

which they are placed. The peculiar state of the continental nations of Europe previous to the rise of the present war—the present mournful war itself, in its different aspects—the moral and religious state of our own beloved country, a state so promising in some points of view, so threatening in others, a state of fierce conflict between the powers of good and of evil, which must lead, and that soon, either to the most delightful or to the most disastrous results—the very peculiar condition of the vast colonial possessions of this country—the wonderful revolution which has taken place and is in progress in China, a country comprehending so large a proportion of the inhabitants of our globe—the singularly interesting state of the inhabitants of our vast possessions in India, amid the breaking up of their ancient superstitions—the condition of the two great systems of imposture and religious tyranny which have so long and so effectually checked and opposed the progress of genuine Christianity, Popery and Mahommedanism—and the urgent calls which missionaries, in all parts of the heathen world, are making for increased help and blessing—all these present to the reflecting Christian mind overwhelming reasons why the disciples of Christ, the true friends of mankind, should, as one man, unite in the use of what Scripture teaches them to consider as the grand means—the means that secures all other necessary means—of at once arresting the evils which seem impending, and securing the blessings which seem ready to be bestowed on the church and the world.

The proposal made in the address referred to is, that Christians should agree that, so far as possible, some portion of every day should be spent in special prayer for certain blessings bearing on individual Christian improvement, on the revival of a spiritual Christianity in the church, and on its dissemination throughout the world.

It is not doubted that the adoption of this proposal in good earnest will lead to increased prayer on these subjects at the family altar, in the devotions of the assembled churches on the Lord's day, and in social meetings for prayer, whether congregational or select, whether periodical or occasional; but the object specifically and principally aimed at is to secure *increased prayer daily in secret* about the matters referred to. It is most justly observed, that it can scarcely be questioned that the chief want among us lies practically in the restraining of Peniel-like wrestling with God in secret. It is comparatively easy to give attendance on meetings; it is another thing to "take hold of God day after day in secret, apart from the excitements of a crowd."* While no meeting, however numerous, would secure such prayers, these secret prayers could scarcely fail to secure such meetings, and, what is still more important, secure the truth and reality of the exercises in them.

It is wished, then, that every day those who join in the concert should, humbling themselves before God, under a deep sense of guilt, depravity, and helplessness, and making confession of the sinfulness of our race, our own individual sinfulness—our sins as members of families—our sins as members of churches—our sins as belonging to a civil community, engage in earnest prayer, that we may be forgiven and sanctified—that the Holy Spirit may be shed forth abundantly on ourselves, our fellow-Christians, our fellow-men—that we and all our brethren in Christ may be better fitted to honour God and do good to mankind—that the churches of Christ may be revived, becoming more pure, more united, more spiritual, and more zealous, active, and successful in the good work of the Lord—that the ministry may be rendered more enlightened, more faithful, more affectionate, more laborious—that the gospel may be more fully and purely preached—that families may become nurseries for the church on earth, for the church in heaven—that all divine institutions may be rendered effectual for these purposes by divine influence—that all things in the churches may be increasingly ordered according to the mind and will of the Lord, as made known in the Scriptures—that God would protect our country from all danger—that He would bestow heavenly and spiritual blessings on our beloved Sovereign, her consort and children, and all our magistrates—that He would impress on all classes a growing horror of war, and desire of peace—that He would make our rulers clearly to understand and faithfully to perform the duties of the present crisis—that He would protect and bless those who keep the battle from our gates, and make the hazards and sufferings of warfare the means of spiritual good to our soldiers and sailors—that He would turn war into peace, and scatter those

* "Suggestions for Daily Prayer," No. 1, p. 8.