek by pen to instruct and to guide men. Oh, our Father, send Thou Thy truth, send Thou Thy righteousness. May they teach the people wisely, and with due

sense of the great honor and the great responsibility they possess. Be with our missionaries abroad, and help them, Thou gracious Father, to know Thee and to make Thee known, and to find how great the joy and how holy the comfort of ministering in sacred things. Bless all ministers at home, and do Thou help them, Father, to be full of love and full of truth, bringing the Gospel of God to men, bringing men to the knowledge of Thy holy Gospel. Hear us, Father in heaven. Hear our prayers for all the needy, for all the distressed, for the lapsed and the sinful, for the resigned and the holy. Bless us, O Father, and send us Thy gracious help. Bless us as a people. Bless our King and parliament. Bless all who around and about seek in any way to bless men, and make the heart of the world happier and the spirit of the world holier. O, Thou blessed Christ, help us to love Thee and let Thy Spirit dwell within Thy people, making Thy people priests unto God. Hear us and bless us, and give to us Thy perfect truth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

—Principal A. M. Fairburn, D.D.

Prayer No. 60 is worthy of study as a model of structure, simplicity and completeness.

It deals with God, mankind and our country. But look at this outline and then read the prayer.

I. God.

II. Men (I) of different ages—old, young, middle-aged.

(2) Of different classes, rulers, teachers, merchants, missionaries, etc.

III. Our country.

LXI

O GOD, grant that there may be truth in the inward parts, in all that is within us. May we put away everything that is positively sinful; may we be in the very depths of our nature so true as the result of that truth, that those who live near us—those who see most of our inner and otherwise hidden character—may know most clearly and feel most profoundly that we have been with Christ and learned of Him. And upon all our doings and our goings shed forth Thy sacred influence. May we feel the compassions which Christ felt for those who are in sorrow and sickness and pitiful circumstances about us; may we exercise evermore all those sweet influences of charity which should characterize the mind that loves and follows Jesus. And upon all our great country send down Thy Divine Spirit with sacred influences. Father, bless, we beseech Thee, this land with abundant blessing. Protect and keep our King and the royal house. Give of Thy Divine Spirit to those who are guiding and directing the affairs of our nation. Keep us in peace, we entreat Thee, O Father, and upon all the earth shower down Thy blessing and give Thine abundant increase. Oh, how feeble are

our petitions! How wanting! How wayward! Not for what we ask do we pray necessarily to be answered, but we entreat Thee to grant that as the result of our prayer, we may profoundly feel and live in the feeling that the will of the Lord should be done, and in it we should rejoice. We entreat this for Christ's sake. AMEN.

—Professor Dallinger, D.D.

LXII

O GOD of Power, God of Love, we come with yearning hearts to submit ourselves to Thee. Grant us, Lord, a true sense of sin and true trust in Him who redeems from all guilt. May Thy Spirit so dissipate our darkness and so quicken our life that we shall worship Thee in spirit and in truth; yea, Lord, in the beauty of holiness. So near may we feel Thy presence that our sense of distance and danger may depart, and our souls find refuge in Thee, our Rock of Defence. Enable us to trust fully; to feel that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to Thy purpose. Oh, may we reach the assurance that Thou, the Judge of all the earth, wilt do right. But more we need. Grant us filial trust which never forgets that like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him, for He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust, and hath said, "Fear not,

little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." Enable us always in our moments of distress or perplexity to hear the Divine Voice saying "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And so shall we find peace, and learn the apostolic lesson that Thy strength is made perfect in human weakness. Come, O Lord Jesus! so come, and establish Thy Kingdom within us, that our every power may be brought under Thy sway and reflect Thy glory. Thus shall we dwell in heavenly places in Christ Jesus and Thy praise be perfected in our redemption. AMEN.

LXIII

WE BESEECH Thee, O God, to revive Thine own work in the midst of the days. We lament that among Thy professing people, apathy and indifference so largely prevail—that so many have merely a name to live, but are in reality dead. Hast Thou not promised, O God, to pour out Thy Spirit upon all flesh and to refresh Thine heritage as a plenteous rain? Wilt Thou not, then, send forth Thy Spirit to enlighten the ignorant, to quicken the dead and to awaken those who are at ease in Zion? We rejoice to remember that on the day of Pentecost Thou didst send Thy Spirit to give efficacy to the preaching of the Gospel; and we know that Thou art still mighty to save, and that Thy Spirit

