

Christian Worker.

"WORK WHILE IT IS CALLED TODAY."

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PRAYER.

While the question of prayer is under discussion, we wish to add a word or two more on the subject. First, some Christians write about prayer as though it was a positive ordinance to be obeyed as the command to be baptized or to observe the Lord's supper. It is not a positive ordinance. We do not see how a man can pray simply as obedience to law. Prayer is the desires of the heart, expressed in words. We can express the desire that is in the heart in obedience to command, but the heart cannot desire at the behest of a command. The heart must be moulded by the influence of divine truth, and made to appreciate the power, goodness, mercy of God, and the sinfulness, weakness and insufficiency of humanity, then its desire is that God would heal its sinfulness, help its weakness, its helplessness, and supply its insufficiency. The heart that realizes the condition of humanity and the mighty power and tender love of God to man, will pray. It must pray. The Scriptures regulate rather than command prayer. They tell how to pray that the prayer may be pleasing to the Father and secure his blessing. The Scriptures never tell man not to pray. They warn him that prayers offered in certain conditions or states are displeasing to the Father. This is done not to cause the individual to cease to pray, but to lead him to change the conditions that make the prayer offensive to God, that it may be accepted by Him.

The conditions of acceptable prayer are given that man in his conscious weakness and helplessness, may in seeking help from God, so change his conditions that the prayer will be heard and answered.

The readiness of God to hear prayer, his willingness to bestow blessings in answer to prayer is given, to lead man to seek that frame of mind and those relations to God that are well pleasing to God and so secure his blessing and favor. A sense of weakness, a desire of help and strength, is as natural to the soul as hunger is to the body. A soul can no more desire spiritual food in obedience to a positive command, than the stomach of a child can hunger for food in obedience to a command of the parent. Compliance with the laws of life makes a healthy body, and a healthy body gives a stomach that craves food. A soul in harmony with divine law creates a hungering after the help that God supplies. To give expression to that soul-hunger is a directing prayer. The parent directs the child how its hunger can be supplied with food that will satisfy the hunger, strengthen the body and in due time cause it again to hunger with a keen, sharp appetite for more food. God directs his child how to come to him that he may find spiritual food that satisfies hungering, increases his spiritual strength, vigor and activity and causes him to come with a sharp spiritual appetite for more and greater blessing.

The only thing that hinders prayer is a feeling of self-sufficiency,

a lack of dependence upon God, a failure to realize human weakness, helplessness and sinfulness. A presumptuous self-reliance and self-sufficiency keep men from the mercy seat of prayer, and that presumptuousness has been stamped by God as the greatest of all sins in his sight.

A man then ought to be careful to secure those conditions and surroundings that God has indicated are needful for his favor. He ought to so harmonize his soul with the law of God, that he will feel continually a keen, sharp, hungering and thirsting after righteousness. He ought to be careful that he ask according to the divine will, and for that food that God has provided which will make the soul strong and active.

He ought to continually cultivate a feeling of his own weakness, frailty and helplessness—of God's readiness to help and abundantly bless.

In a word the prerequisite to acceptable prayer is a full and affectionate surrender to God. A full surrender of our affections to the Father of our spirits. A full surrender of the affection, feelings, purposes of the soul to be led by the will of God. When we do this, friends, we cannot help praying to God, we cannot think of him without comingling with the thoughts an earnest prayer for his blessing, his help, that his power may supplement our weakness. We can't labor for him without breathing into that labor a constant and an earnest prayer that he may through us will and do of his own good pleasure. Labor that is inspired by love to God will be a labor that is wrought from beginning to end in and through prayer.

A labor that is not wrought in prayer to God, is a labor in which God has no part, even though it be performed in mechanical obedience and outward conformity to God's law, and in vain, man labors when God labors not with him. The Divine Master prayed earnestly and persistently for the presence and help of the Father, and he is a self-sufficient, mechanical formalist who imagines he can serve God without earnest, faithful prayer to God in all that he does. The heart that does not continually plead for the Father's help and depend upon the Father's strength and blessing, has never made the full affectionate surrender to God, and needs first of all to make that surrender. It has never realized its lost and helpless condition.

