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MOUNTAIN-TOP EXPERIENCE

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"The Wesleyan Hour" Radio Programs
And Author Of
"Radio Messages"

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ABOUT THE BOOKLET

Eighteen brief gospel sermons uncompromisingly presented -- "The Ministry Of Prayer" --
Ten Sunday Morning Sermons -- Devotional And Homiletical -- "Rich, fresh, inspiring. Covers
every phase of the prayer life." Dr. W. C. McIntire said, "It is really a good treatment on the
subject." Rev. F. Lincicome said, "I read it with profit to my own soul."

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DEDICATION

This Book Is
Lovingly Dedicated
To
My Wife And Sons
And To

My Christian Friends Everywhere.

"But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6:33.

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INTRODUCTION

This is an age of book making: Solomon, thousands of years ago said, "Of making many books there is no end." Good books can be your best friends.

Our friend and brother, Rev. A. J. Baughey has given us a small book of sermons which quiver with life. You can feel the heart-throbs as you read these messages. They are food and fire to the soul. Rev. Baughey is a great preacher and through his radio messages reaches tens of thousands of souls.

May the Holy Spirit seal these truths and give wings to them in printed form to arouse and quicken God's people to a deeper life of devotion.

Rev. J. M. Hames.

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01 -- THE BEATITUDES

"And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him: And He opened His mouth, and taught them saying. Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice,

and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matt. 5:1-12.

Some scholars think that the Sermon on the Mount as recorded by Matthew, is greatly abridged, but undoubtedly he gives us every vital point of Jesus' message for the text as we have it includes every essential truth in the "sound doctrine" of God's Word, and sets forth the highest official dictum on Christian character and conduct. A very interesting contrast is also made between Old and New Testament standards of righteousness. A universal practice of these teachings of Jesus would certainly result in world-wide "peace on earth." Although we will have to wait for world-wide peace until Christ's glorious millennial reign, Rev. 20:1-16, personal peace can be a blessed reality in the heart and life of every man who will earnestly forsake sin, and follow Jesus in newness of life.

As an introduction to this portion of our Saviour's message, we quote a statement by John Wesley, "Observe the benevolent condescension of our Lord. He seems, as it were, to lay aside His supreme authority as our Legislator, that He may better act the part of our Friend and Saviour. Instead of using the lofty style, in positive commands, He, in a more gentle and engaging way, indicates His will and our duty, by pronouncing those 'blessed' who comply with it."

* * *

1. Blessed Are The Poor In Spirit.

One good man said, "Perfect humility is the cornerstone of Christian perfection." The first step to Christian holiness is the inner sensibility of one's spiritual poverty. This must be deep and genuine. When the saintly John Fletcher was asked, "What is the most important Christian grace?" he replied, "Humility." Then he was asked, "What is next?," to which he said "Humility"; and upon being asked the third time he replied, "Humility."

We believe "the poor in spirit," are they who are unfeignedly penitent, who, being fully convinced of their sinful state by nature, are deeply sensible of their guilt and helplessness. This realization causes them to cry out for "redemption through Jesus' blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

Upon those who have this inner humility, Jesus pronounces a blessing saying, "theirs is the kingdom of heaven." A present inward kingdom composed of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; and also the eternal kingdom, if they continue faithful and true unto the end."

* * *

2. Blessed Are They That Mourn.

It is interesting to note the logical connection between these beatitudes. "Mourning" follows as a result of one feeling his spiritual poverty, as he seeks after God's spiritual riches. He becomes "steadily and habitually serious" in pursuit of the divine riches which are so graciously and freely promised. A realization of one's "poverty of spirit" will cause a sincere person to

"mourn," which always prepares the way for the pronounced blessing, "they shall be comforted." This is the "comfort" of the Holy Ghost. "True joy is the fruit of sorrow." Solomon declared, "The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning," and, "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting." Isaiah declared that Jesus would "comfort all that mourn... give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, (and) the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness... that He might be glorified."

* * *

3. Blessed Are The Meek.

The word "meek" comes from an old Anglo-Saxon word, "meca," which means, "companion" and "equal." The humble soul having mourned over his spiritual poverty and been accepted by the Saviour into His heavenly kingdom, very meekly becomes a "brother and companion," as was Epaphroditus to Paul; or a "brother and companion," as John introduced himself in writing to the seven churches in Asia.

True meekness is a gentle and quiet spirit, the opposite of pride or assertiveness. Paul exhorted the Philippian brethren saying, "let each esteem the other better than themselves." Peter speaks of the "holy women who trusted in God," and possessed a "meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

The promised blessing to the "meek" is, "they shall inherit the earth." World governments are now largely in the hands of ungodly men, but one day, not far hence, the whole earth will be "full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Satan will be bound for one thousand years, and the "meek" shall be "priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." See Rev. 20:1-6.

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4. Blessed Are They Which Hunger And Thirst After Righteousness.

This word "righteousness" is another word for "holiness." Notice the possible spiritual progress: from a deep conviction, and realization of one's "poverty of spirit," to a full restoration to the image of God in true holiness. Adam Clarke's comment is, "Strong intense desire after any object has been represented metaphorically by 'hunger and thirst'. 'Righteousness' here, is a full restoration to the image of God."

Notice the simple term or condition upon which our Lord offers to us the fullness of His righteousness. The soul must "hunger and thirst" after it. This singular desire must displace all others and take full possession. Such desire, when exercised by prayer will increase to such an extent as to bring the hungry soul to the place of full surrender to God. He will pay the price regardless the cost, and triumphantly surmount every obstacle, and will find that the divine resources are never exhausted. God requires this, and true it is that, God's requirements are met by His enablings.

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5. Blessed Are The Merciful.

