



35 work that now engages Him without ceasing in the Father's  
36 presence—His all-prevailing intercession. The more we  
37 abide in Him, and grow unto His likeness, will His priestly  
38 life work in us mightily, and our life become what His is, a  
39 life that ever pleads and prevails for men.

40

41 Thou hast made us kings and priests unto God.' Both in the  
42 king and the priest the chief thing is power, influence,  
43 blessing. In the king it is the power coming downward; in  
44 the priest, the power rising upward, prevailing with God. In  
45 our blessed Priest-King, Jesus Christ, the kingly power is  
46 founded on the priestly He is able to save to the uttermost,  
47 because He ever liveth to make intercession.' In us, His  
48 priests and kings, it is no otherwise: it is in intercession that  
49 the Church is to find and wield its highest power, that each  
50 member of the Church is to prove his descent from Israel,  
51 who as a prince had power with God and with men, and  
52 prevailed.

53

54 It is under a deep impression that the place and power of  
55 prayer in the Christian life is too little understood, that this  
56 book has been written. I feel sure that as long as we look on  
57 prayer chiefly as the means of maintaining our own  
58 Christian life, we shall not know fully what it is meant to  
59 be. But when we learn to regard it as the highest part of the  
60 work entrusted to us, the root and strength of all other work,  
61 we shall see that there is nothing that we so need to study  
62 and practise as the art of praying aright. If I have at all  
63 succeeded in pointing out the progressive teaching of our  
64 Lord in regard to prayer, and the distinct reference the  
65 wonderful promises of the last night (John xiv. 16) have to  
66 the works we are to do in His Name, to the greater works,  
67 and to the bearing much fruit, we shall all admit that it is  
68 only when the Church gives herself up to this holy work of

69 intercession that we can expect the power of Christ to  
70 manifest itself in her behalf. It is my prayer that God may  
71 use this little book to make clearer to some of His children  
72 the wonderful place of power and influence which He is  
73 waiting for them to occupy, and for which a weary world is  
74 waiting too.

75

76 In connection with this there is another truth that has come  
77 to me with wonderful clearness as I studied the teaching of  
78 Jesus on prayer. It is this: that the Father waits to hear every  
79 prayer of faith, to give us whatsoever we will, and  
80 whatsoever we ask in Jesus' name. We have become so  
81 accustomed to limit the wonderful love and the large  
82 promises of our God, that we cannot read the simplest and  
83 clearest statements of our Lord without the qualifying  
84 clauses by which we guard and expound them. If there is  
85 one thing I think the Church needs to learn, it is that God  
86 means prayer to have an answer, and that it hath not entered  
87 into the heart of man to conceive what God will do for His  
88 child who gives himself to believe that his prayer will be  
89 heard. God hears prayer; this is a truth universally admitted,  
90 but of which very few understand the meaning, or  
91 experience the power. If what I have written stir my reader  
92 to go to the Master's words, and take His wondrous  
93 promises simply and literally as they stand, my object has  
94 been attained.

95

96 And then just one thing more. Thousands have in these last  
97 years found an unspeakable blessing in learning how  
98 completely Christ is our life, and how He undertakes to be  
99 and to do all in us that we need. I know not if we have yet  
100 learned to apply this truth to our prayer-life. Many complain  
101 that they have not the power to pray in faith, to pray the  
102 effectual prayer that availeth much. The message I would

103 fain bring them is that the blessed Jesus is waiting, is  
104 longing, to teach them this. Christ is our life: in heaven He  
105 ever liveth to pray; His life in us is an ever-praying life, if  
106 we will but trust Him for it. Christ teaches us to pray not  
107 only by example, by instruction, by command, by promises,  
108 but by showing us HIMSELF, the ever-living Intercessor, as  
109 our Life. It is when we believe this, and go and abide in  
110 Him for our prayer-life too, that our fears of not being able  
111 to pray aright will vanish, and we shall joyfully and  
112 triumphantly trust our Lord to teach us to pray, to be  
113 Himself the life and the power of our prayer.

114

115 May God open our eyes to see what the holy ministry of  
116 intercession is to which, as His royal priesthood, we have  
117 been set apart. May He give us a large and strong heart to  
118 believe what mighty influence our prayers can exert. And  
119 may all fear as to our being able to fulfil our vocation  
120 vanish as we see Jesus, living ever to pray, living in us to  
121 pray, and standing surety for our prayer-life.

122

123 ANDREW MURRAY

124

125 WELLINGTON, 28<sup>th</sup> October 1895

126

127

128

129

130 FIRST LESSON.

131

132 Lord, teach us to pray;’

133

134 Or, The Only Teacher .

135

136 And it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place,  
137 that when He ceased, one of His disciples said to Him,  
138 Lord, teach us to pray.’—Luke xi. 1.

139  
140 THE disciples had been with Christ, and seen Him pray.  
141 They had learnt to understand something of the connection  
142 between His wondrous life in public, and His secret life of  
143 prayer. They had learnt to believe in Him as a Master in the  
144 art of prayer—none could pray like Him. And so they came  
145 to Him with the request, Lord, teach us to pray.’ And in  
146 after years they would have told us that there were few  
147 things more wonderful or blessed that He taught them than  
148 His lessons on prayer.

149  
150 And now still it comes to pass, as He is praying in a certain  
151 place, that disciples who see Him thus engaged feel the  
152 need of repeating the same request, Lord, teach us to pray.’  
153 As we grow in the Christian life, the thought and the faith of  
154 the Beloved Master in His never-failing intercession  
155 becomes ever more precious, and the hope of being Like  
156 Christ in His intercession gains an attractiveness before  
157 unknown. And as we see Him pray, and remember that  
158 there is none who can pray like Him, and none who can  
159 teach like Him, we feel the petition of the disciples, Lord,  
160 teach us to pray,’ is just what we need. And as we think  
161 how all He is and has, how He Himself is our very own,  
162 how He is Himself our life, we feel assured that we have but  
163 to ask, and He will be delighted to take us up into closer  
164 fellowship with Himself, and teach us to pray even as He  
165 prays.

166  
167 Come, my brothers! Shall we not go to the Blessed Master  
168 and ask Him to enrol our names too anew in that school  
169 which He always keeps open for those who long to continue

170 their studies in the Divine art of prayer and intercession?  
171 Yes, let us this very day say to the Master, as they did of  
172 old, Lord, teach us to pray.’ As we meditate, we shall find  
173 each word of the petition we bring to be full of meaning.

174

175 Lord, teach us to pray.’ Yes, to pray. This is what we need  
176 to be taught. Though in its beginnings prayer is so simple  
177 that the feeblest child can pray, yet it is at the same time the  
178 highest and holiest work to which man can rise. It is  
179 fellowship with the Unseen and Most Holy One. The  
180 powers of the eternal world have been placed at its disposal.  
181 It is the very essence of true religion, the channel of all  
182 blessings, the secret of power and life. Not only for  
183 ourselves, but for others, for the Church, for the world, it is  
184 to prayer that God has given the right to take hold of Him  
185 and His strength. It is on prayer that the promises wait for  
186 their fulfilment, the kingdom for its coming, the glory of  
187 God for its full revelation. And for this blessed work, how  
188 slothful and unfit we are. It is only the Spirit of God can  
189 enable us to do it aright. How speedily we are deceived into  
190 a resting in the form, while the power is wanting. Our early  
191 training, the teaching of the Church, the influence of habit,  
192 the stirring of the emotions—how easily these lead to prayer  
193 which has no spiritual power, and avails but little. True  
194 prayer, that takes hold of God’s strength, that availeth  
195 much, to which the gates of heaven are really opened  
196 wide—who would not cry, Oh for some one to teach me  
197 thus to pray?

198

199 Jesus has opened a school, in which He trains His redeemed  
200 ones, who specially desire it, to have power in prayer. Shall  
201 we not enter it with the petition, Lord! it is just this we need  
202 to be taught! O teach us to pray.

203

204 Lord, teach us to pray.' Yes, us, Lord. We have read in Thy  
205 Word with what power Thy believing people of old used to  
206 pray, and what mighty wonders were done in answer to  
207 their prayers. And if this took place under the Old  
208 Covenant, in the time of preparation, how much more wilt  
209 Thou not now, in these days of fulfilment, give Thy people  
210 this sure sign of Thy presence in their midst. We have heard  
211 the promises given to Thine apostles of the power of prayer  
212 in Thy name, and have seen how gloriously they  
213 experienced their truth: we know for certain, they can  
214 become true to us too. We hear continually even in these  
215 days what glorious tokens of Thy power Thou dost still give  
216 to those who trust Thee fully. Lord! these all are men of like  
217 passions with ourselves; teach us to pray so too. The  
218 promises are for us, the powers and gifts of the heavenly  
219 world are for us. O teach us to pray so that we may receive  
220 abundantly. To us too Thou hast entrusted Thy work, on our  
221 prayer too the coming of Thy kingdom depends, in our  
222 prayer too Thou canst glorify Thy name; Lord teach us to  
223 pray.' Yes, us, Lord; we offer ourselves as learners; we  
224 would indeed be taught of Thee. Lord, teach us to pray.'

225  
226 Lord, teach us to pray.' Yes, we feel the need now of being  
227 taught to pray. At first there is no work appears so simple;  
228 later on, none that is more difficult; and the confession is  
229 forced from us: We know not how to pray as we ought. It is  
230 true we have God's Word, with its clear and sure promises;  
231 but sin has so darkened our mind, that we know not always  
232 how to apply the word. In spiritual things we do not always  
233 seek the most needful things, or fail in praying according to  
234 the law of the sanctuary. In temporal things we are still less  
235 able to avail ourselves of the wonderful liberty our Father  
236 has given us to ask what we need. And even when we know  
237 what to ask, how much there is still needed to make prayer

238 acceptable. It must be to the glory of God, in full surrender  
239 to His will, in full assurance of faith, in the name of Jesus,  
240 and with a perseverance that, if need be, refuses to be  
241 denied. All this must be learned. It can only be learned in  
242 the school of much prayer, for practice makes perfect. Amid  
243 the painful consciousness of ignorance and unworthiness, in  
244 the struggle between believing and doubting, the heavenly  
245 art of effectual prayer is learnt. Because, even when we do  
246 not remember it, there is One, the Beginner and Finisher of  
247 faith and prayer, who watches over our praying, and sees to  
248 it that in all who trust Him for it their education in the  
249 school of prayer shall be carried on to perfection. Let but  
250 the deep undertone of all our prayer be the teachableness  
251 that comes from a sense of ignorance, and from faith in Him  
252 as a perfect teacher, and we may be sure we shall be taught,  
253 we shall learn to pray in power. Yes, we may depend upon  
254 it, He teaches to pray.

255

256 Lord, teach us to pray.' None can teach like Jesus, none but  
257 Jesus; therefore we call on Him, LORD, teach us to pray.'  
258 A pupil needs a teacher, who knows his work, who has the  
259 gift of teaching, who in patience and love will descend to  
260 the pupil's needs. Blessed be God! Jesus is all this and  
261 much more. He knows what prayer is. It is Jesus, praying  
262 Himself, who teaches to pray. He knows what prayer is. He  
263 learned it amid the trials and tears of His earthly life. In  
264 heaven it is still His beloved work: His life there is prayer.  
265 Nothing delights Him more than to find those whom He can  
266 take with Him into the Father's presence, whom He can  
267 clothe with power to pray down God's blessing on those  
268 around them, whom He can train to be His fellow-workers  
269 in the intercession by which the kingdom is to be revealed  
270 on earth. He knows how to teach. Now by the urgency of  
271 felt need, then by the confidence with which joy inspires.



272 Here by the teaching of the Word, there by the testimony of  
273 another believer who knows what it is to have prayer heard.  
274 By His Holy Spirit, He has access to our heart, and teaches  
275 us to pray by showing us the sin that hinders the prayer, or  
276 giving us the assurance that we please God. He teaches, by  
277 giving not only thoughts of what to ask or how to ask, but  
278 by breathing within us the very spirit of prayer, by living  
279 within us as the Great Intercessor. We may indeed and most  
280 joyfully say, Who teacheth like Him?’ Jesus never taught  
281 His disciples how to preach, only how to pray. He did not  
282 speak much of what was needed to preach well, but much of  
283 praying well. To know how to speak to God is more than  
284 knowing how to speak to man. Not power with men, but  
285 power with God is the first thing. Jesus loves to teach us  
286 how to pray.

287  
288 What think you, my beloved fellow-disciples! would it not  
289 be just what we need, to ask the Master for a month to give  
290 us a course of special lessons on the art of prayer? As we  
291 meditate on the words He spake on earth, let us yield  
292 ourselves to His teaching in the fullest confidence that, with  
293 such a teacher, we shall make progress. Let us take time not  
294 only to meditate, but to pray, to tarry at the foot of the  
295 throne, and be trained to the work of intercession. Let us do  
296 so in the assurance that amidst our stammerings and fears  
297 He is carrying on His work most beautifully. He will  
298 breathe His own life, which is all prayer, into us. As He  
299 makes us partakers of His righteousness and His life, He  
300 will of His intercession too. As the members of His body, as  
301 a holy priesthood, we shall take part in His priestly work of  
302 pleading and prevailing with God for men. Yes, let us most  
303 joyfully say, ignorant and feeble though we be, Lord, teach  
304 us to pray.’  
305

306 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

307

308

309

310 Blessed Lord! who ever livest to pray, Thou canst teach me  
311 too to pray, me too to live ever to pray. In this Thou lovest  
312 to make me share Thy glory in heaven, that I should pray  
313 without ceasing, and ever stand as a priest in the presence of  
314 my God.

315

316 Lord Jesus! I ask Thee this day to enrol my name among  
317 those who confess that they know not how to pray as they  
318 ought, and specially ask Thee for a course of teaching in  
319 prayer. Lord! teach me to tarry with Thee in the school, and  
320 give Thee time to train me. May a deep sense of my  
321 ignorance, of the wonderful privilege and power of prayer,  
322 of the need of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of prayer, lead  
323 me to cast away my thoughts of what I think I know, and  
324 make me kneel before Thee in true teachableness and  
325 poverty of spirit.

326

327 And fill me, Lord, with the confidence that with such a  
328 teacher as Thou art I shall learn to pray. In the assurance  
329 that I have as my teacher, Jesus who is ever praying to the  
330 Father, and by His prayer rules the destinies of His Church  
331 and the world, I will not be afraid. As much as I need to  
332 know of the mysteries of the prayer-world, Thou wilt unfold  
333 for me. And when I may not know, Thou wilt teach me to  
334 be strong in faith, giving glory to God.

335

336 Blessed Lord! Thou wilt not put to shame Thy scholar who  
337 trusts Thee, nor, by Thy grace, would he Thee either. Amen.

338

339

340

341 SECOND LESSON.

342

343 In spirit and truth.’

344

345 Or, The True Worshippers.

346

347 The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers  
348 shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the  
349 Father seek to be His worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they  
350 that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth.’—  
351 John iv. 23, 24.

352

353 THESE words of Jesus to the woman of Samaria are His  
354 first recorded teaching on the subject of prayer. They give  
355 us some wonderful first glimpses into the world of prayer.  
356 The Father seeks worshippers: our worship satisfies His  
357 loving heart and is a joy to Him. He seeks true worshippers,  
358 but finds many not such as He would have them. True  
359 worship is that which is in spirit and truth. The Son has  
360 come to open the way for this worship in spirit and in truth,  
361 and teach it us. And so one of our first lessons in the school  
362 of prayer must be to understand what it is to pray in spirit  
363 and in truth, and to know how we can attain to it.

364

365 To the woman of Samaria our Lord spoke of a threefold  
366 worship. There is first, the ignorant worship of the  
367 Samaritans: Ye worship that which ye know not.’ The  
368 second, the intelligent worship of the Jew, having the true  
369 knowledge of God: We worship that which we know; for  
370 salvation is of the Jews.’ And then the new, the spiritual  
371 worship which He Himself has come to introduce: The hour  
372 is coming, and is now, when the true worshippers shall  
373 worship the Father in spirit and truth.’ From the connection

374 it is evident that the words in spirit and truth' do not mean,  
375 as is often thought, earnestly, from the heart, in sincerity.  
376 The Samaritans had the five books of Moses and some  
377 knowledge of God; there was doubtless more than one  
378 among them who honestly and earnestly sought God in  
379 prayer. The Jews had the true full revelation of God in His  
380 word, as thus far given; there were among them godly men,  
381 who called upon God with their whole heart. And yet not in  
382 spirit and truth,' in the full meaning of the words. Jesus  
383 says, The hour is coming, and now is;' it is only in and  
384 through Him that the worship of God will be in spirit and  
385 truth.

386

387 Among Christians one still finds the three classes of  
388 worshippers. Some who in their ignorance hardly know  
389 what they ask: they pray earnestly, and yet receive but little.  
390 Others there are, who have more correct knowledge, who  
391 try to pray with all their mind and heart, and often pray  
392 most earnestly, and yet do not attain to the full blessedness  
393 of worship in spirit and truth. It is into this third class we  
394 must ask our Lord Jesus to take us; we must be taught of  
395 Him how to worship in spirit and truth. This alone is  
396 spiritual worship; this makes us worshippers such as the  
397 Father seeks. In prayer everything will depend on our  
398 understanding well and practising the worship in spirit and  
399 truth.

400

401 God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship  
402 Him in spirit and truth.' The first thought suggested here by  
403 the Master is that there must be harmony between God and  
404 His worshippers; such as God is, must His worship be. This  
405 is according to a principle which prevails throughout the  
406 universe: we look for correspondence between an object  
407 and the organ to which it reveals or yields itself. The eye

408 has an inner fitness for the light, the ear for sound. The man  
409 who would truly worship God, would find and know and  
410 possess and enjoy God, must be in harmony with Him, must  
411 have the capacity for receiving Him. Because God is Spirit,  
412 we must worship in spirit. As God is, so His worshipper.

413

414 And what does this mean? The woman had asked our Lord  
415 whether Samaria or Jerusalem was the true place of  
416 worship. He answers that henceforth worship is no longer to  
417 be limited to a certain place: Woman, believe Me, the hour  
418 cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem,  
419 shall ye worship the Father.' As God is Spirit, not bound by  
420 space or time, but in His infinite perfection always and  
421 everywhere the same, so His worship would henceforth no  
422 longer be confined by place or form, but spiritual as God  
423 Himself is spiritual. A lesson of deep importance. How  
424 much our Christianity suffers from this, that it is confined to  
425 certain times and places. A man, who seeks to pray  
426 earnestly in the church or in the closet, spends the greater  
427 part of the week or the day in a spirit entirely at variance  
428 with that in which he prayed. His worship was the work of a  
429 fixed place or hour, not of his whole being. God is a Spirit:  
430 He is the Everlasting and Unchangeable One; what He is,  
431 He is always and in truth. Our worship must even so be in  
432 spirit and truth: His worship must be the spirit of our life;  
433 our life must be worship in spirit as God is Spirit.

434

435 God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship  
436 Him in spirit and truth.' The second thought that comes to  
437 us is that the worship in the spirit must come from God  
438 Himself. God is Spirit: He alone has Spirit to give. It was  
439 for this He sent His Son, to fit us for such spiritual worship,  
440 by giving us the Holy Spirit. It is of His own work that  
441 Jesus speaks when He says twice, The hour cometh,' and

442 then adds, and is now.’ He came to baptize with the Holy  
443 Spirit; the Spirit could not stream forth till He was glorified  
444 (John i. 33, vii. 37, 38, xvi. 7). It was when He had made an  
445 end of sin, and entering into the Holiest of all with His  
446 blood, had there on our behalf received the Holy Spirit  
447 (Acts ii. 33), that He could send Him down to us as the  
448 Spirit of the Father. It was when Christ had redeemed us,  
449 and we in Him had received the position of children, that  
450 the Father sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts to  
451 cry, Abba, Father.’ The worship in spirit is the worship of  
452 the Father in the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Sonship.

453

454 This is the reason why Jesus here uses the name of Father.  
455 We never find one of the Old Testament saints personally  
456 appropriate the name of child or call God his Father. The  
457 worship of the Father is only possible to those to whom the  
458 Spirit of the Son has been given. The worship in spirit is  
459 only possible to those to whom the Son has revealed the  
460 Father, and who have received the spirit of Sonship. It is  
461 only Christ who opens the way and teaches the worship in  
462 spirit.

