PRAYER, THE SECRET OF POWER
By Clarence J. Kinne

Trouble and perplexity drive me to prayer, and prayer drives away perplexity and trouble. -- Melanchthon

*     *     *     *     *     *     *

Digital Edition 06/22/07
By Holiness Data Ministry

*     *     *     *     *     *     *
INTRODUCTION

It is quite fitting that this book should be reprinted simultaneously with the fiftieth anniversary observance of the Church of the Nazarene. This book, which has been out of print for more than twenty-five years, was very probably the first title offered by the new and struggling institution of which Rev. C. J. Kinne was the first manager.

Having worked side by side with Brother Kinne for some years, I shared the respect which was felt by all who knew him. He was an indefatigable worker, a warmhearted friend, forthright in expressing his opinions. He was ruggedly individualistic, endowed with a sterling character, and utterly lacking in guile or pretense.

While Brother Kinne deserves anything done to honor his memory, that is not the reason for reprinting the book. It is only by prayer that we can daily meet the demands of living in our day -- not simply saying prayers, but praying in the Spirit.

Prayer is the greatest force on earth; it is supernatural power, miraculous in its working. We need to learn that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

There are observations and practical suggestions in this volume needed by all praying people. None of us can know too much about prayer. And no one can read these pages without being strengthened and encouraged in his prayer life.
If our people will humble themselves and pray, God can and will use us to bring about a world revival.

-- M. LUNN

01 -- WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye
When none but God is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air,
His watchword at the gates of death;
He enters heaven with prayer.

-- James Montgomery

Prayer is communion with God. It may take the form of worship, adoration, thanksgiving, supplication, or confession -- or may embody all. Communion with God may be carried on in many ways which are strangers to the conventional ideas of prayer. Much of what passes for prayer is not communion with God, from the fact that it is mere habit or form, and is not from the heart. Montgomery's lines give a real idea of prayer:

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire."

The soul that really seeks after God and desires anything from Him will be heard, no matter how the desire is expressed, or even if the desire cannot be expressed.
"Prayer is the burden of a sigh,  
The falling of a tear,  
The upward glancing of an eye,  
When none but God is near."

To appreciate the real meaning of prayer, we must get away from the ordinary or general meaning of the word, and confine our thought to the one idea of communion with God. Communion with God must necessarily embody two elements: we must send a message to God, or speak to Him; and we must hear God speak to us, or at least have some assurance that we are heard and that our prayer will be answered.

In a sense the petition to an idol is prayer. The plea presented to a court is often termed a prayer. The petitions offered to saints are called prayers. The formal repeating of words from a prayer book, or from memory, is often thought by some to be prayer. But real, Christian prayer is as far beyond these as a burning flame is beyond painted fire.

As to the first element in prayer: How MAY WE SPEAK TO GOD SO AS TO BE HEARD? When we seek to communicate with a person, we first seek to find him. Where is God? Have you found Him? When Solomon prayed at the dedication of the Temple, he said to God, "Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place." Again he said, "Will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?"

While it is a good thing to be found in the house which is set apart for worship, it is well to understand that God is not confined to any one place. When Paul preached to the people of Athens he said, "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being." The Psalmist said: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

If you seek God that you may bring your petition before Him, you are now in His presence.
Having found God, you ask, "What is prayer?" Perhaps it would be well to begin by telling what prayer is not. Prayer is not a form, nor is it shouting, screaming, crying aloud, groaning, jumping, waving the arms, bobbing the head, beating the air, pounding a bench, walking the floor, nor any other bodily exercise. The position or occupation of the body or its members has little to do with real prayer. Prayer is of the soul.

If you are more conscious of yourself or of your surroundings than of the presence of God, you are not praying. If you are more concerned about the form of your words, your appearance, or the opinions of men than of God's approval, you are not praying. You may pour forth a stream of eloquence which will charm the people, and not pray. You may clench your fists and beat the air, turn your face heavenward and cry loud enough to be heard a mile, and not pray. You may kneel in a devout manner and silently think thoughts of spiritual things, and still not pray. These things may be a help or a hindrance to prayer, according to the nature of the person, time, place, or circumstances. What then is the prime element of prayer? Paul said, "Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Faith, then, is the prime element of prayer. Jesus said, "Whatsoever things ye desire... believe that ye receive." We come to God because we desire, and receive from God because we believe. Again, Jesus said to His disciples, "Have faith in God." How essential faith is to real prayer! Faith in God; not faith in signs, not faith in appearances, not faith in probabilities, not faith in what we see or feel -- FAITH IN GOD.

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Faith laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, "It shall be done!"

* * * * * * *

02 -- HOW NOT TO PRAY

I often say my prayers,
But do I ever pray;
And do the wishes of my heart
Go with the words I say?

I may as well kneel down
And worship gods of stone
As offer to the living God
A prayer of words alone.

For words without the heart
The Lord will never hear;
Nor will He to those lips attend  
Whose prayers are not sincere.

-- John Burton

* * *

The disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray." Jesus told them how to pray. He began by telling them how not to pray. "When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men." He further says, "They have their reward." The chief object of their prayers was that men might see them, and as they were seen, that was their reward. Let us not be like them, but let us have no thought of being heard of men, praying to God for the things we need.

The fact that men know you pray does not make you one whit more religious nor does it increase, by one hair's breadth, the prospect of your receiving the answer to your prayer. Neither does it make you any less religious, nor lessen the probability of your prayers being answered, though all men are of the opinion that you never pray because they do not hear you on the street corner or in the synagogue. Prayer is to God, and to Him alone. He alone gives the answer. Jesus said, "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." How important that we realize that our business is solely with God! The idea in this direction which our Lord gives His disciples is not that the only place where prayer can be offered is in some particular closet or place; the thought is rather a state than a place. The thought is, the world shut out, and the soul shut in with God. This may be accomplished on a busy street, or in a crowded store or factory, but is more likely to be effected and more easily done, away from the worm and its cares. Still, it is quite possible for one to enter a closet with walls and door ten feet thick, and miles away from any human habitation, and carry with him all the distractions incident to the busiest place in the world. He may have within him the love of the world and the desire for pleasure, so that it is impossible for him even to think seriously of God or of his soul's need. He may be so intent upon schemes to increase his wealth or worldly state that he cannot give one thought to God. On the other hand he may, in the midst of every distraction known to man, be so intent on communion with God that he will lose sight of all around him and be deaf to every sound but the voice of God. He may then commune with God, and the passing world be as unconscious of his heavenly joys as he is of its noise and hurry. Oh, yes, they will see the look of joy and peace on his face but cannot know the secret of its source.

Adam Clarke says: "Prayer requires retirement, at least of the heart; for this may be fitly termed the closet in the house of God, which house the body of every real Christian is. To this closet we ought to retire even in public prayer, and in the midst of company."
If you will ask yourself the question, When do I pray the longer prayers, in public or in secret? the answer may give you some idea as to whether you pray to God or that men may hear.

Jesus says that the Father "shall reward thee openly." All your prayers may have been in secret, and the world all unconscious of the connection between you and God, and when the answer comes openly and before all the world they may attribute it to luck. Now and then one will ask you about your good fortune, and this opens the way for you to glorify God.

Before proceeding to the positive instruction as to how to pray, Jesus gives His disciples another caution in these words, "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking." "Use not vain repetitions." What are "vain repetitions"? Certainly all useless repetition is vain. We are not heard for our much speaking, else the person with the strongest body or the greatest gift of gab would get the most from God. It might help you to get an idea of what vain repetition is to try a little experiment. The next time you go to the grocery for butter, say, "I want a pound of butter," and as you see the grocer starting to get it continue to say, "I want a pound of butter; I want a pound of butter," and keep on saying it as he stands there and tries to hand you the butter. This seems absurd when you stop to consider that the grocer is more anxious to sell butter than you are to buy.

