

men ought always to pray and not to faint. The pure suppliant is importunate. Like Jacob, he wrestles with the angel, if need be, until the dawning of the day ; or like the Syrophœnean woman, he renews his entreaties in the face of seeming rebuff, and, from an apparent refusal, draws a plea which in the end prevails. No mere sluggard's formalism, therefore, will suffice. That is not prayer ; that is but the husk appearance ; the true suppliant will continue instant in prayer ; and, when he is over, the exhaustion of his spirit will convince him that he has been laboring indeed.

" Believe me," said Coleridge to his nephew just before his death, " To pray with all your heart and strength, with the reason and the will, to believe vividly that God will listen to your voice through Christ, and verily do the thing that pleaseth him at last,—this is the last, the greatest achievement of the Christian's warfare on earth, *teach us to pray, Lord!* "

But, no one can long persist with such prayer without faith ; and so, at this point, the Saviour's qualifying word " Believing ye shall receive," is appropriate. The earnest petitioner knows that he is not beating the air. His faith is not in his prayer but in his God ; and the stronger that faith is, the more earnest will be his importunity. Even though he knew that the blessing was forthcoming, nay, just because he knows it is coming, he will, like Elijah on Mount Carmel, go again and again, until in the little cloud he sees the beginning of the answer.

But more important than any of these conditions in the character of the suppliant is that laid down by Jesus, when he says, " If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." The man who is abiding in Christ has his eyes purified so that he clearly perceives what things he ought to ask, while at the same time he is in that state of receptivity which renders the granting of his prayers a blessing to him, and not a curse. Men need, therefore, to be in a high condition of Holiness before they can have fulfilled to them, " Ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." They must not take the first part of that