

MR. SPURGEON ON THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

"Then you have not been modified in any way as to the efficacy of prayer?" asked a correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, who interviewed Mr. Spurgeon the other day. Spurgeon laughed, "Only in my faith growing far stronger and firmer than ever. It is not a matter of faith with me, but of knowledge and everyday experience. I am constantly witnessing the most unmistakable instances of answers to prayer. My whole life is made up of them. To me they are so familiar as to cease to excite my surprise, but to many they would seem marvellous, no doubt. Why, I could no more doubt the efficacy of prayer than I could disbelieve in the law of gravitation. The one is as much a fact as the other, constantly verified every day of my life. Elijah, by the brook Cherith, as he received his daily rations from the ravens, could hardly be a more likely subject for scepticism than I.

Look at my Orphanage. To keep it going entails an annual expenditure of about £10,000. Only £1,400 is provided for by endowment. The remaining £8,600 comes to me regularly in answer to prayer. I do not know where I shall get it from day to day. I ask God for it, and He sends it.

Mr. Muller, of Bristol, does the same as mine. The constant inflow of funds—of all the funds necessary to carry on these works—is not stimulated by advertisements, by begging letters, by canvassing, or any of the usual modes of raising the wind. We ask God for the cash, and He sends it. That is a good, solid, material fact, not to be explained away. But quite as remarkable illustrations of the efficacy of believing faith are constantly occurring in spiritual things.

Some two years ago a poor woman, accompanied by two of her neighbours, came to my vestry in deep distress. Her husband had fled the country; in her sorrow she went to the house of God, and something I said in the sermon made her think I was personally familiar with her case. Of course I had known nothing about her. It was a general illustration that fitted a particular case. She told me her story, and a very sad one it was. I said, 'There is nothing that we can do but to kneel down and cry to the Lord for the immediate conversion of your husband.' We knelt down, and I prayed that the Lord would touch the heart of the deserter, convert his soul, and bring

him back to his home. When we rose from our knees I said to the poor woman 'do not fret about the matter. I feel sure your husband will come home; and that he will yet become connected with our Church. She went away, and I forgot all about it.

Some months after she reappeared with her neighbours and a man, whom she introduced to me as her husband. He had indeed come back, and he had returned a converted man. On making inquiry and comparing notes we found that the very day on which we had prayed for his conversion, he, being at that time on board a ship far away on the sea, stumbled most unexpectedly upon a stray copy of one of my sermons. He read it. The truth went to his heart. He repented and sought the Lord, and as soon as possible he returned to his wife and to his daily calling. He was admitted a member, and last Monday his wife, who up to that time had not been a member, was also received among us. That woman does not doubt the power of prayer.

All the infidels in the world could not shake her conviction that there is a God that answereth prayer. I should be the most irrational creature in the world if, with a life, every day of which is full of experiences so remarkable, I entertained the slightest doubt on the subject. I do not regard it as miraculous; it is part and parcel of the established order of the universe that the shadow of a coming event should fall in advance upon some believing soul in the shape of prayer for its realisation. The prayer of faith is a divine decree commencing its fulfilment.

HOME LIFE.

It has been well said that a single bitter word may disquiet an entire family for a whole day. One surly glance casts a gloom over the whole household; while a smile like a gleam of sunshine may light the darkest and weariest hours. Like unexpected flowers, springing up along our dusty road, full of fresh fragrance and beauty, so kind words and gentle acts, and sweet dispositions make glad the home where peace and blessing dwell. No matter how humble the abode, if it be thus garnished with grace and sweetened with kindness and smiles, the heart will turn longingly toward it from all the tumults of the world, and home, if it be ever so homely, will be the dearest spot beneath the circuit of the sun.