

ter those two elements, he not only becomes a man of extensive beneficent influence in his own locality and generation, but so to speak, spreads over a wide surface and lives through many generations. Greatness will always exert a wide and protracted influence, but if allied with wickedness, it is the influence of moral malaria, it inoculates others with its venom, and the wide circles of destruction it has created, according to an awful arrangement of moral government, will recoil with concentrated force on the miserable victim who produced the first ripple. The reiteration of "Jeroboam the son of Nebai, who made Israel to sin," stands as a beacon to all great men, to warn them that they come not into the same condemnation.

The elements of greatness are nature's endowments, and though capable of improvement by tuition and discipline, they are unacquirable by those to whom they are not native. Greatness is not a necessary element to happiness; goodness is; and if greatness cannot be acquired, goodness can; but can any man be good in the scriptural sense of the term, who is not devout. All the great men of the Bible brought before us with approval, were very devout. They were men of prayer, and however much others might admire them for their superiority, they entertained no very high opinion of themselves; they are often found in lowly prostration before God. A careful attention to the history of David, will convince us of his true greatness, as a man of war, a statesman, philosopher, and poet; and yet in reading the effusions of his heart recorded in his psalms, the greatness of the hero is merged in the goodness of the man; and the goodness of the man is embathed in the spirit of devotion. As the beauties of nature are rendered fresh by the dews of the morning, so the goodness produced by Divine truth is revived and promoted by the spirit of prayer.

Now while it is a fact that a man weak in intellect cannot reach the status of greatness, it is a cheering fact that a bad man may become good; and a good man, moderate in ability, may become preeminent in goodness, happy and useful; few things contribute more effectually to this goodness than prayer. There are the forms of prayer and its spirit; a regular attention may be paid to the former, while the latter is sadly neglected; this may be the case both in written and unwritten forms, but all forms without the spirit prove of no avail. It is instructive to observe how often David calls God to consider *his* meditations; and again, "God heareth the desire of the humble." It is the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous, that avail eth much. There is something very lowly, something very sublime, in the spirit of devotion; it is a high privilege. Access to God; access with saints; but it is access to

stores of unmeasured opulence. "The unsearchable riches of Christ." "Open your mouths wide, and I will fill them." The lowly flower which has just thrown open its bosom to inhale the light and heat from the distant orb of day, is a touching emblem of the christian, retired to his closet to inhale the rays of divine favour; and as the former expands, grows, and acquires beauty in the sublime fellowship of an object so remote and glorious, so in the quiet and ar-dour of devotion the good man glows and enlarges in Communion with the Sun of Righteousness.—"It is good for me to draw nigh to God."

High as is the obligation of prayer as a privilege, it comes with superadded weight as a duty. The neglect of a privilege involves guilt, but never impresses the human mind as does the guilt of omitted duty, or violated authority. Now prayer is made a part of our duty. It arises from the relation in which we stand to God; from the very structure of our minds, and, above all, as the injunction of God, "Men ought always to pray and not to faint."

We may attach too much importance to the form of devotion, we cannot attach too much to its spirit; could we witness the width and protraction of its influence, we should, no doubt, be much more impressed with its value, and much more frequent in its exercise. We feel its salutary influence on the mind in which it operates; it is not the exercise of a solitary grace; it is the graces melting into an energetic oneness under its touch. Faith in God, as good and merciful, faithful and bountiful, through the divine mediator. "Come boldly to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Love to the God of love; and hope in the God of promise. He will give grace and glory, and withhold no good thing from those that walk uprightly. In one word, it is to the graces what voice is to the notes of music—pours sweetness over them all. It is fellowship with God, at a moment when the mind is unusually susceptible of impression. It is communion with holiness, at a time when the heart is in a state of happy fusion.

Now is it possible for me to gaze on a lovely object with intense interest, and yet carry away with me no traces of the image of the object which so fixed my attention? Is it possible to commune earnestly with supreme excellency, and yet retain no trace of that excellency? Is it possible for me to hold affectionate and confidential intercourse with a man of superior character and worth, and yet imbibe none of his spirit? Is it then possible in the tranquil earnestness of intercourse with God in the closet, to remain estranged from his Spirit? Does it not conform us to his likeness?

"When one who holds communion with the skies, And fills his urn whence these pure waters rise,

Mingles once more with us in meaner things;  
'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings;  
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,  
And tells us whence his treasures are derived.

But happy as is the prevalence of a devotional spirit to the individual himself, it has not spent all its force on him, it extends to others. We make no unwarrantable statement when we say that all our blessings are a result of prayer. "Christ is the Saviour of all men, especially of them who believe." "Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for an inheritance." Were this world of ours not under the canopy of redeeming love, would not the anger of offended deity burn it up. The fig tree which bore no fruit would have been wrenched from its place, and slung into the fire, but the intercession of Christ spared it a little longer. The names of Elijah and Daniel, of Moses and Samuel, of Ezra and Nehemiah, in olden times, show the efficacy of prayer in reference to others. Did the Father of the Faithful, on a trying occasion, pray, "Let Ishmael live?" and was it not answered? Had the wrath of the Lord kindled against Eliphaz and his two friends, because they had not spoken of him the thing that was right; and how is it to be instrumentally alloyed, "My servant Job shall pray for you, for him will I accept; so Eliphaz the Temanite, and his two friends did according as the Lord commanded them; The Lord also accepted Job."

How obvious is it that God in the administration of his moral government in this world allows much to be done in answer to prayer. We make no attempt to scan the Deity in his essence or internal remoteness from all creatureship, for we know him only in relation to his creatures, and his government of them. The date of his government commences with the first object which started from the bosom of Eternity distinct from himself, and had it been capable of utterance, would have said, I am the product of "I A n." We may imagine creatures of every kind of wisdom, power, and goodness, and through their help receive impressions of the ancient, the remote existence of God. We may climb the ladder of creative excellency, and reach its highest rind, and look into the dark chasm of eternity, which necessarily supervenes between God and all his creatures, and then gladly return to his works and ways with, "who by searching can find out God," in our heart and lips. We know him by his manifestations in his works, or in his word. "For what man knoweth even the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God, knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Now, will not a glance at that revelation which through his Spirit he hath given us, convince us of the energy of prayer. In the first prayer of which we have any record, Gen. xxxii. 9, 24, we have this extraordinary result stated: "Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but