

## The Home Mission Journal.

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All communications and subscriptions may be forwarded to  
**REV. J. H. HUGHES,**  
 Carleton, St. John

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"Make but His service thy delight,  
 Thy wants shall be His care."

4. **Sincerity and Purity of Heart.**—The heart must be engaged in prayer, and it must be in a right state. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; but the prayer of the upright is His delight" (Prov. xv. 8). "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Ps. lxxvi. 18). Hearts and lips must be in accord. God will not hear the cry that goeth "out of feigned lips."

5. **The Aid of the Holy Ghost.**—"Praying in the Holy Ghost," is a condition of successful prayer. We need the "Spirit of grace and of supplications" (Zech. xii. 10). He must prompt the desire and shape the petition. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. viii. 26, 27).

II. Conditions to be observed in the present-ation of our prayers.

When we actually come to the Mercy-Seat, let us remember the following conditions:—

1. **IN THE NAME OF JESUS OUR PRAYERS must be presented.** " whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name I will do it" (John xiv. 13, 14.) This condition is again mentioned in John xvi. 23, 24.

Our prayers must be offered *through His mediation*. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John xiv. 6.) His name is our *authority in prayer*. It is a name of power with God. We have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. x. 19.) *This name is our plea in prayer*. For "Christ's sake" we should ask to be heard, and expect to be answered; pleading His work, merits and blood.

2. **With FAITH must our prayers be offered.** "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. xi. 6.)

"All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, BELIEVING, ye shall receive" (Matt. xxi. 22.) Faith in His *existence* is the first ground of prayer. Then, faith in His *ability* to help us. Again, faith in His *willingness* to bless us; faith too, that he will really do that for which we are asking.

3. **We must pray with PERSISTENT IMPORTUNITY.** "Continuing in prayer" (Rom. xii. 12; Col. iv. 2,) is a condition of prayer. We ever remember the story of Jacob (Gen. xxxii.) The record of that wondrous night of wrestling with God is our edification, as appears from Hosea xii. 4-6: "Yea, he had power over the angel and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there He spake with us; even the Lord God of Hosts; the Lord is His memorial. Therefore turn to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God CONTINUALLY."

We have, too, the example of the disciples waiting for the Spirit. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Acts i. 14.)

And our blessed Saviour taught us that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint," in the parable of the importunate widow (Luke xviii.) And He exemplified His own teaching; for He "continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke vi. 12.)

4. **Asking according to the wish of God** is an important condition of success in prayer. "And this is the confidence we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that

we desired of Him" (1 John v. 14, 15.) "Thy will be done," is the best prayer we can offer, or God can answer. Sometimes God answers prayers that are not according to His will, and the answer proves to be a curse instead of a blessing. Let us beware! Remember what is written concerning some of old: "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul." (Ps. cvi. 15.) Let every prayer contain this proviso: "Not my will, but Thine be done."

5. **Pleading the promises,** is a condition of success in prayer. "Do as Thou hast said," is a powerful plea with God. The promises of God have been well likened to cheques, and we have to present them at the Bank of Faith, expecting payment for them. Most of the *conditions* mentioned are really implied *promises*. It has been said that "God's promises are a Christian's pleas in prayer, the guide of his desires, and the ground of his faith." The prayer should fit the promise as the key does the lock.

6. **Unity of desire among believers,** is a condition of successful prayer. "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. xviii. 19.]

"And when the Day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." [Acts ii. 1.]

"Now unto Him that is able to do abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, UNTO HIM be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end, Amen." [Eph. iii. 20, 21.]

### The Bible as Literature and Much More.

ROBERT STUART MACARTHUR.

#### II

(Continued from last issue.)

#### Rationalistic Theories.

One characteristic of all these theories is the effort entirely to eliminate entirely from the New Testament all its miraculous elements. Strauss gave us the myth theory, making the Gospels simply crystallizations into the story of the Messianic ideas, which had for several generations filled the minds of imaginative men in Palestine. Careful students clearly see, apart from all other considerations, that the time between the death of Christ and the issuance of the Gospels was too short for the development of mythical histories, which necessarily are the growth of centuries. It is also to be affirmed that the first century was not a credulous time. We know well that Sadduceeism had permeated all Jewish thinking and general reasoning. We know that even among the disciples there were doubters regarding even Christ's resurrection; there were doubters then that there might be no doubters now. The disciples were really slow to believe what surpassed their comprehension. In many ways the Gospels run counter to the Jewish ideas of the time. The Gospel was for all nations; the Jews taught a religion which was for Jews alone. The Gospel proclaimed a suffering Messiah; Judaism gloried in the hope of a temporal march and a triumphant kingdom. We know, also, that the apostles were sober, thoughtful, judicial men, and the very last writers likely to be the propagators of mythical statements and groundless fancies. It is not too much to say that the man who could invent the character and history of Christ would have to be Christ Himself. It makes a less severe tax upon our credulity to believe that Christ lived and died and rose, as is taught in the Gospels, than to suppose that the evangelists could have imagined such a life, death, and resurrection.