If when you ask the grocer for butter he does not start after the butter, you will naturally conclude that he did not hear you, and hence you will ask again. Then instead of going on to vain repetition you will pause to hear what the grocer has to say. He may tell you that he has no butter, or may want you to show your money, but you cannot know this unless you give him a chance to speak. It may be that when you begin to speak to God, He does not hear you because your words come only from your lips. You may have to continue to call. But even at that, if your failure to be heard does not beget in you such an earnestness that you cry out from the depths of your soul, it is vain repetition to continue to repeat your petition in the same manner. The only possible excuse for oft repeating your petition is that your own soul may grow more earnest and intense. It is well to be still and let the Lord speak to your soul. Communion implies a speaking from both sides.

* * * * * * *

03 -- HOW TO PRAY

Shepherd Divine, our wants relieve
In this our evil day;
To all Thy tempted followers give
The power to watch and pray.
Long as our fiery trials last,
Long as the cross we bear,
Oh, let our souls on Thee be cast
In never-ceasing prayer.

Till Thou Thy perfect love impart,
Till Thou thyself bestow,
Be this the cry of every heart,
"I will not let Thee go;

"I will not let Thee go unless
Thou tell Thy name to me,
With all Thy great salvation bless,
And make me all like Thee!

"Then let me on the mountaintop
Behold Thy open face,
Where faith in sight is swallowed up,
And prayer in endless praise."

-- Charles Wesley

* * *

Jesus said, "After this manner therefore pray ye," and He then proceeded with what is known as "The Lord's Prayer." Notice that He said, "After this manner . . . pray ye." Not, "After this manner say ye." We may say the words a thousand times and never pray. To pray the petition taught in this prayer and to enter into the spirit of every part would indicate a high state of grace in the petitioner. Every word is significant. The very first word is full of meaning. Why not say, "My Father"? The use of the word "our" precludes any thought of selfishness or exclusiveness. We are one family and we have one Father. Wherever there is a person who, having experienced the new birth, prays as I do, "Our Father," he is my brother, and there is no ground of any sort for me to think or to feel that I am better than he is, or that the Father thinks any more of me than He does of any other one of His children. This truth encountered at the very beginning of the prayer is hard for many to accept, but it is nevertheless true, and wrong thinking on our part cannot change the fact. We knew a professor of holiness who said to a sister who happened to live in a different colored house (her skin of different shade), "If the Lord had wanted you to be my equal, He would have made you white like I am." We felt very much like asking this question: "How do you know but that you are the one who is lower in the scale, and if the Lord had wanted you to be equal with the sister you feel yourself above, He would have given you a skin of her color?"

If the Lord thinks more of one race than of another, who is to say which one it is? If we were to use Abraham Lincoln's philosophy we white folks would have to
take second place. Lincoln said, "The Lord must love common people, or He would not have made so many of them." Yellow skins must be the Lord’s choice of color, for He made more of that kind than of any other.

Some people who call themselves Christians think they have license to hate the Jews. A Christian hates no one. As for the Jews, Jesus was a Jew, and He is my Lord. Surely He cares just as much for them as for any other race. To be like Him I must love them.

There is no aristocracy in the family of God. "God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." If we come with the petition on our lips, "Our Father," we come placing ourselves on a common plane with all of God’s children.

In using the word "Father," we feel sure that our Lord intended it to be used thus by the real children of God, and not in a general sense, calling God the Father of the race, as so many suppose. If God is our Father, then there are mutual confidence and love. We have a right to call on Him and we may expect His special attention to our prayer.

With confidence I now draw nigh,
And, Father, Abba, Father, cry.

"Hallowed be thy name." On this clause we feel that nothing better could be said than to quote Dr. Clarke in full:

"We hallow God's name:

"1. With our lips, when all our conversation is holy, and we speak of those things which are meet to minister grace to the hearers.

"2. In our thoughts, when we suppress every rising evil and have our tempers regulated by His grace and Spirit.

"3. In our lives, when we begin, continue, and end our works to His glory. If we have an eye to God in all we perform, then every act of our common employment will be an act of religious worship.

"4. In our families, when we endeavor to bring up our children in the discipline and admonition of the Lord; instructing also our servants in the way of righteousness.

"5. In a particular calling, or business, when we separate the falsity, deception, and lying commonly practiced, from it; buying and selling as in the sight of the holy and just God."
"Thy kingdom come." What do we mean when we pray for the coming of God's kingdom? There are certainly two ideas embraced in the petition, the most important of which must be my personal relation to the Kingdom. Thy kingdom come in me. Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is within you." To really pray this prayer, I submit myself to God, and commit unto Him my whole being, to be ruled in and reigned over by Him alone. Then, His kingdom has a relation to the whole world. If I pray for God's kingdom to come in the earth, I must certainly desire everything which that implies; and, desiring it, I commit myself to work, pray, and pay to bring it to pass. My earnest endeavor will constantly be to banish evil and establish righteousness. If I really pray this prayer, I am the foe of all that is wrong and the friend of all that makes for the growth of God's kingdom.

"Thy will be done," where, when, and by whom? Certainly we must say everywhere, now, and forever, and by everybody. We can pray for the doing of God's will by everyone, although we may not control others. There is one person in whose heart and life we can insure the answering of this petition Thy will be done in me. If I mean it, I will do God's will in my every act. I will direct my thoughts to God and His will, and I will be constantly led by His Spirit. His will is my law, and no personal preference or outside influence can have any place in determining my course in life. "Thy will be done." Amen!

"In earth, as it is in heaven." Surely this part needs little comment. It is not difficult for us to conceive of how God's will is done in heaven. Surely we may say it is done cheerfully, immediately, and completely.

Before we leave this petition we would direct your thought to the fact that you cannot truly pray this prayer without praying for sanctification. The Word says, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification," and for this will to be accomplished, I must be sanctified. Lord, let it be so.

"Give us this day our daily bread." There is much speculation as to the exact meaning of this petition, but it is unnecessary for us to spend much time questioning about it. We know that we are dependent upon the providence of God for food for soul and body. When we pray this prayer we acknowledge our utter dependence upon God. By this we confess that we are unable to provide it of ourselves, and we express the confidence that we expect it from our Heavenly Father.

Bread of Heaven, feed me till I want no more.

"Forgive us." Yes, Lord we have sinned, and need Thy grace; do forgive us, for the sake of Him who died for us. Surely He will do it if we pray the whole prayer. Brother, sister, do you really want the kind of forgiveness that is here prayed for? "Forgive us... as we forgive." You are asking God to treat you as you treat your enemy. If you hold enmity or hatred in your heart against any man, you are asking God to hold your sins against you. This is not mere human reason or opinion.
Jesus left no room for doubt. He said, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." No one can afford to pray after the manner Jesus taught except those who freely forgive their enemies and who bear no ill will toward anyone. Lord, give us the grace of forgiveness.

"Lead us not into temptation." There is some difference of opinion as to the exact meaning of this. We can safely conclude that it means that we are not to have a spirit of bravado, as though we would say, "Lord, I can stand anything, and am ready to withstand any trial or temptation." On the contrary, we are to realize our weakness, and ask the Lord to spare us any trial or difficulty other than what is necessary.

"But deliver us from evil." We confess that we are powerless to escape the wiles of Satan or loose ourselves from the evil in our nature. We cry to God for deliverance because He is able to save us from evil of every sort, both within and without. Furthermore, if we really desire to be delivered from evil, we will flee from the presence of evil, and will shun every association which would tend to lead us astray. No prayer is genuine unless it carries with it a desire for full salvation. One cannot really seek God or His grace and have any desire to cling to sin or its pleasures.

"Thine is the kingdom." We own Thy right to reign in all and over all, and when we pray for the coming of Thy kingdom, we only give Thee that which is Thine own.

"And the power." We recognize Thy power to govern and uphold all things, and we are glad to put ourselves under Thy protection.

"And the glory." All glory belongs to God. Whatever results come from this prayer, no credit in any way belongs to me or to man. To God be all the glory.

