

## The Power of Prayer.

### A SURE CURE FOR ALL EVIL HABITS.

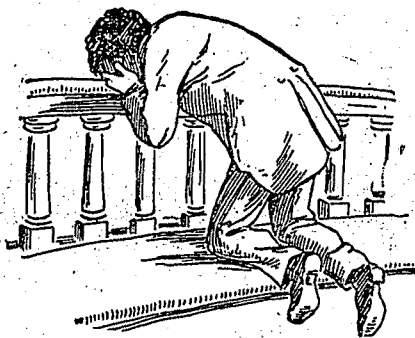
And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. Matt. 21: 22.

While always a firm believer in the fundamental truths of Christianity, I have only lately come through an experience that throws a strong light on the fact that the first and most important step in the Divine life is often left untaken till near the journey's end, and that step is simple Trust, or the unconditioned throwing of one's self into the hands of God. A Christian, one day, relating all his trials and misfortunes to a neighbor, said: 'I tell you, Brother Smith, I have tried everything—done my level best, and now I must just trust in the Lord.'

'My! oh, my!' said Bro. Smith, 'and has it come to that?'

Whether the Lord delivered the man who as a last resort trusted in Him, I cannot tell, but the way in which He delivered me when I, too, fled to the last refuge of the baffled soul—simple trust—is worth relating for the simple fact that it can hardly help helping some worn and weary brother pulling hard against the stream.

Some months ago, a series of revival ser-



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vices were being held in my neighborhood, and I was cordially invited to attend. The evangelist, besides being an effective preacher, was a man of strong force of character. Some one having doubtless, my good at heart, made him acquainted with the fact that I was one of the most inveterate smokers in California—in fact, that I made a god of my pipe—and the information was literally true. I began the habit when I was eight years of age, and I have kept it up ever since—thirty-six years. More than twenty times I have tried to quit it, not so much that I thought it sinful, but simply because I could not smoke in moderation. Other people can take a smoke and then have done with it for an hour or two, but the moment I had emptied my pipe, I immediately refilled it.

Fifteen pipes was my usual smoking between breakfast and dinner; between dinner and supper I generally had four pipes, and after supper I smoked incessantly until bed time. It was a common question with my visitors, 'Do you ever lay down your pipe at all?'

The result of this inordinate (insane would be a better word) indulgence was extreme nervousness, which at times rendered me miserable. Many a night after retiring, my legs would insist on going for a walk on their own responsibility, and I had to rise and go with them. One night I would fly to quinine as an antidote, another, to whisky. Again, a sudden noise of any kind would send my heart to beating at the rate

of eighteen to the dozen. No wonder I tried to quit it! I have even taken the tobacco cures so largely advertised, but all to no effect. So the evangelist got my record, as a record breaker among smokers, and he was told at the same time that if he could only influence me to abandon the habit I might soon become a power for good in the Sunday-school and other Christian agencies. Accordingly, one evening he took the tobacco vice as the theme of his address. He did full justice to his subject, and after he had finished, I felt all the insolation of a leper and everybody (as I thought) seemed to look at me with a I-am-holier-than-thou sort of look in their eye.

Later on, while some questions were being asked and answered, I took occasion to ask the preacher how he reconciled the marvelous work done by Spurgeon, of England, with the fact that he was an inveterate smoker, and that he often said, publicly, that he smoked to the glory of God.

'Yes,' said the preacher, 'but Spurgeon was an exceptional case, besides, he was a man of different build and temperament from you.' And then he went on: 'Now, honestly, brother, don't you admit that smoking is injuring you?'

'Yes.'

'Don't you feel convinced that it's wrong for you to continue the habit?'

'Yes, but I can't quit it.'

'You believe in prayer, don't you?'

'Yes.'

Then calling a minister who was in the room, they both knelt beside me, both prayed, and at their request I prayed, too—not that I had much faith in this mode of procedure, for I firmly believed that the days of such a miracle as my conversion from tobacco were past and gone.