Mercifulness is the natural fruit of God's "righteousness." When the heart is filled with divine love for God and our fellowmen, our lives will be distinguished by deeds of kindness, and acts of mercy which will do far more to prove our profession of faith as genuine, than a multiplicity of words, for love is the badge by which the true children of God are known everywhere. He who lacks this true spirit of mercifulness, can never hope to convince the world that he has the love of Christ abiding within.

"The King of love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am His
And He is mine forever."

The special blessing which Jesus pronounces upon the "merciful" is, "they shall obtain mercy." The irrevocable law of "reaping whatsoever you sow," works with respect to the good we do as well as the evil. A malignant act will be returned to the offender with malignance; and equally true, a "merciful" act will be graciously rewarded with "mercy," from both God and man. Certainly, God repays in manifold measures for the love and mercy we show to others. "Love, is the fulfilling of the law."

* * *

6. Blessed Are The Pure In Heart.

The climax of the Saviour's message is undoubtedly reached in the last verse of chapter 5 which reads, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." These words present a high challenge to every child of God, but having "hungered and thirsted after righteousness," and been made "pure in heart" by the blood of Jesus, through Faith in His Name, the Holy Spirit enables every trusting obedient soul to live "perfect" and well pleasing before God.

The Jewish religion consisted largely in outward washings and cleansings; on these grounds they expected to "see God," but Christ teaches us that it must be a matter of the heart. This teaching of Jesus was in opposition to the Pharisees, who affected outward purity while their hearts were full of corruption. Our Lord makes it plain and definite; there can be no scriptural hope of ever being with God without a purification of the heart from every vile affection and sinful desire. An early writer said, "He must be 'pure' who wishes to enjoy a proper view of a 'pure' Being." The "pure in heart" are those who are wholly sanctified; who love God with all their hearts, and their neighbor as themselves. To such the promise is, "they shall see God." Not here only, but also hereafter in Glory.

Adam Clarke says this is a Hebraism, which signifies to "possess God, enjoy His felicity; as seeing a thing, was used among the Hebrews for possessing it." He refers us to John 3:3 for an

example; "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The word "see" in this verse means to possess and enjoy the kingdom of God.

* * *

7. Blessed Are The Peacemakers.

Having a "pure heart" one becomes a "peacemaker" and acts as a ministering angel going about the home and the church making peace among people; as Dr. Godbey put it, "rising above partisan strife, shedding a benignant heavenly influence all around you." The thought here is of one who makes peace, rather than to simply keep peace. It is highly honorable, and very praiseworthy to keep peace in the family, or in the church, but to find those persons who are capable of making peace in the family or the church among friends and brethren, is something else, and of higher importance: certainly, this is even more honorable and praiseworthy. It takes no grace or right thinking to cause trouble, but it requires much of both mixed well with patience to be a "peacemaker."

The reward of a "peacemaker" is that "they shall be called the children of God." That is to say, they shall be acknowledged as such both by God and men. O, for millions more of such people, by whose lives sinners will be convinced that holiness is practical and works; they are "the children of God"!

* * *

8. Blessed Are They Which Are Persecuted.

Satan sees to it that any one who follows after "righteousness," will be "persecuted." It certainly is surprising that the righteous should suffer simply because they are godly, but such is the carnal enmity in the hearts of some unregenerate men toward all that is of God and goodness, that all who live godly in Christ Jesus "shall suffer persecution." 2 Tim. 3:12.

In our suffering, however, we should be careful and see to it that we are being "persecuted for righteousness' sake" and not because of things we could avoid or change for the better. Many people are made to suffer because of their unnecessary blunders, and often bring reproach on the cause of Christ as well. These things should be carefully avoided. Two things are essential to help overcome this and insure one against painful repetition of such mistakes: first, humble yourself and meekly apologize to whom it may be due; second, take the matter earnestly to God in prayer, asking Him to forgive you, and give you wisdom whereby you may avoid any such future actions. See James 1:5-6.

The promise to God's people who are "persecuted for righteousness' sake" is, "theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This means a spiritual kingdom; an inner Theocracy where Christ reigns on the throne of their hearts, directing their way to the kingdom above -- eternal with God.

* * *

9. Blessed Are They Who Are Reviled.

The "persecution" mentioned above includes all outward acts, all that hands can do against the child of God; being "reviled" refers to all the tongue, by evil speaking, can accomplish. Wesley said, they will "revile" you when present, and "say all manner of evil against you falsely" when you are absent.

Being "persecuted" and "reviled," and maliciously talked about has a very unnatural effect on the true child of God. It does not mean that he enjoys or solicits such, but the unnatural reaction is that he "rejoices, and is exceeding glad" to suffer for Jesus' sake, rather than get mad and return it as carnally minded men so often do.

There are at least two reasons for the "rejoicing" on the part of the Christian who has been "reviled" and "persecuted": first, because what was said about him was said "against him falsely for (Christ's) sake"; and, secondly, because Jesus tells him to "Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in Heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." They are made to realize that "persecution" is no new thing, and that "all who live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution" in one way or another. Let us all pray for needed grace to prove true to Jesus while in the tests, that we may thereby bring honor and praise to Him, for, "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good work." 2 Cor. 9:8.

"There is a meekness free from pride,
That feels no anger rise
At slights, or hate, or ridicule,
But counts the cross a prize."

* * * * *

02 -- THE COMPARABLE CHRISTIAN

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5:13-16.

In the above verses, Jesus sets forth three very interesting similitudes of a true child of God. The importance of each comparison, as associated with the welfare of the human race, and pertaining to the very existence of physical life, make them even more interesting, illustrious, and forceful.

* * *

1. Ye Are The Salt Of The Earth.

Without salt human life cannot be preserved. Equally important are the true saints of God; not the apostles only, nor ministers only, but all who are holy are "the salt of the earth."