"For ever and ever." No change of time or place will alter these conditions. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." The Kingdom, power, and glory will always belong to God, now and forever. Amen and amen!

"Therefore after this manner pray ye." He who can truly pray this prayer is indeed a child of God and in the way of life.

We are not to understand that Jesus intended that we should always use this form in praying. He has given us this model prayer to show us how to pray. The elements embodied in this prayer are the proper elements for true prayer. Certainly this pattern of prayers does not preclude our praying for things not mentioned in this prayer when we have need of them. There will be times when we must pray and cry out to God quickly for an immediate and imperative need. Our Father, who
knows all about us, will know that we do not approach Him abruptly from lack of reverence but because of our dire necessity.

In our prayers as a rule when we have time to give to prayer, we should see that we manifest the spirit and purpose which would prompt such a prayer as Jesus gave His disciples.

1. Acknowledge God and address some form of worship or adoration to Him.

2. Acknowledge your own utter dependence upon Him and declare your entire submission to His will.

3. Ask for the things you need, always keeping in mind God's will and your own good. You should prefer to have your petition denied than to have something which seems ever so desirable if it will not glorify God nor be for the good of your soul.

4. Profess to God your faith in His ability and willingness to bless you.

5. Praise Him. Let praise be a large part of your devotion. Praise Him for what He has done, for what He has promised, and for what He is about to do in answer to your prayer.

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

-- Philippians 4:6

* * * * * * *

04 -- WHO SHOULD PRAY

Jesus, where'er Thy people meet, 
There they behold Thy mercy seat; 
Where'er they seek Thee, Thou art found, 
And every place is hallowed ground.

For Thou, within no walls confined, 
Dost dwell with those of humble mind; 
Such ever bring Thee where they come, 
And, going, take Thee to their home.
Great Shepherd of Thy chosen few,
Thy former mercies here renew;
Here, to our waiting hearts, proclaim
The sweetness of Thy saving name.

Here may we prove the power of prayer
To strengthen faith and sweeten care;
To teach our faint desires to rise,
And bring all heaven before our eyes.

-- William Cowper

* * *

Paul says, "I will that all men pray." Some persons are of the opinion that only Christians should pray, and that it is useless for sinners to try to pray. The scripture, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," is often quoted, and most persons continue on their own responsibility and conclude that the prayers of a sinner avail nothing. It is true that some passages of scripture seem to confirm this notion. We cite the following, as perhaps the most conclusive: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalms 66:18). In the face of this we say to every sinner, "Pray, sinner, pray." Every person has to begin to pray; he ceases to regard iniquity in his heart, and begins to seek God. Jesus said of the publican who prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner," "This man went down to his house justified." Surely the sinner should pray. If only his prayer embraces confession of sin and desire for salvation, he will be heard, for "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice,
Returning from his ways,
While angels in their songs rejoice,
And say, "Behold, he prays!"

Children should be taught to pray. They are capable of a much greater conception of God and of spiritual things than most people credit them with. One of the most important lessons for them to learn is the habit of prayer. Even before they learn the full meaning of the new birth they should learn to pray. When the habit of prayer is once formed, it often proves an anchor to the soul in time of trouble. To know the real value of prayer is the richest heritage a child can have.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.
The Christian should pray. His citizenship is in heaven, and the only means of communication with that country is through prayer. Prayer is his means of gaining strength for his daffy walk and for the trials of life.

Prayer is the Christian’s vital breath,  
The Christian's native air,  
His watchword at the gates of death;  
He enters heaven with prayer.

Both old and young need the benefits of prayer, and no soul can maintain spiritual life without it.

To the question "Who should pray?" we would give a pointed answer: You should pray. Whoever you are, wherever found, and in whatever state, YOU should pray now and always. You may think that you ought not to pray or that you cannot pray, but nevertheless you should pray. If your environments make prayer seem impossible, get out of your environments. Sometimes in such cases if you will but pray, your environments will change without your moving. If your own hearts seems dead to all thought of prayer, the need is all the more imperative that you pray. If you will only cry to Him and give Him a chance, God will give you the spirit of prayer.

If any of you lack wisdom,  
let him ask of God,  
that giveth to all men liberally,  
and upbraideth not; and  
it shall be given him.  
But let him ask  
in faith, nothing wavering.  
For he that wavereth  
is like a wave of the sea  
driven with the wind and tossed.

-- James 1:5-7

* * * * * * *

05 -- WHEN TO PRAY

Come at the morning hour;  
Come, let us kneel and pray;  
Prayer is the Christian pilgrim’s staff  
To walk with God all day.

At noon, beneath the Rock  
Of Ages, rest and pray;
Sweet is the shelter from the sun
In weary heat of day.

At evening, in thy home,
Around its altar, pray;
And finding there the house of God,
With Heaven then close the day.

When midnight veils our eyes,
Oh, it is sweet to say,
"I sleep, but my heart waketh, Lord,
With Thee to watch and pray."

-- James Montgomery

*     *     *

We should have stated times to pray. The Psalmist said, "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud." When Daniel was threatened with death if he should pray to God, "he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." It was Daniel's habit to pray three times a day, and when adversity came, he being a man of principle, it was natural for him to continue his praying, even at the risk of his life. And the living God, to whom he prayed, took care of His servant Daniel, so that the heathen king recognized the power of God in Daniel's life. It is a blessed thing to have a time to pray and refresh the soul, just as we have time to eat and refresh the body.

But by no means should we confine our praying to these set times. Whenever we are freed from toil or care for a few moments, what more profitable exercise than to shut the door of the soul and talk with God? As Peter "went up upon the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour," and there received one of the greatest lessons of his life, so we, if we go apart from the world to pray, will be constantly taught of God and will be guided by His counsel.

The one time above all others when we should be sure to pray is when we are at a point where the ways seem to part and we know not which to take. Then is when we are in need of divine guidance, and if we will only wait on the Lord and not go forward until we have His light on the pathway, we will be safe.

No doubt many of us feel quite sure that we are able to hold our own in almost any place, but it is well to take heed. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." When the children of Israel were in the wilderness they were guided by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Read the record from God's Word: "And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the
children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys" (Exodus 40:36-38).

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land.

God will give direction to His children and no one need fear to walk in His counsel.

Paul said, "Pray without ceasing," and we believe this to be the true habit of prayer for the Christian. Live in the spirit of prayer, so that it is as natural for you to pray as it is for you to breathe. No, you cannot always be in what is usually termed the attitude of prayer, but your soul can be constantly longing for communion with God, and will naturally breathe prayer and praise to Him. In times of quietness, praise the Lord for His mercy, and pray for growth in grace. In times of temptation, pray for deliverance. In times of danger, pray for protection. In affliction, pray for grace to endure. In the hour of death, pray for an abundant entrance into the heavenly Kingdom. "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth."

And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

-- Luke 11:9-10

* * * * * * *

06 -- WHERE TO PRAY

Behold us, Lord, a little space From daily tasks set free, And met within the holy place To rest awhile with Thee.

Around us rolls the ceaseless tide Of business, toil, and care, And scarcely can we turn as/de
For one brief hour of prayer.

Yet these are not the only walls
Wherein Thou mayst be sought;
On homeliest work Thy blessing falls
In truth and patience wrought.

Thine is the loom, the forge, the mart,
The wealth of land and sea;
The worlds of science and of art,
Revealed and ruled by Thee.

Then let us prove our heavenly birth
In all we do and know,
And claim the kingdom of the earth
For Thee, and not Thy foe.

Work shall be prayer if all be wrought
As Thou wouldst have it done;
And prayer, by Thee inspired and taught,
Itself with work be done.

