

## Pastor and People.

### HUMILITY.

The bird that soars on highest wing  
Builds on the ground her lowly nest;  
And she that doth most sweetly sing  
Sings in the shade when all things rest.  
In lark and nightingale we see  
What honour hath humility.

When Mary chose the better part,  
She meekly sat at Jesus' feet;  
And Lydia's gently-opened heart  
Was made for God's own temple meet.  
Fairest and best adorned is she  
Whose clothing is humility.

The saint that wears heaven's brightest crown  
In deepest adoration bends;  
The weight of glory bows him down  
The most, when most his soul ascends.  
Nearest the throne itself must be  
The footstool of humility.

### THE PRAYER THAT HAS POWER.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.

All of God's mighty men and women have been mighty in prayer. When Martin Luther was in the mid-valley of his conflict with the Man of Sin, he used to say that he could not get on without three hours a day in prayer. Charles G. Finney's grip on God gave him a tremendous grip on sinner's hearts. The greatest preacher of our times—Spurgeon—had pre-eminently the "gift of the knees;" the last prayer I ever heard him utter (at his own family worship) was one of the most wonderful that I ever listened to; it revealed the hiding of his power. Abraham Lincoln once said: "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go; my own wisdom and that of all around me seemed insufficient for the day."

But what is prayer? Has every prayer power with God? Let us endeavour to get some clear ideas on that point. Some people seem to regard prayer as the rehearsal of a set form of solemn words, learned largely from the Bible, or a liturgy; and when uttered they are only from the throat outward. Genuine prayer is a believing soul's direct converse with God. Phillips Brooks has condensed it into four words—a "true wish sent Godward." By it, adoration, confession of sin, and petition for mercies and gifts ascend to the Throne, and by means of it infinite blessings are brought down from Heaven. The pull of our prayer may not move the Everlasting Throne, but—like the pull on a line from the bow of a boat—it may draw us into closer fellowship with God and fuller harmony with His wise and holy will.

I. This is the first characteristic of the prayer that has power. "Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thy heart." A great many prayers are born of selfishness, and are too much like dictation or demand. None of God's promises are unconditional; and we have no such assets that we have a right to draw our cheques and demand that God shall pay them. The indispensable quality of all right asking is a right spirit towards our Heavenly Father. When a soul feels such an entire submissiveness towards God that it delights in seeing Him reign, and His glory advanced, it may fearlessly pour out its desires; for then the desires of God and the desires of that sincere submissive soul will agree. God loves to give to them who love to let Him have His way; they find their happiness in the chime of their own desires with the will of God.

James and John once came to Jesus and made to Him the amazing request that He should "do for us whatsoever we shall desire"; and then they bolted out the petition that He should place one of them on His right hand, and the other on His left hand when He set up His Imperial Government at Jerusalem. They were as selfish office seekers as any who now pester our President at Washington. As long as these self-seeking disciples

sought only their own glory, Christ could not give them the askings of their ambitious hearts. By and by when their hearts had been renewed by the Holy Spirit and they had become so consecrated to Christ that they were in complete accord with Him, they are not afraid to pour out their deepest desires. James declares that if we "do not ask amiss," God will "give liberally." John declares that "whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." Just as soon as those two Christians found their supreme happiness in Christ and His cause, they received the desires of their hearts.

II. The second trait of prevailing prayer is that it aims at a mark, and knows what it is after. When we enter a store or shop we ask the salesman to hand us the particular article we want. There is an enormous amount of pointless, prayerless praying done in our devotional meetings; it begins with nothing and ends nowhere. The model prayers mentioned in the Bible were short and right to the mark. "God be merciful to me a sinner!" "Lord save me!" cries sinking Peter. "Come down, ere my child die!" exclaims the heart-stricken nobleman. Old Rowland Hill used to say, "I like short, ejaculatory prayer; it reaches Heaven before the Devil can get a shot at it."

