

confusion like the baseless fabric of a vision because they have dealt in matters too great and things too high for them. But God's plans never transcend Him. "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He it. heaven and in the earth, in the seas and in all deep places." Of his Church, its existence, its preservation, its perpetuity, He speaks unhesitatingly and unmistakably. "It shall come to pass that the mountain of the Lord's House shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow into it." And "on this rock shall I build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." How this is to be accomplished and carried out my text gives some indication. "That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born and shall arise and declare them to their children—That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God but keep His commandments." This with the preceding lines of action indicated throughout by me seems to be God's means and method of building up his Church. But, through revolving years, human sagacity and ingenuity have invented and put into operation additional and varied appliances.

By some, seasons are set apart and times appointed with shrewd calculations upon favourable skies; with men singers and women singers, a skilled cunning craftsman is secured to come in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ, and on the terms mentioned in the agreement to revive and refresh and secure a large ingathering. To this, with hopeful expectancy, managing committees look, and on such occasions a careless or neglectful parentage largely depend for the conversion and ingathering of the children for whom they have made no provision of a religious home atmosphere in which emotions and excitements and impressions made, be cherished and matured. In the days of the good old revivalists, who, for the love of it, went from place to place, "Fear came upon every soul, and there was great joy in that city?" etc. But it is a matter of wonderment, how deftly and accurately modern professional adepts can confine and curtail and restrain and straiten "showers of blessings" to the bounds for the interest of the congregation that furnish the purse or handsome cheque.

Our Church has all along held and acted on the principle that largely her growth and increase like a tree comes from within, and with branches and foliage imparting beneficent influences on climate and temperature around and without. We depend mainly and largely on family development. God's method is "Instead of the fathers shall be thy children." His ways are simple and plain—but in the Church anywhere, everywhere, we are confronted with methods in galore till the alphabet is puzzled to find initial letters for them. Never was there such bustle, such activity. Never was denominational contest keener in the use of old, or devising or testing new schemes for the building up of the Church. We are bewildered by machinery. With a young family, I would not to-day be a door-keeper in the house of the Lord for money. With such batteries charged with gregariousness, you may have numbers, and I will grant you finances—but at what expense? Among many disastrous consequences I single out family life. Maintain these, and family arrangement for reading and meditation is an impossibility, and when that is gone all is gone! I think there is a more excellent though simpler way. There is an old weapon in the armoury, laid aside, but not superseded by a better, but rusting from disuse. With it the apostles did yeoman service. Compared with it, the jaw-bone in Samson's hand was but as a school-boy's toy. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and all thy house." Amid all this restless activity and wealth of means, the thought not only disturbs us, but passes from lip to lip in the Church, and is put by the world and entitled to an explanation. Why and how, with so many undoubtedly Christian parents, do so few of our children openly connect themselves by profession with the Church? I venture a solution. In seeking and finding peace let McCheyne speak:—

Tho' friends spoke in rapture of Christ on the tree,
Jehovah Tsid-kenu was nothing to me.
When free grace awoke me with light from on high,
Then guilty fears shook me, I trembled to die,
No refuge, no safety, in self could I see.
Jehovah Tsid-kenu my Saviour must be.

Nothing but Christ. Nothing but Christ! There is a law in the material world that a body or weight, unassisted, can raise an equal weight no higher than itself, so in the spiritual, yet we ignore it. We use our best influence to put our children under the best means, and, in our folly, expect saving results for them, we could not by any and all means secure for ourselves. Let us go by the exercise of importunate faith and plead for them, as we did plead for ourselves, and we have His pledge that He will deal with and bestow supernatural blessings upon our house.

Then with untiring watchfulness praying with and for our children, with instruction and counsel and oversight "fill them up to the brim," that when the Holy Spirit draws out there may appear fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.

Going forth thus, each holds aloft the torch of light and illuminates the darkness as Eleazar did when beside the converging flock he prayed to the Lord God of his far away master Abraham;—as did Joseph when though a slave, he scorned to take freedom and favour and preferment at the price of "doing this great wickedness, and sinning against God;"—as did the little captive maid, when in the tent of her mistress, she modestly spoke of what the prophet in the land of Israel could do and wished her master were there.

A simple, well-timed speech that affected nations. Let us equip our children that wherever they may be, instead of itch-

ing for the platform, they may, in the workshop or at the desk, amid the minglings and comminglings of their fellow men, by pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by much patience, by love unfeigned, by consistent uprightness, hold up a banner and display it because of the Truth.

Then shall the wilderness be like Eden, and the desert like the garden of the Lord, from which, on the air laden with the echoes of the voice of melody within, we hear words and snatch echoes like these:—

Thus far Thy power hath kept me, sure it still
Will lead me on,
O'er moor, o'er fen, o'er crag and torrent till the night is gone.

