

THE QUIET HOUR.

Thy Will, Not Mine.

"Our lives we cut on a curious plan,
Shaping them, as it were, for man;
But God, with better art than we,
Shapes them for eternity."

Many mistaken conceptions of the doctrine of prayer come from a superficial reading of the Scriptures. One person finds the words, "Ask, and it shall be given you;" and, searching no farther, he concludes that he has a key for the unlocking of all God's storehouses; he can get anything he wants. But he soon discovers that the answers do not come as he expected; and he becomes discouraged, and perhaps loses faith in prayer. The simple fact is, that this word of Christ, standing alone, does not contain the full truth about prayer. "It is written again." He must read more deeply, and, gathering all our Lord's sayings on this subject, combine them in one complete statement. There are conditions to this general promise. The word "ask" must be carefully defined by other Scriptures; and, when this is done, the statement stands true, infallible and faithful. One of the oftentimes forgotten conditions of all true and acceptable prayer is the final reference of every desire to the Divine will. After all our faith, sincerity and importunity, our requests must still be left to God, with confidence that He will do what is best. For how do we know that the thing we ask would really be a blessing to us if it came? Surely God knows better than we can know; and the only sure and safe thing to do is to express our desire with earnestness and faith, and then leave the matter in His hands. To ask according to God's will is to have the confidence, when we make our prayer, that God will grant it, unless in His wisdom He knows that refusal or some different answer than the one we seek will be better for us; in which case we pledge ourselves to take the refusal or the other answer as the right thing for us.

If we understood this, it would remove many of the perplexities which lie about the doctrine of prayer and its answer. We pray earnestly, and do not receive what we ask. In our bitter disappointment, we say: "Has not God promised that if we ask, we shall receive?" Yes; but look a moment at the history of prayer. Jesus Himself prayed that the cup of agony might pass, and yet it did not pass. All through the Christian years, crushed souls, under heavy crosses of sorrow or shame, have been crying: "How long, O Lord! how long?" and the only answer has been a little more added to the burden, another thorn in the crown. Are not our prayers answered, then? Certainly they are. Not a word that goes faith-winged up to God fails to receive attention and answer. But oftentimes the answer that comes is not relief, but the spirit of acquiescence in God's will. The prayer many, many times only draws the trembling supplicant closer to God. We are not to think that every burden we ask God to remove, He will surely remove, nor that every favor we crave, He will bestow. He has never promised this. "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us." Into the very heart of the prayer which our Lord gave, saying, "After this manner pray ye," He put the petition: "Thy will be done." Listening at the garden gate to the Master's own most earnest supplication, we hear, amid all the agonies of His wrestling, the words: "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

The supreme wish in our praying should not, then, be merely to get the relief we desire. This would be to put our own will before God's, and to leave no place for His wisdom to decide what is best. For example: You are a mother, and are struggling in prayer over a sick child. God will never blame you for the strength of your affection, nor for the clasping, clinging love that holds your darling in your bosom and pleads to keep it. Prayer is right, no matter how intense and importunate; yet, amid all your agony of desire, it should be the supreme, the ruling wish, "bringing every thought into subjection," that God's will may be done.

"Not as I will"—the sound grows sweet
Each time my lips the words repeat.
"Not as I will"—the darkness feels
More safe than light, when this thought steals
Like whispered voice to calm and bless
All unrest and all loneliness.
"Not as I will," because the One
Who loved us first and best has gone
Before us on the road, and still
For us must all His love fulfil.

The things we in our ignorance desire, might in the end work us great ill; the things from which we shrink may carry rich blessings for us; so we should not dare to choose for ourselves what our life experiences shall be. The best thing possible for us in this world is always what God wills for us. To have our own way rather than His, is to mar the beauty of His thought concerning us.

The highest attainment in prayer is this laying of all our requests at God's feet for His disposal. The highest reach of faith is loving, intelligent consecration of all our life to the will of God.

"Laid on Thine altar, O my Lord divine!
Accept this gift to-day, for Jesus' sake,
I have no jewels to adorn Thy shrine,
Nor any world famed sacrifice to make;
But here I bring within my trembling hand
Thy will of mine, a thing that seemeth small;
And Thou, alone, O Lord! canst understand
How, when I yield Thee this, I yield mine all."