-- John Ellerton

* * *

In teaching the disciples how to pray, Jesus said, "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet." Some interpret this as against public prayer. The principal place to pray is in the secret place, where the surroundings are conducive to meditation, but there is no place where the soul can lawfully go where it is not an appropriate place to pray. Paul said, "I will therefore that men pray every where." No, you are not to love to pray standing on the street corner to be seen of men, but if you are on a street corner, and occasion arises for prayer, you are to pray. Note the example of Jesus praying at the tomb of Lazarus. This was prayer in a public place. Again, He prayed with His disciples, as recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John.

There are numerous instances to prove that wherever the need arises for prayer, there is the place to pray. When the disciples met to select a successor to Judas, they prayed for divine guidance. When Peter and John came down to Samaria, they publicly prayed for the Samaritans. Paul and Silas prayed in jail. When Paul was taking ship and the saints accompanied him to the shore, he says "he kneeled down, and prayed." He prayed at the public dock where the passengers boarded ship. He also speaks of praying in the Temple. The notion which some people have that we should not pray in public is wrong and prayer in the public assembly is undoubtedly a means of grace. The experience of generation after generation of devout Christians is ample proof of this. If you feel weak and
unworthy and have a special aversion to praying in public, you seize the first opportunity to lead in prayer in the public worship. It will strengthen you and give you boldness to perform the service of a Christian soldier.

Around the family altar is a place where prayer should continually be offered. No home where family worship is neglected can have the blessing of God upon it in the same measure as it would if the family gathered together for prayer. Every member of the family who is a Christian needs the blessing to be gained from such prayer, and surely the unconverted members of the family need its influence. Children never forget the family altar if they are accustomed to it from infancy. Father’s and Mother’s prayers never lose their influence and in after years their power is felt. The example of a holy life and the habit of prayer is a greater legacy to have than houses and lands.

We must certainly conclude that there is no place where an individual or a company may be in need of divine help but where it is proper to pray. If the soul be always in the spirit of prayer, so that every breath is a prayer, then everywhere one goes there will be a place of prayer.

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

-- Matthew 6:6

*     *     *     *     *     *     *

07 -- WHAT THINGS TO PRAY FOR

Prayer is appointed to convey
The blessings God designs to give.
Long as they live should Christians pray;
They learn to pray when first they live.

If pain afflict or wrong oppress,
If cares distract or fears dismay,
If guilt deject or sin distress,
In every case, still watch and pray.

'Tis prayer supports the soul that's weak,
Though thought be broken, language lame;
Pray, if thou canst or canst not speak,
But pray with faith in Jesus' name.

Depend on Him; thou canst not fail;
Make all thy wants and wishes known.
Fear not; His merits must prevail;
Ask but in faith, it shall be done.

-- Joseph Hart

*     *     *

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

"We know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26).

There are some general principles which very largely govern the range of things which it is lawful to pray for. If we are thoroughly grounded in these principles, we will have no difficulty in determining what to pray for.

Jesus said, "What things soever ye desire." Do you think that God will give us anything that fancy might lead us to ask for? If you will read the preceding verses you will find that Jesus said, "Therefore... what things soever ye desire..., believe that ye receive them"; so this hinges on some condition.

The disciples had noted the withering of the fig tree which Jesus had cursed, and seemed to wonder at it. Jesus answered their wondering by the admonition, "Have faith in God." "For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith."

Faith is the essential thing. You say, "If I have the faith I can have anything I ask for!" It might be helpful to ask ourselves the question, "Can I have faith when I am asking for anything which is not the will of God?" To have certain and definite answer to prayer, it must be born of an unwavering confidence that it shall be done. Whence this confidence? Can you have it at any time for anything? We are of the opinion that no soul will come to a satisfactory solution of this question without considering it in the light of Paul's assertion in Romans 8:26, "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us." The Spirit is the Author of the faith, and our desires are controlled by the Spirit of God, who is our Guide.

In this same chapter Paul says, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," and after asserting that "the Spirit maketh intercession for
us," he goes on to say, "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

On this subject John says, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us." Jesus, our great Exemplar, when praying as touching himself and His desires, said, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." To be on praying ground we must be in the will of God. He who is not, or is not led by the Spirit of God, can pray for only one thing, and that is that he may be pardoned and born into the family of God, where he may have an inheritance among the saints. Coming into possession of his inheritance, he at once becomes submissive to the will of God, and all his lawful desires are inspired by the Spirit of God. If we have unholy desires they spring from the carnal nature, which the Scriptures tell us "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." If one be led by the Spirit of God, instead of praying for the fulfillment of those desires, he will pray for deliverance from the principle which inspired them.

Being led by the Spirit of God, we must of necessity desire only the things which are according to His will. If we have a thought to pray for something which is not in His will, we will find that when we submit to the leading of the Spirit we will not persist in praying for it, but will eventually cease to desire it, and, as is often the case, will find ourselves praying fervently for something which is contrary to our first thought. Why? Because "the Spirit maketh intercession . . . according to the will of God."

Let us cut short the discussion by coming to the conclusion that our praying must be according to the will of God and that the Spirit of God will lead us into that will.

No doubt many of our readers will want something more specific, and we deem it proper to mention many things which it is His will for us to pray for.

Salvation is the greatest and most important subject for prayer. It is always in order to pray for pardon if one is under condemnation. "God . . . commandeth all men everywhere to repent," and definitely promises pardon. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," and, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us."

Reader, if you are not now a child of God, the only possible way out is to begin to confess and pray for pardon. Begin now, ere the opportunity for prayer be past. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." Some of God's children may wonder if they should pray for the salvation of their unsaved loved ones. Certainly. Make it a constant subject of prayer, but do it intelligently, and according to the will of God. You say, "Surely it is the will of God that they be saved, and so if I pray for that end I must be praying according to the will of God." Indeed so, but how does God will for them to be saved? Against their
wills? Peter says of the Lord that He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). So, while God wills the salvation of your unsaved loved ones, He wills it to come to pass by the way of repentance, and repentance follows conviction for sin, and conviction for sin follows a special operation of the Spirit of God upon the mind and heart of the sinner. Rather than pray, "Lord, save my brother," should I pray, "Lord, show my brother his sins; show him the result of sin; make him feel that he is a sinner against God, and that he is now under condemnation, which, if not removed, will doom him to everlasting torment."

The most merciful thing God can do for a sinner is to make him miserable on account of his sins. In the very nature of the case, God cannot save a man against his will. Hence, the logical way is to make him so miserable that he will desire to repent, and repenting he will desire pardon, and desiring pardon he will call upon God for forgiveness, and "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

As a necessary part of salvation it is always in order to pray for sanctification if you are a child of God. Some Christians seem to question as to whether they have a right to pray for sanctification. God said, "Be ye holy" (Leviticus 20:7). Then it must be His will that I should pray for the fulfillment of His command. Jesus, when He prayed for His disciples, prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth," and also said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" (John 17:20). Surely you can ask your Father for that for which Jesus prayed, and for which He gave Himself, for "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it."

To settle the whole question the Word says, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (I Thessalonians 4:3). If then it be His will, and I need it, and want it, and I am led by His Spirit, I will be led to pray for it.

He wills that I should holy be.  
What can withstand His will?  
The counsel of His love in me  
He surely will fulfill.

Yes, you may pray for the sanctification of others. Jesus set the example, and Paul said of the Thessalonians, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thessalonians 5:23).

In praying for spiritual benefits we should pray for others beside ourselves or our immediate loved ones. We should pray for the heathen world: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."
It is natural for a Christian to think of the less favored ones, and as he thinks of the wondrous love of God and the matchless grace of Christ as manifested toward him, his heart will be moved with pity for those who never heard of Jesus and His love. This feeling of sympathy will cause him to pray for the heathen. Someone may ask, "Is there no chance for the heathen to be saved without my prayers and efforts?" We once heard Bishop William Taylor answer that question by saying: "That is not the question at all. The question is, Can I be saved if I do not pray and work for their salvation?" It ought to be a source of holy pleasure to us to know that God, our Father, will permit us to help in such a glorious work. There is a verse of poetry on "love" which so aptly illustrates the point in question that we quote it here:

Dig channels for the streams of love,
Where they may broadly run,
And love has overflowing streams
To fill them every one.
But if at any time thou cease
Such channels to provide,
The very founts of love to Thee
Will soon be parched and dried.
For thou must share if thou wouldst keep
That good thing from above;
Ceasing to share we cease to have--
Such is the law of love.