is not straitened. Let Thy Spirit now descend upon the congregation of Thy people like rain upon the mown grass, and like showers that water the earth. May the careless be aroused, the prayerless be constrained in the agency of conscious guilt to cry: What must we do to be saved? And may they be enabled to look by faith to the Lord Jesus Christ in whom alone salvation can be found. May those, also, who have in some measure tasted of Thy goodness, be stirred up to greater measures of zeal and diligence in the divine life. Make them more fervent in spirit, more earnest in prayer, more laborious in their efforts towards the extension of Thy Kingdom, and the salvation of perishing sinners. Thus may Zion arise, shake the dust from her neck, and put on her beautiful garments, and may her righteousness go forth like brightness and her salvation like a lamp that burneth. Hear and answer for the gracious Redeemer's sake. AMEN.

—Prof. William Gregg, D.D.

LXIV

O GOD, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace; give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away from us all hatred and prejudice and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord; that as there is but one body, and one

spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

—Book of Common Prayer.

LXV

THE RESURRECTION

NOTE.—This prayer is a model of Scriptural thought and language relating to: (1) The death and resurrection of Christ; (2) the present comfort for the believer, and (3) the glorious prospects therein revealed; also (4) desire for fidelity till His appearing, etc.

O THOU who broughtest again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant; we draw near unto Thee, this morning, with the voice of rejoicing and of praise. We bless Thee that His soul was not left in the place of the dead, neither did His flesh see corruption; but that He arose a conqueror over the last enemy, and was shown to be the Son of God with power. We rejoice in the testimony thus given, that Thou didst remember His offering and accept His sacrifice on our behalf; so that no one

can now lay anthing to the charge of God's elect; seeing it was Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. We would recall with gratitude His first words to the weeping Mary, "Woman, why weepest thou?" And we would praise Thee that ever since He has been wiping the tears from weeping eyes. We would cherish with deepest thankfulness His first salutation to the brethren in the upper chamber, "Peace be unto you," and desire during our whole life to live under the dew of these blessed words. We would remember how He made the hearts of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus burn within them as He opened up the Scriptures; and we pray that it may be given us to see, as the chief theme of Moses and the Psalms and the prophets the atoning sufferings of Christ, and the glory that was to follow. O God, we bless Thee for a risen Saviour. We bless Thee for Him who was dead, and is alive, and liveth for evermore, and hath the keys of hades and of death. We bless Thee that He is now at Thy right hand, angels and authorities and powers being subject to Him, and that in due time He will come again to gather His elect from the north and from the south and from the east and from the west, to sit down with Him in the Kingdom of God. And we praise Thee for the glorious hope of our own resurrection, when He shall say to the north "Give up, and to the south, keep

not back; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth."

And now, O Lord, mourning over the coldness of our hearts and the dullness of our affections, we implore Thy grace, that, being quickened together with Christ, we may seek the things that are above, where He sitteth on the right hand of God. Oh that, moved and quickened by His agony and bloody sweat, by His cross and passion, by His precious death and burial, by His glorious resurrection and ascension, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost, we may have our conversation in heaven; may sit with Him in heavenly places; and cherish as our brightest hope the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile bodies and fashion them like unto His glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.

And we pray, O God, that Thou wouldst arouse a blind and slumbering world to see the grace and the glory of the Lord Jesus, that, like the company around the throne, they may give all blessing and honor and praise unto the Lamb that was slain. Be pleased to scatter the darkness of heathenism. And, for this end, revive and quicken Thy languid church, and make the last charge of our Master ever to ring in our ears, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

These and all other blessings for us and for ours, and for the church and the world, we humbly ask in the name of Jesus, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be eternal praise. AMEN. —Prof. W. G. Blaikie, D.D., LL.D., in “Household Prayers.”

FAMILY

LXVI

O GOD, we would adore Thee as Light in whom is no darkness at all. We would adore Thee as the Light, which has never been seen on sea or land; that Light of the Spirit in which we may all see light. At creation Thou didst say, Let light be, and light was; and the world is full of kindly light from Thee to guide our feet into the way of understanding. For all this light of knowledge, and the power it brings us, we would praise Thy glorious name. But in this day of the Son of Man, we would thank Thee still more for the light which shines on us through the life of Thy Son. We thank Thee for the pardon He has purchased through His blood. We thank Thee for the cleansing He imparts through His Spirit. We thank Thee for the power he bestows on poor sinners to become sons of God. May these great gifts be ours. As pardoned, purified, and adopted children, may we be prepared to pass at last in to the everlasting home. We ask all these mercies, and a day

of Sabbath peace, for the sake of our Redeemer.
AMEN. —“A Book of Family Worship,” ed. by
W. Robertson Nichol, D.D.

