

how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him? (Matt. 7:11). God condemned Dives to hell because he let Lazarus die of hunger at his gate. With how much confidence, then, should we not fall upon our knees and lift up hands of prayer at the Gate Beautiful of the House of Many Mansions, begging for the crumbs that fall from God's own table!

We must be attentive in prayer. If we do not ourselves attend to what we say, how can we expect God to attend to it? Prayer said with wilful distraction is worse than useless. "Before prayer prepare thy soul, and be not as a man who tempteth God" (Eccli. 18:23). Due attention presupposes that we are very much in earnest, which we shall be in the measure that we feel how sorely we need the help of God. See how keen and eager is the pleading of the one who wants for bread! Such should be our pleading in prayer—keen and eager, and therefore attentive.

"Our prayer must be conceived and begotten in lowliness of heart. The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds" (Eccli. 35:21). And again: "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (St. James 4:6; Prov. 3:34). It does not become beggars to be proud, and we are all of us beggars on the bounty of God. The Pharisee, in the parable, prayed aloud, while he cast a glance of scorn upon the poor Publican who stood afar off, striking his breast, and not daring as much as to lift up his eyes to Heaven. But the Master tells us that it was the latter who went down into his house justified rather than the former. "for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:14).

Lastly, we must be "persevering in prayer" (Acts 1:14). We must "pray always, and faint not" (Luke 18:1). God has faithfully promised to hear us, but He has nowhere pledged Himself to grant our petition outright. We are told, for our example, of Jacob's wrestling with the angel in prayer the live-long night, of our Lord's passing whole nights in prayer on the mountain, of the Apostles and the Virgin Mary persevering in prayer. "Which of you," says our Lord Himself, "shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and shall say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine is come to me from the way, and I have nothing to set before him; and he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not, the door is now