The theory of Baur has been called the "tendency theory." This theory makes the Gospels crigrate in the second century. It affirms that they were written under other names, for the purpose of reconciling opposing opinions between Gentiles and Jews, both of whom were represented in the churches. Literary objections to this theory are numerous, and so are historical and doctrinal objections; but the moral objection is absolutely conclusive. This theory requires us to believe that faithful disciples of Christ in the second century were conscienceless fabricators of

a life of the Lord, while claiming that they were companions of the pure and holy Christ whom they describe. Such Jesuitical impostors as these persons would be, on this supposition, is utterly inconsistent with every conception of honesty, manliness, honor, and Christianity. It has been wisely pointed out by Dr. Strong that Baur's admission that the Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Corinthians, were written by Paul in the first century, utterly vitiates his elaborate theory. These epistles clearly testify to the main events of Christ's life, and thus the entire theory is overthrown by its own author.

We have also the "romance theory" of Renan. This theory contradicts that of Baur in essential particulars. It admits a basis of truth in the Gospels, and it holds that they were written in the first century. Thus one rationalistic critic destroys his brother rationalist. Old-fashioned believers in the Gospel may preserve their souls in patience while these critics are lustily engaged in the work of mutual destruction. We can calmly gaze upon the *disjecta membra* of the critics, rejoicing that the truth is not imperilled while they are destroying one another's rationalistic theories. Renan affirms that the events of Christ's life were so sublimated by the enthusiasm of his disciples that they are really overlaid with "pious fraud," and so cannot be accepted as genuine. He makes the Gospels historic romances. He writes with much literary beauty; and he throws the charm of his rare sentimental glamour over his pages. But he dares deny to Christ "sincerity with himself;" he affirms that Christ practiced "innocent artifice;" he attributes to the Gospels many characteristics which are as imaginative as the morality of the writers, according to his theory, was defective. He grants to Christ a marvellous sweetness of character, but denies Him credit for honesty, and he also robs Him of His divinity. His gushing language, at times, when speaking of Christ, must be most distasteful to every reverent soul, so long as he denies Christ not only the glory of His divinity, but the perfection of human morality. He attributes a romantic enthusiasm to the apostles, but his words in this respect are conclusively contradicted by the superiority of the character and the holy influence of the lives of these inspired writers. His theory is strangely weak, notwithstanding that it possesses a sentimental charm. It utterly fails to account for the rapid spread of the Gospel, and for the real character of Christ and His apostles. Renan's power is already decadent. Only as men link their names in loving loyalty and genuine reverence with the name that is above every name, can they themselves share in the glory of the immortality which belongs to the Son of God.

We have already seen that the writers of the New Testament endorsed the Old Testament. So did Christ. He loved this book. It was his only Bible. He never criticized it. This fact is sufficient to command our approval of that ancient Scripture. The writers of the New Testament imperilled their lives in support of the testimony they gave. The high moral tone of their writings is utterly opposed to any theory of dishonesty in their narratives. Their writings are also mutually confirmatory, their being just enough discrepancy to show the absence of all collusion. The moral ideas of these writers was greatly in advance of their time, and their writing is divinely adapted to the wants of the soul. It addresses all parts of our complex nature. It has been well remarked that in the Scriptures we have law and epistles for man's reason, psalms and gospels for his affectional nature, and prophets and revelation for his lofty imagination. This element in sacred Scripture is one of the reasons for its remarkable character, its universal appropriateness, and its continuous and irresistible power.

#### Additional Evidence.

The Bible itself is in many respects more wonderful than anything it contains. It has lived amid falling civilizations, opposing nationalities, and bitter hostilities of every sort. It never was really a mightier power than it is at this hour. It is endowed with an immortal youth, a universal adaptability, and a resistless fascination. It carries on its own pages evidences of its own genuineness. Forgeries are usually clumsy productions. The work which professes to be the epistles of Phalaris, a tyrant of Agrigentum in Sicily, who lived about the middle of the Sixth