

2. Every time also should be a time of prayer. Appointed times should be set apart for family and secret prayer, and those appointed times should be sacredly kept, and never curtailed by secular pursuits. Not only, however, in set times of devotion, but at all times—in direct worship—in employment—and in recreation the breath of prayer should be ascending to God. "Pray without ceasing." This would keep men from unlawful employments, and save them from the meanness and sin of the wretched excuses made to palliate their conduct. This would keep them also from unhal- lowed and forbidden amusements. In their daily avocations they would be servants of the Lord Jesus, and in their recreations, while nerving the body and lightening the spirits, they would be kept from forgetting the God that made them, and from bringing languor, perhaps death, upon their souls. Nay, we should live in such a habit of prayer, that even in those times when the mind is most vacant, the thoughts that flit before us as shadows, leaving hardly an impress behind, should be thoughts lead- ing heavenward. Even in the time of sleep and deep forgetfulness, when in dreams we wander in an invisible and fanciful creation, our wanderings should be in the bright world above—our visions should be sights of glory, unreal indeed, yet profit- able to our souls.

3. Every place also should be a place of prayer. God's house, where prayer is wont to be made, should always be visited in the spirit of prayer. The dwelling should have its family altar, whence morning and evening should arise the incense of prayer and praise. Every soul also should have its closet—its secret place—where no eye but God's can see, and no ear but his can hear the outpour- ings of a humble and earnest heart.

But besides these special places—the workshop—the field—the busy mart—should be hallowed by prayer. Where God's people meet, and where the wicked congregate, if God cast our lot there, we should call on his name. Abraham called upon the Lord in the plain of Mamre, and Lot from the midst of ungodly Sodom. The lovely plain, gar- nished with the goodness of God, and arched with the glorious heavens, is seen to be a fitting place for the worship of him "who dwelleth not in tem- ples made with hands." But he is not confined to any spot; wherever there is a true worshipper, there is a temple. He heard the cry of faith amidst the din of cursing and revelry in Sodom. The pure incense of prayer ascended to God from the midst and above the thick pollutions of a city whose cup of wickedness was filled to the brim. Daniel cried in the lions' den—that was natural, for who could deliver him from such imminent per- il but God? Daniel also prayed to God in one of the gorgeous palaces of Babylon, in opposition to the fashions of the court and the world—notwith- standing the command of a king whom he loved, and at the risk of a cruel death. This was grace—the might of the spirit raising him above the fears of scorn or of sulking.

In this world we may sometimes be as if cast into a den of lions. Instant and fearful death may be looking us in the face—any man will cry to God then. But at other times we may be surrounded by comforts—so kindly looked upon by the world, that we are as it were in a palace. Be sure then and there to call upon God. The babe seeks Christ upon the streets of the city—by night upon her bed, as well as in the banqueting-house when she enjoys communion with him whom her soul lov- eth. So will we do, if we are or would be child- ren of the babe.

Do you know a place where God is not—where his presence is not intimately beside you? Then, neither know a place where prayer is not to be made. Let every locality be a *Bethel*—a place where you have sought a covenant-keeping God—and every locality will be to you a *Peniel*—a place where you have seen God face to face with the eye of faith, and where he has pressed your soul.

III. Requisites in those who would seek God by prayer.

1. "Lifting up holy hands." Man says, pray not till you are converted. God does not say, You

must not call upon me till you know that you are redeemed. "Come to me." "Whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely." But he also says, In prayer, "lift up holy hands." Ah! who can say, "I am clean, I am pure from every sin!" Who can lift up hands without a stain unto the holy God? Not one. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. The cry of every one who knows himself will be, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." So it is not meant that we must be sinless before we approach unto God, but a *sincere*—pure in this way, that we cast all known sin from us with abhorrence—that we throw down the reward of iniquity from our hands—that we let go the grasp of every false hope—and extend the hands and open the heart to God—longing for his fullness.

The first chapter of Isaiah is an instructive com- mentary on this point.

2. Without wrath. If any man have a quarrel against any, let him forgive and pray for his oppo- nent. Are you the injured party? Still forgive, and seek a better spirit for your adversary. Is your enemy vindictive, and does he continue again and again to do you wrong? Forgive—"till sev- enty times seven." Remember what is forgiven you if ye are Christ's—what must be forgiven you if ever you enter the kingdom. Remember you are a penitent if you truly pray—be like a peni- tent; and remember what is implied in all your supplications—"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us."

