

Sunday Reading

What Jesus Said About Prayer.

The importance which Jesus attached to prayer appears in the prominence given to it in what he known as the Sermon on the Mount. Sixteen verses are devoted to its exposition in this discourse. Two of the parables, the parable of the Unjust Judge, and the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, deal exclusively with prayer. Even more impressive is the fact that his own life and ministry move in an atmosphere of frequent, protracted, earnest, agonizing prayer. The people were astonished at his teaching, because his words were weighted with an unusual authority and grace. The disciples, who witnessed his private life, listened in awe when they heard him pray, and asked him to impart the secret to them. And when he tore himself away from them, he went into solitude, not to sleep but to spend the night in prayer. He prayed at his baptism; and as he prayed the heavens opened. He prayed on the Mount of Transfiguration; and, as he prayed the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became white and dazzling. He prayed at the grave of Lazarus, and Death released his captive. He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, and the bloody perspiration beaded his brow. He prayed in the upper chamber when he had eaten the Passover for the last time, and had instituted the Holy Supper, and that prayer still hushes us into a holy silence, and fills us with a strange, deep peace. The seventh chapter of John's Gospel is the Holy of Holies, where the veil between earth and heaven is held wide apart. It gives us a glimpse of the eternal and everlasting intercession of our Lord. And he prayed on the cross for others and for himself.

Two things never appear in the prayers of Jesus, though in the prayer which he taught his disciples, as indicating the spirit and the scope of their petitions, they have a place. In the first place, Jesus never prayed for the forgiveness of sins. Confession of wrong and penitence are wholly wanting. There is no hint of such things even in the great prayer which preceded His arrest and crucifixion. The omission is of startling significance. It can only mean that the consciousness of personal sin was something of which he was absolutely ignorant, so that not even impending death could awaken it. He prayed as a sinless and holy soul prays; and this makes it clear that prayer is more than a means of grace, helpful to sinful men and women, but needless in a state of moral perfection. Jesus did not pray less, but more, than his disciples. Nor did he cease to pray when he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. He declared that he would continue to pray, and that his prayers would be answered. Whatever of mystery there may be connected with this heavenly intercession, the simple fact remains that he is represented as our Advocate before the Father, pleading on our behalf and praying for us. This makes it clear that prayer is more than a means of grace for the sinful and erring. It is the eternal ordinance of heaven and of earth. We shall never cease to pray.

The second thing which is absent in the prayers of Jesus is the petition for such good things as the body needs. He refused to turn the stones into bread, though he knew that the power was not wanting in him. Nor did he ever pray for bread. He has taught us to pray for our daily bread—

a very modest petition. But even that modest petition he never once made his own. He lived as did the birds of the air, who sow not, neither reap, nor gather into barns. All his prayers move in the higher realm of thanksgiving, adoration, equipment for spiritual service, communion and intercession. The explanation of this cannot be found in his knowledge that whatever was needed was at his command; for, when fierce hunger pressed him in the desert, he refused to work a miracle. He would take only what the Father was pleased to give him, and in the Father's way. The only explanation is that faith in him was so absolute and perfect, and his absorption in his mission so complete, that the only meat and drink about which he concerned himself was the doing of his Father's will. We follow him afar off, but we, too, may take comfort in the assurance that God knows what we need, and that if we seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, all these things shall be added unto us. And if we have food and raiment, let us be gratefully content.

I presume it will always impress us strangely that Jesus prayed; for a prayer is a recognition and confession of dependence. Jesus Christ was and remains very God. And while it is true that the eternal life of God is a plural life, so that in the indivisible essence there is an eternal intercommunion of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, this communion cannot properly be regarded a prayer. God cannot pray to God. Did Christ, then, pray simply as man, the consciousness of Godhead being for the time in eclipse? That is a violent supposition, which destroys the unity of his personal consciousness. We can only say, and we must say, that he was the Incarnate Son of God, God in the Form of Man, and that in consenting to come into the flesh, he voluntarily assumed a place of dependence upon the absolute Godhead, and so came under the law of prayer. He not only could pray; he must pray; because, while he retained his conscious Godhead, he retained it in Form of our common human nature, which is dependent. That conscious dependence he shared and that made prayer his vital breath and native air, as it is ours. In the same way must we construe the heavenly intercession. Jesus Christ now prays for us, not as God, nor as glorified Man, but as the Incarnate Son of God, God in the Form of exalted and glorified man. As such, he still shares in our dependence, and that brings him, even in heaven, under the law of prayer. So that the intercession is not figurative and rhetorical, but real and effective.