Mingling and commingling with other echoes, further up and on:—

Beyond the rising and the setting,
I shall be soon.
Beyond the sowing and the reaping,
Beyond the smiling and the weeping,
I shall be soon.
Love, rest and home,
Lord tarry not, but come.

Nevertheless, willing and ready to wait all the days of my appointed time here with patience till my change come.

Down on our east rock-bound coast a noble steamship in the darkness of midnight, looking in vain for the guiding lighthouse, changed its course, and crashing on the rocks not a soul was left to tell the tale. Silence long and sullenly brooded o'er the scene, disturbed only by the breaking waves or the seagull's scream. At the end of years, in the lone chamber of the dying lighthouse man, he beckoned a watcher to his pillow. In his ear he whispered: Do you remember the wreck of the *Hungarian*? The captain's course was all right, his calculations faultlessly correct, but I neglected to light up!

Parents and guardians, light up! With burning brain and glowing heart have altars reared where altars there are none. Gather together the scattered stones and re-build where these have been neglected and deserted, and "Light up, and keep alive the flame to show the path," lest missing the way any of our loved ones stumble and reel and stagger and fall and perish in an endless destruction.

AN UPLIFT FROM DEPRESSION.

There is a physical depression of disease departing only with the return of health, or from indolence dissipated only by exercise, or of fatigue remedied only by rest.

There is a depression of spirit which may exist, for a time at least, with perfect health of body and soundness of mind; its source is sin, which poisons love, sharpens a thousand stings within the breast, drugs hope, shatters confidence, and scatters faith; its only cure is the bitter water of repentance, the medicine for guilt, and afterward the water of life.

But even he whose iniquity is purged may often be in heaviness, as when the soul staggers under responsibility; or the heart is overwhelmed by the return of tides of sorrow which had long since ebbed: or a father fears that poverty may yet force an entrance into his home; or the mother sinks in dread lest her boy is taking the downward path; or as when the pastor trembles because the sheaves are few, or the harvest delays to ripen till the winter's blast uproots the seed sown in his tears. Anon it comes in the reaction of a good deed, or the protracted strain in the Master's work; it waits upon lonely hours; it darkens the spirit when "the snow that never melts" first falls upon the brow; the lines upon the face of a friend, the tears in his eyes, or his voice at parting or when he whispers his sorrow, may lower a leaden weight upon the heart.

There be many that say, Is there relief for such depression?

There is! Simple, sweet, sufficient. Turn from the outward to the inward, and thence look upward. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, . . . that walketh in darkness and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God." Let him look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen. Seek silence and solitude for one hour; wait before the Lord; let thoughts come and go as they list; look and listen. Thou shalt hear the still small voice; thou shalt see the star of Bethlehem; the heart will lighten; the uplift may be swift or slow, but it will be sure, and thou shalt say:

A presence melted through my mood,
A warmth, a light, a sense of good,
Like sunshine through a winter's wood.

—N. Y. Christian Advocate.

BE TRUE TO YOUR OWN CHURCH.

Don't run down either its pastor or its members; either its doctrine or its policy; either its ordinances or its usages. Give it a hearty and loyal support by word and deed. Remember that it belongs to you; that it is part of your religious life; that in and by it you are being trained for usefulness here and immortality hereafter; that its honour is much in your keeping; that its growth and purity are affected to the extent of your influence by what you say and do; that people who have faith in your word will look upon it largely according to your representation; that you have promised to advance its interests; and that with its good name and prosperity are bound up the glory of the blessed Jesus. Then do nothing to injure its reputation, or to weaken its power for good, or to mar its peace and fellowship.—Presbyterian.

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

June 8
1890.

TEACHING TO PRAY.

[Luke 11:
1-13.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.—Luke xi. 9.

INTRODUCTORY.

The circumstances in which the Lord's Prayer was again taught to the disciples were different from those in which it was first given. The prayer is substantially the same, with the exception that the concluding ascription given in Matthew's Gospel is here omitted, where in the Revised Version it is also omitted. The occasion was different. The first time it is given it forms a part of the Sermon on the Mount, in which the Saviour defines the character of true prayer. Here it is given to the disciples during the last journey to Jerusalem before Christ suffered.

