

take in the presence of the child. In our respective spheres of work, we may be a throne from which the child may descry the throne of God and of the Lamb; or a stumbling-stone on and over which the child may fall never to rise. There is a touching plea in the loyal ardor with which children invest those they love with real or fancied excellence: ready to follow them as guides or ready to listen to them as wisdom.

It is the privilege of every wise and loving parent and every true and beloved teacher to ascend that throne of homage, to occupy that place of honored affection; and long after his lessons in their detail have been forgotten, he will remain fresh in the memory of the heart, a teaching power in the busy scenes of life. Oh, may none of us forget this heritage of influence. By a sluggish, spiritless brain, rude manners, or a selfish heart, may we never alienate that winsome confidence or blight that green fresh hope. These returning exiles set themselves to seek from the Lord a right way for their children and all their substance. We notice two things on which we need to seek wisdom and knowledge.

#### THE NATURE OF THE CHILDREN.

Genius has said many good things on child nature, but when you have gathered them together and put them alongside of one tender touch of Christ they are tame. Was ever trustful dependence, truthful simplicity, guilelessness of character, and gentleness of manner more impressively set forth than when the Master took a little child and set him in the midst, speaking out the object lesson, "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

This is the divine writing on child nature:

"Oh! bright and shining babe,  
What wilt thou be hereafter?"

answered by the loving words, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Think of the stages of dawn and hope in childhood. The period of simple sensation, when there is felt but pains or pleasures; then the upward step of attention, when there must be given "here a little and there a little;" truth pictured to the eye, truth sounding in the ear, taken up by the tongue and treasured in the memory. How quickly is this succeeded by the period of conscience and heart life—the white line in life's work and history; the child is a bundle of feelings as well as of habits: feelings to be fed by truth, and habits to be formed in wisdom. Lay gentle hands on natures so delicate—they carry the marks through time into eternity. Oh! that the family and the Church were more alive to their need of wisdom in moulding such natures for Christ.

The instrumentality by which this nature is to be touched and moulded is

#### THE WORD OF GOD,

The Scripture which makes wise unto salvation, the truth that is living with love, and the record of love—love guided by wisdom. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not which shall prosper, whether this or that." "Blessed are they that sow beside all waters." Teach the truth truthfully.

"Thou must be true thyself,  
If thou the truth would teach;  
The soul must overflow, if thou  
Another's soul would reach;  
It needs the overflow of heart  
To give the lips full speech."

Let us under a sense of our trust, elevate the home into its high and holy mission. Let it be a nursery in the Church and a nursery of the Church, casting in her prayers and power as the strength and hope of the home. Seek unto the Lord for direction for "ourselves, our little ones, and all our substance."

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK IN PRAYER.

The Christian consciousness confirms the fact, which all prayer assumes, of direct communion between the human mind and the mind of God. Varying in degree of vividness, this witness of spirit to spirit is perhaps the most uniform experience of real prayer. The believer is conscious of exercises which he cannot attribute to any other cause than the real and personal agency of God.

Thoughts are often suggested which the believer feels that he did not originate. Preachers have told us of such mental illumination in prayer, by which obscure texts of Scripture have been lighted up; difficult plans of sermons have been opened to them, with an affluence of material and a suddenness of develop-

ment which impress them irresistibly with the conviction: "This is the work of God: this is the teaching of the Holy Ghost; this is the fulfilment of the promise, 'It shall be given you what ye shall say.'" The Rev. Dr. Finney more than once cast aside the elaborated sermon which he had brought to the pulpit, to make room for another on a new text, and a different theme, which seemed to him to be revealed to him in the preceding prayer.

Emotions often fill the praying soul which we cannot otherwise as rationally account for as by the simple fact that the Infinite One is present, drawing the suppliant to communion with himself. "The Lord is in this place," said the awestruck patriarch. That feeling in a believer's soul often has the vividness of vision. A voice proclaiming the fact from the heavens would not be more convincing.

Revolutions of feeling often occur in prayer, of which the most probable explanation is, that they are the work of God. Hope takes the place of despondency. Love displaces fear. Rest follows self-conflict. Trust expels forebodings. Assurance of pardon lifts off suddenly the leaden weight of guilt. Remorse transformed to penitent faith is one of the most revolutionary changes of which the human spirit is susceptible. Poetry and romance discover nothing else like it in the history of human passions. Yet this is one of the most common experiences of believing prayer. . . .

Power of speech is often marvelously quickened in prayer. Emotions which the soul has struggled with long and painfully, find sudden outlet in language of which the praying one never conceived before. Some men can habitually speak in prayer as nowhere else. An unlettered Christian was once summoned into court, in a trial in which he had much at stake. He was called upon to tell his own story. He was flustered, he stammered, he repeated, and contradicted himself, and was in danger of losing his case for want of the power of utterance. He knew himself, and knew that there was one act in which he could talk. He begged of the judge liberty to pray. It was granted. He knelt down, and with flowing tears poured out his case before the Lord in language clear, coherent, fluent, and convincing to the jury. Be this story literally true or not, it illustrates a fact well known to believers in the reality of prayer. A man is known to me, who in common life is an incorrigible stammerer. He cannot say a word without making it three. He is the butt of mimics. But in prayer his utterance is Ciceronian. Few men can mimic him in that. One prayer offered by the late Professor Stuart more than forty years ago is still remembered, and fragments of it rehearsed, as a most thrilling approach to apostolic inspiration.

