

PRIVATE PRAYER.

BY THE REV. CANON WESTCOTT, D.D.

Private prayer and meditation seem to me at present to be in special danger of being overlooked or misunderstood, and yet to be at the same time of paramount importance. There is among us, even in sacred things, a restlessness of much serving, a distraction of external excitements, of publicity, of display, which threaten to overwhelm the more silent and hidden duties of religion. We live too much, so to say, in the busy thoroughfares, and private prayer and meditation take us back to the lonely sanctuary of the soul. Both meet effectively the tyranny of sense and outward things which is perilous to spiritual freedom; both emphasize and hallow the obligations to our personal responsibility; both prepare us to receive more and more of the fulness of Christ, and to embody in action the teaching which His Spirit has revealed to us.

What is the nature of private prayer? "All things whatsoever we pray and ask for, believe"—not that ye receive them, but "that ye have received them," or, still more closely, "that ye receive them," "and ye shall have them" (Mark xi. 24). The answer to the prayer is thus declared to be coincident with the prayer itself. The petition is granted at the very moment when it is framed; the blessing for which we look does not follow at some distant time through any outward events, but is given at once, when, with absolute, childlike trust, we lay the thoughts of our hearts open before our Father. Prayer, in a word, is the conscious and glad acceptance of God's will for us when we have first endeavoured to estimate our own wants.

It is evident that private prayer is the exercise of the noblest and most awful privilege of men, the communing of the single soul with Him in Whom all men live and move and have their being. It is not a blind cry of terror raised in a moment of agony by a panic-stricken sufferer to some power which others have held able to save; it is not the mechanical repetition of forms of words which act as a charm and command spiritual ministries; it is converse with God under conditions of the most impressive solemnity; it demands the most serious reality of thought and expression; it cannot be framed in borrowed phrases; it must give utterance to our whole experience; it must be to its last detail our own, and not another's.

Our own advances cannot be independent of the advance of those about us. Every petition which we make for ourselves will include all with whom we are bound by ties of duty or companionship—our families, our friends, our households, our fellow-workmen—and a chance meeting will become the occasion of new connection before the Divine throne. The crowded streets will become a revelation which we shall seek to carry with us before God. The daily journals will not only stir and satisfy an idle curiosity, but they will furnish the means by which we can enter, through the silent energy of our souls, into council chambers and into prisons. If our private prayers are to be real they must be the natural interpretation of a vision of the world in God.

It is by prayer that we know that in the darkest hours we are not solitary or unfriended; that we know God as the living God, whose activity is not exhausted by the phenomena of the physical world. Prayer is the very breath of the religion which transforms us, so that we go on from strength to strength. If we were made to gain the Divine likeness, that end can only be reached through Divine communion. We could not have attained it by ourselves alone, even if we had not fallen. Every advance of

man is made by contact with that which is higher than himself. Human affection cannot endure in solitude, and is it credible that the love of God can survive, still less grow, without intercourse? We dissemble our faith in the unseen, and forthwith we fall under the thralldom of a material tyranny; we acknowledge it, and the fountains of great deeps are opened, and we are strengthened by a response which we had not dared to hope for.

