

Contributions.

"Saying My Prayers to Myself."

ANNA D. BRADLEY.

My little neighbor was wondrous proud when he was first allowed to go alone into his bed-room and prepare for sleep. "And, mamma," said he the next morning, as he related his experience to an admiring audience, "I knelt down and said my prayers all to myself; then I blew out the lamp and went to bed."

Willie, in describing his manner of prayer, meant neither irreverence nor burlesque. He only intended to say that without dictation, or the presence of either nurse or mother, he had repeated his evening prayer.

But even if he had designed that his words should be literally translated, would Willie be alone in his manner of praying? Is there not quite a good deal of this "saying our prayers to ourself?"

If every petition was spoken only to the ear of our Father, methinks our lives would shine with a more steady light and bring forth more abundant fruit.

The business man rises in the morning and too often "says his prayers to himself." And there is nothing in this form of prayer to shield him from the varied temptations of the day. "Saying his prayers to himself" is not calculated to make him more considerate with his employees and truthful with his customers.

If an opportunity is presented to over-reach another in trade, or if he can take advantage of another's necessities to get a bargain at what he gleefully knows is less than half its value, surely there is no remembrance of the morning devotions to prevent this praying (?) Christian from yielding to every form of temptation which the devil will thrust in his way. Why not? He has only "said his prayers to himself."

The preacher who "says his prayers to himself" may charm us with his rhetoric and his poetic flights of fancy, but he is not the one who can best hold up the Crucified One to a sin-cursed, suffering world. No, he can hold up philosophy, he can hold up metaphysics, he can hold up all the new and popular questions of the day; but if we would see Jesus, we must sit under the ministry of one who, before he came in the presence of men, had gone into the presence of God and had pled for the needed strength and grace with which to feed his flock.

The mother who "says her prayers

to herself" will never be a mighty potentiality in guiding her children from earth to heaven. All powerless will she be until she learns how to secure an audience with the King upon His throne.

The mistress, the friend, the teacher—whatever capacity she may assume—will never lead a waiting soul to Jesus until she forget how to "say her prayers to herself," and learns how to talk with God.

The child who, face to face, communes with his Father in the morning, is not likely to wander very far from His guiding hand during the day; and when evening comes they again will meet and talk, as friend with friend. But the empty, the dwarfed, the barren life is the necessary result to "saying my prayers to myself."

"Saying my prayers to myself" may, for a time, affect my *talk*; but offering my prayers to God will surely, through all my life, affect my *walk*. The one may cause me to appear eminently respectable and pious before the world; the other will make me forever loyal and true to THE RIGHT, no matter whether the world may decide to applaud or condemn.

No one will ever object to our making clean the outside of the platter; this should always be done; but it can only be effectually accomplished when the cleansing process is first commenced within. It is all right to receive the outward form of Christian baptism, but it is infinitely better to be buried with Christ in baptism unto His death. It is well to go up to the house of the Lord, but it is much better to have communion with the Father. It is all right to partake in the general assembly of the bread and wine, but it is always better to eat of the flesh and blood of our Saviour.

All of these sweet beatitudes are possible to the one who has learned to make a stepping-stone of prayer to climb to the presence of God. But so long as we are content with "saying our prayers to ourselves" these lofty flights can ne'er be reached by us. We eat the worthless shell and throw away the luscious fruit. We clasp the useless jewel. Lord, teach us how to pray.

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Day Dreams of the Future.

THE DREAMER.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.

"Who is the King of Glory—who?" "It is the Lord, strong and mighty; the Lord, mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in."

"And once more, in through the gates came the Lord, and this time, mighty in battle, over His dead foes He had come with His 'called and chosen and faithful' followers, and there were those with Him who had heard the cry, 'Crucify Him,' ring through these same streets. Did they remember, I wonder? But what a city in which to receive their long-desired Messiah at last! Only those who have seen a vanquished city, and its attendant horrors, can imagine what it is like. Bloodshed, carnage, death, was everywhere. No wonder the inhabitants were overwhelmed with joy, and exultant cries resounded in all directions. There were some who were privileged to be nearest the Majestic Captain, and as He bent over to speak to them, and with out-stretched hands answered their welcome, something seemed to freeze them into silence. Horror and woe took the place of their new found joy, and then a wail of such bitter sorrow, as was never heard in that city before.

"Why! what was the matter?" I asked. The old man whispered, "They had caught sight of the marks of the nails in His hands, and the sandled feet bore the same sign." It was true; their fathers had crucified their Messiah after all, and all the ages since, they, as a nation, had endorsed the deed.

With heads bowed down and garments rent, they turn, and with one more word of welcome they seek their homes. Into their most secret chamber they entered, where neither wife nor child might come, they mourned as one mourns for his only son. Poor sorrow-stricken Jerusalem; what vengeance to fall on them.

"What was the outcome?" I asked, with breathless interest, as the old man again paused.

"The Lord, mighty in battle, was also their merciful Saviour, and while they were hiding their heads with shame and repentance, the way was being opened. The one who told me of these things, was an eye-witness, and described the time as being the strangest possible. In that day there was a

fountain opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness; while many changes took place in the formation of the city, which turned the locality into one vast plain, and Jerusalem was placed in a fitting condition to be the 'metropolis of the world.'

"After this came the gathering together of the nations of the earth for judgment; the separation into two groups—the sheep and goats—with the welcome, as subjects of the Kingdom of Righteousness, to those on the right hand, and the condemnation of those on the left; the verdict being decided by the formula, In as much as they did, or did it not, unto one of the least of Christ's brethren; while the sentence to those who did it not was, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels. One more thing remained to be done, for which a special messenger was sent from Heaven. That was the chaining and imprisonment of Satan, the great enemy of mankind, in the bottomless pit. A seal was set upon him, and there he must remain until the thousand years are closed. And then the reign of Christ began upon the earth—purified and restored to more than primeval loveliness. This is the reign of righteousness and obedience, while perfect equity controls every law and condition of men, and nothing which can offend has any place in the world. Sin and results are all put away, and the earth rejoices after the long ages of oppression and wrong doing, and I have been spared so far to see it. There is one enemy not destroyed yet, that is Death, and one day I shall sink into my grave to await the second resurrection. May God grant that my name may then be found in the Lamb's book of life."

And I awoke. The sun had sunk behind the horizon; the sunshine and the brightness had gone with my dream, while the wind blew colder with the fast coming storm, and as I turned homewards it was with a thankful heart that time yet remained to do something more to win souls to Christ, and to grow nearer to him in every service, *until He comes.*

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