Prayer strikes its roots in the moral economy of God. It is not the duty and the privilege of some; it is the duty and the privilege of all. It is not the necessity of the few; it is the necessity of all. The attitude of prayer is the normal attitude of a dependent and conscious creature, including its visible and anointed king, who in his conscious dependence is also conscious of his eternal Godhead. Nor can prayer ever cease. It must be the eternal speech of the consciously dependent creature to the Creator and Father, to which he is eternally responsive. There will come a time when confession for sin will drop out of our speech. But thanksgiving, adoration, equipment for spiritual service, communion and intercession will continue to be the normal speech of the eternal heavens. And when we pray our Father will answer.

If, now, we have not exaggerated the importance and the dignity of prayer as the eternal form of communion between the conscious created spirit and its Creator and Father, ever widening in its scope, ever deepening its tenderness and sweet intimacy, we cannot address ourselves too early and earnestly to the mastery of the celestial speech. In this, as in everything else, there must be a beginning, and we should begin right. We walk before we run and we creep before we walk. We spell before we read, and we must learn our alphabet before we spell. The alphabet opens the door into the wide fields of literature, science and art. There is an alphabet of prayer; its mastery is of prime importance. Prayer is not any and every kind of address to God. It has its distinctive features, and these are sketched with great clearness in the utterances of our Lord. These are not grouped in formal order, but they are found imbedded and ingrained in the discourses of Jesus. Their full treatment would require a volume, and the merest hints must here suffice.

Jesus always assures that prayer is the natural speech of the soul. It is more than a duty, more than a privilege; it is a fundamental and universal necessity. Without it the soul is dumb. Man seeks God and God seeks man; therein lies the eternal necessity of prayer. Must not my lips speak to their Maker? Must not my

ear listen to him who formed it? And he hath made the ear, shall not he hear? He who made my lips shall he not speak? Dr. McCosh summed it all up in two short sentences, as sweet as they are simple, when, speaking of prayer, he said: 'I pray, God hears; God speaks, I listen.' That tells the whole story.

Natural speech is always simple and direct. Hence Jesus warns us against needless repetitions, against much speaking, against pomposity of manner and language. That is always offensive, and defeats its end, even between man and man. Sincere speech is always simple. It studies short, plain sentences. It does not deal in superlatives. It discards artifice and ornament. And that is the only speech to which God gives an attentive ear. Any other is hypocrisy, and hypocrisy God hates. In the second place, natural speech is earnest as well as sincere. All sincerity vibrates with earnestness. For sincerity, as Whately tells us, not only means 'reality of conviction,' which may be false, but 'unbiased conviction,' an impartial conviction, uninfluenced by wishes or passions. Such a conviction has grip. The whole soul enters into it. And such earnestness, in the third place, inspires persistence. It is not easily discouraged. It presses its suit. It will not be denied. Hence, our Lord's parable of the Unjust Judge, who yielded to the importunity of the widow. She knew that her cause was just and she was determined to have justice. Hence, too, the present tense in those sayings of Jesus: 'Ask, and it shall be given you; for every one that asketh receiveth.' The asking is continuous, repeated until the request is granted.

Prayer is natural, earnest, frequent, unintermitting speech.

When we turn our attention to the suppliant himself, certain things are emphasized as indispensable to prayer. He who prays is absolutely dependent upon him to whom he prays. That should make him modest in his petitions, and habitually grateful. He who prays is ignorant, 'does not know what is best for him; and that should make him humble and submissive, exalting God's will above his own, and doing this gladly. He who prays is a sinner; and that should make him penitent. Yet he who prays is also by the grace of adoption in Jesus Christ a child of God and an heir of glory; and that should make him bold, asking great things, and expecting them. Prayer is grateful, modest, humble, penitent, bold speech. In prayer, too, we are reminded that we occupy a common place with our fellow-men. The plural number must not drop out of our speech. If we are selfish, God is not. He is no respecter of persons. He does not share our jealousies and hatreds, and they are offensive to him. He will not forgive us, if we do not from our hearts forgive our enemies. Therefore we must pray for them, too; and so intercession for all men must enter into our speech with God. Prayer summons us to an exalted state of mind. It involves gratitude, sincerity, earnestness, persistence, humility, submission, penitence, boldness, comprehensive charity. The character of whom we pray must also be taken into account. It is his favor we seek, not the applause of men. Hence we must pray, not to be seen or heard of others standing apart and attracting attention, but speaking to our God in secret. He is infinitely exalted; and therefore our speech should be profoundly reverent. There should be frankness without sissiness and offensive familiarity. Our place is at the foot of God's throne. He is infinite in wisdom, power, goodness and grace. That commands and justifies the most absolute confidence in him, and surrender to his sovereign will. Summing it all up prayer involves gratitude, sincerity, earnestness, persistence, humility, submission, penitence, boldness, comprehensive charity, secrecy and faith.

