

humble Galileans, who were first taught to use this prayer, were also the first summoned to ensure and promote its fulfilment; leaders of that vast multitude which no man can number, who see that missionary work of whatever kind, and in whatever land, is the true outcome, the only honest result of this wonderful prayer for the Divine glory; nay, that not only is it true to say that God permits and invites and enables and expects us to work with Him, but that He refuses to work without us, and that if we will not ask He will not give. It is God with man, not God without man. Of course if it had so pleased Him He might long ago have made the kingdoms of this world the kingdoms of God and of His Christ. It has not so pleased Him; and the result is what we see, the world still lying in wickedness, and the Church rubbing her eyes to discover her task. Once more see what it requires. First, a personal living faith in the King of the kingdom, that His law is good, His will blessed, His yoke easy, His commandments perfect freedom, His forgiveness free and full without money and without price, His love that it passeth knowledge. All effort, sacrifice, and witnessing and cross-bearing and influence and success spring from the humble but assured consciousness about this King, who is also Saviour, that "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." It is not to be learned from books, nor borrowed from a neighbour, nor uttered as a mere religious shibboleth, nor worn as a spiritual amulet. "The Spirit itself witnesseth with our spirit that we are the children of God." Then, the right saying of this prayer will further mean zeal and eagerness, intelligence and sacrifice for the fulfilment of it. "All things are yours," wrote St. Paul to the Corinthians. But how few of us are at the pains to observe the gifts at our feet, or, even when seen, to pick them up and use them!

If we want this kingdom to come we shall help it to come, and encourage others to do the same. There is nothing so reasonable, so inevitable, so unavoid-

able, let me add, so entirely logical, as missionary work for a redeemed soul, which believes the Gospel and loves the Saviour. "All souls are mine." It may be in England, or in China, a savage or a kinsman whose salvation we care for. The one duty is to be doing something to bring Christ's sheep to His feet—the great sin and shame is to be content with leaving it to others.

One thing more of course it requires—a vigilant and intelligent appreciation of the purpose of God, and of the wisdom of the Divine delays, and of the meaning of disappointments, and of the grandeur of hopefulness, and, withal, of the final and unspeakable triumph of the love of God. Our Lord's parables, further, all more or less touch and illustrate divers aspects of the kingdom which He had come to preach, and by His death and resurrection to found, and by the gift of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the Church to begin to plant among men.

His parable of the wise and foolish virgins indicates the slowness of the growth of the kingdom, and the slumber through infirmity even of those who ought to have known better, but who were weary of watching, because they had almost ceased to expect. His parable of the tares teaches us not to make short cuts to success, nor to take the work that belongs to God of discriminating and separating into our own rash and feeble hands. Till the end comes there will be tares with the wheat. God knows which is which. We know not. But He also teaches us, in the parable of the seed growing secretly, that the seed lives and germinates when we have ceased even to think or care about it; that the invisible forces of the spiritual kingdom are always at work through the snows of winter and the blasts of spring. Christ will triumph, and the Church be crowned, and the Father justified at last before an awed universe. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

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DO THY BEST.—A young painter was directed by his master to complete a picture on which the master had been obliged to suspend his labours on account of his growing infirmities. "I commissior thee, my son," said the aged artist, "to do thy best upon this work." The youth tremblingly seized the brush, and, kneeling before his appointed work, he prayed: "It is for the sake of my beloved master that I implore skill and power to do this deed." His hand grew steady as he painted; slumbering genius awoke in his eye; enthusiasm took the place of fear; forgetfulness of himself supplanted his self-distrust, and with a calm joy he finished his labour. The "beloved master" was borne on his couch into the studio, to pass judgment on the result. As his eye fell upon the triumph of art before him he burst into tears, and throwing his enfeebled arms around the young artist, he exclaimed, "My son, I paint no more!" That youth, Leonardo da Vinci, became the painter of "The Last Supper."