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## Prayer.

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### PART II.

Having, in a former paper, considered prayer as one of the fixed laws of the universe, let us now proceed to treat it as the culmination of the whole.

The prophet Hosea says (Chap. 2:21, 22): "The Lord saith I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel." Jezreel, from two Hebrew words—"Jezre," to sow, and "El," God—literally denotes the "Seed of God" or God's people. Thus we have a chain of prayer with several links, blending both the material and the spiritual, with God at one extreme, and man, the supplicant, at the other.

Here is a system of agents and sub-agents, all active, none idle—none stationary—all co-ordinated in one purpose and one aim, carrying the prayers of Jezreel up to God. Thus it would seem that the universe, instead of leaving no room for prayer, is itself the organ of prayer.

It is a joy also to know that all its operations are presided over by infinite intelligence and power—that it is not a self-acting machine left to work itself out and shape its own destiny. God's immanence secures unbroken order and assures that all is well. Jezreel prays, and at once the whole system of agencies moves in correlated unity—The earth hears—the heavens hear—God hears. From this we may postulate the following grand generalization, viz: That all the agencies between earth and heaven, involving the material and the immaterial—the conscious and the unconscious—the mental and the spiritual forces of the universe are leagued in divine confederacy, moving under God towards one end, viz, to bring Man and God together through the medium of prayer.

Moreover, as this system embraces all elements of existence it follows that all events, all providences and all experiences become illustrations and supports of moral law, each contributing to the whole its appropriate moral effect.

Thus in the interests of prayer the material and the spiritual coalesce in reciprocal subserviency. He who contends that Nature and Grace have nothing in common—that they are two separate and independent systems, must also set aside the God in Christ in whom all things have been united into one system of mediation for the redemption of the world. Nothing is more apparent to the student of history than the constant correlation of the material and the spiritual in effecting God's purposes on earth. Thus we note a famine in Canaan—occasioned through natural material agencies. But observe its moral and spiritual effects.

See Mosses in Egypt—the plagues of flies, frogs, etc.—all by material agents, etc.—yet note how all culminated in the emancipation, the exodus, the giving of the law, and the organization of a theocracy whose moral and spiritual power has been felt in all ages since that day.

The same truth is also abundantly illustrated in Christ who, in His own person, is the embodiment of the whole system. Go back to the beginning of history and note how frequently the "promised Messiah" is set forth—now in the material, and now in the spiritual. Now in corporeal emblem, as the manna, the blood, the brazen serpent—and now in spiritual symbols, as the burning bush, the Shekinah—the mystic cloud of the sanctuary and angelic manifestation. Then coming down the centuries, passing many scenes of similar import, we finally reach the climax of this unfolding in the incarnation of the Son of God, in whom the spiritual and the material coalesce in the person of the God-man—the apex of the moral pyramid and embodiment of the whole,—the synthesis of the universe, "of whom and through whom and to whom are all things, to whom be glory forever." (Paul.)

Again. The same principle is illustrated in the life work of Christ on earth. He often suspended physical law to serve spiritual ends. He walked on the sea, blighted the fig-tree, calmed

the storm, and raised the dead. Thus again and again He compelled the conditions of physical being to subserve the spiritual.

Turning now again to Hosea's chain we may understand it more fully. We see how mediation is linked to meditation and prayer is transmitted through prayer involving the material and the spiritual—the earth and the heavens—at the lower extreme of which is praying Jezreel, and at the other, the ever wakeful ear of Jehovah. Jezreel prays and the whole system at once moves in his behalf.

Beyond all peradventure it is doubtless true, that the whole universe labors for the man who truly prays. A praying man is the culmination of all beneath him and type of all above him, as he kneels in the midst of a system wherein the spiritual and the material are leagued to serve his petition, and of which his divine Lord is the Alpha and Omega—the "author and finisher."

Prayer, so to speak, places the heart where a thousand telegraphic and telephonic wires meet, thus placing the petitioner within speaking and hearing bearness with his Maker. This is God's great cosmophone of spiritual communion. Prayer is the highest altitude of power a soul can occupy this side of heaven. No surprise that Queen Mary trembled when John Knox prayed, and said, "She dreaded his prayers more than all the armies of Europe."

Co-ordinated with the universe as it is, prayer is the mightiest force known to science. It sets the soul *en rapport* with Almightiness as really as gravitation brings world in contact with world. Verily, prayer is not a reverie or hallucination. The man who prays believing, does not deal with an uncertainty, or a mere conjectural hypothesis, but with an actual power, not only as real as electricity, but also superior to it as the supreme law of the universe.