There is, too, a natural and necessary order in the things for which we pray. Nothing is excluded. We may and we ought to, carry everything to God in prayer. All our cares, we may, and we ought to cast upon him. But all things are not of equal importance. The life is more than meat, and the body than raiment. Bread we need, but we do not live by bread alone. The immortal soul should command our chief attention. We should be infinitely more anxious to be saved from sin than from poverty, sickness, suffering and death. Righteousness is our supreme need of the world. Therefore our Lord summons us to pray that the Kingdom of God may come and that his will may be done on earth as it is in heaven. For the answer to that prayer includes every other blessing.

It is a common complaint that many earnest prayers are unanswered. It is pertinent to ask whether the natural and necessary conditions have entered into such prayers. He who scattered his seed upon

Mr. G. O. ARCHIBALD'S CASE.

Didn't Walk for 5 Months. Doctors said Locomotor Ataxia.

Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills Cure a Disease hitherto regarded as Incurable.

The case of Mr. G. O. Archibald, of Hopewell Cape, N.B., (a cut of whom appears below), is one of the severest and most intractable that has ever been



reported from the eastern provinces, and his cure by Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills the more remarkable from the fact that he was given up as incurable by worthy and respected physicians.

The disease, Locomotor Ataxia, with which Mr. Archibald was afflicted is considered the most obstinate and incurable disease of the nervous system known. When once it starts it gradually but surely progresses, paralyzing the lower extremities and rendering the victim helpless and hopeless, enduring the indescribable agony of seeing himself die by inches.

That Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills can cure thoroughly and completely a disease of such severity ought to encourage those whose disorders are not so serious to try this remedy.

The following is Mr. Archibald's letter:

Masses, T. Milburn & Co.—"I can assure you that my case was a very severe one, and had it not been for the use of Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills I do not believe I would be alive to-day. I do not know, exactly, what was the cause of the disease, but it gradually affected my legs, until I was unable to walk hardly any for five months.

"I was under the care of Dr. Morse, of Melrose, who said I had Locomotor Ataxia, and gave me up as incurable.

"Dr. Solomon, a well-known physician of Boston, told me that nothing could be done for me. Every one who came to visit me thought I never could get better.

"I saw Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills advertised and thought I would try them anyway, as they gave more promise of helping me than anything I knew of.

"The seven boxes I took and given me the full use of my legs and given me strength and energy and better health than I have enjoyed in a long time.

"I am agent for P. O. Vickie, of Augusta, Maine, and have sold 300 subscribers in 80 days and won a fifty dollar prize.

"Nothing else in the world saved me but those pills, and I do not think they have an equal anywhere.

"The seven boxes I took and given me the full use of my legs and given me strength and energy and better health than I have enjoyed in a long time.

G. O. ARCHIBALD.

Hopewell Cape, N. B. In addition to the statement by Mr. Archibald, we have the endorsement of two well-known merchants of Hopewell Cape, N. B., viz. Messrs. J. E. Dickson and F. J. Brewster, who certify to the genuineness and accuracy of the facts as given above.

Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills are 50c. a box, or 3 for \$1.25, at all druggists, or sent by mail. T. Milburn & Co., Toronto, Ont.

the ocean has no rights to complain that he does not reap a harvest. There is such a thing as a law of draver. The conditions must be complied with; and these conditions, as we have seen, are not arbitrary, but grow out of the necessities of the case. In true prayer man must understand himself, and man must understand his God. He must ask for what is really needed, with comprehensive charity for all men, and with absolute confidence in God. Prayer does not lead itself to a selfish and self-seeking soul. It is the highest speech of which the soul is capable. In it the heart undurds itself. In it we rush for shelter under the divine wings. In it the perfect will of God broods over our own, quieting our restlessness and impatience, imparting to us the peace in which he dwells. If we pray thus, the answer will come before our lips have ended their appeal. God hears; God speaks, let us listen!

