

faith to remove the mountain of sin, yet how often in a particular case of difficulty.—how often when a difficulty lies in the path of duty, they have not faith to remove this mountain! Before this mountain they stagger—they waver. The fact is, there is still in their heart doubt and unbelief: and hence it is that Christ, in making his solemn declaration of the power of faith, distinctly guards the believing suppliant against all doubting, as in the next words: “And shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith.” Alas! there is too apt to lie in the heart, even of believers, a mountain of doubt and unbelief. This is the greatest of all mountains. Let this be removed, and the other mountain of difficulty will soon disappear. Let their prayer, therefore, in the first place, be—“Lord, help thou our unbelief; increase our faith.”

*Application.*—Do you believe? Have you faith in God? Are you righteous—righteous in the gospel sense, i. e., justified by the grace and sanctified by the Spirit of God? Remember that it is indispensable to efficacious prayer—to prayer that shall certainly prevail, that you are believers. O see, then, that you are born again,—that you are children of the kingdom, and have an interest in the promises.

Ye unregenerate, pray. It is your duty to pray. Prayer is a means of grace. Though your prayer be not the voice of the spirit of adoption, but only the outcry of distressed nature, and therefore not the prayer which commands the blessing, yet it is a means of grace, and God is found in the use of means. The outcry of nature may issue in true prayer—that prayer which ensures acceptance. The door of prayer is open to you; O see that you enter it! Who knows to what it may lead you. It may lead to the forgiveness of your sins, and to your obtaining an inheritance among them that are sanctified.

To Simon Magus, who was destitute of true faith, and had neither part nor lot in the blessings of the gospel, the Apostle Peter, even when perceiving him to be in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity said, “Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.”

Believers, stir up the grace that is in you. O see that you pray in the exercise of faith. Remember that it is the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man that availeth much. See that you pray in the spirit. In all your prayers, implore the help of God's Holy Spirit. See that you pray, having confidence in prayer as to the things prayed for. Think how dishonoring to God, to come to him to ask, without any expectation from or trust in him, as to what is asked. At the same time, see that you ask not what is amiss. See that all your prayers are grounded on the promises. See that the things you pray for are agreeable to God's revealed will; see that they are within the compass of the command or the promise.

See that they are for the glory of God, or the welfare of the church, or for the good temporal, spiritual, or eternal, of yourself or of others.

Perhaps you say your faith is weak, that you cannot so pray, as to be fully persuaded that what you pray for shall be granted you. But consider that there is, no reason you should remain weak in the faith. If true, you can have faith only according to proportion given you; and that Christ do not despise or condemn those that are weak in the faith: but it is equally true that the weakest faith may be made strong by the faithful improvement of the measure given, and Christ rebukes his people, on account of their little faith. On one occasion, he said to Peter, “O, thou of little faith, wherefore dost thou doubt?” On another occasion, he said to some of his disciples, “Why are ye so fearful? How is it, that ye have no faith?” It is plain, therefore, that strong faith is within your reach; for Christ would never have faulted with men for not possessing that which they could not possess.

It is your duty and privilege to ask for a needful blessing, both temporal and spiritual. It is your duty and privilege to make, in your prayers, specific supplication for particular objects. When trials, and difficulties, and afflictions assail you, spread the roll of them. Hezekiah did Sennacherib's threatening letter before the Lord, and ask, in faith, that so doing, you may receive strength and direction from on high.

Ask, desiring what you need, and fully expecting that the Lord will grant your request in what is really good for you; and it will certainly be given you. You shall find that your petition has been granted you. You shall find that you shall have the appropriate answer to your prayer. Your hearts shall be assured, that the needed blessing, if for the present denied, will at length, in God's best time and way, be bestowed. Your will shall be conformed to God's will, in the matter, as you shall say, you know you have received your petition.

Believers, see that your particular requests be holy. See, that in offering it, you perceive that you are under the impulse of the Spirit of God: that you have the Spirit's teaching as your help. See, I say, that your prayer is gracious: that your prayer may be united to the intercession of the great Intercessor, and so may certainly prevail.

Believers, when you are praying for a particular person, see that your prayer be interwrought, fervent prayer. When you pray for an unregenerate person, you will not pray particularly on the instant, for his salvation: that he may have a holy death, or a happy release: that cannot be the prayer of faith; for you do not know that it is God's will to save that particular person: he may be reprobate. But you will pray for his conversion; for that is according to the will of God. Your desire will then be the desire of God himself.