We should pray for the church, which is the body of Christ. After instructing the Ephesians to put on the whole armor of God, Paul says, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

Our most constant prayer should be for a great work of grace in our own hearts, in the church, and then on to the world of unsaved. God expects to bless the world through us, and we are to pray for the manifestation of divine power in and through the church.

We should pray especially for those who preach the Word. Be he ever so holy and ever so gifted, a minister of Christ needs the constant prayers of his people. Not only while he is preaching should we pray fervently for him, but constantly that the power of God may be visited upon the people through his ministry. It is said of a once popular minister that he gradually lost his influence and his congregation. The blame was laid entirely upon him. Some of his church officials went to talk with him on the subject. He replied: "I am quite sensible of all you say; for I feel it to be true; and the reason of it is, I have lost my prayer book." He explained: "Once my preaching was acceptable; many were edified by it, and numbers were added to the church, which was then in a prosperous state. But we were then a praying people. Many joined in prayer that my preaching might be blessed to the conversion of
sinners and to the edification of saints. This, by the blessing of God, made us prosper. Prayer was restrained, and the present condition of things followed. Let us return to the same means and the same results may be expected."

Some Christians are deprived of a large part of their inheritance because of a false idea that God is not concerned about their temporal needs. Jesus said, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." If God notes the sparrow's fall, and is conscious of any harm that may befall even a hair of your head, can you think of any of your affairs which are too small for His notice?

Tell Jesus when the burden seems too great for you to bear; Go lay it at the feet of Christ and know that He will care. And tell Him all the little things that come to cloud your way, The puzzles and perplexities that trouble you today.

There are so many things which are proper subjects of prayer that it is impossible to mention them all. It is safe to say that there is nothing too small to take to God if it is large enough to concern one of His children.

There are a number of temporal things we will mention specifically. We will begin at the commencement of active life.

In choosing your lifework you should make it a special matter of prayer, and enter upon no work without the assurance of God's favor and blessing. A path may look ever so rosy, but without your Father's blessing it will be nothing but thorns. You had better be poor and unnoticed in the world and have the favor of God than to be rich and honored and without His smile.

Young people are apt to think that they are obliged to marry one whom they may happen to fall in love with. If so, be sure not to happen to fall in love with anyone. Make it a subject of prayer, and ask God for His guidance and blessing. Read in the twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis the beautiful story of how God chose a wife for Isaac, and then pray for His direction in seeking your own companion.

In carrying on business, we should make the Lord our Chief Counselor, and talk with Him about every move we make. We should not desire success unless it can come by doing as He wills. At the same time we should feel assured that He knows and cares about our daily burdens. When Jesus walked the shores of Galilee, He was interested in the success of His disciples who had toiled all night and caught nothing. He directed them to success after their fruitless efforts. Is He not just as much interested in you as He was in Peter and John? Is it any harder for Him to understand your needs than it was to know that His fishermen disciples needed help? If you belong to Him you can claim His help whether you build a ship or make a shoe, whether you build a railroad or make a path in the wilderness.
Whether you build one story beehives or ten-story buildings, you need His blessing and care.

If your calling is one which depends upon your brain and skill, you have all the more need of His help. He can sharpen your wits and guide your skill and make you a blessing if you pray.

In supplying temporal needs God will often interpose in a marvelous way to help one of His children who has reached his extremity. It is just as easy for Him to make oil today as it was in the days of Elisha. He filled the widow’s borrowed vessels with oil. He still owns the brooks and the ravens, and His ear is open to your cry. It is a long time since He fed His people with manna, but He could feed one person or the world’s teeming millions on manna for a day or a thousand years if it was needed. His resources are inexhaustible; but what about your need and your faith?

It is perfectly in order to pray for God’s protection when we are to go on a journey or have to encounter any danger or risk. Thousands of instances could be given where God has miraculously preserved the lives of His servants who trusted Him. It is not likely that one who is in the habit of praying will forget to pray when in danger. It is well for us to remember that every hour we need the protection of God. Unseen danger is everywhere present. If we constantly commit ourselves to Him in trustful prayer, we need not fear the sudden calamity.

Shall we pray for the healing of the sick? Certainly. Nothing could be a more proper subject for prayer. If we were writing a book on healing, we would say many things which we cannot say here. It is no doubt well to present only a few important points relative to healing. Yes, pray for your sick ones, or for yourself, and trust God for healing; but don’t testify that you are healed when you are sick. If God has healed you, you are healed. We read in the Word where, when the lame man was healed, he leaped and praised God. It was not difficult to convince the people that he was healed. Also in the case of the man who was born blind, the Jews did not believe he was the man who had been born blind until they had called his parents and heard their testimony. Why did they not believe? Because there was no trace of the blindness left in the man who had been born blind. If you are still walking with crutches or cannot yet see or are being consumed with a burning fever, don’t tell folks that you are healed, for they will not believe you. One says, “Do we not have to believe before we are healed?” Certainly, but faith brings the healing, and the absence of the disease will corroborate our testimony that we are healed.

If you pray for healing and the Holy Ghost makes intercession for you according to the will of God, there will be no trouble about the faith or the healing. On the other hand, if you pray for healing and the Spirit does not help you to believe and you are not healed, you should neither cast away your confidence in God nor conclude that you have lost His favor.
Paul sought the Lord for relief from his thorn in the flesh (undoubtedly some bodily affliction), and the Lord saw fit to give him grace to bear it rather than to heal him. Paul continued to testify to the grace of God, and was undoubtedly a holy man.

On all these lines there are some underlying principles which it is well to remember. We need not expect the Lord to do anything for us, in answer to prayer, which we can readily do for ourselves. No doubt you have heard of the man who at family worship prayed for a poor widow that she might have food provided. After rising from prayer, his son said, "Father, if I had as much wheat in my barn and as many potatoes in my cellar as you have, I would answer that prayer myself." Is it not quite possible that we often ask the Lord to do something when, if we would listen closely to the Spirit's voice, He is asking us to do the thing ourselves? Surely we should pray about everything, but be careful not to get our work and the Lord's work mixed.

It would not look well to kneel under the shade and ask the Lord for a good crop of corn, and instead of working at your job, trust Him for the corn and let the weeds destroy the corn. Do you believe you would get the corn? If you have health and strength, and there is a job at which you can work, do you think the Lord will send you money in answer to prayer while you fold your arms and loaf?

If you break your leg, don't neglect it and ask the Lord to heal it. Long ago the Lord made provision for broken legs. You will be wiser if you have it set and put in splints while it knits according to God's plan. If your child swallows poison, don't stand idly by and pray the Lord to save it. Get a stomach pump or an emetic or antidote. Pray God to give you sense and gumption enough to do something.

Pray, brother, pray; but don't neglect the planting of your corn. Pray, good sister; but at the same time put yeast in your dough -- it will make better bread.

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

-- James 5:18

* * * * * * *

08 -- HINDRANCES TO PRAYER

What various hindrances we meet
In coming to a mercy seat!
Yet who that knows the worth of prayer
But wishes to be often there?
Prayer makes the darkened clouds withdraw;
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw,
Gives exercise to faith and love;
Brings every blessing from above.

Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;
Prayer keeps the Christian's armor bright,
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.

While Moses stood with arms spread wide,
Success was found on Israel's side;
But when through weariness they failed,
That moment Amalek prevailed.

Have you no words? Ah, think again.
Words flow apace when you complain,
And fill your fellow creature's ear
With the sad tale of all your care.