LXVII

WE THANK Thee, O God of love, that Thou gatherest Thy families like a flock and makest bright homes in this dark world. Under the shadow of Thy wings may we dwell in safety, and under the light of Thy Spirit be kept from darkness and sin. Grant us the trustfulness of those who know Thy love and the humility of those who realize their own unworthiness. Be Thou our Deliverer, we implore, not only from sin but from mental and moral bias and misconception. Save us from prejudice and superstition, make conscience sensitive to sin, and give us open vision for wider views of truth and broader sympathies where our knowledge is narrow. May the mind that was in Christ be also in us, and strong in the strength which God supplies may we resist evil, but ever with brotherly tenderness manifest the manhood of Christ by helpful deeds and cheerful spirits. If we are worthy to be made stewards of any kind of wealth, entrust us therewith, we beseech Thee, and grant us grace to improve all our talents for Thy sake. But if, Lord, through ignorance or selfishness we are unfitted to hold Thy treasure in trust, then enlighten our understanding, we pray, and

redeem us from selfishness, that we and all we possess may be Thine forever. For, O Lord God, we desire to live for Thy glory and to see Thy name exalted in all the earth. AMEN.

LXVIII

O LORD, lift up the light of Thy countenance upon us; let Thy peace rule our hearts; and may it be our strength and our song, in the course of our pilgrimage.

We commit ourselves to Thy care and keeping this day; let Thy grace be mighty in us, and sufficient for us, and let it work in us both to will and to do of Thy good pleasure, and grant us strength for all the duties of the day. Keep us from sin; give us the rule over our own spirits; and keep us from speaking unadvisedly with our lips. May we live together in peace and holy love, and do Thou command Thy blessing upon us, even life forevermore. Prepare us for all the events of the day, for we know not what a day may bring forth. Give us grace to deny ourselves; to take up our cross daily, and to follow in the steps of our Lord and Master. AMEN.

—Matthew Henry.

LXIX

GRANT unto us, Almighty God, that that glory which filleth earth and heaven may also fill our hearts; that we, being glorified by

Thy graciousness, made happy by Thy love, made hopeful by Thy promise, may praise and magnify Thy holy name until such time as the praising of Thy holy name shall lead us to the doing of Thy holy will; that we, becoming perfectly obedient thereunto, may possess the life of God in the days of time, that so, in the eternal years, we may be forever Thine. Receive our thanksgivings, forgive our sins, strengthen our hope, make deep our faith; so that all the days of this, our mortal life, we, keeping Thy commandments, and leaning ever upon Thy mercy, may pass on our way until we, through the gate of death, enter into life everlasting. Hear us of Thy Mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

—George Dawson, "Great Souls at Prayer."

LXX

O GOD, who hast commanded that no man should be idle, give us grace to employ all our talents and faculties in the service appointed for us; that, whatsoever our hand findeth to do, we may do it with our might. Cheerfully may we go on in the road which Thou hast marked out, not desiring too earnestly that it should be either more smooth or more wide; but, daily seeking one way by Thy light, may we trust ourselves and the issue of our journey, to Thee, the Fountain of joy, and sing songs of praise as we

go along. Then, O Lord, receive us at the gate of life which Thou hast opened for us in Christ Jesus. AMEN.

—Marineau's, "Common Prayer for Christian Worship."

LXXI

BLESSED Lord, who hast promised that whatsoever we ask the Father in Thy name, Thou wilt give it us, pour into us, we beseech Thee, the spirit of prayer, that we may pray aright, and in none other name but Thine. To this end may we be doers of Thy Word, and not hearers only. Keep us from praying at random not knowing what manner of persons we are; show us our real wants; give us both humility and honesty to confess them unto Thee. Keep us from praying selfishly in our own names; teach us what we are in Thee, and what are our real treasures and interests; that we may plead for them, and not for vain shadows. If we pray for wealth and ease, if we pray for less of Thy work and more of our own enjoyment, do Thou answer, not the trifles on our lips, but the deeper yearnings which lie forgotten in our hearts. When we pray for Thyself, for more fellowship in Thy sufferings and Thy glory, grant Thou our prayer, not according to our zeal in our blunders, but according to Thine infinite wisdom; not according to our impatience, but in Thine own

good time, and after the counsel of Thy Father's will.

Lord, teach us to pray. Holy Spirit, help our infirmities. Great Intercessor, present to Thy Father this Thine own prayer: Our Father which art in heaven, etc.