Take it, O Father! ere my courage fail,
And merge it so in Thine own will, that e'en
If in some desperate hour my cries prevail,
And Thou give back my gift, it may have been
So changed, so purified, so fair have grown,
So one with Thee, so filled with peace divine,
I may not know or feel it as mine own,
But, gaining back my will, may find it Thine."

When some great hope of our heart is about to be taken from us, we should not dare settle the question whether we shall lose or keep it. We do not know that it would be best. At least, we know that God has a perfect plan for our life, marked out by His infinite wisdom; and surely we should not say that what we, with our limited wisdom, might prefer, would be better than what He wants us to be.—[From "Silent Times."

If Thou Couldst Know.

I think if thou couldst know,
O soul that will complain,
What lies concealed below
Our burden and our pain;
How just our anguish brings
Nearer those longed-for things
We seek for now in vain—
I think thou wouldst rejoice, and not complain.

I think if thou couldst see,
With thy dim mortal sight,
How meanings, dark to thee,
Are shadows hiding light;
Truth's efforts crossed and vexed,
Life purpose all perplexed—
If thou couldst see them right,
I think that they would all seem clear, and wise, and bright.

And yet thou canst not know,
And yet thou canst not see;
Wisdom and light are slow
In poor humanity.
If thou couldst trust, poor soul,
In Him who rules the whole,
Thou wouldst find peace and rest.
Wisdom and light are well, but Trust is best.
—Adelaide A. Proctor.

THE SOCIAL CORNER.

Under this heading, communications relating to the home or any subject of interest will be published and questions answered. MINNIE MAY.

"AILEEN."—After being exposed to harsh or chilling winds, it is a good plan, upon retiring, to rub a quantity of fresh cream on the face, removing after five or ten minutes, to be applied again, followed by a generous application of rice powder. Remove in the morning with tepid water. M. M.

"ANXIOUS ANNIE."—The greasy skin of which you complain may arise from various causes, such as debility of the skin, lack of cleanliness, etc. Only an astringent has any effect on it, and a very simple, entirely harmless one may be made from one pint of rose water, half a pint of white wine vinegar, and a few drops of essence of rose. This lotion may be applied with a piece of soft linen or a very fine sponge. M. M.

"Shamrock."—You wear mourning one year for a brother or sister: Six months, crape; four months, black; and two months, black and white, or gray. Whilst wearing crape, it is considered bad taste to join in any sort of festivity or social gathering. Formal calls are not returned until after you leave off wearing crape. M. M.

DEAR MINNIE MAY,—Being a reader of the ADVOCATE, I have become deeply interested in your Social Corner, and so I thought I would write to you.

I do not come with advice, but to ask it. Will some of your readers kindly tell me what will clean white metal; and what will stop my hair from falling out, and make it grow?

Hoping I have not asked too much for the first, I remain, yours truly, L. S.

[Hardware dealers use common whiting to clean white metal, but perhaps some of our readers can tell you of something better. The following preparation is said to cause the hair to grow faster than any other: Clarified beef marrow, half a pound; tincture of cantharides (made by soaking one drachm of powdered cantharides in one ounce of proof spirits, for a week), one ounce; oil of bergamot, twelve drops.

A simpler restorative is made by pouring a pint of boiling water on two tablespoonfuls of dried rosemary leaves, strain and add a wineglassful of rum. Moisten the scalp frequently with this mixture.

We will be pleased to give all possible information on any subject, and we invite the opinions of our readers on questions asked through these columns. M. M.]

The Bird Could Talk.

A well-known New Yorker who stutters dreadfully, and who has an inordinate fondness for practical jokes, was walking along South street in company with a friend, when they encountered a sailor who was carrying a saucy-looking parrot in a cage.

"W-watch me," said the joker. "I w-will have some f-fun w-w-with this man."

So, stopping the sailor, he inquired,

"M-m-my g-good m-man, c-c-can that parrot t-talk?"

"Well," said the sailor, "if he couldn't talk any better than you, I'd wring his bloomin' neck."

The Curfew Bell Again.

BY JOHN GILMER SPEED.