Prayer helps us to live in the world as in a holy temple of God. It is a consecration fresh every morning with the grace of new resolves, fresh every evening with the chastened strains of sober thanksgiving. Prayer keeps vigorous within us our highest feelings and noblest endeavors; it sustains our ideal and arrays it in a fresh beauty. Every time when we truly pray, we touch heaven and draw new strength from its infinite treasures. He who has learned to commune with God becomes able to see Him everywhere. Prayer places us with all our surroundings in the light of the eternal. It calms little jealousies; it subdues human passions. When we pray for another we fix our attention on his capacity to serve God truly, and set forward the cause to which our lives are given. We cannot then think of him without hope; still less can we disparage or injure him. We must each appear before God as if we were alone. We speak to Him and He speaks to us, and in that intercourse is the utterance of our personal immortality. God is not the God of the dead but of the living. Prayer brings us the fulness of peace and joy. If we perceive during the varied discipline of life that there is a will of God which fashions the world; if we recognize the broad lines of its slow fulfilment; if we accept it with humblest faith as our own, will, then we shall feel peace through the strange and perplexing turmoils of our present conflict, and we shall feel joy in the confidence that nothing which is offered to God can be lost. Prayer is the frank and bold confession of our aim and of our motive under the most solemn circumstances. It brings vividly before us and it harmonizes the two worlds to which we belong—the physical, with its unchanging and beneficial sternness, the spiritual world, with its immeasurable potencies of free activity. We, at once creatures of time and heirs of eternity, come before God as those who are made capable of such approach, and who seek to use the prerogative of our nature. We, with our imperfect estimate of righteousness, limited by outward tests, with our narrow wisdom fashioned of fragmentary experiences, with our wayward love swayed to and fro by gusts of feeling, cast ourselves upon Him Who is infinite righteousness, and wisdom, and love. His discipline is that to which we desire to conform ourselves; His counsel is that which we, in our hearts, strive to serve, His compassion is that which we, in our truest moments, seek to reflect. So we lay all our weaknesses, all our thoughts, all our aspirations before Him, and in that very act we know that our prayer is heard and answered, and we can go back to our work to realize alike in failure and in success the certainty of His message: "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall receive them."
—*Family Churchman.*

WE WANT a Correspondent and Agent in every Deanery, and in the large cities. It is suggested to us that the Clergy should choose such an one.

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NEWS FROM THE HOME FIELD.

DIOCESE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

ALBION MINES.—A most successful Garden party was held here last week in the beautiful grounds of Mount Rundell, the historic residence of all the managers of the "Old Albin" for 60 years back. In the evening the grounds were lit up with Chinese lanterns, and the Stel-larton band played charmingly under the verandah of the house. The proceeds were to go to the repair and improvement of the nave of Christ Church.

The congregation are much indebted to the manager of the Acadia Co. (limited), for the use of the (alas!) unoccupied premises, which are so admirably adapted for entertaining a large number of people.

KING'S COLLEGE.—We are glad to learn that the Governors of King's College have appointed Dr. Willets to the position of acting President. Dr. Willets has earned the good will of all during his long residence in Windsor. His qualifications for the post are undoubted, and his appointment has called forth the hearty endorsement of the provincial press and the public. Dr. H. P. Jones, whose success at Heidelberg is still fresh in our minds, has been engaged to fill the Chair of Modern Language and will, doubtless, conduct that department with skill and acceptance. He was very popular whilst a student at King's College, and, having received his training on the spot, will have a good idea of just what the College requires. These appointments will do much to allay the distrust which seems to have seized upon certain minds who ought to be staunch supporters of the College. We understand that the Governors intend to offer special inducements to intending students, and will do all that lies in their power to fill the College halls. The Calendar will be published in a few days and then the nature of these special exhibitions or scholarships will be made known. Dr. Miller in the Collegiate Schools also begins work under good auspices and with every prospect of entire success. He has a splendid foundation, with great prestige, a first rate assistant in Mr. F. J. Richardson, and all the adjuncts of a prosperous school.—*Hants Journal.*

EARLY ENGLISH MISSIONS IN NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA.

(By Rev. A. W. Eaton in Windsor Tribune).

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign parts originating in England "in the pious efforts of Dr. Bray, received its charter from King William the third in 1701. To its unwearied zeal and activity are due the early missionary efforts made by the church of England in these provinces. Founding one of its earliest missions in St. John's Newfoundland, in 1703, is gradually extended its operations throughout the lower provinces until in 1749 it sent out two missionaries with the first settlers to Halifax, the Rev. Wm. Tutty, of Emanuel college, Cambridge, and the Rev. Mr. Anwell. The first English church built in the province was St. Paul's, Halifax, in which the first sermon was preached, 2nd Sept. 1750.

In 1762 the Rev. Thomas Wood visited "the interior parts of Nova Scotia." He was the first missionary of the church of England who had done so, unless possibly the Rev. Dr. Brony-ton may have made an occasional visit, and he went twice to East and West Falmouth, Cornwallis, Horton, Granville and Annapolis, receiving a kindly welcome at each place. He became a favorite not only with the English settlers but with the French and Indians, but he was appointed permanently to the mission at Annapolis and Granville, and the Rev. Joseph Bennett was the first missionary regularly appointed to the townships of Horton, Cornwallis,