Were half the breath thus vainly spent
To heaven in supplication sent,
Our cheerful song would oftener be,
"Hear what the Lord has done for me!"

-- William Cowper

*     *     *

Are there any real hindrances to prayer? If so, what are they, and how may they be overcome? The easiest way to answer the first question is by asking another: Did you in the beginning, or do you now, find it easy to do as much praying as a real Christian ought?

If a time is set to go apart from the world to pray, there will be numerous duties and cares which will seem to center on the time you have set for prayer. Many of these things will be urgent and necessary, and sometimes it will be hard to determine just what to do and just what to leave. At times there will be such responsibilities upon you in the care of the sick or some other necessary good work that it will seem to be impossible to get away from it.

Happy your heart if all the hindrances to prayer are on the outside. The most serious hindrances are those which are within your own soul. The outside hindrances can only control the body and surround you with obstacles, but if the heart be really intent on prayer it will pray though it must do so in the midst of a
babel. "Where there is a will there is a way," is often quoted. We might say in line with that saying, where there is a desire there will be a wilt.

Jesus said, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray." Does a hungry child have any trouble about asking for bread? Do pleasure-loving worldlings complain about the time it takes to seek the pleasures for which they long? When a prospector thinks he knows where there is gold, does he have any trouble spurring himself to active endeavor? We might mention many similes, and present a variety of hindrances to prayer. We feel that most people will concur with us in naming three chief hindrances to prayer. We refer now to the inward hindrances: indifference, guilt, and carnal nature.

Indifference may be occasioned by many things, but it is a mark of unbelief and soul disease. Healthy people are not reluctant to go to the table at mealt ime. They have a natural appetite for food. If they should find no desire for food, there would be a sense of alarm at once. It is certainly as foreign to the nature of a Christian to be indifferent to spiritual food as it is unnatural for one to be without appetite.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, The Christian's native air.

A child is born with an appetite for food, and will have that appetite as long as it lives in health. A Christian is born with the appetite for God and spiritual things, and will retain that appetite as long as the soul lives. To note a growing indifference and a lack of desire for spiritual things is to mark the signs of spiritual death, and ought to cause alarm to any soul. Imagine a man indifferent to fresh air, good water, and wholesome food. Oh, that we were as much concerned about our souls as we are for these perishing houses of clay! Unbelief must lie at the bottom of indifference, for how can one who really believes God's Word be indifferent to his soul's welfare?

When a pestilence is abroad in the land; what a cry there is for physicians and nurses! If the people who are indifferent and prayerless would realize that they are sick unto death, what a cry for help would go up to the Great Physician! Thank God! He turns no one away, and as one has said, "He cures the incurable and takes no pay." There is a balm in Gilead, and a fountain opened to the house of David for sin and for uncleanness.

Guilt is an effectual barrier to prayer. If the soul is conscious of having sinned against God, it cannot pray until the sin is confessed and condemnation removed. How we dislike to meet those whom we have injured! We would rather go without than to ask a favor of them. So a soul which has sinned against God naturally thinks God hates it, or has good reason for not blessing it. Knowing that sin brings spiritual death and bars us from the presence of God, how ready we
should be to seek forgiveness for every sin immediately! That awful notion that we
must sin every day is responsible for much of the lack of prayer.

The carnal nature "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." It
is the root of bitterness which causes the unbelief and consequent indifference, and
also is the cause of the sins the guilt of which keeps us away from God. Surely then
all hindrances to prayer center in this one awful principle. No wonder that Paul cried
out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Dear soul, if there is something within you which constantly draws you away
from God, and makes you dislike real communion with God, and causes you to
stumble continually, we want to remind you that "for this purpose the Son of God
was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." He can do it and will
do it whenever you will submit to Him in faith for the work.

Hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Devote yourself wholly and entirely
to God for time and eternity. Ask Him in faith to cleanse your heart from inbred sin
and fill you with the Holy Ghost. This is the only safe course, and it will remove the
chief hindrances to prayer.

*     *     *     *     *     *     *

09 -- THE INFLUENCES OF PRAYER

My God, is any hour so sweet
From blush of morn to evening star
As that which calls me to Thy feet,
The hour of prayer?

Blest is that tranquil hour of morn,
And blest that solemn hour of eve,
When, on the wings of prayer up-borne,
The world I leave.

No words can tell what sweet relief
Here for my every want I find;
What strength for warfare, balm for grief,
What peace of mind.

Hushed is each doubt, gone every fear;
My spirit seems in heaven to stay,
And e'en the penitential tear
Is wiped away.

Lord, till I reach that blissful shore,
No privilege so dear shall be
As thus my inmost soul to pour
In prayer to Thee.

-- Charlotte Elliott

*     *     *

Aside from the direct answers to prayer, its indirect influence is worth all the time and effort spent in praying.

In many lines of manufacturing there are useful and valuable articles produced out of material which would otherwise be a waste in the process of the original manufacture. These are known as by-products. In some instances it would be worthwhile to run the factory for the profit on the by-product, even though nothing be made on the main product.

The indirect influence of prayer is a by-product of the prayer factory. There is one great difference between this and industrial concerns. While they have to construct machinery and use skill in making the by-product, the by-product of prayer is a natural result which cannot be cut off or stopped. If the factory runs there is a byproduct, and its profits are sure.

We will first mention the effect on the individual who prays, and try to point out its beneficent influence. The very act and habit of prayer wield a powerful influence upon the life. In the First place, the act of really praying begets a spirit of humility. We cannot pray without feeling our dependence upon God. What a blessing it is to realize our worthlessness, and the all-sufficiency of God! Then realizing that I have been praying as an act of worship, I must live a life which is in keeping with prayer in order to maintain my self-respect.

Prayer will indirectly influence our affections and activities. If you are tempted to hate anyone, begin to pray for that one. Get in dead earnest about it, and ask the Lord to pour out His richest blessing upon the object of your temptation. If you do this heartily, you will find it next to impossible to hate the person. There is no patent on this remedy; try it.

If you really pray for the banishment of the saloon, you will not have much trouble about deciding how to vote. If you pray earnestly and constantly for missions, you will find ways and means to increase your missionary offering. To sum it up in a few words: You will naturally become interested in the subject of your prayers.

Prayer rests both soul and body. Who has not felt its gracious influence upon every part of his nature? After a day of toil and care how refreshing it is to betake yourself to the house of prayer and mingle your voice with others in a volume of prayer and praise! Or in the absence of such a privilege, to go alone and meditate
on the goodness and mercy of God and, looking away from all that would burden
the soul, to worship God! There are many sorts of cures recommended for the
nerves, but here is one which requires no trip to the drugstore nor a journey to
some distant spring.

It is said of Haydn, the composer, that he advocated this cure. He was once in
a company of distinguished persons when the conversation turned on the best
means of restoring mental energies when worn with excessive study. After others
had told how they sought relief they asked Haydn what he did. He told them that he
retired to his closet and engaged in prayer -- that nothing exerted on his mind a
more happy and efficacious influence than prayer.

In an old English work the following incident is related: "During the rebellion
in Ireland, in 1793, the rebels had long meditated an attack on the Moravian
settlement at Grace Hill, Wexford county. At length they put their threat into
execution, and a large body of them marched to the town. When they arrived there
they saw no one in the streets nor in the houses. The brethren had long expected
this attack, but, true to their Christian profession, they would not have recourse to
arms for their defense; they assembled in their chapel, and in solemn prayer
besought Him in whom they trusted to be their shield in the hour of danger. The
ruffian band, hitherto breathing nothing but destruction and slaughter, were
astonished at this novel sight: where they expected armed hands, they saw them
clasp in prayer, and the whole body of men bending before the Prince of Peace.
They heard the prayer for protection, the request for mercy to be extended to their
murderers, and the song of praise and confidence in the promise of the Lord. They
beheld all in silence; they were unable to raise a hand against them, and after
having for a night and a day lingered about, they marched away without having
injured a single person, or stolen a loaf of bread. This singular mark of protection of
heaven induced the inhabitants of the neighborhood to bring their goods and ask
for the protection of these Christians."