—Alford's "Year of Prayer."

LXXII

WE BESEECH Thee, Lord, to behold us with favor, folk of many families and nations, gathered together in the peace of this roof; weak men and women subsisting under the covert of Thy patience. Be patient still; suffer us yet a while longer—with our broken promises of good, with our idle endeavors against evil—suffer us a while longer to endure and (if it may be) help us to do better. Bless to us our extraordinary mercies; if the day comes when these must be taken, have us play the man under affliction. Be with our friends, be with ourselves. Go with each of us to rest; if any awake, temper to them the dark hours of watching; and when the day returns to us—our sun and comforter—call us with morning faces, eager to labor, eager to be happy, if happiness shall be our portion, and, if the day be marked to sorrow, strong to endure it. We thank Thee and praise Thee; and in the words of Him to whom this day is sacred, close our oblation. AMEN.

—Robert Louis Stevenson.

Special Prayers

PRAYERS FOR ILLUMINATION

LXXIII

MOST Gracious God and Father, in whom dwelleth all fullness of light and wisdom, enlighten our minds, we beseech Thee, by Thy Holy Spirit, in the true understanding of Thy Word. Give us grace to receive it with all reverence and humility. May it teach us to put our whole trust in Thee only, and so to serve and honor Thee that in all our life we may glorify Thy holy name and be profitable to our fellow men. And inasmuch as it hath pleased Thee to remember us with Thy servants and children, grant that we may render unto Thee the love and obedience which we owe Thee, as children to their father and servants to their lord. We ask all for the sake of Jesus Christ our only Saviour.

AMEN. —Calvin.

LXXIV

ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, who hast given us Thy Holy Word to be a light to our feet and a lamp to our path, grant us now grace and wisdom to use it aright, that Thy truth may fall as good seed in good soil and bring forth much fruit to Thy glory and to our enrichment. Unto Thee, O Lord, we cry for wisdom

and the grace of understanding. Oh, hear us for Thy mercy's sake. AMEN.

LXXV

O GOD, in whose wisdom Thy children become wise, illumine our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit, that we may receive Thy truth in the love of it. May the fruit be unto holiness and the end everlasting life, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

—“New Directory for Public Worship.”

LXXVI

LORD of light and all wisdom, who hast inspired the Oracles of God for our instruction, inspire us now to understand and prepare our hearts to receive Thy divine message. Enable us so to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest Thy truth, that it shall be unto us comfort and consolation, wisdom and strength, redemptive and sanctifying in its power, transforming our lives from glory to glory till we come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of God. And this we ask for Thy glory. AMEN.

LXXVII

O GOD, who in times past hast spoken unto the fathers by the prophets, and hast spoken unto us in these last days by Thy Son,

Speak to us now, we beseech Thee, by Thy Holy Spirit. May He who inspired the Word of Life inspire also our hearts to receive Thy truth. Oh, quicken our love for Thy law; may our meditations therein prepare us better for the citizenship of heaven. So shall we serve Thee here, and so shall we praise Thee forever and ever. AMEN.

AFTER SERMON

LXXVIII

O GOD, our Father, we beseech Thee to accept our worship. Pardon its imperfections, and grant that henceforth, putting all our trust in Thy well-beloved Son, enlightened by His teaching, guided by His example, and sanctified by His Spirit, we may walk in newness of life and so prepare for that blessed life which Thou hast promised to Thy children in heaven. Hear us, O merciful Father, in these our supplications for the sake of Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, to whom with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. AMEN.

—“Social Worship.”

LXXIX

OUR Father, wilt Thou bless the word which we have spoken? Grant that it may be an incitement to our motives. May we measure the ways of men, the ways of the nation, and our own ways, not by human opinions, but by sympathy

with Thy revealed truth. We thank Thee that Thou hast called so many back from the way in which they were wandering and that Thou art awakening again the dormant sympathies of man for man. We pray that Thou wilt kindle to a glowing flame that which is but a spark now, that Thou wilt give to all Thy church and to every heart a glowing love until the summer of good will shall bloom among men.

Wilt Thou, O God, bless the remaining hours of this day. We would walk with Thee. Restrain us with Thy love. Wean us from our sin, and from the love of it, and keep us near Thy side. We ask it for Christ's sake. AMEN.

—Beecher.

LXXX

WE THANK Thee, O Lord, that we have been permitted to hear and meditate on Thy Holy Word; and we beseech Thee that its lessons may be fixed in our memories, and impressed upon our hearts, and that they may bring forth in our lives the peaceable fruits of righteousness to the glory of Thy holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

—Book of Common Prayer.

