

not at first single out the false one for exposure. He holds up a mirror in which the individual is left to see his own face. What he had it in his heart to do, he may never have realized or put definitely to himself until it is detected by the Seer of hearts, until the veracious vulgar name is stamped upon it, and the picture of himself is drawn without glozing guise. Then, when the sign of the soap is privately given, his secret is crystalized, his crouching purpose is precipitated to its issue, and he slips out, and it is dark.

"Lord, when Thou saidst, 'One of you', my heart said, 'Lord, is it I?'" For this purpose, also, He issues His challenge anonymously—that each of us may search his own bosom through all its backwindings and make sure of his loyalty. Samuel Rutherford wrote to Lady Boyd, "My white side comes out on paper, but at home there is much black work. All God's challenges come true of me",—and *he* the saint of Anwoth! Very natural that first suspicious glance round at the others, wondering "Is it *he*, or *he*?" A good sign, and gladdening to the Master's heart, is the affrighted cry of self-distrust, "Lord, is it I?" In that question of alarm there is an implicit ring of horrified protestation of attachment that is a tonic of assurance and joy to the Lord.

† We read a tale or hear a story in which some human character is unveiled that startles us by a certain kinship with our own possibilities. No, it is not our portrait, thank God; and yet we feel challenged with the suspicion that we harbor something akin to that disposition, that we might possibly have done that deed if we had been in a like case. Or people speak in high terms of our virtues and piety, and, by a curious law of counterpoint, we are sent back upon ourselves ashamed,—“If only they knew me!” Or, on the contrary, some unwarrantable insinuation or false charge is started against us: first we are indignant; then we are driven back into the holy Presence to ask if the finger of accusation has touched the spot of our weakness; we recall and confess other errors; but on this point we have high witness borne to our integrity, and we emerge from our judgment hour with tested loyalty and

humbler dependence upon God. A sanctified self-suspicion becomes a means of more grace.
Presbyterian College, Montreal

The Prayer Life of the Christian

By Rev. J. A. Z. Dickson, Ph.D.

In prayer the Christian life begins, in prayer it continues, and in prayer it ends. When the Holy Spirit comes into the heart, He manifests His presence in the outflow of the soul to God in prayer.

The Christian who is wise, or mighty, or successful, is so through prayer. A prayerless Christian is a weak, worthless, useless Christian. The bond that binds him to God is broken, the channel of communication is cut off, and without God he can do nothing.

The prayer life, therefore, needs to be carefully cultivated in the soul. Uncared for, it speedily fails like a stream cut off from its source of supply; but cherished and nourished, it grows and greatens and makes all the life fruitful.

What should enter into prayer? It should have in it all that will naturally arise out of our condition in our relation to God. We must never forget that God is infinitely holy, and that sin is abhorrent to His nature. When we live in the light of His holiness, we shall not fail to see the evil and the enormity of our sin,—our “want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God”. And consequently we shall be able to realize the pressing and urgent need of confession. Think of this,—“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” In other words, we must recognize that we have sinned, and acknowledge our sin, and seek deliverance from its malign influence. Prayer without humble confession is hateful to God.

Looking up to God we must adore Him, thinking of all that He is, and cast ourselves upon His mercy and His grace. “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” We need mercy, that is, the pardon of sin; and we need grace to help, that is, the abundant supply of God's goodness.