463

464 And in truth. That does not only mean, in sincerity. Nor  
465 does it only signify, in accordance with the truth of God’s  
466 Word. The expression is one of deep and Divine meaning.  
467 Jesus is the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and  
468 truth.’ The law was given by Moses; grace and truth came  
469 by Jesus Christ.’ Jesus says, I am the truth and the life.’ In  
470 the Old Testament all was shadow and promise; Jesus  
471 brought and gives the reality, the substance, of things hoped  
472 for. In Him the blessings and powers of the eternal life are  
473 our actual possession and experience. Jesus is full of grace  
474 and truth; the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth; through Him  
475 the grace that is in Jesus is ours in deed and truth, a positive

476 communication out of the Divine life. And so worship in  
477 spirit is worship in truth; actual living fellowship with God,  
478 a real correspondence and harmony between the Father,  
479 who is a Spirit, and the child praying in the spirit.

480

481 What Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, she could not at  
482 once understand. Pentecost was needed to reveal its full  
483 meaning. We are hardly prepared at our first entrance into  
484 the school of prayer to grasp such teaching. We shall  
485 understand it better later on. Let us only begin and take the  
486 lesson as He gives it. We are carnal and cannot bring God  
487 the worship He seeks. But Jesus came to give the Spirit: He  
488 has given Him to us. Let the disposition in which we set  
489 ourselves to pray be what Christ's words have taught us. Let  
490 there be the deep confession of our inability to bring God  
491 the worship that is pleasing to Him; the childlike  
492 teachableness that waits on Him to instruct us; the simple  
493 faith that yields itself to the breathing of the Spirit. Above  
494 all, let us hold fast the blessed truth—we shall find that the  
495 Lord has more to say to us about it—that the knowledge of  
496 the Fatherhood of God, the revelation of His infinite  
497 Fatherliness in our hearts, the faith in the infinite love that  
498 gives us His Son and His Spirit to make us children, is  
499 indeed the secret of prayer in spirit and truth. This is the  
500 new and living way Christ opened up for us. To have Christ  
501 the Son, and the Spirit of the Son, dwelling within us, and  
502 revealing the Father, this makes us true, spiritual  
503 worshippers.

504

505 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

506

507

508

509 Blessed Lord! I adore the love with which Thou didst teach  
510 a woman, who had refused Thee a cup of water, what the  
511 worship of God must be. I rejoice in the assurance that  
512 Thou wilt no less now instruct Thy disciple, who comes to  
513 Thee with a heart that longs to pray in spirit and in truth. O  
514 my Holy Master! do teach me this blessed secret.

515

516 Teach me that the worship in spirit and truth is not of man,  
517 but only comes from Thee; that it is not only a thing of  
518 times and seasons, but the outflowing of a life in Thee.  
519 Teach me to draw near to God in prayer under the deep  
520 impression of my ignorance and my having nothing in  
521 myself to offer Him, and at the same time of the provision  
522 Thou, my Saviour, makest for the Spirit's breathing in my  
523 childlike stammerings. I do bless Thee that in Thee I am a  
524 child, and have a child's liberty of access; that in Thee I  
525 have the spirit of Sonship and of worship in truth. Teach  
526 me, above all, Blessed Son of the Father, how it is the  
527 revelation of the Father that gives confidence in prayer; and  
528 let the infinite Fatherliness of God's Heart be my joy and  
529 strength for a life of prayer and of worship. Amen.

530

531

532

533 THIRD LESSON.

534

535 Pray to thy Father, which is in secret;'

536

537 Or, Alone with God.

538

539 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber,  
540 and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in  
541 secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall  
542 recompense thee'—Matt. vi. 6.



543

544 AFTER Jesus had called His first disciples, He gave them  
545 their first public teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. He  
546 there expounded to them the kingdom of God, its laws and  
547 its life. In that kingdom God is not only King, but Father,  
548 He not only gives all, but is Himself all. In the knowledge  
549 and fellowship of Him alone is its blessedness. Hence it  
550 came as a matter of course that the revelation of prayer and  
551 the prayer-life was a part of His teaching concerning the  
552 New Kingdom He came to set up. Moses gave neither  
553 command nor regulation with regard to prayer: even the  
554 prophets say little directly of the duty of prayer; it is Christ  
555 who teaches to pray.

556

557 And the first thing the Lord teaches His disciples is that they  
558 must have a secret place for prayer; every one must have  
559 some solitary spot where he can be alone with his God.  
560 Every teacher must have a schoolroom. We have learnt to  
561 know and accept Jesus as our only teacher in the school of  
562 prayer. He has already taught us at Samaria that worship is  
563 no longer confined to times and places; that worship,  
564 spiritual true worship, is a thing of the spirit and the life; the  
565 whole man must in his whole life be worship in spirit and  
566 truth. And yet He wants each one to choose for himself the  
567 fixed spot where He can daily meet him. That inner  
568 chamber, that solitary place, is Jesus' schoolroom. That spot  
569 may be anywhere; that spot may change from day to day if  
570 we have to change our abode; but that secret place there  
571 must be, with the quiet time in which the pupil places  
572 himself in the Master's presence, to be by Him prepared to  
573 worship the Father. There alone, but there most surely,  
574 Jesus comes to us to teach us to pray.

575

576 A teacher is always anxious that his schoolroom should be  
577 bright and attractive, filled with the light and air of heaven,  
578 a place where pupils long to come, and love to stay. In His  
579 first words on prayer in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus  
580 seeks to set the inner chamber before us in its most  
581 attractive light. If we listen carefully, we soon notice what  
582 the chief thing is He has to tell us of our tarrying there.  
583 Three times He uses the name of Father: Pray to thy  
584 Father; Thy Father shall recompense thee; Your Father  
585 knoweth what things ye have need of. The first thing in  
586 closet-prayer is: I must meet my Father. The light that  
587 shines in the closet must be: the light of the Father's  
588 countenance. The fresh air from heaven with which Jesus  
589 would have it filled, the atmosphere in which I am to  
590 breathe and pray, is: God's Father-love, God's infinite  
591 Fatherliness. Thus each thought or petition we breathe out  
592 will be simple, hearty, childlike trust in the Father. This is  
593 how the Master teaches us to pray: He brings us into the  
594 Father's living presence. What we pray there must avail. Let  
595 us listen carefully to hear what the Lord has to say to us.

596  
597 First, Pray to thy Father which is in secret. God is a God  
598 who hides Himself to the carnal eye. As long as in our  
599 worship of God we are chiefly occupied with our own  
600 thoughts and exercises, we shall not meet Him who is a  
601 Spirit, the unseen One. But to the man who withdraws  
602 himself from all that is of the world and man, and prepares  
603 to wait upon God alone, the Father will reveal Himself. As  
604 he forsakes and gives up and shuts out the world, and the  
605 life of the world, and surrenders himself to be led of Christ  
606 into the secret of God's presence, the light of the Father's  
607 love will rise upon him. The secrecy of the inner chamber  
608 and the closed door, the entire separation from all around  
609 us, is an image of, and so a help to that inner spiritual

610 sanctuary, the secret of God's tabernacle, within the veil,  
611 where our spirit truly comes into contact with the Invisible  
612 One. And so we are taught, at the very outset of our search  
613 after the secret of effectual prayer, to remember that it is in  
614 the inner chamber, where we are alone with the Father, that  
615 we shall learn to pray aright. The Father is in secret: in these  
616 words Jesus teaches us where He is waiting us, where He is  
617 always to be found. Christians often complain that private  
618 prayer is not what it should be. They feel weak and sinful,  
619 the heart is cold and dark; it is as if they have so little to  
620 pray, and in that little no faith or joy. They are discouraged  
621 and kept from prayer by the thought that they cannot come  
622 to the Father as they ought or as they wish. Child of God!  
623 listen to your Teacher. He tells you that when you go to  
624 private prayer your first thought must be: The Father is in  
625 secret, the Father waits me there. Just because your heart is  
626 cold and prayerless, get you into the presence of the loving  
627 Father. As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth  
628 you. Do not be thinking of how little you have to bring God,  
629 but of how much He wants to give you. Just place yourself  
630 before, and look up into, His face; think of His love, His  
631 wonderful, tender, pitying love. Just tell Him how sinful  
632 and cold and dark all is: it is the Father's loving heart will  
633 give light and warmth to yours. O do what Jesus says: Just  
634 shut the door, and pray to thy Father which is in secret. Is it  
635 not wonderful? to be able to go alone with God, the infinite  
636 God. And then to look up and say: My Father!

637

638 And thy Father, which seeth in secret, will recompense  
639 thee.' Here Jesus assures us that secret prayer cannot be  
640 fruitless: its blessing will show itself in our life. We have  
641 but in secret, alone with God, to entrust our life before men  
642 to Him; He will reward us openly; He will see to it that the  
643 answer to prayer be made manifest in His blessing upon us.

644 Our Lord would thus teach us that as infinite Fatherliness  
645 and Faithfulness is that with which God meets us in secret,  
646 so on our part there should be the childlike simplicity of  
647 faith, the confidence that our prayer does bring down a  
648 blessing. He that cometh to God must believe that He is a  
649 rewarder of them that seek Him.’ Not on the strong or the  
650 fervent feeling with which I pray does the blessing of the  
651 closet depend, but upon the love and the power of the  
652 Father to whom I there entrust my needs. And therefore the  
653 Master has but one desire: Remember your Father is, and  
654 sees and hears in secret; go there and stay there, and go  
655 again from there in the confidence: He will recompense.  
656 Trust Him for it; depend upon Him: prayer to the Father  
657 cannot be vain; He will reward you openly.

658

659 Still further to confirm this faith in the Father-love of God,  
660 Christ speaks a third word: Your Father knoweth what  
661 things ye have need of before ye ask Him.’ At first sight it  
662 might appear as if this thought made prayer less needful:  
663 God knows far better than we what we need. But as we get  
664 a deeper insight into what prayer really is, this truth will  
665 help much to strengthen our faith. It will teach us that we do  
666 not need, as the heathen, with the multitude and urgency of  
667 our words, to compel an unwilling God to listen to us. It  
668 will lead to a holy thoughtfulness and silence in prayer as it  
669 suggests the question: Does my Father really know that I  
670 need this? It will, when once we have been led by the Spirit  
671 to the certainty that our request is indeed something that,  
672 according to the Word, we do need for God’s glory, give us  
673 wonderful confidence to say, My Father knows I need it and  
674 must have it. And if there be any delay in the answer, it will  
675 teach us in quiet perseverance to hold on: FATHER! THOU  
676 KNOWEST I need it. O the blessed liberty and simplicity of  
677 a child that Christ our Teacher would fain cultivate in us, as

678 we draw near to God: let us look up to the Father until His  
679 Spirit works it in us. Let us sometimes in our prayers, when  
680 we are in danger of being so occupied with our fervent,  
681 urgent petitions, as to forget that the Father knows and  
682 hears, let us hold still and just quietly say: My Father sees,  
683 my Father hears, my Father knows; it will help our faith to  
684 take the answer, and to say: We know that we have the  
685 petitions we have asked of Him.

686  
687 And now, all ye who have anew entered the school of Christ  
688 to be taught to pray, take these lessons, practise them, and  
689 trust Him to perfect you in them. Dwell much in the inner  
690 chamber, with the door shut—shut in from men, shut up  
691 with God; it is there the Father waits you, it is there Jesus  
692 will teach you to pray. To be alone in secret with THE  
693 FATHER: this be your highest joy. To be assured that THE  
694 FATHER will openly reward the secret prayer, so that it  
695 cannot remain unblest: this be your strength day by day.  
696 And to know that THE FATHER knows that you need what  
697 you ask; this be your liberty to bring every need, in the  
698 assurance that your God will supply it according to His  
699 riches in Glory in Christ Jesus.

700  
701 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

702

703

704

705 Blessed Saviour! with my whole heart I do bless Thee for  
706 the appointment of the inner chamber, as the school where  
707 Thou meetest each of Thy pupils alone, and revealest to him  
708 the Father. O my Lord! strengthen my faith so in the  
709 Father’s tender love and kindness, that as often as I feel  
710 sinful or troubled, the first instinctive thought may be to go  
711 where I know the Father waits me, and where prayer never

712 can go unblest. Let the thought that He knows my need  
713 before I ask, bring me, in great restfulness of faith, to trust  
714 that He will give what His child requires. O let the place of  
715 secret prayer become to me the most beloved spot of earth.  
716

717 And, Lord! hear me as I pray that Thou wouldest  
718 everywhere bless the closets of Thy believing people. Let  
719 Thy wonderful revelation of a Father's tenderness free all  
720 young Christians from every thought of secret prayer as a  
721 duty or a burden, and lead them to regard it as the highest  
722 privilege of their life, a joy and a blessing. Bring back all  
723 who are discouraged, because they cannot find ought to  
724 bring Thee in prayer. O give them to understand that they  
725 have only to come with their emptiness to Him who has all  
726 to give, and delights to do it. Not, what they have to bring  
727 the Father, but what the Father waits to give them, be their  
728 one thought.

729  
730 And bless especially the inner chamber of all Thy servants  
731 who are working for Thee, as the place where God's truth  
732 and God's grace is revealed to them, where they are daily  
733 anointed with fresh oil, where their strength is renewed, and  
734 the blessings are received in faith, with which they are to  
735 bless their fellow-men. Lord, draw us all in the closet nearer  
736 to Thyself and the Father. Amen.

737

738

739

#### 740 FOURTH LESSON

741

742 After this manner pray;'

743

744 Or, The Model Prayer.

745

746 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in  
747 heaven.’—Matt. vi. 9.

748

749 EVERY teacher knows the power of example. He not only  
750 tells the child what to do and how to do it, but shows him  
751 how it really can be done. In condescension to our  
752 weakness, our heavenly Teacher has given us the very  
753 words we are to take with us as we draw near to our Father.  
754 We have in them a form of prayer in which there breathe  
755 the freshness and fulness of the Eternal Life. So simple that  
756 the child can lisp it, so divinely rich that it comprehends all  
757 that God can give. A form of prayer that becomes the model  
758 and inspiration for all other prayer, and yet always draws us  
759 back to itself as the deepest utterance of our souls before  
760 our God.

761

762 Our Father which art in heaven!’ To appreciate this word of  
763 adoration aright, I must remember that none of the saints  
764 had in Scripture ever ventured to address God as their  
765 Father. The invocation places us at once in the centre of the  
766 wonderful revelation the Son came to make of His Father as  
767 our Father too. It comprehends the mystery of redemption—  
768 Christ delivering us from the curse that we might become  
769 the children of God. The mystery of regeneration—the  
770 Spirit in the new birth giving us the new life. And the  
771 mystery of faith—ere yet the redemption is accomplished or  
772 understood, the word is given on the lips of the disciples to  
773 prepare them for the blessed experience still to come. The  
774 words are the key to the whole prayer, to all prayer. It takes  
775 time, it takes life to study them; it will take eternity to  
776 understand them fully. The knowledge of God’s Father-love  
777 is the first and simplest, but also the last and highest lesson  
778 in the school of prayer. It is in the personal relation to the  
779 living God, and the personal conscious fellowship of love

780 with Himself, that prayer begins. It is in the knowledge of  
781 God's Fatherliness, revealed by the Holy Spirit, that the  
782 power of prayer will be found to root and grow. In the  
783 infinite tenderness and pity and patience of the infinite  
784 Father, in His loving readiness to hear and to help, the life  
785 of prayer has its joy. O let us take time, until the Spirit has  
786 made these words to us spirit and truth, filling heart and life:  
787 Our Father which art in heaven.' Then we are indeed within  
788 the veil, in the secret place of power where prayer always  
789 prevails.

790  
791 Hallowed be Thy name.' There is something here that  
792 strikes us at once. While we ordinarily first bring our own  
793 needs to God in prayer, and then think of what belongs to  
794 God and His interests, the Master reverses the order. First,  
795 Thy name, Thy kingdom, Thy will; then, give us, forgive  
796 us, lead us, deliver us. The lesson is of more importance  
797 than we think. In true worship the Father must be first, must  
798 be all. The sooner I learn to forget myself in the desire that  
799 HE may be glorified, the richer will the blessing be that  
800 prayer will bring to myself. No one ever loses by what he  
801 sacrifices for the Father.

802  
803 This must influence all our prayer. There are two sorts of  
804 prayer: personal and intercessory. The latter ordinarily  
805 occupies the lesser part of our time and energy. This may  
806 not be. Christ has opened the school of prayer specially to  
807 train intercessors for the great work of bringing down, by  
808 their faith and prayer, the blessings of His work and love on  
809 the world around. There can be no deep growth in prayer  
810 unless this be made our aim. The little child may ask of the  
811 father only what it needs for itself; and yet it soon learns to  
812 say, Give some for sister too. But the grown-up son, who  
813 only lives for the father's interest and takes charge of the



814 father's business, asks more largely, and gets all that is  
815 asked. And Jesus would train us to the blessed life of  
816 consecration and service, in which our interests are all  
817 subordinate to the Name, and the Kingdom, and the Will of  
818 the Father. O let us live for this, and let, on each act of  
819 adoration, Our Father! there follow in the same breath Thy  
820 Name, Thy Kingdom, Thy Will;—for this we look up and  
821 long.

822  
823 Hallowed be Thy name.' What name? This new name of  
824 Father. The word Holy is the central word of the Old  
825 Testament; the name Father of the New. In this name of  
826 Love all the holiness and glory of God are now to be  
827 revealed. And how is the name to be hallowed? By God  
828 Himself: I will hallow My great name which ye have  
829 profaned.' Our prayer must be that in ourselves, in all God's  
830 children, in presence of the world, God Himself would  
831 reveal the holiness, the Divine power, the hidden glory of  
832 the name of Father. The Spirit of the Father is the Holy  
833 Spirit: it is only when we yield ourselves to be led of Him,  
834 that the name will be hallowed in our prayers and our lives.  
835 Let us learn the prayer: Our Father, hallowed be Thy name.'

836  
837 Thy kingdom come.' The Father is a King and has a  
838 kingdom. The son and heir of a king has no higher ambition  
839 than the glory of his father's kingdom. In time of war or  
840 danger this becomes his passion; he can think of nothing  
841 else. The children of the Father are here in the enemy's  
842 territory, where the kingdom, which is in heaven, is not yet  
843 fully manifested. What more natural than that, when they  
844 learn to hallow the Father-name, they should long and cry  
845 with deep enthusiasm: Thy kingdom come.' The coming of  
846 the kingdom is the one great event on which the revelation  
847 of the Father's glory, the blessedness of His children, the

848 salvation of the world depends. On our prayers too the  
849 coming of the kingdom waits. Shall we not join in the deep  
850 longing cry of the redeemed: Thy kingdom come'? Let us  
851 learn it in the school of Jesus.

852  
853 Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.' This petition is  
854 too frequently applied alone to the suffering of the will of  
855 God. In heaven God's will is done, and the Master teaches  
856 the child to ask that the will may be done on earth just as in  
857 heaven: in the spirit of adoring submission and ready  
858 obedience. Because the will of God is the glory of heaven,  
859 the doing of it is the blessedness of heaven. As the will is  
860 done, the kingdom of heaven comes into the heart. And  
861 wherever faith has accepted the Father's love, obedience  
862 accepts the Father's will. The surrender to, and the prayer  
863 for a life of heaven-like obedience, is the spirit of childlike  
864 prayer.

865  
866 Give us this day our daily bread.' When first the child has  
867 yielded himself to the Father in the care for His Name, His  
868 Kingdom, and His Will, he has full liberty to ask for his  
869 daily bread. A master cares for the food of his servant, a  
870 general of his soldiers, a father of his child. And will not the  
871 Father in heaven care for the child who has in prayer given  
872 himself up to His interests? We may indeed in full  
873 confidence say: Father, I live for Thy honour and Thy work;  
874 I know Thou carest for me. Consecration to God and His  
875 will gives wonderful liberty in prayer for temporal things:  
876 the whole earthly life is given to the Father's loving care.