It seems not at all improbable that the average reader knows no more of the curfew bell than what has been learned from two or three familiar poems, and as the average reader is not given nowadays to taking poetry very seriously, the knowledge of the custom of ringing a bell at nightfall, and the necessity for it, is not likely to be very widespread. To speak of this just now would not be opportune were it not that there is to be a revival of the curfew in Canada, and, if it prove successful in the cities and towns of that Dominion, it is not unlikely that it may be used in some parts of the United States. The law which has been enacted by the Legislatures of Quebec and Ontario was drafted by the Society for the Protection of Women and Children, and provides that the municipal councils in cities, towns, and incorporated villages shall have power to pass by-laws for the regulation of the time after which children shall not be in the streets at nightfall without proper guardianship. The law also provides that these councils shall cause a bell to be rung at or near the time appointed—as a warning—to be called the curfew bell, after which the children so required to be at their homes or off the streets shall be liable to be warned, by any constable or police officer, to go home. After such warning, if the child shall be found loitering in the street, then it shall be the duty of the officer to take it to its home. If a child habitually breaks this law, then the parent or guardian is to be fined for permitting it—the fine to be increased for a second and third offence.

The word curfew is formed from two French words—*couvre* (cover) and *feu* (fire), and the origin of the custom is indicated by this derivation. In the Middle Ages in Northern Europe, where the household comforts of the ancient Latins and Greeks were unknown, a house was heated by an open fire made in a hole in the centre of a room, and the smoke escaped through an opening in the roof. This fire had to be watched all the time to prevent its spreading to the whole house. As the burning of one house endangered all the rest in a town or city, regulations were made that at a certain time all fires must be covered and all lights extinguished. For the convenience of the people and the watchmen as well, a bell was rung at a certain hour as a signal. This was called the *couvre-feu* or curfew. Some of the encyclopedias say that this custom was instituted in England by William the Conqueror. This, however, is a mistake, as it was a regulation long before his time. He merely enforced the regulation more strictly than it had been enforced immediately before his conquest. There can be little doubt that in doing this he had a double interest—the better protection of his new subjects from devastating conflagrations, and the prevention of persons who might plot against his reign being abroad after nightfall under the shield of darkness. Later it began to be looked upon as a hardship that lights should also be extinguished upon the ringing of the curfew bell, and in 1100 Henry I. abolished this part of the police regulation. In very early times the curfew bell was rung at seven o'clock; then it was not rung till eight, and in some places the time was extended till nine o'clock. In Scotland, always famous for merry and convivial souls, it was not uncommon for the bell not to be sounded till ten o'clock. In some Protestant countries the "prayer bell" is still rung at nightfall, and no doubt this custom succeeded to that of the curfew bell.

Puzzles.

1—FLOWER ENIGMA.

1. A woman's name, and the test of honesty;
2. One of the patriarchs and ascending subject of his dream;
3. A winged creature and the organ of vision;
4. A clasp and a fabulous animal;
5. To fasten and a useless plant;
6. A place of abode and a kind of onion.

2—RIDDLE.

I make little folks laugh,—I make little folks cry,
For sometimes I'm physic—sometimes a nice pie.

3—CHARADE.

While some desire TWO ONE of wealth,
Others would have TWO ONE of knowledge;

If one has plenty of the first,
He may obtain the last at college.

Some people fear a final strain,
Perhaps their fears have some foundation;

However, they should not neglect
The total parts of education.

—Selected.

4—DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

My FIRST is black, and in the spring,
Digs up the corn like everything;

And then my SECOND's just "one time"
Or "formerly" to make it rhyme;

My THIRD and last as you will see
Upon all fish-hooks ought to be.

The corn upon my PRIMALS grow,
Or else I would not tell you so;

Now take my FINALS out to dine,
And give it "anything woven fine";

To all little flies I would say beware,
Or else my TOTALS will you ensnare.

FAIR BROTHER.

Answers to Feb. 15th Puzzles.

- 1—Sole, bass, perch, sucker (succi), muscles, carp, skate, salmon.
- 2—

P R A T E
R A V E N
A V E R T
T E R S E
E N T E R

- 3—The letter E—

"Remember me, ye perfect men—
Ever keep these precepts ten."

- 4—

Nothing useless is or low,
Each thing in its place is best;

That which seems but outward show
Strengthens and supports the rest.

5—Cat e-gory. Can did ate.