III. In the next place, the prayer that has power with God must be a prepaid prayer. If we expect a letter to reach its destination we must put a stamp on it; otherwise it goes to the Dead-letter Office. There is what may be called a Dead-prayer Office, and thousands of well-worded petitions get buried up there. All of God's promises have their conditions; we must comply with those conditions or we cannot expect the blessings coupled with the promises. No farmer is such an idiot as to look out for a crop of wheat unless he has plowed and sowed his fields. In prayer we must first be sure that we are doing our part if we expect God to do His part. There is a legitimate sense in which every Christian should do his utmost for the answering of his own prayers. When a certain venerable minister was called on to pray in a missionary convention, he first fumbled in his pocket, and when he had tossed the coin into the plate, he said: "I cannot pray until I have given something." He prepaid his prayer. For the churches in these days to pray "Thy kingdom come," and then spend more money on jewelry and cigars than in the enterprise of foreign missions, looks almost like a solemn farce. God has no blessings or stung pockets. When I hear requests for prayer for the conversion of a son or daughter, I say to myself: How much is that parent doing to win that child to Christ? The godly wife who makes her daily life attractive to her husband has a right to ask God for the conversion of that husband; she is co-operating with the Holy Spirit, and prepaying her heart's request. God never defaults; but He requires that we prove our faith by our works, and that we never ask for a blessing that we are not ready to labour for. Genuine, self-denying, prevailing prayer is always prepaid; the offerer of it is always willing to make any sacrifice to secure the blessing which his soul desires.

IV. Another essential of the prayer that has power with God, is that it be the prayer of faith, and be offered in the name of Jesus Christ. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." The chief "wrestling" that we are to do is not with any reluctance on God's part; it is the obstacles which sin and unbelief put in our pathway. What God orders, we must submit to uncomplainingly; but we must never submit to what God can better. Never submit to be blocked in any pious purpose or holy undertaking, if, with God's help, you can roll the blocks out of your pathway. The faith that works while it prays com-

monly conquers; for such faith creates such a condition of things that our Heavenly Father can wisely hear us and help us. Oh, what a magnificent epic are the triumphs of striving, toiling, victorious faith! The Hamant of Bible story blazes with answers to prayer, from the days when Elijah unlocked the heavens on to the days when the petitions in the house of John Mark unlocked the dungeon and brought liberated Peter into their presence. The whole field of providential history is covered with answered prayers as thickly as bright-eyed daisies cover our Western prairies. Find thy happiness in pleasing God, and sooner or later He will surely grant thee the desires of thy heart.

### BIOGRAPHY OF CERTAIN HYMNS.

Let anyone stand in some old German church—for Germany is pre-eminently the land of Christian hymns—and listen to the hymn that is lifted up by such strong and hearty voices, and think how the same words have been sung by perhaps ten generations; how the people have heard them from childhood; how they have been met by them in every conceivable circumstance of life, and the brightest and darkest days of Christendom; what struggles of the soul they have roused, and witnessed and shared; in what strange and often tragic scenes they have mingled; what they have been to successive mourners, to widows and orphans, and the sick and dying, and hypocrites and plotters, to all that shifting group of worshippers—let anyone do this, and the hymn seems already to have received its memoir. A Jew passing by the church with his sister steps in while the people are singing; he cannot resist the hymn; his sister rouses and scolds him in vain; it goes singing on in his heart; though she calls it an abomination of the Gentiles; and in the same church he is baptised. Luther writes a hymn and soon after a poor clothworker walks through the streets of Magdeburg, singing it; the Mayor lays hands on him and throws him into prison, but the hymn has done its work, and two hundred sturdy Magdeburgers march up against the Mayor and demand their singer. It must have been a heroic song, for Luther shut up amongst doubts and fears at Coburg, took it for the comfort of his own heroic soul, saying to his servant, "Come and let us sing it against the devil." And the crowds that followed Luther's body through Halle on its way to Wittenburg, strove to raise the same heroic measures through their tears. One would like to know more of this noble paraphrase of the 130th Psalm, but the only other record seems to be this, that it was the last Protestant hymn sung at Strasburg Cathedral, now well-nigh two hundred years ago.—W. Fleming Stevenson.

