

them whatever we may do? Would not Sodom have been spared for ten righteous men whether Abraham had prayed or not? Would not rain have come on Palestine if Elijah had not asked for it?

Well, let us see—as to the parable of the widow and the unjust judge—are we to learn from it, that God will give us anything that we desire, provided only that we pray fervently and frequently for it? Ought the judge to avenge the widow of her adversary unless she had just ground to make complaint and claim redress? Can God be dragooned into doing wrong by our importunity? As to the destruction of Sodom and the sending of rain. It may be that matters would have occurred precisely as they did, though patriarch and prophet had not prayed. What then? Would it have been the same for Abraham and Elijah? Surely not. Their prayers were a real and great blessing to them, bringing them nearer to God and making them humbler and stronger for all time to come. But is it certain that God will give men the same things, whether they pray or not? Or, if He does, will they have the same value for prayerless as for prayerful hearts? Does not a large part of their worth for us, and their effect upon us, lie in just this desire for them and preparation to receive them, wrought within us by the Holy Ghost? A father often says, “I would like to give my son such or such a gift, if I knew that he would prize it and would use it well.” Recently a father said to me, “I would be glad to send my boy to college if he wanted to go.” Suppose, now, that father could influence his child’s mind, leading him to desire an education, until he should come to him some day, and say, “Father, can I go to college, I want to very much.” God can move the hearts of his submissive children to crave and ask the things He knows we need. “The Spirit maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

Once more, as to prayer securing the doing of God’s will, but not of ours. That is not the full, true statement of the case. It secures the doing of God’s will *and* ours, for they are now the same. Would it better if we could sway His will to ours. Would we wish to draw Him down to the level and scope of our low, shortsighted plans, or would we have Him lift us to the height and range of His great, far-reaching views, where He can do “Exceedingly abundantly for us above all we ask or think?” “Should it be according to thy mind?”