3. Without doubting. There is much to make every one doubt who is truly concerned for the sal- vation of his soul. There is the guilt of sin, and the dreadful recollections of our wickedness and ungodliness; and should our fears on this account be banished by such a word as that? "The blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanseth us from all sin." There remains a fear of our own sincerity. We may be conscious even at the moment that we are seeking redemption from all iniquity, and yet, at that very time, fear that in a little while our hearts will be again wandering on the mountains of vani- ty. Such causes of doubting are known to all who have got some insight into the desperate wick- edness and deceitfulness of their own hearts. But besides these, we are conscious of baseness and repented provocation towards God in our sins, that we cannot in honesty forgive ourselves, and we fear that God looks upon us with a feeling of loathing, and will not forgive us either, forgetting that he is God, and not man, and that he can be just, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. Our doubts, with other evil thoughts, proceed from out of our own hearts, and are countenanced by our unbelieving and unscrup- tural reasonings concerning God in his dealing with sinners. They do not spring from any views of God in his acting towards true penitents that are given in his word: for though he is holy, and re- quires holiness in those that seek his face, yet he provides holiness for his people—though just and inflexible in his judgments, yet he has a plan of mercy consistent with justice. One died the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. He is able and willing to save—faithful to all his promises.

Doubts spring from ourselves. Now in prayer—in true prayer—we disclaim all self-righteous- ness—all merit—all power in man to save. We cast ourselves in guilt before God. All hope is placed in him—all trust in Christ's finished work—all expectation in grace, and the promised spirit to guide us into all truth, and make us meet for heav- en. God is all and in all in prayer—therefore, in prayer we should not doubt.

Call then upon the Lord. Let no one neglect this duty. However guilty and vile, seek his face. Christ came to save the lost. We have undone ourselves, but in God is our help. It is here, "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." He will be inquired of for this. "Whoso- ever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

G.

MINISTERIAL CONCERT FOR PRAYER.

To the Editor of the Record.

DEAR Sir,—In my last note I brought under your notice and the notice of the brethren, the subject of a concert for prayer on Saturday evening of every week, and limited at some of the ben- efits which might be expected to flow from the adoption of such a scheme. I trust it is unneces- sary to say anything in further recommendation of the proposal, more especially to ministers, as I am sure that all the servants of God, who are taught of him, will feel communion with the Lord at his throne of grace, and special prayer for the influ- ences of the Holy Spirit to be the best preparation for the duties of the sanctuary. No doubt study is necessary, and preparation of a mental and in- tellectual kind, but the preparation of the heart is necessary in an equal or even higher degree; and this preparation cometh from God, and must be sought in communion with him and prayer, for the softening, quickening and purifying influences of the Spirit.

At present I mean very briefly to point out some subjects which might have a special place in our supplications on these occasions; and in doing this I shall not dwell on those subjects which should have a place in the prayers of all Christians at all times, but shall notice such in particular as relate most closely to the circumstances of the church in this land.

1. That as the servants of Christ, we may be taught of God, and enabled to speak the truth in love; to declare the whole counsel of God; to ha- ving epistles of Christ, known and read of all men; and to seek the glory of the Lord in the salvation of souls, as the great end of all our ministrations.

2. That the Lord would open the hearts of our people, and make his word effectual for convincing and converting sinners, comforting distressed souls, and sanctifying and edifying believers, so that the word of God may have free course and be glorified.

3. That prevailing wickedness and ungodliness may be arrested and brought to an end; and that the spirit of the Lord may lift up a standard against the flood of ungodliness which threatens to sweep over our land. Many flagrant sins cleave to us as a community, especially Sabbath profanation, im- temperance, swearing, &c.

4. That God would build up and prosper our church. When we look back on the brief history of our church, we may well say, "the Lord hath been mindful of us;" and in looking forward we may hope that he will bless us and increase us more and more. But we have much to humble us, and to make our hearts tremble for the ark of God. And whither can we look for aid? Vain is the help of man. God alone is our refuge and our strength. How necessary is it that we seek his direction and blessing in all that we do as a church.

5. That God would bless especially the educa- tional institutions of the church. These are of the very highest importance, for providing a supply of labourers for the large portion of Christ's vine- yard committed to our care. In many respects these institutions are in a hopeful and promising state; but still the full supply of teachers has not been obtained; and even were the machinery in the most complete and working state, the blessing of God is necessary. The most perfect organiza- tion is useless if the spirit of God is not present. Let us then pray that God would specially bless these institutions, and teach, by his own spirit, both professors and students; that he would provide men fitted for this important work, and own these institutions as schools for the prophets.

6. That success may attend our efforts for union. I trust the desire for a union is both universal and sincere. Some difficulties seem to be in the way; but I really believe that these difficulties are more likely to be surmounted by the cultivation on both sides of a devotional, a Christian and charitable spirit, than by mere discussion. At all events, we may look for success just in proportion as we are enabled to have a single eye to God's glory, and to follow the leadings of his providence and of his spirit. Man may make disunion. We must look to God if we would secure union.