

Because God prepared and strengthened him to do it. He had inspired him through all the proceedings of that eventful day. He had accepted by fire the offering which Elijah laid. He had inclined the people to yield to his appeal, and to respond, "The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God!"

In this way He had drawn Elijah upward, gradually, surely, to this point, the crown and culmination of the whole affair. He had increased the prophet's faith and boldness, and made him see that "the set time to favor Israel had come." Elijah had been led into the council chamber of the Most High, and been shown things which the outward sense could not attain. Before the cloud appeared he had foreseen its rise. When it seemed a mere speck to other eyes, to him it already overspread the sky and poured its showers upon the thirsty earth. God educates his servant thus, makes him a sharer in his own plans, and begets in him an earnest longing that the divine decree shall be performed. In all these instances of prayer written in the Scripture for our instruction do we not see the doctrine of our text made good? Are they not all clear examples of aid and inspiration of the Holy Ghost? But there is another class of prayers presented in the Bible that seem at first to violate this rule. I mean those prayers of Christ and of good men which did not gain the answer which they asked—*e. g.*, Christ's petition in Gethsemane, thrice offered, that the cup of suffering might pass away, and Paul's prayer, also thrice uttered, that the thorn in his flesh might be removed. The opposition of these cases is apparent, not real. Christ did indeed ask for the removal of the cup, but he each time coupled that petition with the clause, "nevertheless, not my will but thine be done." In the agony of trial the flesh rebelled against his spirit. For a moment his twofold nature was at strife. He wished to escape the pain, he willed that God's purpose should be done. He spoke both thoughts in prayer, but he made the last his chief and crowning plea. The prayer was answered. His fear and trembling passed away, and courage and power were given in their place. "An angel from heaven strengthened him." He arose from the ground where he had fallen, waked his slumbering disciples and led them out to meet the hand that came against him. He advanced to take and drink the cup from which he asked to be delivered. Paul also grew strong and calm in prayer. He sought to be relieved, but he was enabled to rejoice in his infirmity for Christ's sake. His very pain became a source of boasting