

declaration and divorce it from the second ; it is only in a measure in which they are abiding in Christ, and his words are abiding in them, that they have any right to expect that their prayers shall be answered. Behold how this was seen in Abraham when he took it upon himself to speak unto the Lord. It was the meeting of friend with friend. On the one hand, Jehovah said, " Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do ? " And on the other, Abraham said unto the Lord, " Peradventure ten shall be found there ; " and the answer came, " I will not destroy it for ten's sake. " We are apt to imagine, at first thought, that all this was the manifestation of mere earnestness ; but out of what did that earnestness spring ? It sprang out of the closeness of Abraham's walk with God ; that is, out of his abiding in God, and God's words abiding in him. So it was with all the others spoken of in the Bible as successful suppliants. Daniel, the beloved, had his eyes opened in answer to his prayers because he was so exalted in character ; and he who saw the great apocalypse was the disciple who leaned upon the Master's breast at supper, and had drunk in most of his spirit. Successful prayer is thus the fruitage of a holy character ; and it is only when men delight themselves in God that they can calculate upon receiving the desires of their hearts. It is thus, indeed, a great thing to pray ; and when all these things are taken into consideration men need not be surprised that so few of their requests are answered. The cause is not in God but in themselves ; for, tried by these tests, the best of them must confess that they have rarely prayed at all.

But a second class of conditions connect themselves with the nature of the thing requested. That which we ask must be in accordance with God's will. Beneath every genuine supplication, there is the spirit of resignation breathed by Jesus himself in his Gethsemane anguish : " Nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt. " Man is ignorant and shortsighted and very often asks for that which would be hurtful to him ; he cannot see the end from the beginning and so, frequently, that which at present seems to him desirable would ultimately prove injurious.