Because of its quality and action, salt has always been associated with divine worship. In Leviticus 2:13 we read, "And every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offering; with all thine offerings, thou shalt offer salt." The word "salt" is used three times in this verse and is plainly understood to be indispensable in connection with the children of Israel's meat-offerings. In verse 11 you note that "No meat-offering, which ye shall bring unto the Lord, shall be made with leaven." "Salt" was the opposite of "leaven," for it preserved, thus signifying the purity and preservation necessary to the worship of God "in Spirit and in truth."

Salt has a two-fold action. It preserves as well as seasons. In his commentary Dr. W. B. Godbey tells us that "The salt in the ocean preserves it from putrefaction and stagnation. Consequently the ocean is the great conservator of atmospheric purity. Hence sea voyages always improve health. If the salt were not in the ocean, its waters would stagnate, generate malaria, which the winds would carry throughout all the continents and islands, rendering the atmosphere so pestilential as to be uninhabitable by man and beast; thus ultimating in the depopulation of the globe, and the destruction of all the air-breathing animals, turning the world into a boneyard. Hence the tremendous force of our Saviour's metaphor, involving the conclusion that if all the Christians were out of the world, the human race would be hopeless, as the inmates of hell, not ignoring the possibility of salvation, but the probability. The Christian religion is the salt which God uses to save the world. The Holy Ghost is the savour. Therefore when religion is without the Spirit, consisting only of the dead form, it is fit for nothing on the face of the earth except to make walks for the convenience for the multitudes traveling down to hell."

God's people, in their action as "salt," are preserving His standard of righteousness even in the face of appalling compromise and shameful lethargy. In scattered quarters of the globe, you will find small groups of "the true worshippers," who, in their action as salt, season the spiritual atmosphere of divine worship. These, however, are scarce, for we are well aware that deep piety and spiritual worship is practically relegated from many churches today which at one time flourished with spiritual beauty, life, power, and holy enthusiasm. "Ichabod" is written over the doorway, for "the glory is departed," and it is because "the salt has lost his savour."

In Judea can be found a place known as the Valley of Salt. One man describing it said, "Along on one side of the valley, toward Gibul, there is a small precipice, occasioned by the continual taking away of the salt; and, in this, you may see how the veins lie. I broke a piece of it, of which that part that was exposed to the rain, sun, and air, though it had the sparks and particles of salt, yet it had perfectly lost its savour: the inner part, which was connected to the rock, retained its savour, as I found by proof." This is comparable to the individual, whether preacher or layman, who has "lost" the Christ-life, the clear witness of the Spirit, yea, lost the holy heavenly unction, but still carries on with a mere profession, having the sparkle and glittering particles of the true wisdom, but sadly lacking the savour.

What are the consequences of losing the "savour"? Jesus said "it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." He makes a similar statement to the church of the Laodiceans: "... because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." In John 15 Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." This teaches the possibility of one being lost eternally, who had been a "branch" in the "true vine," but failed to "bear fruit," or failed to go through the "purging" process: consequently was "taken away," cast forth, withered, gathered by men, cast into the fire and burned." In Rev. 20:15 we read, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." This is the ultimate doom of all sinners and backsliders who refuse to repent and live godly in Christ Jesus.

* * *

2. Ye Are The Light Of The World.

In the physical realm, "light" is equally as important as salt. Light is a God-created blessing, indispensable to human life. When dense darkness covered the universe, God's Spirit moved upon the face of the waters, and the first recorded words of God in Genesis 1:3, were "Let there be light: and there was light." Furthermore, God divided "the light from the darkness." This is significant. In John 3:19-21 we read, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

The Holy Ghost revealed unto Simeon, a just and devout man in Jerusalem, that he would live to see "the Lord's Christ." Then he came by the Spirit into the temple and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, Simeon took him in his arms, blessing God and saying, "Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel." This is the "light" of which John spake, that "is come into the world."

In John 15 Jesus symbolizes Himself as "the vine," and we "the branches." Furthermore He says, "Abide in Me, and I in you. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, bringeth forth much fruit." Both John and Simeon symbolizes Jesus as "light," and John tells us, "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light." With Jesus abiding in us, we become "instruments which God chooses to use to enlighten the minds of men; as He uses the sun to light the world. "Light of the world, was a title applied to the most eminent rabbins," says Adam Clarke, and, "Christ transfers the title from these and gives it to His own disciples, who, by the doctrines that He taught them, were to be the means of diffusing the light of life throughout the universe."

In Rev. 21:23-25 we are told that the holy city, new Jerusalem, "had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb (Christ the Lord) is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there." On the other hand,

Jesus speaks of another destination which is "outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." This is the inevitable doom of everyone who rejects "the Light of the world"; but "those who are saved shall walk in the light" of the new Jerusalem, world without end, for they were filled with this spiritual light, letting their light so shine before men, as to bring glory to the Father in heaven.

"Men die in darkness at thy side,
Without a hope to cheer the tomb;
Take up the torch, and wave it wide,
The torch that lights time's thickest gloom."

* * *

3. A City Set On An Hill.

One writer explains that not far from the "Mount of Beatitudes," standing on a very eminent and conspicuous mountain, was the city of Saphet, supposed to be the ancient Bethulia. This city could be seen far and near. Said he, "May we not suppose that Christ alludes to this city, in these words of his, 'A city set on an hill cannot be hid?'" And in the words of Quesnell, "The Christian life is something very high and sublime, to which we cannot arrive without pains: while it draws us from the earth, and carries us nearer heaven, it places us ,in view, and as a mark, to the malice of carnal men."

The Saviour mentions three degrees of "light": first, "the light of the world," which might refer to the "body of Christ," or the "Church" as a whole, scattered throughout the entire world; secondly, "A city set on an hill," which might refer to a church group, or a unit of the "body of Christ"; thirdly, "a candle, on a candlestick," which might refer to any individual member of the "body of Christ" of which the Church of Jesus Christ is comprised. The Church as a whole is the "light of the world"; as a single unit furnishes spiritual "light" in any single "city"; and each individual member "giveth light unto all that are in the house." The "world," a "city," and a "house"; each being illuminated by the presence of godly people who diffuse the "light" of heavenly knowledge and the warmth of Divine love through the whole circle of their acquaintance.