I. Jesus Teaches us to Pray.—By His example Jesus has taught us to pray. He, the Holy One, often spent whole nights in prayer. His example produced a deep impression on the disciples who thus were the witnesses of the frequency and fervency of his devotion. So now on the occasion mentioned in the lesson when He ended His prayer, one of the disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray," and as a reason for preferring the request he instances the fact that John the Baptist had taught his disciples how to pray. This request does not mean that the disciple merely desired a form of prayer, forms were very plentiful among the Jews. What this disciple wanted to know was how to pray in the true spirit and with acceptance, also what things to pray for. It is easy to learn, and easier still to repeat a set form of words, but mere mechanical repetition of forms, however excellent in themselves, is not prayer. Prayer implies the outgoing of the soul in fervent devotion to God, the Hearer and the Answerer of prayer. In the exercise of prayer as in all else Jesus is the best teacher. He graciously complied with the disciple's request and He is ready and willing to respond to the sincere desire of every soul that seeks to learn of Him.

II. The Prayer which Christ Taught.—While this model prayer has been reverently cherished all through the centuries since the time it was first spoken, and while the words are those that Jesus spake, there is no intimation that the mere form is ever and always to be adhered to, for although here Christ says, "When ye pray, say," in Matthew He says, "After this manner, therefore, pray ye." The Lord's prayer is the most complete and comprehensive form of prayer that exists. "It expresses and combines," says a distinguished Christian scholar, "in the best order, every divine promise, every human sorrow, and want, and every Christian aspiration for the good of others." It has been noted that in this model prayer the word "our" not "my" is used. The individual life is dependent on God, but Christ teaches us to include others in our supplications at a throne of grace. The truly Christian soul is unselfish. God is the Father of all men in that they are His creatures. He is the reconciled Father of all who are adopted into His family through faith in Jesus Christ. He is in heaven, supreme in power, wisdom and glory and having all power on earth. His name—that by which He makes Himself known to us—is to be held in deepest reverence and respect. The next petition is the expression of the devout heart for the coming of God's kingdom on the earth, when truth and righteousness shall universally prevail. The next is closely connected with it, "Thy will be done." God's will is the rule of our obedience. In heaven that will is done, and this petition voices the desire that all on this earth may be as faithful and as loving in their voluntary obedience to the divine will as the angels are in heaven. The first part of the prayer, like the first part of the moral law, relates to the duties we owe directly to God. Now we come to the part that deals with our deepest needs here on earth. Bread is a necessity for the sustenance of our bodily life. It is God that gives it to us. His bounty in nature can be seen by every eye. He wants us to ask it from Him, and we should ask it from day to day, that we might realize our dependence upon Him and express our gratitude for His daily gifts. Daily bread includes all that is needful for the maintenance of our health and strength. It includes also the supplies of all needed grace for the soul's health and prosperity. For this reason Jesus says, "I am the Bread of Life, which came down from heaven." No less deep is the need of forgiveness of sin. For this also we must constantly pray. If we are to be forgiven we must also forgive those who have injured us. In certain moods this may seem hard, but how can injuries inflicted upon us by fellow-mortals be compared to our sins against God? The conclusion of the prayer as here given is a request for preservation from temptation and deliverance from evil. If we pray that God would not lead us into temptation, we must not run into it ourselves. If we are in God's providence exposed to temptation we can look to Him for the strength and grace necessary to overcome. The Revised Version renders the last petition of the Lord's Prayer "deliver us from the Evil One," teaching us that we are exposed to the adverse power of the Adversary of Souls and are in need of the Divine protection that we may be kept from the wiles and snares of the devil.

III. God Answers Prayer.—There is another lesson in connection with prayer which the Saviour here teaches. Prayer must be persevering. It must be that we mean it. This importunity in prayer is illustrated by the case of a man who goes to his friend's house at midnight to ask the loan of bread to set before a hungry guest who has just arrived at that unreasonable hour. At first the friend from whom the favour is sought does not wish to be disturbed and makes excuses for refusal. The other perseveres until to escape from his pertinacity the man rises from his bed and gives him what he asks. If a selfish man will give when he is importuned how much more willingly will the Giver of every good and perfect gift answer the prayers of His people. Then as if to remove every doubt the Saviour adds: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." God answers every true prayer, but He answers it in His own time and way. He will only give us what is good for us. This is brought out in the next illustration used. No rational father will give his son a stone when he asks for bread, a serpent when he asks a fish, or a scorpion instead of an egg. So then if imperfect earthly parents will not knowingly give their children what is hurtful, even though they ask for it, the Infinite Father will give the best of all gifts, the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. So strong are the assurances in Scriptures that God hears and answers prayer, so numerous are the encouragements and persuasions to fervent believing daily prayer, that to neglect its exercises is directly to disobey the Saviour's teaching, and condemn His example.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

Prayer forms a part of every Christian life. The true soul cannot live without prayer.

Jesus can best teach us how to pray.

God has given us His own word for it that He will answer believing prayer.

God knows best how and when to answer our prayers.