

OUR LOST PRAYERS.

BY S. C. JENNINGS, D. D.

A thousand of these our missives to the throne of grace, were never heard of there. He knew of them by His omniscience, but they were of such a character that the door of mercy was not opened to them; and yet they asked for blessings which He often gives when sought with "the whole heart."

Some prayers are lost because those offering them do not heartily desire them to be heard. He "desireth truth [sincerity] in the inward parts" (Psalms ii. 6.), and He will not give heed to idle words. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." (Gal. vi. 7.) This is not remembered.

Another reason why some are lost in the sense that no answer comes, is because those who sent them did not expect any spiritual good. Expectation is a part of faith, and 'without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him.' (Heb. ii. 6.)

Still another reason why many prayers may be lost, is that those who make them do not desire the spiritual benefit as much as some merely worldly object that perishes and alienates from God. These earthly things hang as a weight on the soul, and the prayers do not ascend to God.

Others fail of bringing down the favor of God because the *Psalmist's conviction* is not felt; 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. (Ps. xvi. 18.) It is only the effectual brayer of the righteous 'that availeth much.' (James v. 16.) Some have said 'I have prayed for what God promised, and yet received no answer.' Said one of the old writers, 'You may pray until your knees are hardened like hoofs, and yet if you will not cease to sin, you will not be heard.' Continued sinning continues the loss of the efficacy of prayer.

Prayers are lost when they proceed from an unhumiliated heart through feigned lips. They may be sent out clothed in elegant language, which is not always coming 'boldly to the throne of grace,' but often with the self-conceit of the Pharisee, and God does not hear: for it is said 'He resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.' (James iv. 6.) Some supplications are as empty of true desire as the whistling wind, and like it are lost. No divine influence follows their utterance. The authors of

them are not profited, nor do they bring down the Spirit upon individuals, nor upon the world.

Though such prayers may be offered in concert with others, and in the name of Jesus, yet God changes not, so as to answer those who do not seek Him "with the whole heart." (Psalm cvix. 2.) Hence the promises remain unfulfilled, and the world to a great extent 'lieth in wickedness.'

O that we all might understand the privilege of prayer for ourselves and for others.

Dr. Ralph Richardson writes, that any one may be cured of stammering by simply making an audible note in expiration before each word. Stammerers can sing as easily as other persons. Jackey Broster, of Chester, who made a large fortune by curing stammering simply made his pupils say *h e r* before each word beginning with a consonant.

If you want to be miserable, think about yourself, about what you want, what you like, what respect people ought to pay to you, and what people think of you. —*Charles Kingsley.*

Dr. Spring believed that better morals would be taught to children by infidels than by Jesuits.

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