In conclusion, Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men." This was God's design in giving us this light, so that it might shine before all men, "That they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." This is the purpose for which we should "let our light shine." As God's true people we not only have this light, but also "walk" in it; thus exemplifying its truth and power by "our good works," and as a result causing others to be moved to love and serve God likewise, bringing glory and honor to His Name!

"Eternal Light, before Thy blazing beams
We bow in deep humility;
Oh, let the vision which we now behold,
Within these lives reflected be."

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03 -- LAW VERSUS GRACE

This division of the Sermon on the Mount, includes verses 17 through 48 of Matthew 5; the key verses being the 17th and the 48th which are linked together by comparisons of the law and grace, showing how the commandments can and must be complied with in one's experience and life, making them a governing principle of living instead of outwardly keeping them as a mere code of moral rules.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil... Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

These verses set forth the relation of Christ to the law, the purpose of His coming into the world, and the provided privilege of every soul. In the original, verse 48 reads, "Therefore ye shall be perfect, as your Father Who is in heaven is perfect"; referring to all that holiness which is described in the foregoing verses, said Mr. Wesley, "which our Lord in the beginning of the chapter recommends as happiness, (with His words 'Blessed are'), and in the close of it as perfection." This text, said Dr. John Paul, "was not given for us to evade, to explain away, or to take as a text from which to preach a sermon against 'sinless perfection'. A phobia against sinless perfection is not a sign of soul health; it is rather a sign that one does not measure up to the fourth beatitude. For hunger and thirst after righteousness furnishes an evidence of spiritual life, of a normal measure of soul health. When a patient is normally hungry he is on his way up. 'Sinless perfection' is a term used almost exclusively by them that are opposed to it, and never advocated in any group to which I have been introduced. Many very good people are more afraid of holiness than they are of sin; more afraid of perfection than they are of imperfection."

* * *

The Fulfillment Of Law.

Christ made it plain that He came "not to destroy the law, or the prophets, but to fulfill." That is, "to establish, illustrate and explain its highest meaning, both by His doctrine and His life. The Mosaic ritual foreshadowed the great design which was to be perfected and completed under grace, which is Christian perfection. The law deals with the transgressor and "is not made for a righteous man" (I. Tim. 1:8-10); but "righteousness," being more than outward splendor and ceremonialism, has a deeper application and is glorious in its results, for it deals with the motives from which offenses spring. It is this aspect of which Jesus warns us, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no ease enter into the kingdom of heaven." Heart purity is the answer! "The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe," has become established in personality, making the fountain clean which now gives forth "sweet water"; and the tree good, yielding now "the fruit of righteousness" which "is sown in peace of them that make peace."

Jesus proceeds to illustrate how "the law" is to be fulfilled by saying, "You have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother (without a cause) shall

be in danger of the "judgment." John Wesley omits the words "without a cause," in his translation of this verse, saying, "this is utterly foreign to the whole scope and tenor of our Lord's discourse. He had only forbidden the being angry without a cause, there was no manner of need of that solemn declaration, 'I say unto you'; for the scribes and Pharisees said as much as this. Even they taught, men ought not to be angry 'without a cause'. We ought not for any cause be angry at the person of the sinner, but at his sin only. Happy world, were this plain and necessary distinction thoroughly understood, remembered, and practiced!"

The law said, "Thou shalt not kill," but Jesus qualifies this command, making it a matter of the heart by saying, "But I say unto you, whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment." The "judgment" was a senate, composed of twenty-three magistrates, who judged in cases of murder and other capital crimes, and punished criminals by strangling or beheading. This earthly senate judged and punished the criminal upon conviction for his overt act, but the judgment of God will certainly deal with the inner motive of "anger" from which the act of murder springs. The grace of God in the heart and life destroys this evil temper of anger which leads to murder; whereas the law, although it forbids murder, can only punish the offender: it cannot deliver him from the inborn cause of his crime. While the pure "law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2), with its higher precepts, is greater in its demands, transferring the offense from the overt act to the motive, yet its results are even more wonderful in yielding the peaceable "fruit of righteousness."

* * *

Making Adjustments.

Jesus instructs us how to remove the hindrances which often stand like mountains between brethren, "towering high as heaven, reaching down deep as hell." "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought 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." John Wesley said, "For neither thy gift nor thy prayer will atone for thy want of love."

Confession is vitally important; first to God, then to whom confession is due. A young lady was in deep agony at the altar. A worker asked her if she had not something that she ought to confess. Rising, she went to the rear of the auditorium, threw her arms around a young comrade and said, with gushing tears, "O Lizzie, please forgive me for everything I have done or said about you!" That moment her face brightened, and she shouted aloud. Lizzie was struck with deep conviction, and rushed to the altar to seek the blessing her companion had found. These unconfessed sins and faults will withhold the showers of blessings from our souls, and impede the cause of Christ to an alarming extent. Never allow little misunderstandings to remain between you and your brother or neighbor, for the longer it stands, the larger it grows, and the farther apart the two of you become. "Agree with thine adversary"; -- with any whom thou hast offended, "while thou art in the way with him"; -- instantly, on the spot, before you part. "Lest the adversary deliver you to the judge," -- lest he commit his cause to God; "and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." -- That is never, since thou canst never do this. (Wesley).

Dr. Godbey said, "What about paying the uttermost farthing? The simple truth is, you have nothing to pay with, neither in this world or in the world to come. Therefore it is utterly impossible for you to ever satisfy the Divine law, which requires a holy heart, as you have already rejected the last opportunity to receive the satisfying work of Christ."

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Adultery And Divorce.