877  
878 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our  
879 debtors.' As bread is the first need of the body, so  
880 forgiveness for the soul. And the provision for the one is as  
881 sure as for the other. We are children but sinners too; our

882 right of access to the Father's presence we owe to the  
883 precious blood and the forgiveness it has won for us. Let us  
884 beware of the prayer for forgiveness becoming a formality:  
885 only what is really confessed is really forgiven. Let us in  
886 faith accept the forgiveness as promised: as a spiritual  
887 reality, an actual transaction between God and us, it is the  
888 entrance into all the Father's love and all the privileges of  
889 children. Such forgiveness, as a living experience, is  
890 impossible without a forgiving spirit to others: as forgiven  
891 expresses the heavenward, so forgiving the earthward,  
892 relation of God's child. In each prayer to the Father I must  
893 be able to say that I know of no one whom I do not heartily  
894 love.

895

896 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil  
897 one.' Our daily bread, the pardon of our sins, and then our  
898 being kept from all sin and the power of the evil one, in  
899 these three petitions all our personal need is comprehended.  
900 The prayer for bread and pardon must be accompanied by  
901 the surrender to live in all things in holy obedience to the  
902 Father's will, and the believing prayer in everything to be  
903 kept by the power of the indwelling Spirit from the power  
904 of the evil one.

905

906 Children of God! it is thus Jesus would have us to pray to  
907 the Father in heaven. O let His Name, and Kingdom, and  
908 Will, have the first place in our love; His providing, and  
909 pardoning, and keeping love will be our sure portion. So the  
910 prayer will lead us up to the true child-life: the Father all to  
911 the child, the Father all for the child. We shall understand  
912 how Father and child, the Thine and the Our, are all one,  
913 and how the heart that begins its prayer with the God-  
914 devoted THINE, will have the power in faith to speak out  
915 the OUR too. Such prayer will, indeed, be the fellowship

916 and interchange of love, always bringing us back in trust  
917 and worship to Him who is not only the Beginning but the  
918 End: FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE  
919 POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER, AMEN.’ Son  
920 of the Father, teach us to pray, OUR FATHER.’

921

922 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

923

924

925

926 O Thou who art the only-begotten Son, teach us, we  
927 beseech Thee, to pray, OUR FATHER.’ We thank Thee,  
928 Lord, for these Living Blessed Words which Thou has  
929 given us. We thank Thee for the millions who in them have  
930 learnt to know and worship the Father, and for what they  
931 have been to us. Lord! it is as if we needed days and weeks  
932 in Thy school with each separate petition; so deep and full  
933 are they. But we look to Thee to lead us deeper into their  
934 meaning: do it, we pray Thee, for Thy Name’s sake; Thy  
935 name is Son of the Father.

936

937 Lord! Thou didst once say: No man knoweth the Father  
938 save the Son, and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal  
939 Him.’ And again: I made known unto them Thy name, and  
940 will make it known, that the love wherewith Thou hast  
941 loved Me may be in them.’ Lord Jesus! reveal to us the  
942 Father. Let His name, His infinite Father-love, the love with  
943 which He loved Thee, according to Thy prayer, BE IN US.  
944 Then shall we say aright, OUR FATHER!’ Then shall we  
945 apprehend Thy teaching, and the first spontaneous breathing  
946 of our heart will be: Our Father, Thy Name, Thy Kingdom,  
947 Thy Will.’ And we shall bring our needs and our sins and  
948 our temptations to Him in the confidence that the love of  
949 such a Father care for all.

950

951 Blessed Lord! we are Thy scholars, we trust Thee; do teach  
952 us to pray, OUR FATHER.’ Amen.

953

954

955

956

957 FIFTH LESSON.

958

959 Ask, and it shall be given you;

960

961 Or, The Certainty of the Answer to Prayer.

962

963 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find;  
964 knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that  
965 asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that  
966 knocketh it shall be opened,’—Matt. vii. 7, 8.

967

968 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss.’—Jas. iv. 3.

969

970 OUR Lord returns here in the Sermon on the Mount a  
971 second time to speak of prayer. The first time He had  
972 spoken of the Father who is to be found in secret, and  
973 rewards openly, and had given us the pattern prayer (Matt.  
974 vi. 5-15). Here He wants to teach us what in all Scripture is  
975 considered the chief thing in prayer: the assurance that  
976 prayer will be heard and answered. Observe how He uses  
977 words which mean almost the same thing, and each time  
978 repeats the promise so distinctly: Ye shall receive, ye shall  
979 find, it shall be opened unto you;’ and then gives as ground  
980 for such assurance the law of the kingdom: He that asketh,  
981 receiveth; he that seeketh, findeth; to him that knocketh, it  
982 shall be opened.’ We cannot but feel how in this sixfold  
983 repetition He wants to impress deep on our minds this one

984 truth, that we may and must most confidently expect an  
985 answer to our prayer. Next to the revelation of the Father's  
986 love, there is, in the whole course of the school of prayer,  
987 not a more important lesson than this: Every one that  
988 asketh, receiveth.

989  
990 In the three words the Lord uses, ask, seek, knock, a  
991 difference in meaning has been sought. If such was indeed  
992 His purpose, then the first, ASK, refers to the gifts we pray  
993 for. But I may ask and receive the gift without the Giver.  
994 SEEK is the word Scripture uses of God Himself; Christ  
995 assures me that I can find Himself. But it is not enough to  
996 find God in time of need, without coming to abiding  
997 fellowship: KNOCK speaks of admission to dwell with Him  
998 and in Him. Asking and receiving the gift would thus lead  
999 to seeking and finding the Giver, and this again to the  
1000 knocking and opening of the door of the Father's home and  
1001 love. One thing is sure: the Lord does want us to count most  
1002 certainly on it that asking, seeking, knocking, cannot be in  
1003 vain: receiving an answer, finding God, the opened heart  
1004 and home of God, are the certain fruit of prayer.

1005  
1006 That the Lord should have thought it needful in so many  
1007 forms to repeat the truth, is a lesson of deep import. It  
1008 proves that He knows our heart, how doubt and distrust  
1009 toward God are natural to us, and how easily we are  
1010 inclined to rest in prayer as a religious work without an  
1011 answer. He knows too how, even when we believe that God  
1012 is the Hearer of prayer, believing prayer that lays hold of  
1013 the promise, is something spiritual, too high and difficult for  
1014 the half-hearted disciple. He therefore at the very outset of  
1015 His instruction to those who would learn to pray, seeks to  
1016 lodge this truth deep into their hearts: prayer does avail  
1017 much; ask and ye shall receive; every one that asketh,

1018 receiveth. This is the fixed eternal law of the kingdom: if  
1019 you ask and receive not, it must be because there is  
1020 something amiss or wanting in the prayer. Hold on; let the  
1021 Word and the Spirit teach you to pray aright, but do not let  
1022 go the confidence He seeks to waken: Every one that asketh,  
1023 receiveth.

1024

1025 Ask, and it shall be given you.’ Christ has no mightier  
1026 stimulus to persevering prayer in His school than this. As a  
1027 child has to prove a sum to be correct, so the proof that we  
1028 have prayed aright is, the answer. If we ask and receive not,  
1029 it is because we have not learned to pray aright. Let every  
1030 learner in the school of Christ therefore take the Master’s  
1031 word in all simplicity: Every one that asketh, receiveth. He  
1032 had good reasons for speaking so unconditionally. Let us  
1033 beware of weakening the Word with our human wisdom.  
1034 When He tells us heavenly things, let us believe Him: His  
1035 Word will explain itself to him who believes it fully. If  
1036 questions and difficulties arise, let us not seek to have them  
1037 settled before we accept the Word. No; let us entrust them  
1038 all to Him: it is His to solve them: our work is first and fully  
1039 to accept and hold fast His promise. Let in our inner  
1040 chamber, in the inner chamber of our heart too, the Word be  
1041 inscribed in letters of light: Every one that asketh, receiveth.

1042

1043 According to this teaching of the Master, prayer consists of  
1044 two parts, has two sides, a human and a Divine. The human  
1045 is the asking, the Divine is the giving. Or, to look at both  
1046 from the human side, there is the asking and the receiving—  
1047 the two halves that make up a whole. It is as if He would  
1048 tell us that we are not to rest without an answer, because it  
1049 is the will of God, the rule in the Father’s family: every  
1050 childlike believing petition is granted. If no answer comes,  
1051 we are not to sit down in the sloth that calls itself

1052 resignation, and suppose that it is not God's will to give an  
1053 answer. No; there must be something in the prayer that is  
1054 not as God would have it, childlike and believing; we must  
1055 seek for grace to pray so that the answer may come. It is far  
1056 easier to the flesh to submit without the answer than to yield  
1057 itself to be searched and purified by the Spirit, until it has  
1058 learnt to pray the prayer of faith.

1059

1060 It is one of the terrible marks of the diseased state of  
1061 Christian life in these days, that there are so many who rest  
1062 content without the distinct experience of answer to prayer.  
1063 They pray daily, they ask many things, and trust that some  
1064 of them will be heard, but know little of direct definite  
1065 answer to prayer as the rule of daily life. And it is this the  
1066 Father wills: He seeks daily intercourse with His children in  
1067 listening to and granting their petitions. he wills that I  
1068 should come to Him day by day with distinct requests; He  
1069 wills day by day to do for me what I ask. It was in His  
1070 answer to prayer that the saints of old learned to know God  
1071 as the Living One, and were stirred to praise and love (Ps.  
1072 xxxiv., lxvi. 19, cxvi. 1). Our Teacher waits to imprint this  
1073 upon our minds: prayer and its answer, the child asking and  
1074 the father giving, belong to each other.

1075

1076 There may be cases in which the answer is a refusal,  
1077 because the request is not according to God's Word, as  
1078 when Moses asked to enter Canaan. But still, there was an  
1079 answer: God did not leave His servant in uncertainty as to  
1080 His will. The gods of the heathen are dumb and cannot  
1081 speak. Our Father lets His child know when He cannot give  
1082 him what he asks, and he withdraws his petition, even as the  
1083 Son did in Gethsemane. Both Moses the servant and Christ  
1084 the Son knew that what they asked was not according to  
1085 what the Lord had spoken: their prayer was the humble



1086 supplication whether it was not possible for the decision to  
1087 be changed. God will teach those who are teachable and  
1088 give Him time, by His Word and Spirit, whether their  
1089 request be according to His will or not. Let us withdraw the  
1090 request, if it be not according to God's mind, or persevere  
1091 till the answer come. Prayer is appointed to obtain the  
1092 answer. It is in prayer and its answer that the interchange of  
1093 love between the Father and His child takes place.

1094

1095 How deep the estrangement of our heart from God must be,  
1096 that we find it so difficult to grasp such promises. Even  
1097 while we accept the words and believe their truth, the faith  
1098 of the heart, that fully has them and rejoices in them, comes  
1099 so slowly. It is because our spiritual life is still so weak, and  
1100 the capacity for taking God's thoughts is so feeble. But let  
1101 us look to Jesus to teach us as none but He can teach. If we  
1102 take His words in simplicity, and trust Him by His Spirit to  
1103 make them within us life and power, they will so enter into  
1104 our inner being, that the spiritual Divine reality of the truth  
1105 they contain will indeed take possession of us, and we shall  
1106 not rest content until every petition we offer is borne  
1107 heavenward on Jesus' own words: Ask, and it shall be given  
1108 you.'

1109

1110 Beloved fellow-disciples in the school of Jesus! let us set  
1111 ourselves to learn this lesson well. Let us take these words  
1112 just as they were spoken. Let us not suffer human reason to  
1113 weaken their force. Let us take them as Jesus gives them,  
1114 and believe them. He will teach us in due time how to  
1115 understand them fully: let us begin by implicitly believing  
1116 them. Let us take time, as often as we pray, to listen to His  
1117 voice: Every one that asketh, receiveth. Let us not make the  
1118 feeble experiences of our unbelief the measure of what our  
1119 faith may expect. Let us seek, not only just in our seasons of

1120 prayer, but at all times, to hold fast the joyful assurance:  
1121 man's prayer on earth and God's answer in heaven are  
1122 meant for each other. Let us trust Jesus to teach us so to  
1123 pray that the answer can come. He will do it, if we hold fast  
1124 the word He gives today: Ask, and ye shall receive.'

1125

1126 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

1127

1128

1129

1130 O Lord Jesus! teach me to understand and believe what  
1131 Thou hast now promised me. It is not hid from Thee, O my  
1132 Lord, with what reasonings my heart seeks to satisfy itself,  
1133 when no answer comes. There is the thought that my prayer  
1134 is not in harmony with the Father's secret counsel; that  
1135 there is perhaps something better Thou wouldest give me;  
1136 or that prayer as fellowship with God is blessing enough  
1137 without an answer. And yet, my blessed Lord, I find in Thy  
1138 teaching on prayer that Thou didst not speak of these things,  
1139 but didst say so plainly, that prayer may and must expect an  
1140 answer. Thou dost assure us that this is the fellowship of a  
1141 child with the Father: the child asks and the Father gives.

1142

1143 Blessed Lord! Thy words are faithful and true. It must be,  
1144 because I pray amiss, that my experience of answered  
1145 prayer is not clearer. It must be, because I live too little in  
1146 the Spirit, that my prayer is too little in the Spirit, and that  
1147 the power for the prayer of faith is wanting.

1148

1149 Lord! teach me to pray. Lord Jesus! I trust Thee for it; teach  
1150 me to pray in faith. Lord! teach me this lesson of today:  
1151 Every one that asketh receiveth. Amen.

1152

1153

1154

1155

1156 SIXTH LESSON.

1157

1158 How much more?’

1159

1160 Or, The Infinite Fatherliness of God.

1161

1162 Or what man is there of you, who, if his son ask him for a  
1163 loaf, will give him a stone; or if he shall ask for a fish, will  
1164 give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give  
1165 good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your  
1166 Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask  
1167 Him?’—Matt. vii. 9-11

1168

1169 IN these words our Lord proceeds further to confirm what  
1170 He had said of the certainty of an answer to prayer. To  
1171 remove all doubt, and show us on what sure ground His  
1172 promise rests, He appeals to what every one has seen and  
1173 experienced here on earth. We are all children, and know  
1174 what we expected of our fathers. We are fathers, or  
1175 continually see them; and everywhere we look upon it as  
1176 the most natural thing there can be, for a father to hear his  
1177 child. And the Lord asks us to look up from earthly parents,  
1178 of whom the best are but evil, and to calculate HOW  
1179 MUCH MORE the heavenly Father will give good gifts to  
1180 them that ask Him. Jesus would lead us up to see, that as  
1181 much greater as God is than sinful man, so much greater our  
1182 assurance ought to be that He will more surely than any  
1183 earthly father grant our childlike petitions. As much greater  
1184 as God is than man, so much surer is it that prayer will be  
1185 heard with the Father in heaven than with a father on earth.

1186

1187 As simple and intelligible as this parable is, so deep and  
1188 spiritual is the teaching it contains. The Lord would remind  
1189 us that the prayer of a child owes its influence entirely to  
1190 the relation in which he stands to the parent. The prayer can  
1191 exert that influence only when the child is really living in  
1192 that relationship, in the home, in the love, in the service of  
1193 the Father. The power of the promise, Ask, and it shall be  
1194 given you,' lies in the loving relationship between us as  
1195 children and the Father in heaven; when we live and walk in  
1196 that relationship, the prayer of faith and its answer will be  
1197 the natural result. And so the lesson we have today in the  
1198 school of prayer is this: Live as a child of God, then you  
1199 will be able to pray as a child, and as a child you will most  
1200 assuredly be heard.

1201

1202 And what is the true child-life? The answer can be found in  
1203 any home. The child that by preference forsakes the father's  
1204 house, that finds no pleasure in the presence and love and  
1205 obedience of the father, and still thinks to ask and obtain  
1206 what he will, will surely be disappointed. On the contrary,  
1207 he to whom the intercourse and will and honour and love of  
1208 the father are the joy of his life, will find that it is the  
1209 father's joy to grant his requests. Scripture says, As many as  
1210 are led by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God:'  
1211 the childlike privilege of asking all is inseparable from the  
1212 childlike life under the leading of the Spirit. He that gives  
1213 himself to be led by the Spirit in his life, will be led by Him  
1214 in his prayers too. And he will find that Fatherlike giving is  
1215 the Divine response to childlike living.

1216

1217 To see what this childlike living is, in which childlike  
1218 asking and believing have their ground, we have only to  
1219 notice what our Lord teaches in the Sermon on the Mount of  
1220 the Father and His children. In it the prayer-promises are

1221 imbedded in the life-precepts; the two are inseparable. They  
1222 form one whole; and He alone can count on the fulfilment  
1223 of the promise, who accepts too all that the Lord has  
1224 connected with it. It is as if in speaking the word, Ask, and  
1225 ye shall receive,' He says: I give these promises to those  
1226 whom in the beatitudes I have pictured in their childlike  
1227 poverty and purity, and of whom I have said, They shall be  
1228 called the children of God' (Matt. v. 3-9): to children, who  
1229 let your light shine before men, so that they may glorify  
1230 your Father in heaven:' to those who walk in love, that ye  
1231 may be children of your Father which is in heaven,' and  
1232 who seek to be perfect even as your Father in heaven is  
1233 perfect' (v. 45): to those whose fasting and praying and  
1234 almsgiving (vi. 1-18) is not before men, but before your  
1235 Father which seeth in secret;' who forgive even as your  
1236 Father forgiveth you' (vi. 15); who trust the heavenly Father  
1237 in all earthly need, seeking first the kingdom of God and  
1238 His righteousness (vi. 26-32); who not only say, Lord, Lord,  
1239 but do the will of my Father which is in heaven (vii. 21).  
1240 Such are the children of the Father, and such is the life in  
1241 the Father's love and service; in such a child-life answered  
1242 prayers are certain and abundant.

1243

1244 But will not such teaching discourage the feeble one? If we  
1245 are first to answer to this portrait of a child, must not many  
1246 give up all hope of answers to prayer? The difficulty is  
1247 removed if we think again of the blessed name of father and  
1248 child. A child is weak; there is a great difference among  
1249 children in age and gift. The Lord does not demand of us a  
1250 perfect fulfilment of the law; no, but only the childlike and  
1251 whole-hearted surrender to live as a child with Him in  
1252 obedience and truth. Nothing more. But also, nothing less.  
1253 The Father must have the whole heart. When this is given,  
1254 and He sees the child with honest purpose and steady will

1255 seeking in everything to be and live as a child, then our  
1256 prayer will count with Him as the prayer of a child. Let any  
1257 one simply and honestly begin to study the Sermon on the  
1258 Mount and take it as his guide in life, and he will find,  
1259 notwithstanding weakness and failure, an ever-growing  
1260 liberty to claim the fulfilment of its promises in regard to  
1261 prayer. In the names of father and child he has the pledge  
1262 that his petitions will be granted.

1263

1264 This is the one chief thought on which Jesus dwells here,  
1265 and which He would have all His scholars take in. He  
1266 would have us see that the secret of effectual prayer is: to  
1267 have the heart filled with the Father-love of God. It is not  
1268 enough for us to know that God is a Father: He would have  
1269 us take time to come under the full impression of what that  
1270 name implies. We must take the best earthly father we  
1271 know; we must think of the tenderness and love with which  
1272 he regards the request of his child, the love and joy with  
1273 which he grants every reasonable desire; we must then, as  
1274 we think in adoring worship of the infinite Love and  
1275 Fatherliness of God, consider with how much more  
1276 tenderness and joy He sees us come to Him, and gives us  
1277 what we ask aright. And then, when we see how much this  
1278 Divine arithmetic is beyond our comprehension, and feel  
1279 how impossible it is for us to apprehend God's readiness to  
1280 hear us, then He would have us come and open our heart for  
1281 the Holy Spirit to shed abroad God's Father-love there. Let  
1282 us do this not only when we want to pray, but let us yield  
1283 heart and life to dwell in that love. The child who only  
1284 wants to know the love of the father when he has something  
1285 to ask, will be disappointed. But he who lets God be Father  
1286 always and in everything, who would fain live his whole  
1287 life in the Father's presence and love, who allows God in all  
1288 the greatness of His love to be a Father to him, oh! he will

1289 experience most gloriously that a life in God's infinite  
1290 Fatherliness and continual answers to prayer are  
1291 inseparable.