LXXXI

O GOD, our one Father, our one Teacher, our one Master, our God, we come to Thee with thanksgiving; we thank Thee for all Thou

hast done for us, and for all Thou art to us. We thank Thee for Thy faithfulness to our fathers. We thank thee for Thy faithfulness to Thy people now. We thank Thee for all the grace to come. Bless to us the weighty words we have heard at this time. Let them bear much fruit for our own souls, for every congregation, and every church here represented, for Thy Kingdom upon the earth. O God, let Thy blessing rest upon this Council. We know not our own needs. Thou knowest it altogether. Touch our hearts and lighten our eyes, quicken our consciences, bind us one to another. Bind us first of all unto Thyself, and as we have been reminded that the beginning of salvation is the personal bond between the Saviour and the sinner, O God, let there not be one now in Thy presence who is not consciously given up to Thee as Thy redeemed child and Thy faithful servant. And bless Thy people everywhere. O God, we do not come here as though we were a body, much less the body. The body is Thine, the body is that of which Thou art the Head. But we do pray to be members of the body, and we pray Thee to use us for the good of Thy body. And let grace, mercy, and peace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Lord, hear us, and answer us; bless us, not only according to our need, but according to the riches of Thy grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN. —Theodore Monod.

AFTER THE OFFERING

LXXXII

WE EXTOL Thy name, O God, our Father, that Thou hast enriched us beyond our deserving, and hast provided rewards for faithful stewardship. Remembering that there is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet but it tendeth to poverty, we seek Thy guidance in our scattering. Make us wise in setting aside the due proportion of our substance for Thy great work in the world, so that with holy boldness we may pray for Thy blessing upon our possessions. Forbid, Lord, that we should be unworthy to control what is already entrusted to our care, or that we should so far err as to need Thy discipline. Hear us in our desire to know and to accomplish Thy will, and to manifest Thine eternal excellence among men. Accept our offering and our prayer since we live and labor for Jesus' sake. AMEN.

LXXXIII

ACCEPT, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the offerings we have just made of our substance. Enable us so to dedicate ourselves, our homes, and our business to Thy service that all may rest under Thy blessing. Obeying natural laws, may we obey also those which are spiritual, and gladly

acquiesce in Thy revealed will. We thank Thee for the talents already entrusted to us; may we be faithful stewards. We bless Thee for the well-being of those we love, and humbly acknowledge that we cannot protect them from evils unseen; unto Thee, Almighty God, do we entrust the lambs of our fold. Preserve their lives, if it be Thy will, to our comfort and support. Guard for us, we pray, such riches as can take wings and fly away; and grant us grace to repel from our business all evil allies, and to resist all encroachments of the enemy, that we and our possessions may all be devoted to the establishment of Thy Kingdom among men. This we ask in the name and spirit of Christ. AMEN.

PATRIOTIC

LXXXIV

O LORD, our Heavenly Father, high and mighty King of kings, and Lord of lords, the only ruler of princes, who dost from Thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth; most humbly we beseech Thee with Thy favor to behold our most gracious Sovereign King Edward VII (or our royal sovereign, or the chief ruler of our beloved land, etc.) and so replenish him with the grace of Thy Holy Spirit that he may always incline to Thy will and walk in Thy way. Endue him plenteously with heavenly gifts; grant him

in health and wealth long to live; strengthen him that he may vanquish and overcome all his enemies; and finally, after this life, may he attain everlasting joy and felicity through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

—Book of Common Prayer.

LXXXV

AND, oh, look upon this nation which Thou hast so highly exalted among all nations, and to which Thou hast given such extended dominion and power, and such widespread opportunities of usefulness. May our beloved country, generally and nationally, rise to that high and blessed office to which she is now called, of diffusing the glorious light of Thy Gospel throughout the world. Let our Monarch be as a Cyrus to returning Israel; let our statesmen be like Daniel and Nehemiah, ruling in Thy fear and love; and may holiness to the Lord be inscribed on all our possessions, commerce and wealth; that thus we may be a blessing to every land, through Jesus Christ our all-sufficient Helper and Redeemer. AMEN. —Bickersteth.