"Ye have heard... Thou shalt not commit adultery." Although the scribes interpreted "adultery" as meaning the overt act, Jesus said, "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." According to this rule the inward thought constitutes a violation as truly as the overt act. "Adultery" is thus located in the heart, and to be forgiven must be confessed.

With reference to "looking on a woman to lust after her," Jesus continues by saying, "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee:... for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members (even an eye) should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." The thought is this: it would be great gain to part with anything, however dear to you, or useful; if, by keeping it, it would lead you into sin. However, the Divine plan is to remove all evil tempers and unholy lusts from the heart, thus affecting the proper cure: neither plucking out an eye, nor cutting off a hand would remove the evil desire, which must be expelled by the mighty work of grace.

The careful reader will observe that Jesus here associates adultery with divorce. In verses 31 and 32 we read, "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement; But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, (premarital immorality) causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."

We wish to quote Dr. Adam Clarke on this debated subject: "It does not appear that there is any other case in which Jesus Christ admits of divorce. A real Christian ought rather to beg of God the grace to bear patiently and quietly the imperfections of his wife, than to think of the means of being parted from her. 'But divorce was allowed by Moses;' yes, for the hardness of their hearts it was permitted: but what was permitted to an uncircumcised heart among the Jews, should not serve for a rule to a heart in which the love of God has been shed abroad by the Holy Spirit. Those who form a matrimonial connection in the fear and love of God, and under His direction, will never need a divorce. But those who marry as passion or money lead the way, may be justly considered 'adulterers' and 'adulteresses' as long as they live."

The divorce problem in America continues to grow each year with alarming increase. It is a menace which threatens the spiritual and social welfare of our nation with ruin, and eats at the foundation of American home-life as a cancer. In a recent publication we pointed out that there were 2,227 divorce bills filed in Oakland County (Michigan) in the year 1945. Records show that in the same county during the year of 1946 there were 2,405 divorce bills filed: an increase of 178.

A report says that the average number of divorces between 1921 and 1940 in the state of New Hampshire, were 700 a year; but in 1945 the number jumped to a new high of 1,468, or more than double that of 1940; then in 1946 the number increased to an all-time high of 2,108. Such shameful increase of divorce in America is great cause for alarm, and demands grave concern on the part of every individual who has taken or expects to take the marriage vows. Only God can tell the outcome on our coming generations if this terrible situation continues at such rates of increase.

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Conversation.

Following His admonition to "swear not at all"; (nor is this necessary, for the law recognizes an "affirmation" as legal;) Jesus proceeds by saying, "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." Anything more than an affirmation or negation, according to the requirements of truth, comes of evil. Evil speaking has menaced the cause of Christ appallingly. God requires purity of speech, as well as of heart. This excludes the use of bywords, and at least rough slang, for these come from the Evil One.

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Retaliation Versus Divine Love.

From verse 38 through 48, Jesus compares the excellency of grace, or Divine love, to the stern rigor of the law, saying, "It has been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil, ('resist not the evil man'): but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee by the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away": John Wesley adds -- "Give and lend to any, so far (but no further, for God never contradicts Himself) as is consistent with thy engagements to thy creditors, thy family, and the household of faith."

The rule of Christian Perfection is "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." In so doing you shall be recognized by God and men as "the children of your Father which is in heaven," and, "be perfect, (Christian perfection) even as your Father which is in heaven"; imitating His love, kindness and condescension; being a "partaker of His Divine nature" and of His holiness.

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04 -- ALMS-GIVING

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have the

glory of men. Verily I say unto you, that they have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly." (Matt. 6:1-4).

In the 5th chapter of Matthew, Jesus particularly describes the true nature of inward holiness; but in this chapter He emphasizes the purity of intention and motives without which none of our outward actions are holy. The New Testament criterion of righteousness is expressed in these words: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." I Cor. 10:31. It has been said that "Man is the creature in whom God has decreed He shall be represented and glorified."

Jesus warned: "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven." This word "alms" refers to "righteousness," or "righteous acts," and has to do with religious externals. The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was mere externalism, which Jesus herewith condemns. Their righteous acts were performed merely "to be seen of men." This was the "righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" of which Jesus spoke saying, "except your righteousness shall exceed, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:20.

We may perform such righteous acts as are consistent with holy living, publicly, thus letting "(our) light shine before men, that they may see (our) good works, and glorify (our) Father which is in heaven," but our Lord here censures those vain and hypocritical persons who do such simply "to be seen of men" and receive their honor, glory and praise.

"Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have the glory of men." We are told that it was a custom among the Pharisees to blow a trumpet, calling beggars to them to receive contributions having no other motive than to gratify their own carnal love of public notice and praise. Some learned men think that the word "trumpet" used in this verse had reference to the "hole" in the public alms-chest, into which money was dropped to benefit the poor. Such holes, because they were wide at one end and grew gradually narrow toward the other, were actually termed "shoperoth" (a trumpet), and this example of its use was given. "An ostentatious man, who wished to attract the notice of those around him, would throw his money with some force into these trumpet-resembling holes, and thus he might be said 'to sound a trumpet'." Our Lord warns us not to do this, saying, "otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven." The hypocrites "have their reward," that is, the honor, esteem and vainglory of men which they thus seek, and therefore God is under no obligation to them -- they give their gift with no eye single to His glory, so cannot rightfully expect any recompense from Him. They have their reward in this life, the praise of men and passing vainglory, therefore cannot expect any reward in the world to come.

Divine love must be the impelling force behind every righteous act if we expect it to be honored by Divine sanction. God smiles only on such alms-deeds as are performed with pure motives and right intention. God severely reprehends hypocrisy and pride and has amply provided a complete cure for it. Although others may not detect the motives behind our actions, let us remember that "The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts." I Chron. 28:9.

"Searcher of hearts, in mine
Thy trying power display,
Into its darkest corner shine,
And take the veil away."