LOVE.

Grandest word ever conceived in a heart, or uttered by a tongue. Word fraught with deeper meaning than any other word found in human language. Word of deep import in heaven and earth, that shall never become obsolete, and never die, for "God is love." It reveals the most benign attribute of his nature. High as the heavens it presents the lofty exhibition of his graciousness, deep as the exhaustless mines of His wisdom and knowledge it shows his abounding mercy, and declares his blissful and glorious

purpose. That lofty exhibition of his love is the gift of His Son, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," the abounding mercy of his love. While we were yet sinners he gave his Son to be a propitiation, and show that his glorious purposes was to "bring us to God." We cannot scale the height, fathom the depth, or measure the length and breadth of this chief attribute of the Divine Father. Wonderful word of life. Love. Its origin found only in infinite goodness. Exhibited fully in purposing and dividing a grand scheme of redemption, and offering it fully and freely to sinful, helpless, ruined man. Gather together all his expressions and emotions of the love of all tender and loving mothers, every sentiment of human kindness the world ever knew, every feeling of affection and love ever expressed, parental, filial, social and fraternal; all would fail to exhibit the love of God to man. "Herein is love, not that we love God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be a propitiation for our sins." Surely justice and mercy have met, righteousness and peace are joined together. What wonderful compassion, amazing pity, and boundless mercy. Only approached by the love of Jesus "Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity." "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." "Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." Was ever love like "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge."

He left his starry crown
And laid his robes aside,
On wings of love came down
And war, and strife, and need,
What he endured, O who can tell,
To save our souls from death and hell.

The love of Christ. What length and breadth! what depth and height! Look at his eventful life, though attended by priestly hatred, the envy and invidious of deceitful pharisees, and assailed on every side by the enmity and adversary of man. "He went about doing good." His life was stigmatized as evil, his associations declared to be vile, called a wine-bibber, a blasphemer, a glutton, a friend of publicans and sinners. Yet deeds of love and mercy are shown all along his pathway. He endures toil, fatigue and hunger, receives hatred, scorn, and ingratitude, "despised and rejected of men." "A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." He has an outstretched arm to weak suffering humanity, in every pain and sorrow, and an eye of love and pity for every trial and grief. "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." All manner of diseases hide from his presence, and sin and sorrow flee away. The dead son is restored to the heart broken widowed mother. And the grave yields up its victims again to the orphan and the widow. Bethany but all these acts of boundless love and power, shrink from view, as we draw near Gethsemane. The feast of fellowship and love in the upper room is past, the echoes

of the closing hymn have scarce died away, when we have beyond Kellrons vale the sad words of the Martyr. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, tarry up here and watch with me." The great work he came to perform for the world is upon him, the dread encounter is near, the thought of some separation from God in order to reach lost humanity, dead in trespasses and sins, separated from God, wring from his heart the terrible agony. He points out his soul to God in cries and tears. "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." If it be possible (that none can be redeemed, saved from sin, ransomed from the grave, rolled in righteousness, crowned with everlasting life and joy, and dwell with thee forever more) without this agony, this suffering, this awful separation, let it pass from me. If not, "thy will be done." I will drink its bitterness to the dregs. And he drinks it. "Surely he bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows." He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed."

O Gethsemane thou sacred hallowed spot, the depths of agony and sorrow folded in thy shadow, the heights of anguish and suffering wrapped in thy midnight shades, cannot be measured by finite minds. But the voices of countless love and suffering voices not here, we must witness another, a greater exhibition of love, "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." Man must remain forever lost, or the Son of God must die. The spotless Lamb must be slain for us.

At Calvary the grand climax of love is reached. Here is fulness of love, here Heaven's richest gift to man, God gives his son to die, that son "becomes obedient even unto the death of the cross," a death of open shame and ignominy, a death at the hands of an infuriated mob who clamor for his blood, a death where friends forsake him, where no tear is shed, no word of sympathy and comfort spoken, no acts of kindness shown, no hand to wipe away the bloody sweat of agonizing pain, no arm outstretched to cool that fevered throbbing brow or moisten those parched lips, burning with thirst, which utter only words of forgiving love. That torn and bleeding body, and that pierced brow awaken in the breast of the cruel mob no pity, no sympathy, nothing but a desire to fill with deeper bitterness the cup of anguish he is called to drink. No murmur is heard from him, no words of bitterness escape those pale quivering lips, but in response to the mocking of the priests, the scorn of Scribes and Pharisees, the revilings and insults of the rabble he pleads, "Father forgive them they know not what they do." While we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Was ever love like this, view him as he hangs on the cross.