1292  
1293 Beloved fellow-disciple! we begin to see what the reason is  
1294 that we know so little of daily answers to prayer, and what  
1295 the chief lesson is which the Lord has for us in His school.  
1296 It is all in the name of Father. We thought of new and  
1297 deeper insight into some of the mysteries of the prayer-  
1298 world as what we should get in Christ's school; He tells us  
1299 the first is the highest lesson; we must learn to say well,  
1300 Abba, Father!' Our Father which art in heaven.' He that can  
1301 say this, has the key to all prayer. In all the compassion with  
1302 which a father listens to his weak or sickly child, in all the  
1303 joy with which he hears his stammering child, in all the  
1304 gentle patience with which he bears with a thoughtless  
1305 child, we must, as in so many mirrors, study the heart of our  
1306 Father, until every prayer be borne upward on the faith of  
1307 this Divine word: How much more shall your heavenly  
1308 Father give good gifts to them that ask Him.'

1309  
1310 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

1311  
1312  
1313  
1314 Blessed Lord! Thou knowest that this, though it be one of  
1315 the first and simplest and most glorious lessons in Thy  
1316 school, is to our hearts one of the hardest to learn: we know  
1317 so little of the love of the Father. Lord! teach us so to live  
1318 with the Father that His love may be to us nearer, clearer,  
1319 dearer, than the love of any earthly father. And let the  
1320 assurance of His hearing our prayer be as much greater than  
1321 the confidence in an earthly parent, as the heavens are  
1322 higher than earth, as God is infinitely greater than man.

1323 Lord! show us that it is only our unchildlike distance from  
1324 the Father that hinders the answer to prayer, and lead us on  
1325 to the true life of God's children. Lord Jesus! it is fatherlike  
1326 love that wakens childlike trust. O reveal to us the Father,  
1327 and His tender, pitying love, that we may become childlike,  
1328 and experience how in the child-life lies the power of  
1329 prayer.

1330

1331 Blessed Son of God! the Father loveth Thee and hath given  
1332 Thee all things. And Thou lovest the Father, and hast done  
1333 all things He commanded Thee, and therefore hast the  
1334 power to ask all things. Lord! give us Thine own Spirit, the  
1335 Spirit of the Son. Make us childlike, as Thou wert on earth.  
1336 And let every prayer be breathed in the faith that as the  
1337 heaven is higher than the earth, so God's Father-love, and  
1338 His readiness to give us what we ask, surpasses all we can  
1339 think or conceive. Amen.

1340

1341 NOTE.^1

1342

1343 Your Father which is in heaven.' Alas! we speak of it only  
1344 as the utterance of a reverential homage. We think of it as a  
1345 figure borrowed from an earthly life, and only in some faint  
1346 and shallow meaning to be used of God. We are afraid to  
1347 take God as our own tender and pitiful father. He is a  
1348 schoolmaster, or almost farther off than that, and knowing  
1349 less about us—an inspector, who knows nothing of us  
1350 except through our lessons. His eyes are not on the scholar,  
1351 but on the book, and all alike must come up to the standard.

1352

1353 Now open the ears of the heart, timid child of God; let it go  
1354 sinking right down into the inner most depths of the soul.  
1355 Here is the starting-point of holiness, in the love and  
1356 patience and pity of our heavenly Father. We have not to



1357 learn to be holy as a hard lesson at school, that we may  
1358 make God think well of us; we are to learn it at home with  
1359 the Father to help us. God loves you not because you are  
1360 clever not because you are good, but because He is your  
1361 Father. The Cross of Christ does not make God love us; it is  
1362 the outcome and measure of His love to us. He loves all His  
1363 children, the clumsiest, the dullest, the worst of His  
1364 children. His love lies at the back of everything, and we  
1365 must get upon that as the solid foundation of our religious  
1366 life, not growing up into that, but growing up out of it. We  
1367 must begin there or our beginning will come to nothing. Do  
1368 take hold of this mightily. We must go out of ourselves for  
1369 any hope, or any strength, or any confidence. And what  
1370 hope, what strength, what confidence may be ours now that  
1371 we begin here, your Father which is in heaven!

1372  
1373 We need to get in at the tenderness and helpfulness which  
1374 lie in these words, and to rest upon it—your Father. Speak  
1375 them over to yourself until something of the wonderful truth  
1376 is felt by us. It means that I am bound to God by the closest  
1377 and tenderest relationship; that I have a right to His love and  
1378 His power and His blessing, such as nothing else could give  
1379 me. O the boldness with which we can draw near! O the  
1380 great things we have a right to ask for! Your Father. It  
1381 means that all His infinite love and patience and wisdom  
1382 bend over me to help me. In this relationship lies not only  
1383 the possibility of holiness; there is infinitely more than that.

1384  
1385 Here we are to begin, in the patient love of our Father.  
1386 Think how He knows us apart and by ourselves, in all our  
1387 peculiarities, and in all our weaknesses and difficulties. The  
1388 master judges by the result, but our Father judges by the  
1389 effort. Failure does not always mean fault. He knows how  
1390 much things cost, and weighs them where others only

1391 measure. YOUR FATHER. Think how great store His love  
1392 sets by the poor beginnings of the little ones, clumsy and  
1393 unmeaning as they may be to others. All this lies in this  
1394 blessed relationship and infinitely more. Do not fear to take  
1395 it all as your own.

1396

1397 ^1From Thoughts on Holiness, by Mark Guy Pearse. What  
1398 is so beautifully said of the knowledge of God's  
1399 Fatherliness as the starting-point of holiness is no less true  
1400 of prayer.

1401

1402

1403

1404 SEVENTH LESSON.

1405

1406 How much more the Holy Spirit;

1407

1408 Or, The All-Comprehensive Gift.

1409

1410 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto  
1411 your children, how much more shall the heavenly Father  
1412 give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?'—Luke xi. 13.

1413

1414 IN the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord had already given  
1415 utterance to His wonderful HOW MUCH MORE? Here in  
1416 Luke, where He repeats the question, there is a difference.  
1417 Instead of speaking, as then of giving good gifts, He says,  
1418 How much more shall the heavenly Father give THE HOLY  
1419 SPIRIT?' He thus teaches us that the chief and the best of  
1420 these gifts is the Holy Spirit, or rather, that in this gift all  
1421 others are comprised The Holy Spirit is the first of the  
1422 Father's gifts, and the one He delights most to bestow. The  
1423 Holy Spirit is therefore the gift we ought first and chiefly to  
1424 seek.

1425

1426 The unspeakable worth of this gift we can easily  
1427 understand. Jesus spoke of the Spirit as the promise of the  
1428 Father;’ the one promise in which God’s Fatherhood  
1429 revealed itself. The best gift a good and wise father can  
1430 bestow on a child on earth is his own spirit. This is the great  
1431 object of a father in education—to reproduce in his child his  
1432 own disposition and character. If the child is to know and  
1433 understand his father; if, as he grows up, he is to enter into  
1434 all his will and plans; if he is to have his highest joy in the  
1435 father, and the father in him,—he must be of one mind and  
1436 spirit with him. And so it is impossible to conceive of God  
1437 bestowing any higher gift on His child than this, His own  
1438 Spirit. God is what He is through His Spirit; the Spirit is the  
1439 very life of God. Just think what it means—God giving His  
1440 own Spirit to His child on earth.

1441

1442 Or was not this the glory of Jesus as a Son upon earth, that  
1443 the Spirit of the Father was in Him? At His baptism in  
1444 Jordan the two things were united,—the voice, proclaiming  
1445 Him the Beloved Son, and the Spirit, descending upon Him.  
1446 And so the apostle says of us, Because ye are sons, God  
1447 sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying,  
1448 Abba, Father.’ A king seeks in the whole education of his  
1449 son to call forth in him a kingly spirit. Our Father in heaven  
1450 desires to educate us as His children for the holy, heavenly  
1451 life in which He dwells, and for this gives us, from the  
1452 depths of His heart, His own Spirit. It was this which was  
1453 the whole aim of Jesus when, after having made atonement  
1454 with His own blood, He entered for us into God’s presence,  
1455 that He might obtain for us, and send down to dwell in us,  
1456 the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit of the Father, and of the Son,  
1457 the whole life and love of the Father and the Son are in  
1458 Him; and, coming down into us, He lifts us up into their

1459 fellowship. As Spirit of the Father, He sheds abroad the  
1460 Father's love, with which He loved the Son, in our hearts,  
1461 and teaches us to live in it. As Spirit of the Son, He breathes  
1462 in us the childlike liberty, and devotion, and obedience in  
1463 which the Son lived upon earth. The Father can bestow no  
1464 higher or more wonderful gift than this: His own Holy  
1465 Spirit, the Spirit of sonship.

1466

1467 This truth naturally suggests the thought that this first and  
1468 chief gift of God must be the first and chief object of all  
1469 prayer. For every need of the spiritual life this is the one  
1470 thing needful, the Holy Spirit. All the fulness is in Jesus; the  
1471 fulness of grace and truth, out of which we receive grace for  
1472 grace. The Holy Spirit is the appointed conveyancer, whose  
1473 special work it is to make Jesus and all there is in Him for  
1474 us ours in personal appropriation, in blessed experience. He  
1475 is the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; as wonderful as the life  
1476 is, so wonderful is the provision by which such an agent is  
1477 provided to communicate it to us. If we but yield ourselves  
1478 entirely to the disposal of the Spirit, and let Him have His  
1479 way with us, He will manifest the life of Christ within us.  
1480 He will do this with a Divine power, maintaining the life of  
1481 Christ in us in uninterrupted continuity. Surely, if there is  
1482 one prayer that should draw us to the Father's throne and  
1483 keep us there, it is this: for the Holy Spirit, whom we as  
1484 children have received, to stream into us and out from us in  
1485 greater fulness.

1486

1487 In the variety of the gifts which the Spirit has to dispense,  
1488 He meets the believer's every need. Just think of the names  
1489 He bears. The Spirit of grace, to reveal and impart all of  
1490 grace there is in Jesus. The Spirit of faith, teaching us to  
1491 begin and go on and increase in ever believing. The Spirit  
1492 of adoption and assurance, who witnesses that we are God's

1493 children, and inspires the confiding and confident Abba,  
1494 Father! The Spirit of truth, to lead into all truth, to make  
1495 each word of God ours in deed and in truth. The Spirit of  
1496 prayer, through whom we speak with the Father; prayer that  
1497 must be heard. The Spirit of judgment and burning, to  
1498 search the heart, and convince of sin. The Spirit of holiness,  
1499 manifesting and communicating the Father's holy presence  
1500 within us. The Spirit of power, through whom we are strong  
1501 to testify boldly and work effectually in the Father's  
1502 service. The Spirit of glory, the pledge of our inheritance,  
1503 the preparation and the foretaste of the glory to come.  
1504 Surely the child of God needs but one thing to be able really  
1505 to live as a child: it is, to be filled with this Spirit.

1506  
1507 And now, the lesson Jesus teaches us today in His school is  
1508 this: That the Father is just longing to give Him to us if we  
1509 will but ask in the childlike dependence on what He says: If  
1510 ye know to give good gifts unto your children, HOW  
1511 MUCH MORE shall your heavenly Father give the Holy  
1512 Spirit to them that ask Him.' In the words of God's promise,  
1513 I will pour out my Spirit abundantly;' and of His command,  
1514 Be ye filled with the Spirit' we have the measure of what  
1515 God is ready to give, and what we may obtain. As God's  
1516 children, we have already received the Spirit. But we still  
1517 need to ask and pray for His special gifts and operations as  
1518 we require them. And not only this, but for Himself to take  
1519 complete and entire possession; for His unceasing  
1520 momentary guidance. Just as the branch, already filled with  
1521 the sap of the vine, is ever crying for the continued and  
1522 increasing flow of that sap, that it may bring its fruit to  
1523 perfection, so the believer, rejoicing in the possession of the  
1524 Spirit, ever thirsts and cries for more. And what the great  
1525 Teacher would have us learn is, that nothing less than God's  
1526 promise and God's command may be the measure of our

1527 expectation and our prayer; we must be filled abundantly.  
1528 He would have us ask this in the assurance that the  
1529 wonderful HOW MUCH MORE of God's Father-love is the  
1530 pledge that, when we ask, we do most certainly receive.

1531

1532 Let us now believe this. As we pray to be filled with the  
1533 Spirit, let us not seek for the answer in our feelings. All  
1534 spiritual blessings must be received, that is, accepted or  
1535 taken in faith.^1 Let me believe, the Father gives the Holy  
1536 Spirit to His praying child. Even now, while I pray, I must  
1537 say in faith: I have what I ask, the fulness of the Spirit is  
1538 mine. Let us continue stedfast in this faith. On the strength  
1539 of God's Word we know that we have what we ask. Let us,  
1540 with thanksgiving that we have been heard, with  
1541 thanksgiving for what we have received and taken and now  
1542 hold as ours, continue stedfast in believing prayer that the  
1543 blessing, which has already been given us, and which we  
1544 hold in faith, may break through and fill our whole being. It  
1545 is in such believing thanksgiving and prayer, that our soul  
1546 opens up for the Spirit to take entire and undisturbed  
1547 possession. It is such prayer that not only asks and hopes,  
1548 but takes and holds, that inherits the full blessing. In all our  
1549 prayer let us remember the lesson the Saviour would teach  
1550 us this day, that, if there is one thing on earth we can be  
1551 sure of, it is this, that the Father desires to have us filled  
1552 with His Spirit, that He delights to give us His Spirit.

1553

1554 And when once we have learned thus to believe for  
1555 ourselves, and each day to take out of the treasure we hold  
1556 in heaven, what liberty and power to pray for the outpouring  
1557 of the Spirit on the Church of God, on all flesh, on  
1558 individuals, or on special efforts! He that has once learned  
1559 to know the Father in prayer for himself, learns to pray most  
1560 confidently for others too. The Father gives the Holy Spirit

1561 to them that ask Him, not least, but most, when they ask for  
1562 others.

1563

1564 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

1565

1566

1567

1568 Father in heaven! Thou didst send Thy Son to reveal  
1569 Thyself to us, Thy Father-love, and all that that love has for  
1570 us. And He has taught us, that the gift above all gifts which  
1571 Thou wouldst bestow in answer to prayer is, the Holy Spirit.

1572

1573 O my Father! I come to Thee with this prayer; there is  
1574 nothing I would—may I not say, I do—desire so much as to  
1575 be filled with the Spirit, the Holy Spirit. The blessings He  
1576 brings are so unspeakable, and just what I need. He sheds  
1577 abroad Thy love in the heart, and fills it with Thy self. I  
1578 long for this. He breathes the mind and life of Christ in me,  
1579 so that I live as He did, in and for the Father’s love. I long  
1580 for this. He endues with power from on high for all my walk  
1581 and work. I long for this. O Father! I beseech Thee, give me  
1582 this day the fulness of Thy Spirit.

1583

1584 Father! I ask this, resting on the words of my Lord: HOW  
1585 MUCH MORE THE HOLY SPIRIT.’ I do believe that  
1586 Thou hearest my prayer; I receive now what I ask; Father! I  
1587 claim and I take it: the fulness of Thy Spirit is mine. I  
1588 receive the gift this day again as a faith gift; in faith I  
1589 reckon my Father works through the Spirit all He has  
1590 promised. The Father delights to breathe His Spirit into His  
1591 waiting child as He tarries in fellowship with Himself.  
1592 Amen.

1593

1594 ^1The Greek word for receiving and taking is the same.  
1595 When Jesus said, Everyone that asketh receiveth,' He used  
1596 the same verb as at the Supper, Take, eat,' or on the  
1597 resurrection morning, Receive,' accept, take, the Holy  
1598 Spirit.' Receiving not only implies God's bestowment, but  
1599 our acceptance.

1600

1601

1602

1603

1604 EIGHTH LESSON.

1605

1606 Because of his importunity;'

1607

1608 Or, The Boldness of God's Friends.

1609

1610 And He said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend,  
1611 and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, Friend, lend  
1612 me three loaves; for a friend of mine is come to me from a  
1613 journey, and I have nothing to set before him' and he from  
1614 within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is  
1615 now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise  
1616 and give thee. I say unto you, though he will not rise and  
1617 give him because he is his friend, yet because of his  
1618 importunity he will rise and give him as many as he  
1619 needeth.'—Luke xi. 5-8.

1620

1621 THE first teaching to His disciples was given by our Lord in  
1622 the Sermon on the Mount. It was near a year later that the  
1623 disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray. In answer He  
1624 gave them a second time the Lord's Prayer, so teaching  
1625 them what to pray. He then speaks of how they ought to  
1626 pray, and repeats what he formerly said of God's  
1627 Fatherliness and the certainty of an answer. But in between



1628 He adds the beautiful parable of the friend at midnight, to  
1629 teach them the two fold lesson, that God does not only want  
1630 us to pray for ourselves, but for the perishing around us, and  
1631 that in such intercession great boldness of entreaty is often  
1632 needful, and always lawful, yea, pleasing to God.

1633  
1634 The parable is a perfect storehouse of instruction in regard  
1635 to true intercession. There is, first, the love which seeks to  
1636 help the needy around us: my friend is come to me.’ Then  
1637 the need which urges to the cry I have nothing to set before  
1638 him.’ Then follows the confidence that help is to be had:  
1639 which of you shall have a friend, and say, Friend, lend me  
1640 three loaves.’ Then comes the unexpected refusal: I cannot  
1641 rise and give thee.’ Then again the perseverance that takes  
1642 no refusal: because of his importunity.’ And lastly, the  
1643 reward of such prayer: he will give him as many as he  
1644 needeth.’ A wonderful setting forth of the way of prayer and  
1645 faith in which the blessing of God has so often been sought  
1646 and found.

1647  
1648 Let us confine ourselves to the chief thought: prayer as an  
1649 appeal to the friendship of God; and we shall find that two  
1650 lessons are specially suggested. The one, that if we are  
1651 God’s friends, and come as such to Him, we must prove  
1652 ourselves the friends of the needy; God’s friendship to us  
1653 and ours to others go hand in hand. The other, that when we  
1654 come thus we may use the utmost liberty in claiming an  
1655 answer.

1656  
1657 There is a twofold use of prayer: the one, to obtain strength  
1658 and blessing for our own life; the other, the higher, the true  
1659 glory of prayer, for which Christ has taken us into His  
1660 fellowship and teaching, is intercession, where prayer is the  
1661 royal power a child of God exercises in heaven on behalf of

1662 others and even of the kingdom. We see it in Scripture, how  
1663 it was in intercession for others that Abraham and Moses,  
1664 Samuel and Elijah, with all the holy men of old, proved that  
1665 they had power with God and prevailed. It is when we give  
1666 ourselves to be a blessing that we can specially count on the  
1667 blessing of God. It is when we draw near to God as the  
1668 friend of the poor and the perishing that we may count on  
1669 His friendliness; the righteous man who is the friend of the  
1670 poor is very specially the friend of God. This gives  
1671 wonderful liberty in prayer. Lord! I have a needy friend  
1672 whom I must help. As a friend I have undertaken to help  
1673 him. In Thee I have a Friend, whose kindness and riches I  
1674 know to be infinite: I am sure Thou wilt give me what I ask.  
1675 If I, being evil, am ready to do for my friend what I can,  
1676 how much more wilt Thou, O my heavenly Friend, now do  
1677 for Thy friend what he asks?