"But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly." Alms-deeds are practical expressions of true Christianity, for "charity edifieth" but Jesus uses the proverbial expression, "let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth," to indicate in what manner we should perform our acts of charity. Dr. Godbey tells us, "An advocate always stood on the right hand of the judge. The 'right hand' symbolizes the spiritual and the 'left hand' the temporal side of life, which were frequently antagonistic one to the other. Giving alms with an eye single to the glory of God is quite an available test of true spirituality."

The full meaning is given however in these words: "That thine alms may be in secret." That is, of course, as secretly as is consistently possible. John Wesley said, "Barely the being seen, while we are doing any of these things, is a circumstance purely indifferent. But the doing them with this view, to be seen and admired, this is what our Lord condemns."

A story is told of two wealthy men, said to be Christians; the one a lawyer and the other a merchant, who joined a party that was traveling around the world.

In Korea, one day, they saw in a field by the side of the road, a boy pulling a crude plow, while an old man held the plow handles and directed it. The lawyer was amazed and took a snap shot of the scene.

"That's a curious picture! I suppose they are very poor," he said to the missionary, who was interpreter and guide to the party.

"Yes," was the reply. "That is the family of Chi Noui. When the church was being built they were eager to give something to it, but they had no money; so they sold their only ox and gave their money to the church. This spring they are pulling the plow themselves."

The lawyer and the business man were silent for some moments. Then the business man said, "That must have been a real sacrifice."

"They did not call it that," said the missionary, "they thought that it was fortunate that they had an ox to sell."

This is a beautiful example of the proper motive and purpose for alms-giving. This is with an eye single to God's glory. To such persons as this the Lord has graciously promised, "and thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly".. Let us always remember that the eye of the Lord is ever upon us, and He sees both the act and motive that leads to it. In process of time, if our gifts and deeds have been prompted by pure love, God will "reward us openly," revealing our sincerity and His approbation.

In Luke 21:1 to 4 we read that Jesus honored the poor widow's gift of only "two mites" more than those of "the rich men" saying: "Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all; For all these have of their abundance cast into the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had."

One "mite" is the equivalent to one-eighth of a cent; she gave "two mites," or one-quarter of a cent, which was all she possessed. Someone figured what this poor widow would be worth if she drew compound interest on the "two mites," from the time she gave it, A. D. 32 to 1936. [In dollars] It amounts to 1 decillion, 661 nonillion, 534 octillion, 994 septillion, 731 sextillion, 144 quintillion, 841 quadrillion, 129 trillion, 758 billion, 825 million, 350 thousand, \$430.72. Who dares to say that God will not recompense His people even more than at the rate of compound interest for everything we do in His Name and for His honor, glory and praise? He certainly will!

At the close of I Corinthians 15, with the fact of the glorious "resurrection" in mind, Paul encourages us by saying, "My beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labor is not in vain in the Lord." This is one of the ways in which our heavenly Father shall "reward us openly"; give us an "incorruptible," "immortal" body. "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

In conclusion, hear the words of Jesus, recorded in Revelation 22:11 and 12: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And behold I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." We shall do well therefore, my friends, to heed the words of Martin Luther, when he said, "Let us live as though Christ were crucified yesterday; risen today; and coming tomorrow."

"We are not storerooms, but channels;
We are not cisterns, but springs;
Passing our benefits onward,
Fitting our blessings with wings."

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05 -- EFFECTUAL PRAYER

"And 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. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what ye have need of, before ye ask Him. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive

our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For 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." Matthew 6:5-15.

In these verses, Jesus sets forth the right intention, the right manner, the right form, and the prerequisites of Prayer!

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1. The Right Intention Of Prayer.

Prayer, in order to be effectual, must spring from pure intentions. Perhaps the lack of this would account for many unanswered prayers. Jesus warned, "thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: they love to pray, that they may be seen of men." Dare we say that many public prayers in our day are likewise offered? There is something about an effectual prayer that is inexplicable! It is heard in heaven and felt on earth; it blesses the saints and convicts the sinners. It moves God and men. Such prayer must come from a humble and holy intention, which God always recognizes and rewards by answering.

Many people do not discern the improper motives back of the hypocrite's prayer, but no one has ever deceived omnipotent God. Therefore, it is futile to pray unless with a sincere intention and purpose of heart, for the hypocritical prayer never finds acceptance with God, but only receives such carnal rewards as human praise, and "to be seen of men."

Public prayer has an important place in true worship, and should be practiced by every child of God; but effectual prayer is always the sincere desire of a true heart expressed to God only; if heard by others, only incidentally!

* * *

2. The Right Manner Of Prayer.

Prayer is paradoxical! On man's part it is a genuine, deep, self-abnegation, waiting with open heart, in hushed and full surrender before God, but in God's sight, it is the loftiest form of human utterance, and one true means of securing His attention in interest of every need we have. There can be no effectual prayer apart from humility. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Daniel Webster said, "Heaven's gates are not so highly arched as kings palaces; they that enter there must go upon their knees." Jesus describes the ill manner of the hypocrite's prayers saying, "they love to pray standing... that they may be seen of men." They had no piety but that which was outward, and prayed thus to let it fully appear, that they might make the most of it among the people. This same hypocritical pretension to devotion is common today: the old-fashioned practice of kneeling for prayer even in many camp meetings, revivals, and regular church services is nearly a thing of the past, and is indicative of the dreadful lack of reverence, sincerity, and humility among professing Christians, There are proper occasions for public prayers with every one standing, and, which are honored and answered by the Lord, but, whenever possible and

convenient, we should kneel as well as bow our hearts in true humility when we approach the Throne of Grace.

