

by making us feel our leanness and our need the more. A definite prayer may expect a definite answer. A patient who will give the doctor no information but only that he "is sick," will probably receive only some mild cathartic, but miss the special remedy adapted to his disease. God's Spirit does not so with us. He fastens upon some particular sin in our conscience, and pushes it home upon us, and pierces us through and through, with it, till that sin is slain, and we slain with it! And when in the after-life that we begin to lead with Christ, we make a new discovery of another sin, we are to drag it out and slay it in Christ's sight, with prayers for help and groans of penitence. And when we discover some great *emptiness* to be filled, we are to hold it up before God, till the very heavens grow "weary with forbearing!"

And we must cultivate a natural expression in prayer. So many men are undevout in their lives, that for *them* to be natural would needs be to be undevout. Such men never pray. Their "prayers" are but devout shams. Still another class, and who are Christians, seem to leave behind them in prayer everything peculiarly their own, and drift along in the most abject formalism. No spice of the man's idiosyncrasy is found in his prayers. Whatever be the occasion, or however special the need of the hour, the prayer is ever the same. How can he expect a definite answer who asks by no definite prayer? How can he expect an answer shaped and fitted to his need who never presents that need, to have an answer shaped and fitted to it? In this glorious Bethel-ladder of communication between Earth and Heaven, the angel who brings down the answer is always of the same course and order with the one who took the petition up.

And we need warmth in our prayers. Shall God deign to speak with men, and our souls not be stirred at the condescension? Shall Christ, having already suffered and died for us, come to us with whispers of love, and *our* hearts not feel the rapture? The voice follows the heart: let the heart be stirred, and then the voice will find strength and freedom.

The leader of a Prayer-Meeting will often find the opportunity and benefit of throwing in a suggestion or hint as to the subjects for prayer. It has always been considered decorous and proper to omit, in social prayer, all "proper names" and minute circumstances, even when a special request may be made for prayer. It is doubtful if this is so often necessary. "God bless Jessie, and teach her to give Christ her heart to-night" is probably a far better prayer for impressing the heart of the poor anxious girl, and more likely to obtain an answer, than any reference whatever to "the young sister now in our midst." If our ordinary speech, our personal exhortations, and our prayers, were nearer one another all the time, our speech would be holier, and our prayers more natural.

To conduct a Prayer-Meeting is one of the best means known to become fitted for the more important public duties of the Church. To get a young convert to commit himself to vocal utterance in the praying circle, is one of the best things that could be done for him. And to have a band of praying men and women, those "whose hearts the Lord hath touched," is the surest sign of a living Church, and the surest indication of victories yet to be.

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THE RELIGIOUS CONDITION IN GERMANY.

The Provisions made for Spiritual benefit, shall be the centre of suggestion in the topics of this second letter. A stranger on his first Sabbath here is much struck with unlikeness to home. Reflection on the unlikeness seems to me to mark strongly, as evil, too much adherence to the methods of the past. We at home are liable to fall into this evil, and so I write not so much to blame good people here as to guide our working at home.

The texts of the preachers are a striking illustration of the tendency and of the