### A PERSONAL APPLICATION.

It is related of Joseph Mackey, some years ago publisher of the Commercial Gazette, of New York, that, having a very large number of workmen in his employ, he had them print for his own individual use, a complete copy of the Bible, differing from the ordinary one only in this, that wherever there was a general promise he made it particular by inserting his own name before it. For example, he made it read thus: "Joseph Mackey, ask and receive, that your joy may be full"; "Joseph Mackey, My grace is sufficient for thee"; "Joseph Mackey, greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world."

We can well imagine that the Scriptures became a very different book to him when he read it in this way. And he really did not go beyond this privilege. All the obedient, believing disciples of Christ are fully authorized to take to themselves personally the richest, largest words of the grand legacy He has left them. Their only care should be to comply with the conditions which are always either expressed or implied, and then, mingling themselves boldly on the

naked word, rest there in perfect peace. Every one may and should write in or read in his own name before the promises, though he cannot print it as did Joseph Mackey.—Zion's Herald.

### FOR THE SCOFFERS OF MISSIONS TO THINK ABOUT.

When the microscopic search of skepticism, which has hunted the heavens and sounded the seas to disapprove the existence of a Creator, has turned its attention to human society, and has found a place in this planet ten miles square, where a decent man may live in decency, comfort and security, supporting and educating his children, unspoiled, unpolluted—a place where age is revered, infancy respected, womanhood honoured, and human life held in due regard—when skeptics can find a place ten miles square on this globe, where the Gospel has not gone and cleared the way and laid the foundation and made decency and security possible, it will then be in order for the skeptical literati to move thither and ventilate their views. So long as these men are dependent upon the religion which they discard for every privilege they enjoy, they may well hesitate a little before they seek to rob the Christian of his hope, and humanity of faith in that Saviour who alone has given to man that hope of life eternal which makes life tolerable and society possible, and robs death of its terrors and the grave of its gloom.

### SERIOUS THINGS TO-MORROW.

Many ages ago a Greek nobleman made a feast for his friends. In the midst of his mirth a messenger entered in great haste, with a letter. It was from a distance, to tell him that a plot had been formed by his enemies to kill him that night. "My master desired me to say that you must read the letter without delay, for it is about serious things."

"Serious things to-morrow," said the nobleman, as he threw the letter aside, and took up his cup of wine. The delay was fatal. Before his feast was at an end, his enemies rushed into the hall and slew him.

"What folly!" you say; "why did he not attend to the warning?" But are you not acting in the same manner? The world with all its pleasures and profits to-day; serious things to-morrow!

Give heed to this friendly warning. Forsake your evil ways. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood cleanseth from all sin, and without whom you must be forever lost. He invites you by His Holy Spirit, in His word: "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts;" for "now is the day of salvation." Serious Things To-day!—A. T. S. Tract.

### A PERMANENT GIFT.

"Not as the world giveth give I unto you." (John 14: 27.) The world has not the power to give a lasting gift. It promises well, but it cannot fulfil. Not one of us can say to the world, "Thine is the power," for a single day, but from any situation in life we can look up to God and say, "Thine is the power forever." "Not as the world giveth." How did the world give to the people before the flood? Their own way, for a time, and destruction at last. How did the world give to Lot? Great riches and brilliant prospects, only to snatch them all away without mercy with a mocking hand, just when he loved them most. What did the world give to Judas? Some very bright pieces of silver to carry for a few hours and then use them to buy a grave for himself. The moment the world bestows a gift, she sends out a band of thieves to steal it back, but "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," Jesus does not give in that way. Whatever He gives us is ours to keep, and to forever, because He will forever live to protect us in our gift. Whose gift are you seeking to-day, friend? The world's or Christ's.—Sam's Horn.