That night I went to bed without smoking. Next day, I felt a want of something, but I persuaded myself it wasn't tobacco. A week passed, and I was still a free man; then a day came, and the mail brought me news of a financial loss, and towards evening my horse ran away and reduced my new buggy to match-wood. That night, I thought of my pipe, and the question suggested itself, 'I wonder could I smoke if I tried?'

I tried, and for a week and more I made up for lost time. A sudden and acute illness called a halt, and brought a member of the Salvation Army to ask how I was getting on. I told him of my tobacco cure, and how I had begun the habit again. He said he had been 'cured by prayer, too,' asked if I would join him in an earnest request to God that my appetite for tobacco might be again taken away?

This time, I joined in the prayer with all my heart. I felt that I had sinned beyond forgiveness in going back to the habit from which I had been so marvelously delivered, and I feared that God would punish me by leaving me to struggle against it myself in future. I mentioned this fear to my visitor, and his reply was, 'You have nothing to do with it. Commit the whole thing to God, don't worry trying to keep yourself from it. God will do that. You have only to trust, He will do the keeping.'

A few days after, I was convalescent, and all craving for tobacco seemed plucked out by the roots, and plucked out for ever. Like all who have abandoned the insidious vice, I have improved physically and spiritually. I have been vouchsafed a full, clear, and beautiful insight into those words in the first epistle general of Peter, 'Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. W. J. Thompson, L.L. D., Clair, Cal. in the 'Ram's Horn.'

## The Old Question.

It was in the late autumn of 189—. In the little town of C— revival fires were burning brightly. Two evangelists, young men wholly given up to the Lord and manifestly filled with his Spirit, by prayer and song and sermon and exhortation, were pleading mightily the cause of Christ and his salvation.

The members of the church and of the other churches in the place were deeply moved, and many sought and obtained the new and blessed experience of heart purity.

Many souls were under deep conviction, among them several of the high school students. The superintendent, Prof. Hartwell, and the principal, Miss Wayne, were zealous Christian workers. Very dear to them were these young people with whom their lives were associated day by day. As they watched them, halting between two opinions, they went quietly to one and another, and gently urged an immediate decision.

Among the students was Cora Lynn, a bright, vivacious girl of sixteen. She had not been reared in a Christian home, and had given these matters but little thought. Now, however, she could think of little else. The tender, earnest appeals for full surrender to Jesus, the songs that seemed like tender messages from on high, and the glad testimonies of those who had found the great light, impressed her strangely, as nothing had ever done before. She was conscious of the unfolding and reaching out of her spiritual nature in a great longing for him, the light of the world.

Still she would not yield. She would wait, she said to herself, and see how these others held out. Miss Wayne was watching her. She knew her nature well enough to seek an opportune moment for the word she wished to speak. And one evening, as the invitation was given with even more than the usual pleading tenderness, and Miss Wayne saw that Cora was indeed 'almost persuaded,' she went to her, and taking her hands in her own, spoke the words she had been longing to say, and a moment later led her weeping to the altar.

When Cora Lynn rose from the altar that night life seemed to her a new thing, a sacred thing, to be wholly given to the service of the Lord. She almost dreaded to go out from that place, lest contact with the world should bring with it profanation of her new-found happiness. But as the days went on she learned that her experience had in it something abiding. It was, indeed, like a well of living water, springing up within.

She had always admired Miss Wayne; now she felt that she loved her, more even, she sometimes feared, than she did her own mother, for her mother could not help her in her Christian life.

Weeks passed. The evangelists had gone. Pastor and people had continued the meetings for some time, but the weariness of the flesh at last prevailed, and the services fell back into the usual routine. But results were apparent everywhere. The lecture-room, which had formerly looked so empty to the few who had gathered there for the weekly prayer-meeting, was quite too small to hold the numbers that came. The readiness in prayer and testimony was a joy to the pastor's heart.

There was a different atmosphere in the school-room—an earnestness and attention to work, where before had been little breezes and ripples of mischief on very slight pretexts.

And best of all, in many, many homes was a higher, purer standard of living as a result of this 'troubling of the waters.'

But it is particularly with the school that my story deals.

In January came the first fall of snow suffi-