1678  
1679 The question might suggest itself, whether the Fatherhood  
1680 of God does not give such confidence in prayer, that the  
1681 thought of His Friendship can hardly teach us anything  
1682 more: a father is more than a friend. And yet, if we consider  
1683 it, this pleading the friendship of God opens new wonders to  
1684 us. That a child obtains what he asks of his father looks so  
1685 perfectly natural, we almost count it the father's duty to  
1686 give. But with a friend it is as if the kindness is more free,  
1687 dependent, not on nature, but on sympathy and character.  
1688 And then the relation of a child is more that of perfect  
1689 dependence; two friends are more nearly on a level. And so  
1690 our Lord, in seeking to unfold to us the spiritual mystery of  
1691 prayer, would fain have us approach God in this relation  
1692 too, as those whom He has acknowledged as His friends,  
1693 whose mind and life are in sympathy with His.  
1694

1695 But then we must be living as His friends. I am still a child  
1696 even when a wanderer; but friendship depends upon the  
1697 conduct. Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command  
1698 you.' Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by  
1699 works was faith made perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled  
1700 which saith, And Abraham believed God, and he was called  
1701 the friend of God.' It is the Spirit, the same Spirit,' that  
1702 leads us that also bears witness to our acceptance with God;  
1703 likewise, also,' the same Spirit helpeth us in prayer. It is a  
1704 life as the friend of God that gives the wonderful liberty to  
1705 say: I have a friend to whom I can go even at midnight. And  
1706 how much more when I go in the very spirit of that  
1707 friendliness, manifesting myself the very kindness I look for  
1708 in God, seeking to help my friend as I want God to help me.  
1709 When I come to God in prayer, He always looks to what the  
1710 aim is of my petition. If it be merely for my own comfort or  
1711 joy I seek His grace, I do not receive. But if I can say that it  
1712 is that He may be glorified in my dispensing His blessings  
1713 to others, I shall not ask in vain. Or if I ask for others, but  
1714 want to wait until God has made me so rich, that it is no  
1715 sacrifice or act of faith to aid them, I shall not obtain. But if  
1716 I can say that I have already undertaken for my needy  
1717 friend, that in my poverty I have already begun the work of  
1718 love, because I know I had a friend Who would help me,  
1719 my prayer will be heard. Oh, we know not how much the  
1720 plea avails: the friendship of earth looking in its need to the  
1721 friendship of heaven: He will give him as much as he  
1722 needeth.'

1723  
1724 But not always at once. The one thing by which man can  
1725 honour and enjoy his God is faith. Intercession is part of  
1726 faith's training-school. There our friendship with men and  
1727 with God is tested. There it is seen whether my friendship  
1728 with the needy is so real, that I will take time and sacrifice

1729 my rest, will go even at midnight and not cease until I have  
1730 obtained for them what I need. There it is seen whether my  
1731 friendship with God is so clear, that I can depend on Him  
1732 not to turn me away and therefore pray on until He gives.  
1733

1734 O what a deep heavenly mystery this is of persevering  
1735 prayer. The God who has promised, who longs, whose fixed  
1736 purpose it is to give the blessing, holds it back. It is to Him  
1737 a matter of such deep importance that His friends on earth  
1738 should know and fully trust their rich Friend in heaven, that  
1739 He trains them, in the school of answer delayed, to find out  
1740 how their perseverance really does prevail, and what the  
1741 mighty power is they can wield in heaven, if they do but set  
1742 themselves to it. There is a faith that sees the promise, and  
1743 embraces it, and yet does not receive it (Heb. xi. 13, 39). It  
1744 is when the answer to prayer does not come, and the  
1745 promise we are most firmly trusting appears to be of none  
1746 effect, that the trial of faith, more precious than of gold,  
1747 takes place. It is in this trial that the faith that has embraced  
1748 the promise is purified and strengthened and prepared in  
1749 personal, holy fellowship with the living God, to see the  
1750 glory of God. It takes and holds the promise until it has  
1751 received the fulfilment of what it had claimed in a living  
1752 truth in the unseen but living God.  
1753

1754 Let each child of God who is seeking to work the work of  
1755 love in his Father's service take courage. The parent with  
1756 his child, the teacher with his class, the visitor with his  
1757 district, the Bible reader with his circle, the preacher with  
1758 his hearers, each one who, in his little circle, has accepted  
1759 and is bearing the burden of hungry, perishing souls,—let  
1760 them all take courage. Nothing is at first so strange to us as  
1761 that God should really require persevering prayer, that there  
1762 should be a real spiritual needs-be for importunity. To teach

1763 it us, the Master uses this almost strange parable. If the  
1764 unfriendliness of a selfish earthly friend can be conquered  
1765 by importunity, how much more will it avail with the  
1766 heavenly Friend, who does so love to give, but is held back  
1767 by our spiritual unfitness, our incapacity to possess what He  
1768 has to give. O let us thank Him that in delaying His answer  
1769 He is educating us up to our true position and the exercise  
1770 of all our power with Him, training us to live with Him in  
1771 the fellowship of undoubting faith and trust, to be indeed  
1772 the friends of God. And let us hold fast the threefold cord  
1773 that cannot be broken: the hungry friend needing the help,  
1774 and the praying friend seeking the help, and the Mighty  
1775 Friend, loving to give as much as he needeth.

1776

1777 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

1778

1779

1780

1781 O my Blessed Lord and Teacher! I must come to Thee in  
1782 prayer. Thy teaching is so glorious, and yet too high for me  
1783 to grasp. I must confess that my heart is too little to take in  
1784 these thoughts of the wonderful boldness I may use with  
1785 Thy Father as my Friend. Lord Jesus! I trust Thee to give  
1786 me Thy Spirit with Thy Word, and to make the Word quick  
1787 and powerful in my heart. I desire to keep Thy Word of this  
1788 day: Because of his importunity he will give him as many as  
1789 he needeth.'

1790

1791 Lord! teach me more to know the power of persevering  
1792 prayer. I know that in it the Father suits Himself to our need  
1793 of time for the inner life to attain its growth and ripeness, so  
1794 that His grace may indeed be assimilated and made our very  
1795 own. I know that He would fain thus train us to the exercise  
1796 of that strong faith that does not let Him go even in the face

1797 of seeming disappointment. I know He wants to lift us to  
1798 that wonderful liberty, in which we understand how really  
1799 He has made the dispensing of His gift dependent on our  
1800 prayer. Lord! I know this: O teach me to see it in spirit and  
1801 truth.

1802

1803 And may it now be the joy of my life to become the  
1804 almoner of my Rich Friend in heaven, to care for all the  
1805 hungry and perishing, even at midnight, because I know  
1806 MY FRIEND, who always gives to him who perseveres,  
1807 because of his importunity, as many as he needeth. Amen.

1808

1809

1810

1811 NINTH LESSON.

1812

1813 Pray the Lord of the harvest;’

1814

1815 Or, Prayer provides Labourers.

1816

1817 Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is  
1818 plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the  
1819 Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into  
1820 His harvest.’—Matt. ix. 37-38.

1821

1822 THE Lord frequently taught His disciples that they must  
1823 pray, and how; but seldom what to pray. This he left to their  
1824 sense of need, and the leading of the Spirit. But here we  
1825 have one thing He expressly enjoins them to remember: in  
1826 view of the plenteous harvest, and the need of reapers, they  
1827 must cry to the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers.  
1828 Just as in the parable of the friend at midnight, He would  
1829 have them understand that prayer is not to be selfish; so here  
1830 it is the power through which blessing can come to others.

1831 The Father is Lord of the harvest; when we pray for the  
1832 Holy Spirit, we must pray for Him to prepare and send forth  
1833 labourers for the work.

1834

1835 Strange, is it not, that He should ask His disciples to pray  
1836 for this? And could He not pray Himself? And would not  
1837 one prayer of His avail more than a thousand of theirs? And  
1838 God, the Lord of the harvest, did He not see the need? And  
1839 would not He, in His own good time, send forth labourers  
1840 without their prayer? Such questions lead us up to the  
1841 deepest mysteries of prayer, and its power in the Kingdom  
1842 of God. The answer to such questions will convince us that  
1843 prayer is indeed a power, on which the ingathering of the  
1844 harvest and the coming of the Kingdom do in very truth  
1845 depend.

1846

1847 Prayer is no form or show. The Lord Jesus was Himself the  
1848 truth; everything He spake was the deepest truth. It was  
1849 when (see ver. 36) He saw the multitude, and was moved  
1850 with compassion on them, because they were scattered  
1851 abroad, as sheep having no shepherd,' that He called on the  
1852 disciples to pray for labourers to be sent among them. He  
1853 did so because He really believed that their prayer was  
1854 needed, and would help. The veil which so hides the  
1855 invisible world from us was wonderfully transparent to the  
1856 holy human soul of Jesus. He had looked long and deep and  
1857 far into the hidden connection of cause and effect in the  
1858 spirit world. He had marked in God's Word how, when God  
1859 called men like Abraham and Moses, Joshua and Samuel  
1860 and Daniel, and given them authority over men in His  
1861 name, He had at the same time given them authority and  
1862 right to call in the powers of heaven to their aid as they  
1863 needed them. He knew that as to these men of old, and to  
1864 Himself for a time, here upon earth, the work of God had

1865 been entrusted, so it was now about to pass over into the  
1866 hands of His disciples. He knew that when this work should  
1867 be given in charge to them, it would not be a mere matter of  
1868 form or show, but that on them, and their being faithful or  
1869 unfaithful, the success of the work would actually depend.  
1870 As a single individual, within the limitations of a human  
1871 body and a human life, Jesus feels how little a short visit  
1872 can accomplish among these wandering sheep He sees  
1873 around Him, and He longs for help to have them properly  
1874 cared for. And so He tells His disciples now to begin and  
1875 pray, and, when they have taken over the work from Him on  
1876 earth, to make this one of the chief petitions in their prayer:  
1877 That the Lord of the harvest Himself would send forth  
1878 labourers into His harvest. The God who entrusted them  
1879 with the work, and made it to so large extent dependent on  
1880 them, gives them authority to apply to Him for labourers to  
1881 help, and makes the supply dependent on their prayer.

1882  
1883 How little Christians really feel and mourn the need of  
1884 labourers in the fields of the world so white to the harvest.  
1885 And how little they believe that our labour-supply depends  
1886 on prayer, that prayer will really provide as many as he  
1887 needeth.' Not that the dearth of labour is not known or  
1888 discussed. Not that efforts are not sometimes put forth to  
1889 supply the want. But how little the burden of the sheep  
1890 wandering without a Shepherd is really borne in the faith  
1891 that the Lord of the harvest will, in answer to prayer, send  
1892 forth the labourers, and in the solemn conviction that  
1893 without this prayer fields ready for reaping will be left to  
1894 perish. And yet it is so. So wonderful is the surrender of His  
1895 work into the hands of His Church, so dependent has the  
1896 Lord made Himself on them as His body, through whom  
1897 alone His work can be done, so real is the power which the  
1898 Lord gives His people to exercise in heaven and earth, that



1899 the number of the labourers and the measure of the harvest  
1900 does actually depend upon their prayer.

1901

1902 Solemn thought! O why is it that we do not obey the  
1903 injunction of the Master more heartily, and cry more  
1904 earnestly for labourers? There are two reasons for this. The  
1905 one is: We miss the compassion of Jesus, which gave rise to  
1906 this request for prayer. When believers learn that to love  
1907 their neighbours as themselves, that to live entirely for  
1908 God's glory in their fellow-men, is the Father's first  
1909 commandment to His redeemed ones, they will accept of  
1910 the perishing ones as the charge entrusted to them by their  
1911 Lord. And, accepting them not only as a field of labour, but  
1912 as the objects of loving care and interest, it will not be long  
1913 before compassion towards the hopelessly perishing will  
1914 touch their heart, and the cry ascend with an earnestness till  
1915 then unknown: Lord! send labourers. The other reason for  
1916 the neglect of the command, the want of faith, will then  
1917 make itself felt, but will be overcome as our pity pleads for  
1918 help. We believe too little in the power of prayer to bring  
1919 about definite results. We do not live close enough to God,  
1920 and are not enough entirely given up to His service and  
1921 Kingdom, to be capable of the confidence that He will give  
1922 it in answer to our prayer. O let us pray for a life so one  
1923 with Christ, that His compassion may stream into us, and  
1924 His Spirit be able to assure us that our prayer avails.

1925

1926 Such prayer will ask and obtain a twofold blessing. There  
1927 will first be the desire for the increase of men entirely given  
1928 up to the service of God. It is a terrible blot upon the  
1929 Church of Christ that there are times when actually men  
1930 cannot be found for the service of the Master as ministers,  
1931 missionaries, or teachers of God's Word. As God's children  
1932 make this a matter of supplication for their own circle or

1933 Church, it will be given. The Lord Jesus is now Lord of the  
1934 harvest. He has been exalted to bestow gifts—the gifts of  
1935 the Spirit. His chief gifts are men filled with the Spirit. But  
1936 the supply and distribution of the gifts depend on the co-  
1937 operation of Head and members. It is just prayer will lead to  
1938 such co-operation; the believing suppliants will be stirred to  
1939 find the men and the means for the work.

1940

1941 The other blessing to be asked will not be less. Every  
1942 believer is a labourer; not one of God's children who has  
1943 not been redeemed for service, and has not his work  
1944 waiting. It must be our prayer that the Lord would so fill all  
1945 His people with the spirit of devotion, that not one may be  
1946 found standing idle in the vineyard. Wherever there is a  
1947 complaint of the want of helpers, or of fit helpers in God's  
1948 work, prayer has the promise of a supply. There is no  
1949 Sunday school or district visiting, no Bible reading or  
1950 rescue work, where God is not ready and able to provide. It  
1951 may take time and importunity, but the command of Christ  
1952 to ask the Lord of the harvest is the pledge that the prayer  
1953 will be heard: I say unto you, he will arise and give him as  
1954 many as he needeth.'

1955

1956 Solemn, blessed thought! this power has been given us in  
1957 prayer to provide in the need of the world, to secure the  
1958 servants for God's work. The Lord of the harvest will hear.  
1959 Christ, who called us so specially to pray thus, will support  
1960 our prayers offered in His name and interest. Let us set  
1961 apart time and give ourselves to this part of our intercessory  
1962 work. It will lead us into the fellowship of that  
1963 compassionate heart of His that led Him to call for our  
1964 prayers. It will elevate us to the insight of our regal position,  
1965 as those whose will counts for something with the great  
1966 God in the advancement of His Kingdom. It will make us

1967 feel how really we are God's fellow-workers on earth, to  
1968 whom a share in His work has in downright earnest been  
1969 entrusted. It will make us partakers in the soul travail, but  
1970 also in the soul satisfaction of Jesus, as we know how, in  
1971 answer to our prayer, blessing has been given that otherwise  
1972 would not have come.

1973

1974 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

1975

1976

1977

1978 Blessed Lord! Thou hast this day again given us another of  
1979 Thy wondrous lessons to learn. We humbly ask Thee, O  
1980 give us to see aright the spiritual realities of which Thou  
1981 hast been speaking. There is the harvest which is so large,  
1982 and perishing, as it waits for sleepy disciples to give the  
1983 signal for labourers to come. Lord, teach us to look out  
1984 upon it with a heart moved with compassion and pity. There  
1985 are the labourers, so few. Lord, show us how terrible the sin  
1986 of the want of prayer and faith, of which this is the token.  
1987 And there is the Lord of the harvest, so able and ready to  
1988 send them forth. Lord, show us how He does indeed wait  
1989 for the prayer to which He has bound His answer. And there  
1990 are the disciples, to whom the commission to pray has been  
1991 given: Lord, show us how Thou canst pour down Thy Spirit  
1992 and breathe upon them, so that Thy compassion and the  
1993 faith in Thy promise shall rouse them to unceasing,  
1994 prevailing prayer.

1995

1996 O our Lord! we cannot understand how Thou canst entrust  
1997 such work and give such power to men so slothful and  
1998 unfaithful. We thank Thee for all whom Thou art teaching  
1999 to cry day and night for labourers to be sent forth. Lord,  
2000 breathe Thine own Spirit on all Thy children, that they may

2001 learn to live for this one thing alone—the Kingdom and  
2002 glory of their Lord—and become fully awake to the faith of  
2003 what their prayer can accomplish. And let all our hearts in  
2004 this, as in every petition, be filled with the assurance that  
2005 prayer, offered in loving faith in the living God, will bring  
2006 certain and abundant answer. Amen.

2007

2008

2009

2010 TENTH LESSON.

2011

2012 What wilt thou?’

2013

2014 Or, Prayer must be Definite.

2015

2016 And Jesus answered him, and said, What wilt thou that I  
2017 should do unto thee?’—Mark x. 51; Luke xviii. 41.

2018

2019 THE blind man had been crying out aloud, and that a great  
2020 deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.’ The cry had  
2021 reached the ear of the Lord; He knew what he wanted, and  
2022 was ready to grant it him. But ere He does it, He asks him:  
2023 What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?’ He wants to  
2024 hear from his own lips, not only the general petition for  
2025 mercy, but the distinct expression of what his desire was.  
2026 Until he speaks it out, he is not healed.

2027

2028 There is now still many a suppliant to whom the Lord puts  
2029 the same question, and who cannot, until it has been  
2030 answered, get the aid he ask. Our prayers must not be a  
2031 vague appeal to His mercy, an indefinite cry for blessing,  
2032 but the distinct expression of definite need. Not that His  
2033 loving heart does not understand our cry, or is not ready to  
2034 hear. But He desires it for our own sakes. Such definite

2035 prayer teaches us to know our own needs better. It demands  
2036 time, and thought, and self-scrutiny to find out what really  
2037 is our greatest need. It searches us and puts us to the test as  
2038 to whether our desires are honest and real, such as we are  
2039 ready to persevere in. It leads us to judge whether our  
2040 desires are according to God's Word, and whether we really  
2041 believe that we shall receive the things we ask. It helps us to  
2042 wait for the special answer, and to mark it when it comes.

2043

2044 And yet how much of our prayer is vague and pointless.  
2045 Some cry for mercy, but take not the trouble to know what  
2046 mercy must do for them. Others ask, perhaps, to be  
2047 delivered from sin, but do not begin by bringing any sin by  
2048 name from which the deliverance may be claimed. Still  
2049 others pray for God's blessing on those around them, for the  
2050 outpouring of God's Spirit on their land or the world, and  
2051 yet have no special field where they wait and expect to see  
2052 the answer. To all the Lord says: And what is it now you  
2053 really want and expect Me to do? Every Christian has but  
2054 limited powers, and as he must have his own special field of  
2055 labour in which he works, so with his prayers too. Each  
2056 believer has his own circle, his family, his friends, his  
2057 neighbours. If he were to take one or more of these by  
2058 name, he would find that this really brings him into the  
2059 training-school of faith, and leads to personal and pointed  
2060 dealing with his God. It is when in such distinct matters we  
2061 have in faith claimed and received answers, that our more  
2062 general prayers will be believing and effectual.

2063

2064 We all know with what surprise the whole civilised world  
2065 heard of the way in which trained troops were repulsed by  
2066 the Transvaal Boers at Majuba. And to what did they owe  
2067 their success? In the armies of Europe the soldier fires upon  
2068 the enemy standing in large masses, and never thinks of

2069 seeking an aim for every bullet. In hunting game the Boer  
2070 had learnt a different lesson: his practised eye knew to send  
2071 every bullet on its special message, to seek and find its man.  
2072 Such aiming must gain the day in the spiritual world too. As  
2073 long as in prayer we just pour out our hearts in a multitude  
2074 of petitions, without taking time to see whether every  
2075 petition is sent with the purpose and expectation of getting  
2076 an answer, not many will reach the mark. But if, as in  
2077 silence of soul we bow before the Lord, we were to ask such  
2078 questions as these: What is now really my desire? do I  
2079 desire it in faith, expecting to receive? am I now ready to  
2080 place and leave it in the Father's bosom? is it a settled thing  
2081 between God and me that I am to have the answer? we  
2082 should learn so to pray that God would see and we would  
2083 know what we really expect.

2084  
2085 It is for this, among other reasons, that the Lord warns us  
2086 against the vain repetitions of the Gentiles, who think to be  
2087 heard for their much praying. We often hear prayers of great  
2088 earnestness and fervour, in which a multitude of petitions  
2089 are poured forth, but to which the Saviour would  
2090 undoubtedly answer 'What wilt thou that I should do unto  
2091 thee?' If I am in a strange land, in the interests of the  
2092 business which my father owns, I would certainly write two  
2093 different sorts of letters. There will be family letters giving  
2094 expression to all the intercourse to which affection prompts;  
2095 and there will be business letters, containing orders for what  
2096 I need. And there may be letters in which both are found.  
2097 The answers will correspond to the letters. To each sentence  
2098 of the letters containing the family news I do not expect a  
2099 special answer. But for each order I send I am confident of  
2100 an answer whether the desired article has been forwarded.  
2101 In our dealings with God the business element must not be  
2102 wanting. With our expression of need and sin, of love and

2103 faith and consecration, there must be the pointed statement  
2104 of what we ask and expect to receive; it is in the answer that  
2105 the Father loves to give us the token of His approval and  
2106 acceptance.

