

## PRAYER ENCOURAGEMENT.

By C. H. Wetherbe.

A great deal of able argument has been made for many years to show that God answers human prayer, and also to set forth the utility of prayer. But it is worthy of note that there is no set argument in the Bible in favor of prayer. There is, however, very much encouragement given in the Bible to all people to pray, and to pray continually. This is a great deal better than mere argument. One answer to prayer does more to encourage a person of weak faith to pray than all argument can do. When one person goes to another one and asks him for a much-needed favor, and promptly receives it, he is thereby encouraged to again go to that one for some benefit, and the second successful asking gives a still greater encouragement. It is very much so in reference to the examples of successful praying which the Bible gives. In the New Testament are examples of answered prayer which are quoted from the Old Testament, and one reason for it seems to be for the encouragement of the readers to keep on praying, even under the most discouraging conditions. It is stated that Elijah was of the same nature that believers in New Testament times were, and he prayed that it might not rain, and for three and a half years it did not rain; then he prayed for rain, and it came. That fact was quoted as a mighty encouragement to the praying ones, not only in apostolic times, but in all succeeding times. And call to mind how often Christ, by exhortation, by parable, and by His own example, encouraged His followers to pray. Think of His picture of the widow and the unjust judge. It is especially adapted to the cases of great discouragement, because answers to prayer seem to be long delayed. It applies to those who think that it is useless for them to longer pray for a certain thing, or for anything. Christ encourages such ones by saying that some things will not be received by the praying ones until they have persistently besought God when everything seems to be against them. Remember the fact that Satan does all that he can to discourage Christians from praying, and Christ does all that He can do to give them the greatest encouragement to pray.

## MAKING GOOD USE OF THE ENEMY.

Overcoming is the keenest joy in life. Shall we, then, dread, or welcome, the opportunity to overcome? The man who has fallen so many times before his worst sin-foe that he has given up counting his failures, yet who desperately, blindly fights on, groping for the light through the tears of his bitter discouragement, hoping against hope, in agony of soul, that he may yet win,—it is no wonder that he dreads in shrinking terror the next onslaught of the enemy. He knows that the enemy knows the well-worn track through broken will and shattered resolutions into the citadel of his life. But why may he not gain strength, after all, by recognizing that that very attack is his opportunity, permitted of God, to taste the keen joy of overcoming? Without the renewal of the fight, there would be no chance to regain the lost character, the lost will. The enemy can be made the stepping-stone to all that one longs for; and without the enemy, now, there would be no such restoration. Half the force of the attack will be gone when the enemy finds that he is welcomed! But only in Christ's strength may we safely do this.—Sunday School Times.

Leave Christ out of your sermons, and you blot the sun out of the firmament. To make a sermon, and Christ not the main thing in it, you may call it discourses, it is not preaching.—R. HALL, of Kelso.

## WORDS FROM THE CROSS.

## "Father, Forgive Them."

This is the climax of love, and so the climax of Christ.

Christ considers not what is done but what is willed; if we "know not," God punishes not.

## "To-day shalt thou be with me."

No one of us can be in a worse case than the thief on the cross; he has shown us how any man may be saved. The cross the gateway to paradise! Do we find it so?

## "Why hast Thou forsaken me?"

This only was needed to complete Christ's union with mankind—that He should doubt His Father!

We can never be so far forsaken of God as Christ seemed to be, and yet how near God was to Him!

## "Behold thy Mother."

Christ on the Cross took thought for the lowest sinner, and pardoned him; and for the highest of His creation, a loving mother.

This word was also a blessing to John; there is no comfort of grief equal to a task.

## "I thirst."

Not only the most bitter pangs of the spirit broke the heart of Jesus, but the most intense anguish of body. He can sympathize with all our aches.

Remember that if Christ had not come, such cruel deaths would still be inflicted.

## "Father, into Thy hands."

Christ has used His life all through as a steward of it for another; now He returns it,—how gloriously enlarged!

The clouds had passed away; there is no more thought of being forsaken.