History is replete with the story of its mighty achievements, Elijah prayed, and fire fell. He prayed again, and rain descended. Daniel prayed, and the lions were muzzled. Ezra prayed, and the walls of Jerusalem rose. Prayer has dethroned kings unlinged empires, routed armies, outlived persecutions of the fagot, the rack and the dungeon, and robbed in the garlands of victory, has filled heaven and earth with the shouts of its triumphs.

Prayer touches the knob that moves mightier forces than Atlantic cables and agencies more potent than galvanic batteries. Amid the mutations of dynasties—the concussion of principles and the march of civilization it has held, and still holds the throne of supremacy in the galaxy of veritable forces. As stated above, every known law in nature has bowed in obedience to its sceptre, and history, science, and philosophy cast their crowns before it as the willing servants of its sovereign demands.

The great law of prayer, like all other laws, is confessedly inexplicable. The whys and the wherefores of its power is one of the "secrets which belong to God," but if Jesus did not exaggerate we must accept it as reality beyond question.

He says, "Ask and you shall receive." "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing ye shall receive." "Verily I say unto you whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name He will give it you." Also Matt. 18: 19, and Mark 11: 24. Why our heavenly Father should have established such a law and vouchsafed to us such privileges none can tell, but neither can we know why "God so loved the world." Yet the fact remains.

Another saying of Christ may carry us a step farther. John 14: 13. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Evidently our prayers are answered for a specific reason, far beyond ourselves—never for our own selfish gratification or profit but that the "Father may be glorified in the Son."

Now, the glory of the Father is the ultimate aim and objective centre of all the laws of the universe. No true thinker will deny this, and Christ here places the law of prayer on the same level as co-ordinated with the rest for the glory of God—"that the Father may be glorified in the

Son," and this is the culmination of the whole system. That prayer should appeal to us as a power great beyond all human computation need no longer surprise us. Its potency inheres in the words of our Lord—"That the Father may be glorified in the Son," and in this thought the "whatsoever" is assured.

Looking at it from the human side. What made Luther the man he was? Prayer. And Knox and Judson and Finney, and Spurgeon, and Moody? What was the secret of their power with God and man? Prayer. The history of prayer is the history of revivals, conversions, and church triumphs. Nothing on earth is equal in power to a praying church, i. e., a church that truly prays in the true spirit.

If all the Churches in Christendom could fully realize what prayer really means, and is, and involves, and the place of power it holds under the dominion of God the Father, the world would soon be taken for Christ. Let him who truly prays rest assured that his prayers are heard, and that the veracity of heaven's throne is pledged for his answer. We have the words of Christ for it—"Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 18: 19.

Did Jesus actually say this? If so who can doubt, and what might not a church accomplish resting on such a declaration? "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away." Matt. 24: 35.

Trenton, N. J.

## The Divine Image.

BY MAY FIELD MCKEAN

A teacher stood in the midst of her class,  
Surrounded by eager faces,  
As each bright little lad and wee, small lass  
Looked up from their wonted places.

And she told in accents loving and sweet  
(Though now no name proclaiming)  
Of that Character rare, in whom there meet  
All virtues of heavenly naming.

She told of His gentleness, love and truth,  
Of His patience, which wearied never;  
She told how he blessed each maiden and youth,  
And brightened their pathways forever.

She told how the little ones came at His call,  
And answered His smile so tender;  
How He scorned all wrong, though in palace  
hall,  
And of weak ones became the Defender.

"And how do you know of whom I tell?"—  
She looked from one to another.—  
"O, yes!" cried one, "I know very well.  
You are talking about my mother."

Ah! happy the life so gentle and mild,  
So full of God's truth recovered,  
So helpful and loving that in it her child  
The image of Christ discovered.

And happy for you, and for me and mine,  
If, in each day of our living,  
We come so near to that heart divine,  
That its grace we are ever enjoying!

—Baptist Standard: "When the pastor resigns he ought to move. Of course, any Baptist preacher has a right to live any where he pleases and can, but in most every case, the Baptist minister who has been pastor of the church ought to leave that field entirely when he gives up the work. It sometimes happens, of course, that he has nowhere else to go, but it will take unusual grace for him to stay in the old field and not embarrass the new pastor."