2107

2108 But the word of the Master teaches us more. He does not  
2109 say, What dost thou wish? but, What does thou will? One  
2110 often wishes for a thing without willing it. I wish to have a  
2111 certain article, but I find the price too high; I resolve not to  
2112 take it; I wish, but do not will to have it. The sluggard  
2113 wishes to be rich, but does not will it. Many a one wishes to  
2114 be saved, but perishes because he does not will it. The will  
2115 rules the whole heart and life; if I really will to have  
2116 anything that is within my reach, I do not rest till I have it.  
2117 And so, when Jesus says to us, What wilt thou?' He asks  
2118 whether it is indeed our purpose to have what we ask at any  
2119 price, however great the sacrifice. Dost thou indeed so will  
2120 to have it that, though He delay it long, thou dost not hold  
2121 thy peace till He hear thee? Alas! how many prayers are  
2122 wishes, sent up for a short time and then forgotten, or sent  
2123 up year after year as matter of duty, while we rest content  
2124 with the prayer without the answer.

2125

2126 But, it may be asked, is it not best to make our wishes  
2127 known to God, and then to leave it to Him to decide what is  
2128 best, without seeking to assert our will? By no means. This  
2129 is the very essence of the prayer of faith, to which Jesus  
2130 sought to train His disciples, that it does not only make  
2131 known its desire and then leave the decision to God. That  
2132 would be the prayer of submission, for cases in which we  
2133 cannot know God's will. But the prayer of faith, finding  
2134 God's will in some promise of the Word, pleads for that till  
2135 it come. In Matthew (ix. 28) we read Jesus said to the blind  
2136 man: Believe ye that I can do this?' Here, in Mark, He says:

2137 What wilt thou that I should do?’ In both cases He said that  
2138 faith had saved them. And so He said to the Syrophenician  
2139 woman, too: Great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou  
2140 wilt.’ Faith is nothing but the purpose of the will resting on  
2141 God’s word, and saying: I must have it. To believe truly is  
2142 to will firmly.

2143

2144 But is not such a will at variance with our dependence on  
2145 God and our submission to Him? By no means; it is much  
2146 rather the true submission that honours God. It is only when  
2147 the child has yielded his own will in entire surrender to the  
2148 Father, that he receives from the Father liberty and power to  
2149 will what he would have. But, when once the believer has  
2150 accepted the will of God, as revealed through the Word and  
2151 Spirit, as his will, too, then it is the will of God that His  
2152 child should use this renewed will in His service. The will is  
2153 the highest power in the soul; grace wants above everything  
2154 to sanctify and restore this will, one of the chief traits of  
2155 God’s image, to full and free exercise. As a son, who only  
2156 lives for his father’s interests, who seeks not his own but his  
2157 father’s will is trusted by the father with his business, so  
2158 God speaks to His child in all truth, What wilt thou?’ It is  
2159 often spiritual sloth that, under the appearance of humility,  
2160 professes to have no will, because it fears the trouble of  
2161 searching out the will of God, or, when found, the struggle  
2162 of claiming it in faith. True humility is ever in company  
2163 with strong faith, which only seeks to know what is  
2164 according to the will of God, and then boldly claims the  
2165 fulfilment of the promise: Ye shall ask what ye will, and it  
2166 shall be done unto you.’

2167

2168 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

2169

2170



2171

2172 Lord Jesus! teach me to pray with all my heart and strength,  
2173 that there may be no doubt with Thee or with me as to what  
2174 I have asked. May I so know what I desire that, even as my  
2175 petitions are recorded in heaven, I can record them on earth  
2176 too, and note each answer as it comes. And may my faith in  
2177 what Thy Word has promised be so clear that the Spirit may  
2178 indeed work in me the liberty to will that it shall come.  
2179 Lord! renew, strengthen, sanctify wholly my will for the  
2180 work of effectual prayer.

2181

2182 Blessed Saviour! I do beseech Thee to reveal to me the  
2183 wonderful condescension Thou showest us, thus asking us  
2184 to say what we will that Thou shouldest do, and promising  
2185 to do whatever we will. Son of God! I cannot understand it;  
2186 I can only believe that Thou hast indeed redeemed us  
2187 wholly for Thyself, and dost seek to make the will, as our  
2188 noblest part, Thy most efficient servant. Lord! I do most  
2189 unreservedly yield my will to Thee, as the power through  
2190 which Thy Spirit is to rule my whole being. Let Him take  
2191 possession of it, lead it into the truth of Thy promises, and  
2192 make it so strong in prayer that I may ever hear Thy voice  
2193 saying: Great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.’  
2194 Amen.

2195

2196

2197

2198

2199 ELEVENTH LESSON.

2200

2201 Believe that ye have received;’

2202

2203 Or, The Faith that Takes.

2204

2205 Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and  
2206 ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall  
2207 have them.’—Mark xi. 24

2208

2209 WHAT a promise! so large, so Divine, that our little hearts  
2210 cannot take it in, and in every possible way seek to limit it  
2211 to what we think safe or probable; instead of allowing it, in  
2212 its quickening power and energy, just as He gave it, to enter  
2213 in, and to enlarge our hearts to the measure of what His love  
2214 and power are really ready to do for us. Faith is very far  
2215 from being a mere conviction of the truth of God’s word, or  
2216 a conclusion drawn from certain premises. It is the ear  
2217 which has heard God say what He will do, the eye which  
2218 has seen Him doing it, and, therefore, where there is true  
2219 faith, it is impossible but the answer must come. If we only  
2220 see to it that we do the one thing that He asks of us as we  
2221 pray: BELIEVE that ye have received; He will see to it that  
2222 He does the thing He has promised: Ye shall have them.’  
2223 The key-note of Solomon’s prayer (2 Chron. vi. 4), Blessed  
2224 be the Lord God of Israel, who hath with His hands fulfilled  
2225 that which He spake with His mouth to my father David,’ is  
2226 the key-note of all true prayer: the joyful adoration of a God  
2227 whose hand always secures the fulfilment of what His  
2228 mouth hath spoken. Let us in this spirit listen to the promise  
2229 Jesus gives; each part of it has its Divine message.

2230

2231 All things whatsoever.’ At this first word our human  
2232 wisdom at once begins to doubt and ask: This surely cannot  
2233 be literally true? But if it be not, why did the Master speak  
2234 it, using the very strongest expression He could find: All  
2235 things whatsoever.’ And it is not as if this were the only  
2236 time He spoke thus; is it not He who also said, If thou canst  
2237 believe, ALL THINGS are possible to him that believeth;’  
2238 If ye have faith, NOTHING shall be impossible to you.’

2239 Faith is so wholly the work of God's Spirit through His  
2240 word in the prepared heart of the believing disciple, that it is  
2241 impossible that the fulfilment should not come; faith is the  
2242 pledge and forerunner of the coming answer. Yes, ALL  
2243 THINGS WHATSOEVER ye shall ask in prayer believing,  
2244 ye receive.' The tendency of human reason is to interpose  
2245 here, and with certain qualifying clauses, if expedient,' if  
2246 according to God's will,' to break the force of a statement  
2247 which appears dangerous. O let us beware of dealing thus  
2248 with the Master's words. His promise is most literally true.  
2249 He wants His oft repeated ALL THINGS' to enter into our  
2250 hearts, and reveal to us how mighty the power of faith is,  
2251 how truly the Head calls the members to share with Him in  
2252 His power, how wholly our Father places His power at the  
2253 disposal of the child that wholly trusts Him. In this all  
2254 things' faith is to have its food and strength: as we weaken  
2255 it we weaken faith. The WHATSOEVER is unconditional:  
2256 the only condition is what is implied in the believing. Ere  
2257 we can believe we must find out and know what God's will  
2258 is' believing is the exercise of a soul surrendered and given  
2259 up to the influence of the Word and the Spirit; but when  
2260 once we do believe nothing shall be impossible. God forbid  
2261 that we should try and bring down His ALL THINGS to the  
2262 level of what we think possible. Let us now simply take  
2263 Christ's WHATSOEVER' as the measure and the hope of  
2264 our faith: it is a seed-word which, if taken just as He gives  
2265 it, and kept in the heart, will unfold itself and strike root, fill  
2266 our life with its fulness, and bring forth fruit abundantly.

2267  
2268 All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for.' It is in prayer  
2269 that these all things' are to be brought to God, to be asked  
2270 and received of Him. The faith that receives them is the  
2271 fruit of the prayer. In one aspect there must be faith before  
2272 there can be prayer; in another the faith is the outcome and

2273 the growth of prayer. It is in the personal presence of the  
2274 Saviour, in intercourse with Him, that faith rises to grasp  
2275 what at first appeared too high. It is in prayer that we hold  
2276 up our desire to the light of God's Holy Will, that our  
2277 motives are tested, and proof given whether we ask indeed  
2278 in the name of Jesus, and only for the glory of God. It is in  
2279 prayer that we wait for the leading of the Spirit to show us  
2280 whether we are asking the right thing and in the right spirit.  
2281 It is in prayer that we become conscious of our want of  
2282 faith, that we are led on to say to the Father that we do  
2283 believe, and that we prove the reality of our faith by the  
2284 confidence with which we persevere. It is in prayer that  
2285 Jesus teaches and inspires faith. He that waits to pray, or  
2286 loses heart in prayer, because he does not yet feel the faith  
2287 needed to get the answer, will never learn to believe. He  
2288 who begins to pray and ask will find the Spirit of faith is  
2289 given nowhere so surely as at the foot of the Throne.

2290

2291 Believe that ye have received.' It is clear that what we are to  
2292 believe is, that we receive the very things we ask. The  
2293 Saviour does not hint that because the Father knows what is  
2294 best He may give us something else. The very mountain  
2295 faith bids depart is cast into the sea. There is a prayer in  
2296 which, in everything, we make known our requests with  
2297 prayer and supplication, and the reward is the sweet peace  
2298 of God keeping heart and mind. This is the prayer of trust. It  
2299 has reference to things of which we cannot find out if God  
2300 is going to give them. As children we make known our  
2301 desires in the countless things of daily life, and leave it to  
2302 the Father to give or not as He thinks best. But the prayer of  
2303 faith of which Jesus speaks is something different,  
2304 something higher. When, whether in the greater interests of  
2305 the Master's work, or in the lesser concerns of our daily life,  
2306 the soul is led to see how there is nothing that so honours

2307 the Father as the faith that is assured that He will do what  
2308 He has said in giving us whatsoever we ask for, and takes  
2309 its stand on the promise as brought home by the Spirit, it  
2310 may know most certainly that it does receive exactly what it  
2311 asks. Just see how clearly the Lord sets this before us in  
2312 verse 23: Whosoever shall not doubt in his heart, but shall  
2313 believe that what he saith cometh to pass, he shall have it.’  
2314 This is the blessing of the prayer of faith of which Jesus  
2315 speaks.

2316

2317 Believe that ye have received.’ This is the word of central  
2318 importance, of which the meaning is too often  
2319 misunderstood. Believe that you have received! now, while  
2320 praying, the thing you ask for. It may only be later that you  
2321 shall have it in personal experience, that you shall see what  
2322 you believe; but now, without seeing, you are to believe that  
2323 it has been given you of the Father in heaven. The receiving  
2324 or accepting of an answer to prayer is just like the receiving  
2325 or accepting of Jesus or of pardon, a spiritual thing, an act  
2326 of faith apart from all feeling. When I come as a supplicant  
2327 for pardon, I believe that Jesus in heaven is for me, and so I  
2328 receive or take Him. When I come as a supplicant for any  
2329 special gift, which is according to God’s word, I believe  
2330 that what I ask is given me: I believe that I have it, I hold it  
2331 in faith; I thank God that it is mine. If we know that He  
2332 heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the  
2333 petitions which we have asked of Him.’

2334

2335 And ye shall have them.’ That is, the gift which we first  
2336 hold in faith as bestowed upon us in heaven will also  
2337 become ours in personal experience. But will it be needful  
2338 to pray longer if once we know we have been heard and  
2339 have received what we asked? There are cases in which  
2340 such prayer will not be needful, in which the blessing is

2341 ready to break through at once, if we but hold fast our  
2342 confidence, and prove our faith by praising for what we  
2343 have received, in the face of our not yet having it in  
2344 experience. There are other cases in which the faith that has  
2345 received needs to be still further tried and strengthened in  
2346 persevering prayer. God only knows when everything in  
2347 and around us is fully ripe for the manifestation of the  
2348 blessing that has been given to faith. Elijah knew for certain  
2349 that rain would come; God had promised it; and yet he had  
2350 to pray the seven times. And that prayer was no show or  
2351 play; an intense spiritual reality in the heart of him who lay  
2352 pleading there, and in the heaven above where it had its  
2353 effectual work to do. It is through faith and patience we  
2354 inherit the promises.' Faith says most confidently, I have  
2355 received it. Patience perseveres in prayer until the gift  
2356 bestowed in heaven is seen on earth. Believe that ye have  
2357 received, and ye shall have.' Between the have received in  
2358 heaven, and the shall have of earth, believe: believing praise  
2359 and prayer is the link.

2360

2361 And now, remember one thing more: It is Jesus who said  
2362 this. As we see heaven thus opened to us, and the Father on  
2363 the Throne offering to give us whatsoever we ask in faith,  
2364 our hearts feel full of shame that we have so little availed  
2365 ourselves of our privilege, and full of fear lest our feeble  
2366 faith still fail to grasp what is so clearly placed within our  
2367 reach. There is one thing must make us strong and full of  
2368 hope: it is Jesus who has brought us this message from the  
2369 Father. He Himself, when He was on earth, lived the life of  
2370 faith and prayer. It was when the disciples expressed their  
2371 surprise at what He had done to the fig-tree, that He told  
2372 them that the very same life He led could be theirs; that they  
2373 could not only command the fig-tree, but the very mountain,  
2374 and it must obey. And He is our life: all He was on earth He

2375 is in us now; all He teaches He really gives. He is Himself  
2376 the Author and the Perfecter of our faith: He gives the spirit  
2377 of faith; let us not be afraid that such faith is not meant for  
2378 us. It is meant for every child of the Father; it is within  
2379 reach of each one who will but be childlike, yielding  
2380 himself to the Father's Will and Love, trusting the Father's  
2381 Word and Power. Dear fellow-Christian! let the thought that  
2382 this word comes through Jesus, the Son, our Brother, give  
2383 us courage, and let our answer be: Yea, Blessed Lord, we  
2384 do believe Thy Word, we do believe that we receive.

2385

2386 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

2387

2388

2389

2390 Blessed Lord! Thou didst come from the Father to show us  
2391 all His love, and all the treasures of blessing that love is  
2392 waiting to bestow. Lord! Thou hast this day again flung the  
2393 gates so wide open, and given us such promises as to our  
2394 liberty in prayer, that we must blush that our poor hearts  
2395 have so little taken it in. It has been too large for us to  
2396 believe.

2397

2398 Lord! we now look up to Thee to teach us to take and keep  
2399 and use this precious word of Thine: All things whatsoever  
2400 ye ask, believe that ye have received.' Blessed Jesus! it is  
2401 Thy self in whom our faith must be rooted if it is to grow  
2402 strong. Thy work has freed us wholly from the power of sin,  
2403 and opened the way to the Father; Thy Love is ever longing  
2404 to bring us into the full fellowship of Thy glory and power;  
2405 Thy Spirit is ever drawing us upward into a life of perfect  
2406 faith and confidence; we are assured that in Thy teaching  
2407 we shall learn to pray the prayer of faith. Thou wilt train us  
2408 to pray so that we believe that we receive, to believe that we

2409 really have what we ask. Lord! teach me so to know and  
2410 trust and love Thee, so to live and abide in Thee, that all my  
2411 prayers rise up and come before God in Thee, and that my  
2412 soul may have in Thee the assurance that I am heard. Amen.  
2413  
2414  
2415

2416 TWELFTH LESSON.

2417  
2418 Have faith in God;’  
2419

2420 Or, The Secret of Believing Prayer.  
2421

2422 Jesus, answering, said unto them, Have faith in God. Verily  
2423 I say unto you, Whosoever shall not doubt in his heart, but  
2424 shall believe that what He saith cometh to pass; he shall  
2425 have it. Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye  
2426 pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye  
2427 shall have them.’—Mark xi. 22-24.  
2428

2429 THE promise of answer to prayer which formed our  
2430 yesterday’s lesson is one of the most wonderful in all  
2431 Scripture. In how many hearts it has raised the question:  
2432 How ever can I attain the faith that knows that it receives all  
2433 it asks?  
2434

2435 It is this question our Lord would answer today. Ere He  
2436 gave that wonderful promise to His disciples, He spoke  
2437 another word, in which He points out where the faith in the  
2438 answer to prayer takes its rise, and ever finds its strength.  
2439 HAVE FAITH IN GOD: this word precedes the other, Have  
2440 faith in the promise of an answer to prayer. The power to  
2441 believe a promise depends entirely, but only, on faith in the  
2442 promiser. Trust in the person begets trust in his word. It is



2443 only where we live and associate with God in personal,  
2444 loving intercourse, where GOD HIMSELF is all to us,  
2445 where our whole being is continually opened up and  
2446 exposed to the mighty influences that are at work where His  
2447 Holy Presence is revealed, that the capacity will be  
2448 developed for believing that He gives whatsoever we ask.

2449

2450 This connection between faith in God and faith in His  
2451 promise will become clear to us if we think what faith really  
2452 is. It is often compared to the hand or the mouth, by which  
2453 we take and appropriate what is offered to us. But it is of  
2454 importance that we should understand that faith is also the  
2455 ear by which I hear what is promised, the eye by which I  
2456 see what is offered me. On this the power to take depends. I  
2457 must hear the person who gives me the promise: the very  
2458 tone of his voice gives me courage to believe. I must see  
2459 him: in the light of his eye and countenance all fear as to my  
2460 right to take passes away. The value of the promise depends  
2461 on the promiser: it is on my knowledge of what the  
2462 promiser is that faith in the promise depends.

2463

2464 It is for this reason that Jesus, ere He gives that wonderful  
2465 prayer-promise, first says, HAVE FAITH IN GOD.' That is,  
2466 let thine eye be open to the Living God, and gaze on Him,  
2467 seeing Him who is Invisible. It is through the eye that I  
2468 yield myself to the influence of what is before me; I just  
2469 allow it to enter, to exert its influence, to leave its  
2470 impression upon my mind. So believing God is just looking  
2471 to God and what He is, allowing Him to reveal His  
2472 presence, giving Him time and yielding the whole being to  
2473 take in the full impression of what He is as God, the soul  
2474 opened up to receive and rejoice in the overshadowing of  
2475 His love. Yes, faith is the eye to which God shows what He  
2476 is and does: through faith the light of His presence and the

2477 workings of His mighty power stream into the soul. As that  
2478 which I see lives in me, so by faith God lives in me too.

2479

2480 And even so faith is also the ear through which the voice of  
2481 God is always heard and intercourse with Him kept up. It is  
2482 through the Holy Spirit the Father speaks to us; the Son is  
2483 the Word, the substance of what God says; the Spirit is the  
2484 living voice. This the child of God needs to lead and guide  
2485 him; the secret voice from heaven must teach him, as it  
2486 taught Jesus, what to say and what to do. An ear opened  
2487 towards God, that is, a believing heart waiting on Him, to  
2488 hear what He says, will hear Him speak. The words of God  
2489 will not only be the words of a Book, but, proceeding from  
2490 the mouth of God, they will be spirit and truth, life and  
2491 power. They will bring in deed and living experience what  
2492 are otherwise only thoughts. Through this opened ear the  
2493 soul tarries under the influence of the life and power of God  
2494 Himself. As the words I hear enter the mind and dwell and  
2495 work there, so through faith God enters the heart, and  
2496 dwells and works there.