When King Solomon had finished the building of the Temple "for the name of the Lord God or Israel," he "made a brazen scaffold, of five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had it set in the midst of the court; and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel" in his prayer at the dedication of the temple. God honored the king's humble spirit, for in the following chapter we read, "When Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house." (II Chron. 6:13 and 7:1 and 2). Daniel, "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God"; Jesus admonished His disciples, saying, "Pray that ye enter not into temptation": then "He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed"; Stephen, the first Christian martyr, "kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," as the enemies of Christ were stoning him; Peter, "kneeled and prayed"; and Paul, "kneeled down, and prayed," according to the records. Jonathan Edwards cautioned, "Avoid an aspiring, ambitious, ostentatious, assuming, arrogant, scornful, stubborn, willful, leveling, self-justifying behavior; and strive for more and more of the humble spirit that Christ manifested while He was here upon earth."

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3. The Right Form Of Prayer.

The form of prayer which is commonly called "the Lord's prayer," is in three parts: (John Wesley's comments are as follows):

A -- The Preface. "Our Father," Creator and Preserver, "which art in heaven," Beholding all things both in heaven and in earth; knowing every creature, and all the works of every creature, and every possible event from everlasting to everlasting.

B -- The Petitions. "Hallowed be Thy Name," Mayest Thou, O Father, be truly known by all intelligent beings, and with affections suitable to that knowledge! "Thy kingdom come," May Thy kingdom of grace come quickly, and swallow up all the kingdoms of the earth! May all mankind, receive Thee, O Christ, for their King, truly believing in Thy name, be filled with righteousness, peace and joy, with holiness and happiness, till they are removed hence into Thy kingdom of glory, to reign with Thee for ever and ever. "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." May all the inhabitants of earth do Thy will as willingly as the holy angels! "Give us this day our daily bread." All things needful for our souls and bodies. "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Give us redemption in Thy blood, even the forgiveness of sins: as Thou enablest us freely and fully to forgive every man, so do Thou forgive all our trespasses. "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:" Whenever we are tempted, O Thou that helpst our infirmities, suffer us not to 'enter into temptation'; to be overcome or suffer loss thereby; but make a way for our escape, so that we may be more than conquerors, through Thy love, over sin and all the consequences of it.

C -- The Conclusion. "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." The sovereign right of all things that are or ever were created; the executive power, whereby Thou governest all things in Thy everlasting kingdom; the praise due from every creature, for Thy power, and all Thy wondrous works, and the mightiness of Thy kingdom, which endureth through all the ages, even 'for ever and ever'."

* * *

4. The Prerequisites Of Prayer.

Answers to prayer do not come about by freak occurrences or by haphazard accident. Prayer is a fine art, and must be Scripturally practiced. Jesus said, "But thou, when thou prayest,

A -- "Enter into thy closet." This prerequisite carries with it utmost secrecy between God and the soul. The world is too profane and treacherous to be in on the secret, therefore we must find a place of solitude and retirement, which may fitly be termed "the closet in the house of God, which house the body of a real Christian is. (I Cor. 3:16). To this closet we ought to retire even in public prayer, and in the midst of company." Truly, the most important thing for those who know God is to spend time with Him in secret prayer!

B -- "Shut the door." The Lord's directions concerning prayer are very simple, yet it is highly important that we follow them conscientiously. It is one thing to "enter into thy closet," and still another to "shut the door." Perhaps the latter is more important, for the prayer-closet is never so warm as when the "door" is "shut"! A door has two sides, and serves a two-fold purpose: when open, it permits one to enter; it is a door of privilege, and there is no greater privilege than that of entering humbly into the divine presence of God through the door of prevailing prayer. When "shut," the door serves to prohibit uninvited and unwelcomed intruders. Satan's six sentinels must be strictly forbidden to enter, if you would pray effectively; their names all begin with the letter 'I', and are as follows; Iniquity, Infidelity, Indolence, Indifference, Independence, and Inadvertence. When the "door" is completely "shut," these must remain on the outside, for any one of them would hinder your prayer from reaching the ear of God! But, when the "door" to the prayer "closet" is "shut," the soul is actually shut-in with God in sacred retirement, and in a proper position to receive His full attention, enjoy unbroken and unmolested fellowship. The promise to the soul that prays thus is, "and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

C -- "Pray to thy Father which is in secret." God lives and answers prayer today. Having entered the closet and shut the door, there remains but one thing left to do; "pray to thy Father which is in secret." It is not more machinery, committees, programs and organizations the church needs today, but men of prayer, men and women, whom the Holy Ghost can use mightily in prayer.

There is a place where thou canst touch the eyes
Of blinded men to instant, perfect sight;

There is a place where thou canst say, "Arise!"
To dying captives, bound in chains of night;

There is a place where heaven's resistless power
Responsive moves to thine instant plea;

There is a place -- a silent, trusting hour
Where God Himself descends and fights for thee.

Where is that blessed place dost thou ask, "Where?"
O soul, it is the secret place of prayer.

D -- "Use not vain repetitions." Adam Clarke said, "Prayer requires more of the heart than of the tongue. The eloquence of prayer consists in the fervency of desire, and the simplicity of faith. Our trust and confidence ought to proceed from that which God is able to do in us, and not from that which we can say to Him."

Prayer is the language of the heart: words are cheap and meaningless except when formed in the heart by the Holy Spirit. Such a prayer is a pouring forth of the soul's desires to God whether expressed or unuttered, and always rise as a sweet incense to the lofty Throne of God! John Wesley said, "To repeat any words without meaning them is vain repetition. All the words in the world are not equivalent to one holy desire; and the very best prayers are but vain repetitions' if they are not the language of the heart."

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5. The Assurance Of Prayer.

Jesus gives us a faith-inspiring assurance saying, "your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him." Omniscient as He is, God cannot be informed, therefore prayer is not designed principally to inform God of our wants and needs, but rather to humble our hearts, excite our desires, and raise our faith to a point where we can believe the promises of God for every need we have. Prayer performs a great work, effects a radical change in us, and gets us in a position where we are fit to receive the offered blessing of God.