## "It is Finished."

And yet it was only begun, as Luke rightly said in the first verse of the Acts.

There is no "finished," complete life outside of Christ.

## A Cluster of Quotations.

Christ's cross is the Jacob's ladder by which we mount up to heaven.—C. H. Spurgeon.

Christ's faith, as a man, reached its climax in that supreme hour when, loaded with the mysterious burden of God's abandonment, he yet cried in His agony, "My God!"—Alexander Mac-laren.

The seven sentences from the cross are seven windows by which we can still look into Christ's very mind and heart.—James Stalker.

Yes! if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God.—Rousseau.

## Our Reasonable Pledge.

Our pledge promises Bible-reading, prayer, testimony, service, church-support, church-attendance, a Christian life.

It does not promise these absolutely, but it agrees to strive for them.

It agrees in regard to them to be governed, not by whim or chance, but by Christ's will, discovered by an enlightened conscience.

It assumes that usually Christ will have these things done regularly, but that sometimes He will have other duties for us.

It is binding, but only so far as Christ's will is binding on the Christian, for it seeks His will alone.

If any pastor wishes to change the pledge for any reason, and write an entirely new one for his young people, he may do so. He may make it harder

or easier, change it little or much. He need not submit the changed pledge to any one outside his own church. His society will be in just as good standing as a Christian Endeavor Society after the changes are made as before.

If there is anything unreasonable in this, what is it, pray?

## DAILY READINGS.

M., Dec. 3.—Honoring a mother. Prov. 23:22-25.  
T., Dec. 4.—Our Great High Priest. Heb. 2:14-18.  
W., Dec. 5.—Paul's finished life. 2 Tim. 4:1-8.  
T., Dec. 6.—Forgiving enemies. Mark 11:20-26.  
F., Dec. 7.—"Save to the uttermost." Heb. 7:22-28.  
S., Dec. 8.—"Into thy hands." Ps. 31:1-8.  
S., Dec. 9.—Topic—Christ's life. XII. Lessons from the "seven words from the cross." John 19:25-30; Luke 23: 23-46; Mark 15:34.

## THE TRUE EDUCATION.

In religious education the implanting of a firm faith in the Bible, as the word of God, a sense of the need of regeneration, the principles of morality, an appreciation of the love, mercy and justice of God, the voluntary sacrifice of Christ, the influence of the Spirit, the promise of help for the life that now is, and the promise of salvation to all who truly repent of their sins and believe the Gospel, are what each soul of man needs. These truths will produce conviction in most youths if they see the witness in the life of parents and teachers. Those who can not be reached by them may be led by and to men, but not to Christ. The only philosophy of revivals is that which aims to create in men an intense sense of the need of Christ now.—New York Christian Advocate.

## ANGER'S STING.

No word spoken in anger against a person is ever justified. It matters not how wrong, or unjust, or cutting, or ill-mannered, or wilfully untruthful, that person may be; to give vent to one's anger in return only lowers one to the level of the other, accomplishes no good, and leaves one with a rankling sense of defeat. Most of us have put this to the test,—and then have wished we had not. The times of stress upon which all look back with most lasting satisfaction are those times when they have kept their self-control, not when they have lost it. The reason why an outburst of anger leaves such a sting with the one who gives way to it, is because it is a defeat self-inflicted. It hurts more than any wound from another.

## THE LIGHTNESS OF HEAVY SORROW.

Sorrow's burden is going to be outweighed, some day, by the joy for which it is making us ready. We cannot understand this while sorrow is heavy upon us, but the loving Father will help us to believe it even now. "For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." Our present affliction seems heavy beyond endurance; it is heavy with an oppression that God must help us bear up under; yet even its terrible weight is as lightness to the "weight of glory" which God has in store for us, and which, for reasons that we cannot know, he could not give us save by the "lightness" of present affliction. Times will come, and is near at hand, when we shall see to rejoice in all that now looks dark and unloving. Let us keep faith while we cannot see.

It has been observed by some eminent divines, that ministers are seldom honored with much success, unless they are continually aiming at the conversion of sinners.—DR. OWEN.