LXXXVI

ALMIGHTY Lord, the most high God, by whom kings reign and princes decree justice. Thou puttest down one, and settest up

another; and there are no powers but of Thee; the powers that be are ordained of God. Thy Word directs us to pray for kings, and for all that are in authority. And, both in duty and in inclination we are petitioners to Thy heavenly Majesty for Thy chosen servant our beloved King (or our chief magistrate, etc.) and for all our governors in church and state. Give Thy judgments, O God, to the King, that he may judge Thy people righteously, and break in pieces their oppressors. Give him the spirit of government, and make him wise as a servant of God, to discern between good and evil; a ruler after Thine own heart, and a follower after wise and pious princes in things excellent and praiseworthy. Rule his heart in Thy fear and love that he may rule his people to Thy honor and glory. In his days let the righteous flourish and enjoy abundance of peace, with the liberty of Thy Gospel and the free profession of Thy true and holy religion.

Grant, Lord, unto all our rulers a mind and spirit suitable to their stations. Make them a terror only to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well. Oh that they may use for Thee, all the power which they have received from Thee, not bearing the sword in vain; but curbing and suppressing all vice and ungodliness; and defending and encouraging whatever is holy, just and good. Oh, give them wisdom to understand, and hearts to consider, and abilities to redress the grievances of Thy people; that under their pro-

tection we may lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty.

And may all rulers so rule, and subjects so obey; and every one of us, from the highest to the lowest, understand and seek after God, that Thou mayest not root us out from being a people, but be still our God, and do us good in the accustomed ways of Thy loving kindness to us, through the Son of Thy love, our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

—Benjamin Jenks.

MISSIONS

LXXXVII

THOU Light and Desire of all nations, watch over Thy messengers both by land and sea; prosper the endeavors of all Thy servants to spread Thy Gospel among heathen nations; accompany the word of their testimony concerning Thy atonement with demonstration of the Spirit and of power; bless our congregations gathered from among the heathen; keep them as the apple of Thine eye; have mercy on Thy ancient covenant people, the Jews; deliver them from their blindness and bring all nations to the saving knowledge of Thee; let the seed of Israel praise the Lord; yea, let all the nations praise Him; give to Thy people open doors to preach the Gospel and set them to Thy praise on earth. AMEN.

—Moravian Litany.

LXXXVIII

BLESS the whole church and family of God everywhere. We pray for the peace of Jerusalem; we pray for the true progress of Thy Word in all lands; we pray Thee to bless all missionaries, among Jews or Gentiles, and at length fulfill all Thy promises, in the universal triumph of the holy and happy Kingdom of Jesus, throughout the world.

Oh, hear and answer us for His name's sake.
AMEN. —Bickersteth.

LXXXIX

HEAR us, O Father, on behalf of the unevangelized peoples of the earth. Hast Thou not said "Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession?" Fulfill unto us thy promise, O covenant-keeping God. So teach us to sympathize with them in their ignorance and suffering, their superstition and sin, their degradation and cruelty, that we shall each and all take a practical and personal interest in their welfare. Enable us to consecrate part of our substance to alleviate their sorrow, to enlighten their darkness, and to send them the good tidings of Thy love. In this great work of redeeming heathendom, grant us the joy of becoming co-workers with Thee; and gladden our hearts

by the fuller coming of Thy Kingdom among men. AMEN.

XC

OUR Gracious Lord and Glorious Redeemer, hasten that blessed time when Thy Kingdom shall come in all its fullness and all shall know Thee from the least even to the greatest; when the knowledge of Thy glory shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea. To that end, O God, prosper the labors of Thy servants o'er all the earth, subduing to Thyself all kindred and tongues and nations. May the heathen and the unbelieving everywhere become the inheritance of Christ, and may the light of Thy grace flood all the world. And upon us, O Lord, who enjoy the peace and liberty of the Gospel pour out more and more the spirit of grace and of supplication. Lay upon our hearts the sorrows of our fellow men in superstition and sin, and enable us to cry mightily for their liberation and enlightenment. And as we pray, so, O God of might, enable us to labor for Thy glory's sake. AMEN.

XCI

AND because Thou hast commanded us to pray one for another, we do not only make request, O Lord, for ourselves and them that Thou hast already called to the true understanding of Thy Heavenly Will, but for all people and

nations of the world, who as they know by Thy wonderful works that Thou art God over all, so they may be instructed by The Holy Spirit to believe in Thee their only Saviour and Redeemer. But forasmuch as they cannot believe except they hear, nor cannot hear but by preaching, and none can preach except they be sent; therefore, O Lord, raise up faithful distributors of Thy mysteries, who setting apart all worldly respects, may both in their life and doctrine only seek Thy glory. AMEN.

—John Knox.

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