Does prayer influence others? Yes; and in a wonderful manner. None but a
hardened wretch can act the part of a sinner when in the presence of one who is
known to be in the habit of prayer. Cowper says:

And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.

Even so, and others beside Satan tremble when they know that some saint of God
is praying. That man is dead indeed to all spiritual things who can be unmoved
when he knows that some saint of God is praying for him. And if that saint is
praying for God to arrest him in his course, well may he tremble.

No doubt many will recall the story of George Washington's prayer at the time
when things looked dark for his armies. A British officer is said to have wandered
near the place where Washington was praying. After hearing the prayer he went
back to his quarters and said, "There is no use in continuing the war; we will never conquer men who pray like that."

We heard of a woman who, though weak and frail, was a woman of prayer and endeavor. She lived in a godless community, but did her best to hold up the banner of the Cross. She very much desired to have a Sunday school but was denied the use of the schoolhouse, which was the only appropriate place for it. The school directors left the decision in the matter to one of their number who was a godless man. He refused the woman again and again. Finally he said to her, "You would just as well stop bothering me about it, for I will never give you the key to the schoolhouse." She quietly replied: "Oh, yes, I am coming again, for I fully expect to get the key. I have been praying about it, and I am going to keep on: for I have noticed that when I keep on praying something must give way." He looked at her in silence for a moment; then his face turned pale, and he reached in his pocket and brought out the key and handed it to the woman. No doubt the thought struck him that, if something must give way, what would that something be? Evidently he had, at some time in his life, come in contact with the result of prayer.

We could multiply these instances till they would fill a volume, but will give but one more. In the year 1825, on the island of Islay, there was a boy of fourteen years who exhibited an intimate acquaintance with the leading doctrines of Christianity. He was in the habit of searching the Scriptures daily, and was frequently observed by his neighbors to retire to lonely places for meditation and prayer. On one occasion a thoughtless man contrived, without being perceived, to follow him, and overheard him pray. He was struck with astonishment at the simple yet elevated language used; he burst into tears, and afterwards acknowledged that he never knew what it was to be humbled under a sense of his own sinfulness until he heard that boy pray by the side of a wall.

You who have had praying fathers and mothers need no words to convince you that there is a lasting influence from the habit of prayer.

This earth is not the only place where the influence of prayer is felt. Satan and his host know something of what prayer can accomplish. Surely there is a commotion among his forces when a church is of one mind and prays for a revival as one man. And who better than Satan knows that a man who prays in faith brings things to pass?

As for the influence of prayer in heaven, that is illustrated by the case of Cornelius, the centurion. It was said of him that he prayed to God always. That this commanded attention in heaven is shown by the words of the angel who said unto him, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God."

Keep praying, reader; God will take note of your prayers and their influence will be felt around you.
10 -- FAITH EXPECTS ANSWERS

In some way or other the Lord will provide.
It may not be my way, it may not be thy way,
And yet in His own way the Lord will provide.

At some time or other the Lord will provide.
It may not be my time, it may not be thy time,
And yet in His own time the Lord will provide.

Despond, then, no longer; the Lord will provide.
And this be thy token -- no word He hath spoken
Was ever yet broken. The Lord will provide.

March on, then, right boldly; the sea shall divide;
The pathway made glorious, with shoutings victorious,
We'll join in the chorus, "The Lord will provide."

-- Mary Ann W. Cook

You can readily determine whether or not you are praying in faith by the preparations you are making to receive the answer to your prayer. A striking illustration of this point is found in an incident which happened at sea. A ship was becalmed in the neighborhood of a cannibal island. It was slowly but surely drifting ashore and the cannibals were awaiting their prize. A well-known Christian man was aboard and the captain told him that unless they could have wind to drive them off the shore all would be lost, and besought him to pray for wind. To this request he said he would agree upon one condition. The captain asked him to name that condition. It was that all sails should be set in anticipation of the answer. The captain finally agreed and ordered all hands aloft to unfurl the sails, and the intercessor went to his stateroom to pray for wind. Presently the captain knocked at his door and inquired if he was still praying for wind. Upon being told that he was, the captain cried, "Do stop, for we have more wind than we can manage."

The principle underlying the act of this man of God should govern our action. If we really believe God will answer our prayers we will set our sails in preparation.
When the two blind men followed Jesus crying for help, He said, "Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:28-29). It is to be feared that the Lord would not do much for some of us if He blessed us only according to our faith. How merciful and gracious He is to do more than we dare ask Him!

Brother, sister, your own faith will be strengthened and you will put God to a test if you prepare to receive the answer to your prayer. When Elijah talked with Ahab he did not express an opinion that it would not rain for a while. He boldly said, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." What a rash statement to make! No, no, Elijah had faith and to him what faith saw was just as real as though it had already come to pass.

You have some faith but perhaps have neglected it. Begin to exercise it and cultivate it. It will grow. Honor God by expecting answers to your prayers.

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

-- John 15:7

11 -- GOD ANSWERS PRAYER

There is an eye that never sleeps Beneath the wing of night; There is an ear that never shuts When sink the beams of light.

There is an arm that never tires When human strength gives way; There is a love that never fails When earthly loves decay.

That eye is fixed on seraph throngs; That arm upholds the sky; That ear is filled with angel songs; That love is throned on high.

But there's a power which man can wield, When mortal aid is vain,
That eye, that arm, that love to reach,  
That listening ear to gain.

That power is prayer, which soars on high,  
Through Jesus, to the throne,  
And moves the hand which moves the world,  
To bring salvation down.

-- John A. Wallace

*     *     *

Yes, God, the Maker of the universe, before whom all the hosts of heaven bow, hears the faintest cry of the weakest mortal, and He answers prayer!

We might present an imposing array of scripture promises to prove that God answers prayer. If you have faith in God, you already believe it. We desire to point to a few facts which demonstrate that God does answer prayer.

We are told in the Scriptures that "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain." Most of us are apt to regard the men and women of whom the Bible speaks as being of a different order of beings from us. We quote the above passage of scripture to show that such an idea is a mistake. If Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, then he had no advantage over us in the matter of prayer. We read that God is no respecter of persons, and hence was not any more ready to hear the men of old than He is now to hear you.

In the matter of personal salvation, you know that God answers prayer, as He has heard and answered for you. As to prayer for others, it has been demonstrated again and again that people are generally saved through the agency of someone's prayers. There is an incident related of a church where a revival broke out and a number of people were saved without any apparent effort on the part of the church. A short time afterwards an invalid woman who had been the most devout person in the community died. After her death a book was found hidden in her bed, in which was written her prayer list, containing the names of the persons for whom she was in the habit of praying. On this list was found the name of every person who had been saved during the revival. It was no longer a mystery as to the source of the revival. God will hear you in behalf of your loved ones if you are persistent in prayer, but He will not hear you unless you pray.

As to prayer for temporal things, the striking instances of direct answer to prayer are numerous, both in the Bible and all down through human history.
When King Hezekiah was sick unto death, he prayed to God and was healed, and had fifteen years added unto his life. There is no room for doubt as to the genuineness of both the sickness and the cure. God had sent His prophet unto Hezekiah to tell him that his sickness was unto death. Before the prophet got away from the place, God heard Hezekiah's prayer, and told the prophet to go back and tell him that he would be healed. Read the whole account in the twentieth chapter of II Kings. It is interesting to note that even in this remarkable case, where God had definitely answered prayer and given His word for the healing, the prophet Isaiah told them to lay a lump of figs on the boil which was killing Hezekiah, and the Word says, "They took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered." We are constrained to call special attention to this, as it may be helpful to some soul who is tempted to fanaticism. Put it down in your book of remembrance that God may or may not work through human agency. Whether He does or does not, it in no wise detracts from His glory nor diminishes His power. In praying for healing, as well as for any other temporal blessing, you will not get very far unless you are willing to receive the desired blessing in any way or through any agency by which God may choose to send it. In addition to the case of Hezekiah's healing there are many cases in the present day. Notwithstanding the many who say they are healed when they are not, God does heal people now in answer to prayer.