2497

2498 When faith now is in full exercise as eye and ear, as the  
2499 faculty of the soul by which we see and hear God, then it  
2500 will be able to exercise its full power as hand and mouth, by  
2501 which we appropriate God and His blessing. The power of  
2502 reception will depend entirely on the power of spiritual  
2503 perception. For this reason Jesus said, ere He gave the  
2504 promise that God would answer believing prayer: HAVE  
2505 FAITH IN GOD.' Faith is simply surrender: I yield myself  
2506 to the impression the tidings I hear make on me. By faith I  
2507 yield myself to the living God. His glory and love fill my  
2508 heart, and have the mastery over my life. Faith is  
2509 fellowship; I give myself up to the influence of the friend  
2510 who makes me a promise, and become linked to him by it.

2511 And it is when we enter into this living fellowship with God  
2512 Himself, in a faith that always sees and hears Him, that it  
2513 becomes easy and natural to believe His promise as to  
2514 prayer. Faith in the promise is the fruit of faith in the  
2515 promiser: the prayer of faith is rooted in the life of faith.  
2516 And in this way the faith that prays effectually is indeed a  
2517 gift of God. Not as something that He bestows or infuses at  
2518 once, but in a far deeper and truer sense, as the blessed  
2519 disposition or habit of soul which is wrought and grows up  
2520 in us in a life of intercourse with Him. Surely for one who  
2521 knows his Father well, and lives in constant close  
2522 intercourse with Him, it is a simple thing to believe the  
2523 promise that He will do the will of His child who lives in  
2524 union with Himself.

2525

2526 It is because very many of God's children do not understand  
2527 this connection between the life of faith and the prayer of  
2528 faith that their experience of the power of prayer is so  
2529 limited. When they desire earnestly to obtain an answer  
2530 from God, they fix their whole heart upon the promise, and  
2531 try their utmost to grasp that promise in faith. When they do  
2532 not succeed, they are ready to give up hope; the promise is  
2533 true, but it is beyond their power to take hold of it in faith.  
2534 Listen to the lesson Jesus teaches us this day: HAVE  
2535 FAITH IN GOD, the Living God: let faith look to God  
2536 more than the thing promised: it is His love, His power, His  
2537 living presence will waken and work the faith. A physician  
2538 would say to one asking for some means to get more  
2539 strength in his arms and hands to seize and hold, that his  
2540 whole constitution must be built up and strengthened. So  
2541 the cure of a feeble faith is alone to be found in the  
2542 invigoration of our whole spiritual life by intercourse with  
2543 God. Learn to believe in God, to take hold of God, to let  
2544 God take possession of thy life, and it will be easy to take

2545 hold of the promise. He that knows and trusts God finds it  
2546 easy to trust the promise too.

2547

2548 Just note how distinctly this comes out in the saints of old.  
2549 Every special exhibition of the power of faith was the fruit  
2550 of a special revelation of God. See it in Abraham: And the  
2551 word of the Lord came unto Abram, saying, Fear not,  
2552 Abram; I am thy shield. And He brought him forth abroad,  
2553 and said . . . AND HE BELIEVED THE LORD.’ And later  
2554 again: The Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, I am  
2555 God Almighty. And Abram fell on his face, and God talked  
2556 with him, saying, As for me, behold my covenant is with  
2557 thee.’ It was the revelation of God Himself that gave the  
2558 promise its living power to enter the heart and work the  
2559 faith. Because they knew God, these men of faith could not  
2560 do anything but trust His promise. God’s promise will be to  
2561 us what God Himself is. It is the man who walks before the  
2562 Lord, and falls upon his face to listen while the living God  
2563 speaks to him, who will really receive the promise. Though  
2564 we have God’s promises in the Bible, with full liberty to  
2565 take them, the spiritual power is wanting, except as God  
2566 Himself speaks them to us. And He speaks to those who  
2567 walk and live with Him. Therefore, HAVE FAITH IN  
2568 GOD: let faith be all eye and ear, the surrender to let God  
2569 make His full impression, and reveal Himself fully in the  
2570 soul. Count it one of the chief blessings of prayer to  
2571 exercise faith in God, as the Living Mighty God who waits  
2572 to fulfil in us all the good pleasure of His will, and the work  
2573 of faith with power. See in Him the God of Love, whose  
2574 delight it is to bless and impart Himself. In such worship of  
2575 faith in God the power will speedily come to believe the  
2576 promise too: ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER YE ASK,  
2577 BELIEVE THAT YE RECEIVE.’ Yes, see that thou dost in  
2578 faith make God thine own; the promise will be thine too.

2579

2580 Precious lessons that Jesus has to teach us this day. We seek  
2581 God's gifts: God wants to give us HIMSELF first. We think  
2582 of prayer as the power to draw down good gifts from  
2583 heaven; Jesus as the means to draw ourselves up to God.  
2584 We want to stand at the door and cry; Jesus would have us  
2585 first enter in and realize that we are friends and children. Let  
2586 us accept the teaching. Let every experience of the littleness  
2587 of our faith in prayer urge us first to have and exercise more  
2588 faith in the living God, and in such faith to yield ourselves  
2589 to Him. A heart full of God has power for the prayer of  
2590 faith. Faith in God begets faith in the promise, in the  
2591 promise too of an answer to prayer.

2592

2593 Therefore, child of God, take time, take time, to bow before  
2594 Him, to wait on Him to reveal Himself. Take time, and let  
2595 thy soul in holy awe and worship exercise and express its  
2596 faith in the Infinite One, and as He imparts Himself and  
2597 takes possession of thee, the prayer of faith will crown thy  
2598 faith in God.

2599

2600 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY. ?

2601

2602

2603

2604 O my God! I do believe in Thee. I believe in Thee as the  
2605 Father, Infinite in Thy Love and Power. And as the Son, my  
2606 Redeemer and my Life. And as the Holy Spirit, Comforter  
2607 and Guide and Strength. Three-One God, I have faith in  
2608 Thee. I know and am sure that all that Thou art Thou art to  
2609 me, that all Thou hast promised Thou wilt perform.

2610

2611 Lord Jesus! increase this faith. Teach me to take time, and  
2612 wait and worship in the Holy Presence until my faith takes

2613 in all there is in my God for me. Let it see Him as the  
2614 Fountain of all Life, working with Almighty Strength to  
2615 accomplish His will on the world and in me. Let it see Him  
2616 in His love longing to meet and fulfil my desires. Let it so  
2617 take possession of my heart and life that through faith God  
2618 alone may dwell there. Lord Jesus, help me! with my whole  
2619 heart would I believe in God. Let faith in God each moment  
2620 fill me.

2621  
2622 O my Blessed Saviour! how can Thy Church glorify Thee,  
2623 how can it fulfil that work of intercession through which  
2624 Thy kingdom must come, unless our whole life be FAITH  
2625 IN GOD. Blessed Lord! speak Thy Word, HAVE FAITH  
2626 IN GOD,' unto the depths of our souls.

2627

2628

2629

2630 THIRTEENTH LESSON.

2631

2632 Prayer and fasting;'

2633

2634 Or, The Cure of Unbelief.

2635

2636 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could  
2637 not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of  
2638 your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a  
2639 grain of mustard seed, nothing shall be impossible to you.

2640 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and

2641 fasting'—Matt. xvii. 19-21.

2642

2643 WHEN the disciples saw Jesus cast the evil spirit out of the  
2644 epileptic whom they could not cure,' they asked the Master  
2645 for the cause of their failure. He had given them power and  
2646 authority over all devils, and to cure all diseases.' They had

2647 often exercised that power, and joyfully told how the devils  
2648 were subject to them. And yet now, while He was on the  
2649 Mount, they had utterly failed. That there had been nothing  
2650 in the will of God or in the nature of the case to render  
2651 deliverance impossible, had been proved: at Christ's  
2652 bidding the evil spirit had gone out. From their expression,  
2653 Why could we not?' it is evident that they had wished and  
2654 sought to do so; they had probably used the Master's name,  
2655 and called upon the evil spirit to go out. Their efforts had  
2656 been vain, and in presence of the multitude, they had been  
2657 put to shame. Why could we not?'

2658  
2659 Christ's answer was direct and plain: Because of your  
2660 unbelief.' The cause of His success and their failure, was  
2661 not owing to His having a special power to which they had  
2662 no access. No; the reason was not far to seek. He had so  
2663 often taught them that there is one power, that of faith, to  
2664 which, in the kingdom of darkness, as in the kingdom of  
2665 God, everything must bow; in the spiritual world failure has  
2666 but one cause, the want of faith. Faith is the one condition  
2667 on which all Divine power can enter into man and work  
2668 through him. It is the susceptibility of the unseen: man's  
2669 will yielded up to, and moulded by, the will of God. The  
2670 power they had received to cast out devils, they did not hold  
2671 in themselves as a permanent gift or possession; the power  
2672 was in Christ, to be received, and held, and used by faith  
2673 alone, living faith in Himself. Had they been full of faith in  
2674 Him as Lord and Conqueror in the spirit-world, had they  
2675 been full of faith in Him as having given them authority to  
2676 cast out in His name, this faith would have given them the  
2677 victory. Because of your unbelief' was, for all time, the  
2678 Master's explanation and reproof of impotence and failure  
2679 in His Church.

2680

2681 But such want of faith must have a cause too. Well might  
2682 the disciples have asked: And why could we not believe?  
2683 Our faith has cast out devils before this: why have we now  
2684 failed in believing? The Master proceeds to tell them ere  
2685 they ask: This kind goeth not out but by fasting and prayer.’  
2686 As faith is the simplest, so it is the highest exercise of the  
2687 spiritual life, where our spirit yields itself in perfect  
2688 receptivity to God’s Spirit and so is strengthened to its  
2689 highest activity. This faith depends entirely upon the state  
2690 of the spiritual life; only when this is strong and in full  
2691 health, when the Spirit of God has full sway in our life, is  
2692 there the power of faith to do its mighty deeds. And  
2693 therefore Jesus adds: Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by  
2694 fasting and prayer.’ The faith that can overcome such  
2695 stubborn resistance as you have just seen in this evil spirit,  
2696 Jesus tells them, is not possible except to men living in very  
2697 close fellowship with God, and in very special separation  
2698 from the world—in prayer and fasting. And so He teaches  
2699 us two lessons in regard to prayer of deep importance. The  
2700 one, that faith needs a life of prayer in which to grow and  
2701 keep strong. The other, that prayer needs fasting for its full  
2702 and perfect development.

2703

2704 Faith needs a life of prayer for its full growth. In all the  
2705 different parts of the spiritual life, there is such close union,  
2706 such unceasing action and re-action, that each may be both  
2707 cause and effect. Thus it is with faith. There can be no true  
2708 prayer without faith; some measure of faith must precede  
2709 prayer. And yet prayer is also the way to more faith; there  
2710 can be no higher degrees of faith except through much  
2711 prayer. This is the lesson Jesus teaches here. There is  
2712 nothing needs so much to grow as our faith. Your faith  
2713 groweth exceedingly,’ is said of one Church. When Jesus  
2714 spoke the words, According to your faith be it unto you,’ He



2715 announced the law of the kingdom, which tells us that all  
2716 have not equal degrees of faith, that the same person has not  
2717 always the same degree, and that the measure of faith must  
2718 always determine the measure of power and of blessing. If  
2719 we want to know where and how our faith is to grow, the  
2720 Master points us to the throne of God. It is in prayer, in the  
2721 exercise of the faith I have, in fellowship with the living  
2722 God, that faith can increase. Faith can only live by feeding  
2723 on what is Divine, on God Himself.

2724

2725 It is in the adoring worship of God, the waiting on Him and  
2726 for Him, the deep silence of soul that yields itself for God to  
2727 reveal Himself, that the capacity for knowing and trusting  
2728 God will be developed. It is as we take His word from the  
2729 Blessed Book, and bring it to Himself, asking him to speak  
2730 it to us with His living loving voice, that the power will  
2731 come fully to believe and receive the word as God's own  
2732 word to us. It is in prayer, in living contact with God in  
2733 living faith, that faith, the power to trust God, and in that  
2734 trust, to accept everything He says, to accept every  
2735 possibility He has offered to our faith will become strong in  
2736 us. Many Christians cannot understand what is meant by the  
2737 much prayer they sometimes hear spoken of: they can form  
2738 no conception, nor do they feel the need, of spending hours  
2739 with God. But what the Master says, the experience of His  
2740 people has confirmed: men of strong faith are men of much  
2741 prayer.

2742

2743 This just brings us back again to the lesson we learned when  
2744 Jesus, before telling us to believe that we receive what we  
2745 ask, first said, 'Have faith in God.' It is God, the living God,  
2746 into whom our faith must strike its roots deep and broad;  
2747 then it will be strong to remove mountains and cast out  
2748 devils. If ye have faith, nothing shall be impossible to you.'

2749 Oh! if we do but give ourselves up to the work God has for  
2750 us in the world, coming into contact with the mountains and  
2751 the devils there are to be cast away and cast out, we should  
2752 soon comprehend the need there is of much faith, and of  
2753 much prayer, as the soil in which alone faith can be  
2754 cultivated. Christ Jesus is our life, the life of our faith too. It  
2755 is His life in us that makes us strong, and makes us simple  
2756 to believe. It is in the dying to self which much prayer  
2757 implies, in closer union to Jesus, that the spirit of faith will  
2758 come in power. Faith needs prayer for its full growth.

2759  
2760 And prayer needs fasting for its full growth: this is the  
2761 second lesson. Prayer is the one hand with which we grasp  
2762 the invisible; fasting, the other, with which we let loose and  
2763 cast away the visible. In nothing is man more closely  
2764 connected with the world of sense than in his need of food,  
2765 and his enjoyment of it. It was the fruit, good for food, with  
2766 which man was tempted and fell in Paradise. It was with  
2767 bread to be made of stones that Jesus, when an hungered,  
2768 was tempted in the wilderness, and in fasting that He  
2769 triumphed. The body has been redeemed to be a temple of  
2770 the Holy Spirit; it is in body as well as spirit, it is very  
2771 specially, Scripture says, in eating and drinking, we are to  
2772 glorify God. It is to be feared that there are many Christians  
2773 to whom this eating to the glory of God has not yet become  
2774 a spiritual reality. And the first thought suggested by Jesus'  
2775 words in regard to fasting and prayer, is, that it is only in a  
2776 life of moderation and temperance and self-denial that there  
2777 will be the heart or the strength to pray much.

2778  
2779 But then there is also its more literal meaning. Sorrow and  
2780 anxiety cannot eat: joy celebrates its feasts with eating and  
2781 drinking. There may come times of intense desire, when it  
2782 is strongly felt how the body, with its appetites, lawful

2783 though they be, still hinder the spirit in its battle with the  
2784 powers of darkness, and the need is felt of keeping it under.  
2785 We are creatures of the senses: our mind is helped by what  
2786 comes to us embodied in concrete form; fasting helps to  
2787 express, to deepen, and to confirm the resolution that we are  
2788 ready to sacrifice anything, to sacrifice ourselves, to attain  
2789 what we seek for the kingdom of God. And He who  
2790 accepted the fasting and sacrifice of the Son, knows to value  
2791 and accept and reward with spiritual power the soul that is  
2792 thus ready to give up all for Christ and His kingdom.

2793  
2794 And then follows a still wider application. Prayer is the  
2795 reaching out after God and the unseen; fasting, the letting  
2796 go of all that is of the seen and temporal. While ordinary  
2797 Christians imagine that all that is not positively forbidden  
2798 and sinful is lawful to them, and seek to retain as much as  
2799 possible of this world, with its property, its literature, its  
2800 enjoyments, the truly consecrated soul is as the soldier who  
2801 carries only what he needs for the warfare. Laying aside  
2802 every weight, as well as the easily besetting sin, afraid of  
2803 entangling himself with the affairs of this life, he seeks to  
2804 lead a Nazarite life, as one specially set apart for the Lord  
2805 and His service. Without such voluntary separation, even  
2806 from what is lawful, no one will attain power in prayer: this  
2807 kind goeth not out but by fasting and prayer.

2808  
2809 Disciples of Jesus! who have asked the Master to teach you  
2810 to pray, come now and accept His lessons. He tells you that  
2811 prayer is the path to faith, strong faith, that can cast out  
2812 devils. He tells you: 'If ye have faith, nothing shall be  
2813 impossible to you;' let this glorious promise encourage you  
2814 to pray much. Is the prize not worth the price? Shall we not  
2815 give up all to follow Jesus in the path He opens to us here;  
2816 shall we not, if need be, fast? Shall we not do anything that

2817 neither the body nor the world around hinder us in our great  
2818 life-work,—having intercourse with our God in prayer, that  
2819 we may become men of faith, whom He can use in His  
2820 work of saving the world.

2821

2822 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY. ’

2823

2824

2825

2826 O Lord Jesus! how continually Thou hast to reprove us for  
2827 our unbelief! How strange it must appear to Thee, this  
2828 terrible incapacity of trusting our Father and His promises.  
2829 Lord! let Thy reproof, with its searching, Because of your  
2830 unbelief, ’ sink into the very depths of our hearts, and reveal  
2831 to us how much of the sin and suffering around us is our  
2832 blame. And then teach us, Blessed Lord, that there is a place  
2833 where faith can be learned and gained,—even in the prayer  
2834 and fasting that brings into living and abiding fellowship  
2835 with Thyself and the Father.

2836

2837 O Saviour! Thou Thyself art the Author and the Perfecter of  
2838 our faith; teach us what it is to let Thee live in us by Thy  
2839 Holy Spirit. Lord! our efforts and prayers for grace to  
2840 believe have been so unavailing. We know why it was: we  
2841 sought for strength in ourselves to be given from Thee.  
2842 Holy Jesus! do at length teach us the mystery of Thy life in  
2843 us, and how Thou, by Thy Spirit, dost undertake to live in  
2844 us the life of faith, to see to it that our faith shall not fail. O  
2845 let us see that our faith will just be a part of that wonderful  
2846 prayer-life which Thou givest in them who expect their  
2847 training for the ministry of intercession, not in word and  
2848 thought only, but in the Holy Unction Thou givest, the  
2849 inflowing of the Spirit of Thine own life. And teach us how,

2850 in fasting and prayer, we may grow up to the faith to which  
2851 nothing shall be impossible. Amen.

2852

2853 NOTE

2854

2855 At the time when Blumhardt was passing through his  
2856 terrible conflict with the evil spirits in those who were  
2857 possessed, and seeking to cast them out by prayer, he often  
2858 wondered what it was that hindered the answer. One day a  
2859 friend, to whom he had spoken of his trouble, directed his  
2860 attention to our Lord's words about fasting. Blumhardt  
2861 resolved to give himself to fasting, sometimes for more than  
2862 thirty hours. From reflection and experience he gained the  
2863 conviction that it is of more importance than is generally  
2864 thought. He says, Inasmuch as the fasting is before God, a  
2865 practical proof that the thing we ask is to us a matter of true  
2866 and pressing interest, and inasmuch as in a high degree it  
2867 strengthens the intensity and power of the prayer, and  
2868 becomes the unceasing practical expression of a prayer  
2869 without words, I could believe that it would not be without  
2870 efficacy, especially as the Master's words had reference to a  
2871 case like the present. I tried it, without telling any one, and  
2872 in truth the later conflict was extraordinarily lightened by it.  
2873 I could speak with much greater restfulness and decision. I  
2874 did not require to be so long present with the sick one; and I  
2875 felt that I could influence without being present.'

2876

2877

2878

2879 FOURTEENTH LESSON.

2880

2881 When ye stand praying, forgive;'

2882

2883 Or, Prayer and Love.

2884

2885 And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught  
2886 against any one; that your Father also which is in heaven  
2887 may forgive you your trespasses.’—Mark xi. 25.

2888

2889 THESE words follow immediately on the great prayer-  
2890 promise, All things whatsoever ye pray, believe that ye have  
2891 received them, and ye shall have them.’ We have already  
2892 seen how the words that preceded that promise, Have faith  
2893 in God,’ taught us that in prayer all depends upon our  
2894 relation to God being clear; these words that follow on it  
2895 remind us that our relation with fellow-men must be clear  
2896 too. Love to God and love to our neighbour are inseparable:  
2897 the prayer from a heart, that is either not right with God on  
2898 the one side, or with men on the other, cannot prevail. Faith  
2899 and love are essential to each other.

