

in all our mental life. It is a good thing, therefore, to remember that prayer is not the time to train the mind, but that in prayer we shall reap the fruits of the carelessness or watchfulness of our ordinary life.

2. Again, it must be remembered that the mind is a very delicate instrument, and is very easily put out of order, and that spiritual work does not exempt people from natural laws. We need, therefore, care and common sense just as much in spiritual as in temporal things: a person may suffer very considerably in his spiritual life from lack of the exercise of a little common sense.

(a) In learning to pray it is, therefore, most important not to overburden ourselves at first with too many prayers. Leave plenty of room to grow; be content at first to say such prayers as are suited to a beginner. If you would ever be able to spend a long time in prayer you must begin with short times; the mind must be seasoned. Do not let prayer hang over you as a burden. It may be an admirable exercise in humility to confess to oneself how short a time one is able to pray; the mind must grow into the life of prayer, but it will never do this if it is allowed to be overweighted with a burden of prayer beyond its strength.

(b). Again, do not leave your prayers to be said when the mind is too wearied to think. If you are obliged to be up late, say the greater part of your prayers earlier in the evening; it is a fatal thing to go to one's room at night tired out and burdened with the dread of a considerable time to be spent in prayer, much of which experience has taught will be a mere struggle with sleep. One will never learn to pray by such methods; the mind needs in prayer the exercise of all its powers, and prayer should be said when the mind is fresh and in full vigor. The times of prayer, therefore, should be arranged so that the natural instrument is at the best, not at its worst, and it should be always borne in mind that God does not give His grace to help us to do what nature can do of itself. You have no right to expect God to help you to say your prayers when you are tired, because you have not taken the trouble to say them in the proper time.

(c) There must be, if there is any *life* in prayer, adaptability; one of the chief conditions of life is the capacity of adapting inward to outward relations. It is the same with prayer. Prayers in sickness will not be the same as in health if they are the utterances of a living soul, and in times of special trial or temptation the prayers will not