WILL GIVE LUCK A CHANCE.

A Man Who Tried Work With Wells Lightening Rods and Windmills.

'I used to think that hard work counted for more than luck,' said the man who a had thrown-down appearance, but after basking against the idea for ten years I've had to give up. I'm out of a job and dead broke, but I'm going to walk around on my uppers and see what luck will do for me.

'I went into drive wells a few years ago,' he continued as he jingled three or four cents in his palm. 'Bought the right for four counties in Kansas and could see \$3,000 profits a year. Put in my last dollar and started out to drive. In driving a well for a farmer you may calculate on hitting water within thirty feet. That's what you base on when you figure on the job. A farmer won't pay by the foot. It's so much for a well yielding all the water he wants. I put down thirty feet of my first well and only struck dust. I went down sixty feet and could smell a little dampness. The pipe was down a full hundred feet before we got water. I put down fourteen wells and was teetotally busted. I had picked out the counties myself, but they were the driest in the State. I drove 140 feet of pipe for the last without getting any water.

'Then I turned to lightning rods. I got an agency and an outfit and started out to do the farmers of Illinois. Say, you may not believe me, but out of ten barns which I protected in one township eight were struck by lightning during one storm. The farmers got after me in a mob, and besides having my leg broken and my nose knocked out of plumb, I was hauled into court and my broken up in business.

'As soon as I could limp around again I got the agency of a windmill to a part of Indiana. The only one I put up was for an old farmer who wanted it to drive a saw for cutting wood. I had to exert so much power, you see, and he had his saw ready

as soon as the windmill was up. All the time we were putting up the mill it blew a gale, but no sooner had we finished than the gale dropped to a zephyr. Say, now, well for fifteen straight days there wasn't wind enough to ruffle a duck pond, and the farmer declared my mill a fraud and made me take it down.

'After I'd been out of a job for a year an old uncle started me in the chicken business. Ever figure on it? Bless your heart, but the man who can't figure out a clear profit of \$2,000 a year has no business to live. There are so many hens, so many eggs, so many chickens. Easiest thing in the world to figure on, especially where an incubator goes with it. I leased five acres of ground, got an incubator and 300 hens, and for a few days I had my hat on my ear. Did you ever hear of the chicken disease called pip? Well, it broke out among my hens, and they went pip! pip! till the last one turned up her toes. I didn't get two dozen eggs out of the whole lot. Then I fell back on my incubator to hatch and grow a new lot. Hatched out 150 little chicks, and then—please excuse my emotions. One day that incubator blew up with a bang and scattered my hen farm all over the county and laid me up in bed for three months.

'I have been offered a patent churn, a washing machine and a hay-rick agency, but have respectfully declined. No more hard work for me. I'm walking around looking for lost pocketbooks and big rewards, and I count on luck to uncover a gold mine or notify me of a legacy.'

Why Suffer?

When there is such a good remedy as Nervine for all kinds of pain. It cures neuralgia in five minutes; toothache in one minute; lame back at one application; headache in a few moments; and all pain just as rapidly. Give it a trial.

She Knew His Footsteps.

His enemies may have originated, but his friends do not hesitate to repeat, a story about a rising young politician, who, says the New York Tribune, has large feet as well as a capacious head.

The politician's mother, a lovable old woman is unfortunately very deaf. She lives in a flat in the neighborhood of Grant's tomb, and is always delighted by a visit from her son.

When the United States cruiser Brooklyn, which was anchored in the Hudson, off the tomb, on Memorial day, fired a salute of twenty-one guns, the old lady was observed to start, fix her cap, and smooth down her apron.

Then she said, with a sweet smile, 'George is coming. I hear his footsteps on the stairs.'

A young man sent his father, an old farmer in the country, his photograph, accompanied with a request for aid, as he was poor. The old man looked at the photograph and then responded:— 'You can't cheat me, you young dog. You can't be very poor to be living among them marble vases, and statues, and flowers and nice furniture, such as your photograph shows.'

IN MEMORY

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count, I long for excitement; I cannot stand being alone with my own thoughts. I dare not trust myself to think of him and yet I live out even Aunt Janette in my wild, mad endeavors to see him, to speak to him, to try and break down the barrier which has risen between us.