"See from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love go mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet

Or thorns compass so rich a crown."

We look in amazement, and wonder, why all this suffering, agony, bleeding and dying? Why all this divine compassion, all this wondrous love? "That whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but might have everlasting life."

Jesus has died that I might live
Might live to God alone
In him eternal life receive
And sit upon his throne.

All this exhibition of Divine love, that we might "love him because he first loved us," that he might win us from sin and sorrow, to holiness and heaven. Love consists not in words and professions, but in promises and deeds. Earth's highest evidence of love is that a man die for his friend. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." To heaven belongs the love that gave the Saviour to die for his enemies. Earth has no comparison, no illustration and no manifestation of such love as heaven reveals. "By this the love of God was manifested to us, that God sent forth his Son, the only begotten into the world that he might live for us, and die for us." "As God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "The love of God is perfect in us, that we may love one another, as he loved us, and we abide in his love, and his love is made perfect in us."

Man may not love as God loves, but he may love as man can love, this is all God asks, and when man loves with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength, he renders all the return God requires. O shall we not do this, anything short of it will be but ingratitude. When we love God we love the Children of God,—the brethren,—"By this we know that we love the Children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments." By keeping his commandments we cease to love sin, cease to practice sin, and cease to be in a state of sin. Having purified our souls by obeying the truth (keeping his commands) we are to love one another from a pure heart fervently. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another." O that the day may soon come, when as Christians we shall love God sufficiently to keep all his commandments, then, and only then, can we love the Children of God, and "If we love one another God abides in us, and his love is made perfect in us."

"How sweet how heavenly is the love
That those that love the Lord

Love in one another's peace delight
And so fulfil the word.
Love is the golden chain that binds
The happy souls above
And he's an heir of heaven who finds
His bosom glow with love."
(J. J. B.)

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SUCCESS DEPENDS ON ACTION.

No sailing ship drifts into port
While out upon the ocean,
Not drifting, founder, hapless boat,
You want of proper motion
No engine drives your laden train
Without some fuel, fire,
Nor can you mount the rounds of fate
Without a will, desire!

Those guns alone can't check the foe
Till he's laid—behind his powder!
Nor rank of men can put your breach
Till you're laid—behind your bayonet!
You sit and oft complain at Fate;
And, sitting, curse Dame Fortune!
Alas! you'll lose, when it's too late,
Success depends on action!

Repose waited not for luck
To write his name in history,
But with the iron pen of pluck
He wrote it—that's the way—
High;
And you would be the owner?
Then up! awake! about it, fly!
Nor wait some chance doneer!

The world is wide, and broad, and free;
Then cease of gloom to borrow;
Arise! go forth and you will see
It's your own self that's narrow!

And what if you ain't great or wise,
But may be small and poor!
Well, God don't look on sense or size
But on the heart—the doer!

Don't wait some action great to do,
Be little deeds your portion;
You Shore, but grains of sands,
You know,
Restrains the mighty ocean!

Then trust to other hands some less,
And trust to yours some more;
And trust to God your lot to bless,
And plenty'll crowd your store!
W. C. HARLEY,
Chattanooga, Tenn.

—Apostolic Guide—

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If one wants to enjoy the comforts afforded by the Bible, the indispensable condition of securing the result is that he should bow his head and his heart to an absolute authority of the Bible in all matters pertaining to religious faith and practice. In no other mood of mind can he receive these comforts or be entitled to them. If he cavils with the Bible or trifles with it, this will certainly destroy its power to bless his soul. Its comforts are for those, and for those only, who implicitly yield to its authority.

In matters of love nothing is so common to all woman as the desire that another shall not gain that which she herself refuses—
Alexander Hamilton.