George Muller said, "The living God is with us, Whose power never fails, Whose arm never grows weary, Whose wisdom is infinite, and Whose power is unchanging." Let us go to Him with a full assurance that He will do "exceeding, abundantly, above all that we can ask or think," for His promises are "yea, and Amen" to them who believe!

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06 -- FASTING

"When ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto the Father which is in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Matt. 6:16-18.

In chapter 5, Jesus describes inward holiness. In chapter 6 He speaks of outward manifestations of that inward piety, the first verse serving as a text, which, in Wesley's translation reads, "Take heed that ye practice not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them, otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven."

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1. The Time For Fasting.

"When ye fast"! This implies that every follower of Christ should practice fasting, which is reportedly mentioned fifty times in the Bible. Jesus did not set a particular time for every one to fast, but leaves the decision up to each person's own discretion to fast at times best suited to their living conditions, health, and devotional life. No one can deny that fasting is a part of vital importance to the Christian life. Wesley said, "Fasting, Prayer and Alms-deeds were duties which were established in the Church of God." Fasting is a private part of divine worship and should find its place in the devotional life of every Believer. Dr. J. B. Chapman said, "If we live in the devotional, it will stir the emotional and give us the experimental, and lead us to the practical."

It seems the early Church fasted two days a week; namely, Wednesdays and Fridays. There is no doubt but that we should do likewise in behalf of God's kingdom, and for the salvation of lost souls. As to the days on which we fast and the number of meals we leave off, it seems practical to leave that decision up to each individual's circumstances and as the Lord may direct.

In the early days of the Methodist Church, some of the questions put to the ministers were, "Will you recommend fasting or abstinence both by precept and example?" And, "Do you use as much abstinence and fasting every week as your health, strength and labor will permit?" The "Band Societies" ,likewise were asked "to observe as days of fasting or abstinence all Fridays in the year." Also in those days among Methodists, no woman was permitted to participate in the "Band Societies" who were "attired in enormous bonnets, ruffles or rings." Further directions which were given to them were, "Wear no needless ornaments such as rings, earrings, necklaces, lace or ruffles." These are some of the standards adopted and held by men of God, which, if the churches of today would inculcate in its members, and be faithfully upheld by the ministers, would prove a great blessing and cause Christians everywhere to maintain their identity; but, greatest of all, we believe would win the smile and approval of God upon us, for "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." James 4:6.

Dr. Godbey said, "Away with the modern dogma which would depreciate fasting as a means of grace. All truly spiritual people have so tested and proved the blessing of fasting as to be ready witnesses when the Bible doctrine is assailed."

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2. The Intention Of Fasting.

Jesus said that the hypocrites fasted with "a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast." Their "sad countenance" however only exhibited their lack of joy and the emptiness of their religious profession, for dry forms, rituals, ordinances and ceremonies cannot furnish the joy and blessing which accompany heartfelt salvation! The whole intention of their fasting was to catch the attention of those about them and receive their praise, which of course is all the reward they ever received, for Jesus said, "They have their reward." Although the hypocrites succeeded in deceiving many of the people, Jesus knew their evil motives, and exposed them by warning His disciples against their evil practices which they performed under the cloak of religion, and said, "be not as the hypocrites." The religious forms, ceremonies and ordinances, even as are held by our holiness churches of today, unless preceded by genuine heartfelt repentance and regeneration, accompanied by saving faith, is nothing more than the hypocritical externalism which Jesus denounced in His great sermon on the mount.

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3. The Right Manner Of Fasting.

"But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

The right manner of fasting constitutes a beautiful, voluntary act of self-denial; the sacrifice of which is seen only ,by the eye of God. This kind of fasting is occasioned only by pure motives: first, wholly for the glory of God; second, for the advancement of His cause and kingdom. Although the life of a true follower of Christ is one of happiness, peace and joy "in the Holy Ghost," yet it is likewise one of self-denial and sacrifice. Just before His transfiguration, Jesus said to His disciples, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it." Matthew Henry said, "The first lesson in Christ's school is self-denial." Another said, "They that deny themselves for Christ shall enjoy themselves in Christ." Hear the words of Mary Lyon: "In heaven, we shall never regret any sacrifice however painful, or labor however protracted, made or performed here for the cause of Christ."

The prophet Isaiah (58:8) mentioned some results of a true fast, saying: "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward." But notice the true motives for the fast of which Isaiah speaks; "to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke." (58:6). Fasting is unprofitable unless worshipfully and consistently performed in the sight of "thy Father which is in secret"! It is a "secret" sacrifice and service for God alone to behold. Lest others about you should learn of your fast, and praise your devotion, Jesus instructs us saying, "anoint thine head" with the oil of gladness. "Rejoice as at other times, and let your deportment prove that you desire to recommend your soul to God and not your face to men. Jesus also said, 'and wash thy face' so as to appear neat and tidy and refreshed, for that is the true inner condition of your heart which is so disposed and composed before God."

"And thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." It is impossible to fully understand to what extent God rewards conscientious, systematic fasting. My friend, Rev. James Miller, tells of a pastor who was converted from a life of sin and delivered from imprisonment because his godly mother spent twenty-two days fasting and praying for him. Although she knew it not, while she was praying for her son he was locked behind bars in a New York prison awaiting trial, and already trod a life sentence against him in Canada. However, when he prayed through and confessed his sins to God and to the authorities, and then wrote the Canadian Government confessing to them and telling what God had done for him, they withdrew the sentence, and this, in turn, caused the authorities in New York to cancel the charge against him and they released him a free man. He is preaching the gospel today, all because a little mother fasted and prayed for her son. Although our fasting is a secret sacrifice in the sight of God, it carries with it a divine promise of "reward" publicly. Christian friends, "let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Galatians 6:9.

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THE END