"The Spirit helpeth our infirmities." How often does the promise come home to the struggling suppliant, as a fact revealed! Apostles had no monopoly of it. Leaders in public worship, to whom the service is a cross and a terror, do you know nothing of this unsealing of the dumb lips, this inspiration of the silent tongue? Has it not sometimes been to you like a burst of sunlight on a wintry sky? Has not the outbreak of triumphant song, in the hymn that followed, been your own irrepressible offering of thanksgiving? Youthful preachers know, or will know, what I mean?

But cannot these phenomena result from the unaided working of the human mind? Oh, yes, they can. Sometimes perhaps they do. We can afford large concessions. But the point to which Christian consciousness bears witness is that commonly they are more naturally explained by the hypothesis of the real presence and the direct agency of God.

#### A HINT.

We find the following prompt words in the "Oregon Churchman." We give them for the benefit of those concerned:

There is a class of grumblers who do a vast deal of harm. In our parishes they are the persons who are always finding out that "people take so little interest" in this or that. To a great extent, no doubt, it is true that there is a want of interest in all good work. But the people who most frequently use the word are those who do the least. A man's vision is always colored for him from within. We hear now and then from infidels that the churches are all falling to pieces. A man who never prays, thinks no one else prays. And if one settles himself down to masterly inactivity, he will be sure to think that no one takes any interest in anything. The way to kill this kind of

grumbling is for the grumblers to go to work. Take interest yourselves, and you will then find that other people take interest also. It must always be, of course, that the burden of the work will fall upon the few. The great majority of the people are interested in nothing but getting bread and making a show. Let the few faithful ones in every parish work together faithfully, doing their best to bring others into the work, but never abating their own labors because the laborers are few. It is always so. It always will be so. The strongest proof that the Lord is among His people is seen in the fact that in almost every community there are those who are ready to toil early and late in the Master's cause. God's blessing rests upon faithful work, singly or in crowds. Don't grumble then about the few who labor, but see that you are among that number.

#### SOME KINDS OF SPECTACLES.

How many people wear spectacles! not visible to their neighbors and friends, perhaps not made of glass or costly pebbles, nor rimmed with gold or steel or shell—but spectacles for all that, affecting every impression received by the wearer.

To be sure, these spectacles are not always helpful. Very often they are hindrances. In many cases they distort, enlarge, contract the objects presented to them. Yet singularly enough their wearers can seldom, if ever, be brought to recognize their own lack of clear vision. They distrust the testimony of others. They discredit the plainest facts, if those facts would prove them wrong. They shake their heads with serene obstinacy and say "You can't deceive us! We know better," and all argument becomes hopeless.

Some of these spectacles magnify terribly. Seen through this kind, a small fault becomes a glaring impropriety; a few hasty unconsidered words develop into a downright insult; a trifling inattention grows into a serious neglect; or worst of all, a thoughtless criticism of a friend enlarges into a cruel slander.

Other spectacles, again, diminish everything within their range of vision. The wearers of these never see great and noble deeds in their full proportions. Large aims and thoughts must narrow down to suit their limited field. As for the small kindnesses, the petty sacrifices of every-day life, these escape them altogether, dwarfed into an unmeaning littleness, and this unworthy of note.

Still other spectacles of this sort are constructed on the model of those bits of smoked glass with which we watch a solar eclipse. Like them they impart a dull, dim, depressing hue to all around. The blue sky, the golden sunshine, the brilliant coloring of flowers, are all blended in one monotonous tint. Nor is this peculiarity confined (as in the case of the smoked glass) to natural objects. Bright smiles, healthful bloom, worldly prosperity, faithful love, promising genius—all these, and many more, lose their charm and brilliancy when looked at through these dismal spectacles. Unhappy enough must be he or she who wears them, but alas! tenfold more wretched is the fate of the unfortunate who must dwell here below with the wearer.

Let us be quite sure, dear friends, that we make not even an occasional use of any of these hateful spectacles. Rather may we seek and seeking find a pair of these clear, true, enviable glasses, fashioned by the hand of Love, which shall show us the good that dwells in every one and every thing about us. Such a pair of spectacles will help us to bear all things, hope all things. They will aid us to find the silver lining to the darkest cloud that overshadows us. They will serve us in discovering something to do, something to learn, something to love in all our lives, and when we look up to heaven they will not fail us. Love springing from faith, shall strengthen and enlarge our vision evermore.

AUTHORITY, custom, or chance are, in fact, the great sources of law in primitive communities, as we know, not contract.—*Maine*.

CHRIST HAS DIED.—It is natural for the heart to long for something better than itself; to long for a God; Christ came and satisfied that longing, we see Him at a terrible price giving Himself for God; why does He this? Not for Himself, for us; This attracts our attention to Him, and we long to know more of Him; Then comes the Holy Spirit. The man is made new and started in life afresh with God's blessing. Man's Christianity is gratitude to Christ. How simple! Do not dispute over trifles; here is a great thing; Christ has died for us.—*Rev. Phillips Brooks*.