As a remarkable and direct answer to prayer we give the account of the healing of Miss Eula Wilson, a student in Illinois Holiness University. The account is written by one of the teachers and is as follows:

She had been confined to her bed fifteen weeks and six days, during which time she had had five awful abscesses in her right side. For four days in the early part of January her jaws were completely locked; for nine weeks she had been totally blind, and almost deaf in one ear, had lain in one position for weeks, not able to raise her head, nor could she be turned; had been unable to retain either solid food or water since Christmas. For two whole weeks she was unable to retain nourishment of any kind. Her side and back were so black-spotted that it seemed her flesh must be decaying.

Throughout her entire sickness, Miss Wilson gave evidence of an unusual faith in God and even when others believed she was dying and anxiously bent over her that they might hear her last words, she would gaspingly say "I am still holding on; I will get well." Her smiling face, cheerful manners, untiring patience, and never wavering faith in God, whom she believed would spare her life to do a work He had laid on her heart, were the source of great encouragement to God's children and of conviction to the unsaved and unsanctified who ministered to her needs. The time of prayer, the Word of God, and the songs of Zion were her special delight through all her intense suffering.

During the week previous to her healing, Miss Wilson was much worse in body and passed through a severe spiritual test. God gave her wonderful victory in her soul, and from that time she began to talk of her complete healing. As is usual
when God has something in store for one of His children, the enemy tried hard to defeat her. She kept praying for herself, but felt that in accordance with James 5:14 she should call others in to pray with her. This she did near midnight of March 1, and after those called had each engaged in audible prayer, she continued to pray. The devil kept saying, "Be careful about using all your strength; you know your heart is weak." It did seem that her strength was almost gone, but with each uttered cry to God, He gave strength for another.

Continuing to call upon God, she suddenly received the assurance that her cries were heard and the desire of her heart granted. Before even opening her eyes, for she had been unable to open her lids for weeks, she exclaimed, "Oh, I can see!" and raised herself in bed. They gave her the Bible, carelessly opened, and she read the first verse of the 108th psalm: "O God, my heart is fixed." Then with shouts of praise and victory unto God, who had so marvelously healed her body, she stepped out of her room and down the long hall, going first to the room of her friend, the nurse, who had retired for the night for some needed rest. Nearly every student and teacher and many citizens were awakened and hastened to view the work of God's hands. Oh, what glory filled the atmosphere! How God's presence was felt as His children joined in shouts and songs of praise to Him for this wonderful manifestation of His power and love!

Approaching the building, one was reminded of God's admonition to Moses: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

The physicians had not been to see Miss Wilson for eight weeks. Through curiosity or otherwise, Dr. Henshaw, of Ridge Farm, came on Sunday afternoon and after a thorough examination pronounced her perfectly sound in body and mind. The side was normal in every respect, the swelling all gone, not a semblance of the black spots left. Thank God!

When Paul and Silas were in jail they needed help. Instead of circulating a petition for their release, they sent one up to headquarters and followed it with a song of praise for the coming blessing. The Lord saw fit to shake the jail open with an earthquake in answer to the prayer of His servants. He is just the same today, and will interpose on behalf of those who are in distress. Some think there are no miracles today. It depends upon what you regard as a miracle. All the miracles are not wrought on wood or stone. It is harder to make a man than to build a jail and it is much harder to move one. If the Lord moves men in a wonderful way in order to get one of His servants out of jail in answer to prayer, who shall say that it is not a miracle of grace?

We have in mind a case which in its way was just as wonderful as the deliverance of Paul and Silas. A sister who is well known to us was in charge of a rescue home in a city where interested parties had secured the passage of an
ordinance prohibiting the establishing of such an institution within a certain distance of a residence (the distance was so great as to make it next to impossible to maintain such a place in the city).

According to the law she was subject to a fine of from fifty to three hundred dollars a day for every day. Through the instrumentality of a man who lived near she was arrested and brought into court to be tried. The law was plain in imposing the fine and the evidence was clear that she was maintaining the home. Feeling the need for special help which it seemed that no human arm could give, she and the friends made special prayer to God for deliverance. At the hearing the witnesses insisted that the place had no right to exist. The judge asked what kind of work she was engaged in and on being told he further asked if any who had been saved by the home were in court. One was there and after observing her the judge asked the matron to tell what kind of people she took in and what they were after being in the home. After hearing this he said: "The city is full of meanness and it looks like the people could stand some good. The case is dismissed."

As an illustration of definite and immediate answer to prayer in everyday life we give the following incident in the life of a friend. He was working in the field with a span of valuable mules hitched to a Champion self-rake reaper. He started the team a little to see if the machine was in order. The mules became frightened at the flails as they began to revolve. Our friend had slipped off the seat behind the machine and the mules ran at full gallop across the field. He was helpless to stop them and it looked like destruction for the team and machine. In his distress he closed his eyes and cried to God and asked Him definitely to stop the mules. Faith took hold and God answered prayer. When he opened his eyes the mules were quietly walking towards him.

The following was related in our hearing by a good Christian brother: He was sitting at home in his room when it seemed that a voice said to him to go and give Brother G. five dollars. He thought that was strange, but the impression was so strong that he went immediately. When he reached the house of the brother, who was a man of God, he found him and his family on their knees praying for help, as they had reached their extremity, which proved to be God's opportunity.

One ought not to wait until he gets into a desperate strait before he begins to pray, but if he does get into such a place he ought to pray, no matter what brought him there. The Lord can answer a prayer which comes from the most unheard-of place imaginable. As an example of this, look at Jonah. He disobeyed God and got into trouble. Things were getting desperate when he was thrown overboard into the sea. The Book says, "Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah." If you disobey God and get into trouble, it is as likely as not that the trouble is God's fish which He has prepared to swallow you. If you are inclined to wander from God, you will find that trouble is your best friend. When you get into it, and on the flat of your back, there is some hope for you. There is only one way you can look and that is up, and that is where your help will come from. Think of Jonah,
away down in the sea, in the belly of a fish! If ever a fellow got into a hopeless place, it was Jonah. A person is never beyond hope as long as he is willing to cry to God. Jonah could not send for the pastor or the neighbors. He could not cry around and tell how he had been abused. There was only one thing he could do, and he had sense enough to do that. Read the record: "Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish’s belly . . . . And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." It seems that the Lord's fish was pretty well trained, and by this time Jonah was improving, for the record now says that "the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time" and "Jonah arose, and went."

Certainly, brother, God answers prayer, no matter whether it starts from the bottom of the ocean or the top of a mountain. He knows just when to answer prayer. The child of a pious widow once said, "God always waits until we get to the bottom of the flour barrel, and then He answers our prayer." It is indeed so. He knows just when to answer prayer. He left Jonah until he got sick enough to be obedient, and He may do the same by you. Hold on to God and pray until you hear from heaven -- GOD ANSWERS PRAYER.

*     *     *

SWEET HOUR OF PRAYER

Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer,
That calls me from a world of care
And bids me at my Father's throne
Make all my wants and wishes known!
In seasons of distress and grief
My soul has often found relief,
And oft escaped the tempter's snare
By thy return, sweet hour of prayer.

Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer,
Thy wings shall my petition bear
To Him whose truth and faithfulness
Engage the waiting soul to bless;
And since He bids me seek His face,
Believe His Word, and trust His grace,
I'll cast on Him my ev'ry care,
And wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer.

Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer,
May I thy consolation share,
Till from Mount Pisgah's lofty height
I view my home and take my flight.
This robe of flesh I'll drop, and rise
To seize the everlasting prize;
And shout while passing through the air,
"Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer."

-- William W. Walford

* * * * * * *

THE END