'Why, Barbara,' she exclaims, one very hot day when, after a drive in the park, an hour's shopping, a luncheon-party, an afternoon garden party, and a dinner at night, I urge her to drop in at Lady Crevin's reception for an hour before going home, 'why, Barbara, you are tireless, irresistible; not one night this week have you touched our pillows before daylight. You will ruin your complexion; you are losing all your exquisite color. I really do think we had better go home tonight and get some rest.'

'Just for an hour, Aunt Janette,' I plead, feverishly, 'just to have a look round. She expects us. We need not stay, you know.'

Only long enough to see who is there, I suppose, she replies, quietly. 'Dear Barbara, what has come to you? What is it that has wrought such a wondrous change in my Woodland flower?'

It is midnight when we arrive there, and the crash is empty frightful.

We see dozens of familiar faces in the first few minutes.

Colonel Treherne meets us at the entrance of the drawing-room.

I see a sudden light leap into my aunt's eyes and die quickly away again, as he rises and addresses me with a smile.

Then I see Sir Anthony's stern, handsome face at our side, and I forget everything.

'Ah Sir Anthony,' cries my aunt, with a smile. 'How are you? We caught a glimpse of you in the stalls tonight but you did not come round to our box. May I leave Barbara in your charge for a few minutes? I am going down to supper with Colonel Treherne.'

In another instant she has gone, and we are alone together.

I can feel my hand tremble as I lay it on his arm.

For once Fate has favored me.

Now surely, I ever, I shall learn how I am offended him, and make my peace.

Almost mechanically he commences to walk towards the window recess in the corridor, where we seat ourselves in silence, and we did once before—centuries ago now, it seems to me.

'We hardly ever seem to meet you now, Sir Anthony,' I begin slowly, for want of something better to say. 'It was quite a pleasant surprise to see you here tonight.'

'It is by the merest chance that I am here,' he replies, with averted eyes. 'Lady Crevin is an old friend of mine, and he seemed to think that I have neglected her. She was very anxious for me to take part in her private theatricals next month, which I was obliged to refuse, as I am leaving town for a time. I was anxious to make my peace before going, therefore ran for an hour tonight.'

'You are leaving town?' I repeat, mechanically, not taking in the full sense of my words all at once. 'How long for—there are you going to—when do you start and how soon shall you return?'

'I start to-morrow,' he replies, briefly. 'The date of my return is in the remote future. My destination is Africa, where have arranged to join a party of friends on a shooting expedition.'

'Africa?' I echo, startled out of all assumed indifference, as I realize what his definite absence will mean to me. 'No me fixed for your return—it is horrible to think of. You must be joking, Sir Anthony.'

There is an agony in my voice that my most efforts seem to subside—my words are wildly incoherent.

I tremble from head to foot, and I feel that I am losing hold of everything I care for—as if life, reason, and Heaven itself are slipping away from me.

'Why should I be joking?' he replies, calmly. 'No; I assure you, Miss Courtaine, that I am in real earnest; I spent months there once before, and it did me an incalculable amount of good. You see, a man wants something more in his life than to hang about drawing-rooms all day. I am fond of an outdoor life—sport and exercise. I am tired to death of the end of existence I have been leading lately. What shall I send you from foreign parts?'

Is light jesting tone seems to cut my heart like a knife.

I am conscious that, for my pride's sake, the honor of womanhood, I ought to tell myself together, and return some commonplace answer.

But I cannot; I am not accustomed to do one thing and trip another.

Everything seems to fade away out of my life, save the knowledge that I love this man with all my soul—all my nature—and that he cares for me so little that he can away without one word of regret.

'You were going away without saying good-bye?' I whisper, almost inaudibly.

'That have I done—how have I offended you? You would hardly leave an ordinary acquaintance without saying good-bye.'

'I left my card at Mrs. Dashwood's this mornning,' he replies in an odd voice; and, picking up into his face, I see that it is pale death.

Is it the effect of the dim light, or is it that he is ill? Or can it be that he is not indifferent to me as he wishes to appear? 'You must not go,' I cry, wildly. 'You are my only real friend. What shall I do about you about—about Sir Harry?'

'I hope that you will not marry him,' he says, quietly. 'I should—I should be very much to hear of your marriage to any one who is worthy of you, but—well, I am going away, and will speak plainly to you. I know of Sir Harry Grassmore's back some years, and I am only speaking the truth when I tell you that he is a bad man. His wife will be a miserable misery. Promise me that you will be firm. I shall never marry Sir Harry,' I reply.

(Continued on Thursday Paper.)