

it? We mean that the man is not in earnest about his work, that he only does it because he cannot help himself, he does not like his work and does not try to like it. Now this is true of too many prayers. There is no heart or life about them, no earnestness, no reality, no real wish to make them hearty and earnest. All such prayers die before they are born, they never reach the ceiling, much less the ears of God in heaven.

You must, then, study and give diligence to make your prayers what they ought to be. One means of making them what they ought to be is taking pains to provide ourselves with proper prayers, proper forms of prayer, which we can always have ready for use. (I am of course now speaking of our regular daily prayers.) If any one say, 'But will not God hear our own words, if we set our wants before him in the best way we can?' I answer,—Most assuredly He will, if you do so. But take care that you do set your wants before Him *in the best way that you can*. That is not, surely, to drop carelessly upon your knees without thinking at all of what you are going to say, and trusting to any chance thoughts that may come into your mind at the time. You should prepare yourself for prayer and have your petitions ready, before you venture into the presence of the Most High. Take pains to improve your prayers, to pray better and better. God loves to be so honoured by those who approach Him. The serious, the earnest, the painstaking christian, the diligent man in prayer, is the one who will always go back from prayer, having the petitions that he asked of God.

2. Then, secondly, when the catechism says we are to "learn *at all times* to call upon God," this implies