2900

2901 We find that this is a thought to which our Lord frequently  
2902 gave expression. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 23,  
2903 24), when speaking of the sixth commandment, He taught  
2904 His disciples how impossible acceptable worship to the  
2905 Father was if everything were not right with the brother: If  
2906 thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest  
2907 that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift  
2908 before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy  
2909 brother, and then come and offer thy gift.’ And so later,  
2910 when speaking of prayer to God, after having taught us to  
2911 pray, Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our  
2912 debtors,’ He added at the close of the prayer: If you forgive  
2913 not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive  
2914 your trespasses.’ At the close of the parable of the  
2915 unmerciful servant He applies His teaching in the words: So  
2916 shall also my Heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not  
2917 every one his brother from your hearts.’ And so here, beside

2918 the dried-up fig-tree, where He speaks of the wonderful  
2919 power of faith and the prayer of faith, He all at once,  
2920 apparently without connection, introduces the thought,  
2921 Whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught  
2922 against any one; that your Father also which is in heaven  
2923 may forgive you your trespasses.' It is as if the Lord had  
2924 learned during His life at Nazareth and afterwards that  
2925 disobedience to the law of love to men was the great sin  
2926 even of praying people, and the great cause of the  
2927 feebleness of their prayer. And it is as if He wanted to lead  
2928 us into His own blessed experience that nothing gives such  
2929 liberty of access and such power in believing as the  
2930 consciousness that we have given ourselves in love and  
2931 compassion, for those whom God loves.

2932

2933 The first lesson taught here is that of a forgiving disposition.  
2934 We pray, Forgive, even as we have forgiven.' Scripture  
2935 says, Forgive one another, even as God also in Christ  
2936 forgave you.' God's full and free forgiveness is to be the  
2937 rule of ours with men. Otherwise our reluctant, half-hearted  
2938 forgiveness, which is not forgiveness at all, will be God's  
2939 rule with us. Every prayer rests upon our faith in God's  
2940 pardoning grace. If God dealt with us after our sins, not one  
2941 prayer could be heard. Pardon opens the door to all God's  
2942 love and blessing: because God has pardoned all our sin,  
2943 our prayer can prevail to obtain all we need. The deep sure  
2944 ground of answer to prayer is God's forgiving love. When it  
2945 has taken possession of the heart, we pray in faith. But also,  
2946 when it has taken possession of the heart, we live in love.  
2947 God's forgiving disposition, revealed in His love to us,  
2948 becomes a disposition in us; as the power of His forgiving  
2949 love shed abroad and dwelling within us, we forgive even as  
2950 He forgives. If there be great and grievous injury or  
2951 injustice done us, we seek first of all to possess a Godlike

2952 disposition; to be kept from a sense of wounded honour,  
2953 from a desire to maintain our rights, or from rewarding the  
2954 offender as he has deserved. In the little annoyances of daily  
2955 life, we are watchful not to excuse the hasty temper, the  
2956 sharp word, the quick judgment, with the thought that we  
2957 mean no harm, that we do not keep the anger long, or that it  
2958 would be too much to expect from feeble human nature, that  
2959 we should really forgive the way God and Christ do. No, we  
2960 take the command literally, Even as Christ forgave, so also  
2961 do ye.' The blood that cleanses the conscience from dead  
2962 works, cleanses from selfishness too; the love it reveals is  
2963 pardoning love, that takes possession of us and flows  
2964 through us to others. Our forgiving love to men is the  
2965 evidence of the reality of God's forgiving love in us, and so  
2966 the condition of the prayer of faith.

2967

2968 There is a second, more general lesson: our daily life in the  
2969 world is made the test of our intercourse with God in  
2970 prayer. How often the Christian, when he comes to pray,  
2971 does his utmost to cultivate certain frames of mind which he  
2972 thinks will be pleasing. He does not understand, or forgets,  
2973 that life does not consist of so many loose pieces, of which  
2974 now the one, then the other, can be taken up. Life is a  
2975 whole, and the pious frame of the hour of prayer is judged  
2976 of by God from the ordinary frame of the daily life of which  
2977 the hour of prayer is but a small part. Not the feeling I call  
2978 up, but the tone of my life during the day, is God's criterion  
2979 of what I really am and desire. My drawing nigh to God is  
2980 of one piece with my intercourse with men and earth:  
2981 failure here will cause failure there. And that not only when  
2982 there is the distinct consciousness of anything wrong  
2983 between my neighbour and myself; but the ordinary current  
2984 of my thinking and judging, the unloving thoughts and  
2985 words I allow to pass unnoticed, can hinder my prayer. The



2986 effectual prayer of faith comes out from a life given up to  
2987 the will and the love of God. Not according to what I try to  
2988 be when praying, but what I am when not praying, is my  
2989 prayer dealt with by God.

2990

2991 We may gather these thoughts into a third lesson: In our life  
2992 with men the one thing on which everything depends is  
2993 love. The spirit of forgiveness is the spirit of love. Because  
2994 God is love, He forgives: it is only when we are dwelling in  
2995 love that we can forgive as God forgives. In love to the  
2996 brethren we have the evidence of love to the Father, the  
2997 ground of confidence before God, and the assurance that our  
2998 prayer will be heard, (1 John iv. 20, iii. 18-21, 23.). Let us  
2999 love in deed and truth; hereby shall we assure our heart  
3000 before Him. If our heart condemn us not, we have boldness  
3001 toward God, and whatever we ask, we receive of Him.’  
3002 Neither faith nor work will profit if we have not love; it is  
3003 love that unites with God, it is love that proves the reality of  
3004 faith. As essential as in the word that precedes the great  
3005 prayer-promise in Mark xi. 24, ‘Have faith in God,’ is this  
3006 one that follows it, ‘Have love to men.’ The right relations to  
3007 the living God above me, and the living men around me, are  
3008 the conditions of effectual prayer.

3009

3010 This love is of special consequence when we labour for  
3011 such and pray for them. We sometimes give ourselves to  
3012 work for Christ, from zeal for His cause, as we call it, or for  
3013 our own spiritual health, without giving ourselves in  
3014 personal self-sacrificing love for those whose souls we seek.  
3015 No wonder that our faith is feeble and does not conquer. To  
3016 look on each wretched one, however unloveable he be, in  
3017 the light of the tender love of Jesus the Shepherd seeking  
3018 the lost; to see Jesus Christ in him, and to take him up, for  
3019 Jesus’ sake, in a heart that really loves, —this, this is the

3020 secret of believing prayer and successful effort. Jesus, in  
3021 speaking of forgiveness, speaks of love as its root. Just as in  
3022 the Sermon on the Mount He connected His teaching and  
3023 promises about prayer with the call to be merciful, as the  
3024 Father in heaven is merciful (Matt. v. 7, 9, 22, 38-48), so we  
3025 see it here: a loving life is the condition of believing prayer.

3026

3027 It has been said: There is nothing so heart-searching as  
3028 believing prayer, or even the honest effort to pray in faith. O  
3029 let us not turn the edge of that self-examination by the  
3030 thought that God does not hear our prayer for reasons  
3031 known to Himself alone. By no means. Ye ask and receive  
3032 not, because ye ask amiss.' Let that word of God search us.  
3033 Let us ask whether our prayer be indeed the expression of a  
3034 life wholly given over to the will of God and the love of  
3035 man. Love is the only soil in which faith can strike its roots  
3036 and thrive. As it throws its arms up, and opens its heart  
3037 heavenward, the Father always looks to see if it has them  
3038 opened towards the evil and the unworthy too. In that love,  
3039 not indeed the love of perfect attainment, but the love of  
3040 fixed purpose and sincere obedience, faith can alone obtain  
3041 the blessing. It is he who gives himself to let the love of  
3042 God dwell in him, and in the practice of daily life to love as  
3043 God loves, who will have the power to believe in the Love  
3044 that hears his every prayer. It is the Lamb, who is in the  
3045 midst of the throne: it is suffering and forbearing love that  
3046 prevails with God in prayer. The merciful shall obtain  
3047 mercy; the meek shall inherit the earth.

3048

3049 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

3050

3051

3052

3053 Blessed Father! Thou art Love, and only he that abideth in  
3054 love abideth in Thee and in fellowship with Thee. The  
3055 Blessed Son hath this day again taught me how deeply true  
3056 this is of my fellowship with Thee in prayer. O my God! let  
3057 Thy love, shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Spirit, be in  
3058 me a fountain of love to all around me, that out of a life in  
3059 love may spring the power of believing prayer. O my  
3060 Father! grant by the Holy Spirit that this may be my  
3061 experience, that a life in love to all around me is the gate to  
3062 a life in the love of my God. And give me especially to find  
3063 in the joy with which I forgive day by day whoever might  
3064 offend me, the proof that Thy forgiveness to me is a power  
3065 and a life.

3066  
3067 Lord Jesus! my Blessed Teacher! teach Thou me to forgive  
3068 and to love. Let the power of Thy blood make the pardon of  
3069 my sins such a reality, that forgiveness, as shown by Thee  
3070 to me, and by me to others, may be the very joy of heaven.  
3071 Show me whatever in my intercourse with fellowmen might  
3072 hinder my fellowship with God, so that my daily life in my  
3073 own home and in society may be the school in which  
3074 strength and confidence are gathered for the prayer of faith.  
3075 Amen.

3076

3077

3078

3079 FIFTEENTH LESSON.

3080

3081 If two agree;'

3082

3083 Or, The Power of United Prayer

3084

3085 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on  
3086 earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be

3087 done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where  
3088 two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I  
3089 in the midst of them.—Matt. xviii. 19, 20.

3090

3091 ONE of the first lessons of our Lord in His school of prayer  
3092 was: Not to be seen of men. Enter thy inner chamber; be  
3093 alone with the Father. When He has thus taught us that the  
3094 meaning of prayer is personal individual contact with God,  
3095 He comes with a second lesson: You have need not only of  
3096 secret solitary, but also of public united prayer. And He  
3097 gives us a very special promise for the united prayer of two  
3098 or three who agree in what they ask. As a tree has its root  
3099 hidden in the ground and its stem growing up into the  
3100 sunlight, so prayer needs equally for its full development  
3101 the hidden secrecy in which the soul meets God alone, and  
3102 the public fellowship with those who find in the name of  
3103 Jesus their common meeting-place.

3104

3105 The reason why this must be so is plain. The bond that  
3106 unites a man to his fellow-men is no less real and close than  
3107 that which unites him to God: he is one with them. Grace  
3108 renews not alone our relation to God but to man too. We not  
3109 only learn to say My Father,' but Our Father.' Nothing  
3110 would be more unnatural than that the children of a family  
3111 should always meet their father separately, but never in the  
3112 united expression of their desires or their love. Believers are  
3113 not only members of one family, but even of one body. Just  
3114 as each member of the body depends on the other, and the  
3115 full action of the spirit dwelling in the body depends on the  
3116 union and co-operation of all, so Christians cannot reach the  
3117 full blessing God is ready to bestow through His Spirit, but  
3118 as they seek and receive it in fellowship with each other. It  
3119 is in the union and fellowship of believers that the Spirit can  
3120 manifest His full power. It was to the hundred and twenty

3121 continuing in one place together, and praying with one  
3122 accord, that the Spirit came from the throne of the glorified  
3123 Lord.

3124  
3125 The marks of true united prayer are given us in these words  
3126 of our Lord. The first is agreement as to the thing asked.  
3127 There must not only be generally the consent to agree with  
3128 anything another may ask: there must be some special thing,  
3129 matter of distinct united desire; the agreement must be, as  
3130 all prayer, in spirit and in truth. In such agreement it will  
3131 become very clear to us what exactly we are asking,  
3132 whether we may confidently ask according to God's will,  
3133 and whether we are ready to believe that we have received  
3134 what we ask.

3135  
3136 The second mark is the gathering in, or into, the Name of  
3137 Jesus. We shall afterwards have much more to learn of the  
3138 need and the power of the Name of Jesus in prayer; here our  
3139 Lord teaches us that the Name must be the centre of union  
3140 to which believers gather, the bond of union that makes  
3141 them one, just as a home contains and unites all who are in  
3142 it. The Name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous  
3143 runneth into it and escape.' That Name is such a reality to  
3144 those who understand and believe it, that to meet within it is  
3145 to have Himself present. The love and unity of His disciples  
3146 have to Jesus infinite attraction: Where two or three are  
3147 gathered in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.' It is  
3148 the living presence of Jesus, in the fellowship of His loving  
3149 praying disciples, that gives united prayer its power.

3150  
3151 The third mark is, the sure answer: It shall be done for them  
3152 of my Father.' A prayer-meeting for maintaining religious  
3153 fellowship, or seeking our own edification, may have its  
3154 use; this was not the Saviour's view in its appointment. He

3155 meant it as a means of securing special answer to prayer. A  
3156 prayer meeting without recognised answer to prayer ought  
3157 to be an anomaly. When any of us have distinct desires in  
3158 regard to which we feel too weak to exercise the needful  
3159 faith, we ought to seek strength in the help of other. In the  
3160 unity of faith and of love and of the Spirit, the power of the  
3161 Name and the Presence of Jesus acts more freely and the  
3162 answer comes more surely. The mark that there has been  
3163 true united prayer is the fruit, the answer, the receiving of  
3164 the thing we have asked: I say unto you, It shall be done for  
3165 them of my Father which is in heaven.’

3166

3167 What an unspeakable privilege this of united prayer is, and  
3168 what a power it might be. If the believing husband and wife  
3169 knew that they were joined together in the Name of Jesus to  
3170 experience His presence and power in united prayer (1  
3171 Peter); if friends believed what mighty help two or three  
3172 praying in concert could give each other; if in every prayer  
3173 meeting the coming together in the Name, the faith in the  
3174 Presence, and the expectation of the answer, stood in the  
3175 foreground; if in every Church united effectual prayer were  
3176 regarded as one of the chief purposes for which they are  
3177 banded together, the highest exercise of their power as a  
3178 Church; if in the Church universal the coming of the  
3179 kingdom, the coming of the King Himself, first in the  
3180 mighty outpouring of His Holy Spirit, then in His own  
3181 glorious person, were really matter of unceasing united  
3182 crying to God;—O who can say what blessing might come  
3183 to, and through, those who thus agreed to prove God in the  
3184 fulfilment of His promise.

3185

3186 In the Apostle Paul we see very distinctly what a reality his  
3187 faith in the power of united prayer was. To the Romans he  
3188 writes (xv. 30): I beseech you, brethren, by the love of the

3189 Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayer to God  
3190 for me.' He expects in answer to be delivered from his  
3191 enemies, and to be prospered in his work. To the  
3192 Corinthians (2 Cor. i. 11), God will still deliver us, ye also  
3193 helping together on our behalf by your supplications;' their  
3194 prayer is to have a real share in his deliverance. To the  
3195 Ephesians he writes: With all prayer and supplication  
3196 praying at all seasons in the Spirit for all the saints and on  
3197 my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me.' His power  
3198 and success in his ministry he makes to depend on their  
3199 prayers. With the Philippians (i. 19) he expects that his  
3200 trials will turn to his salvation and the progress of the gospel  
3201 through your supplications and the supply of the spirit of  
3202 Jesus Christ.; To the Colossians (iv. 3) he adds to the  
3203 injunction to continue steadfast in prayer: Withal praying for  
3204 us too, that God may open unto us a door for the word.'  
3205 And to the Thessalonians (2 Thess. iii. 1) he writes: Finally,  
3206 brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and  
3207 be glorified, and that we may be delivered from  
3208 unreasonable men.' It is everywhere evident that Paul felt  
3209 himself the member of a body, on the sympathy and co-  
3210 operation of which he was dependent, and that he counted  
3211 on the prayers of these Churches to gain for him, what  
3212 otherwise might not be given. The prayers of the Church  
3213 were to him as real a factor in the work of the kingdom, as  
3214 the power of God.

3215

3216 Who can say what power a Church could develop and  
3217 exercise, if it gave itself to the work of prayer day and night  
3218 for the coming of the kingdom, for God's power on His  
3219 servants and His word, for the glorifying of God in the  
3220 salvation of souls? Most Churches think their members are  
3221 gathered into one simply to take care of and build up each  
3222 other. They know not that God rules the world by the

3223 prayers of His saints; that prayer is the power by which  
3224 Satan is conquered; that by prayer the Church on earth has  
3225 disposal of the powers of the heavenly world. They do not  
3226 remember that Jesus has, by His promise, consecrated every  
3227 assembly in His Name to be a gate of heaven, where His  
3228 Presence is to be felt, and His Power experienced in the  
3229 Father fulfilling their desires.

3230

3231 We cannot sufficiently thank God for the blessed week of  
3232 united prayer, with which Christendom in our days opens  
3233 every year. As proof of our unity and our faith in the power  
3234 of united prayer, as a training-school for the enlargement of  
3235 our hearts to take in all the needs of the Church universal, as  
3236 a help to united persevering prayer, it is of unspeakable  
3237 value. But very specially as a stimulus to continued union in  
3238 prayer in the smaller circles, its blessing has been great.  
3239 And it will become even greater, as God's people recognise  
3240 what it is, all to meet as one in the Name of Jesus to have  
3241 His presence in the midst of a body all united in the Holy  
3242 Spirit, and boldly to claim the promise that it shall be done  
3243 of the Father what they agree to ask.

3244

3245 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY'

3246

3247

3248

3249 Blessed Lord! who didst in Thy high-priestly prayer ask so  
3250 earnestly for the unity of Thy people, teach us how Thou  
3251 dost invite and urge us to this unity by Thy precious  
3252 promise given to united prayer. It is when we are one in  
3253 love and desire that our faith has Thy presence and the  
3254 Father's answer.

3255



3256 O Father! we pray for Thy people, and for every smaller  
3257 circle of those who meet together, that they may be one.  
3258 Remove, we pray, all selfishness and self-interest, all  
3259 narrowness of heart and estrangement, by which that unity  
3260 is hindered. Cast out the spirit of the world and the flesh,  
3261 through which Thy promise loses all its power. O let the  
3262 thought of Thy presence and the Father's favour draw us all  
3263 nearer to each other.

3264  
3265 Grant especially Blessed Lord, that Thy Church may  
3266 believe that it is by the power of united prayer that she can  
3267 bind and loose in heaven; that Satan can be cast out; that  
3268 souls can be saved; that mountains can be removed; that the  
3269 kingdom can be hastened. And grant, good Lord! that in the  
3270 circle with which I pray, the prayer of the Church may  
3271 indeed be the power through which Thy Name and Word  
3272 are glorified. Amen.

3273

3274

3275

3276

3277 SIXTEENTH LESSON.

3278

3279 Speedily, though bearing long;'

3280

3281 Or, The Power of Persevering Prayer.

3282

3283 And He spake a parable unto them to the end that they  
3284 ought always to pray, and not to faint. . . . And the Lord  
3285 said, Hear what the unrighteous judge saith. And shall not  
3286 God avenge His own elect, which cry to Him day and night,  
3287 and He is long-suffering over them? I say unto you, that He  
3288 will avenge them speedily.'—Luke xviii. 108.

3289

3290 OF all the mysteries of the prayer world, the need of  
3291 persevering prayer is one of the greatest. That the Lord,  
3292 who is so loving and longing to bless, should have to be  
3293 supplicated time after time, sometimes year after year,  
3294 before the answer comes, we cannot easily understand. It is  
3295 also one of the greatest practical difficulties in the exercise  
3296 of believing prayer. When, after persevering supplication,  
3297 our prayer remains unanswered, it is often easiest for our  
3298 slothful flesh, and it has all the appearance of pious  
3299 submission, to think that we must now cease praying,  
3300 because God may have His secret reason for withholding  
3301 His answer to our request.

3302

3303 It is by faith alone that the difficulty is overcome. When  
3304 once faith has taken its stand upon God's word, and the  
3305 Name of Jesus, and has yielded itself to the leading of the  
3306 Spirit to seek God's will and honour alone in its prayer, it  
3307 need not be discouraged by delay. It knows from Scripture  
3308 that the power of believing prayer is simply irresistible; real  
3309 faith can never be disappointed. It knows how, just as water,  
3310 to exercise the irresistible power it can have, must be  
3311 gathered up and accumulated, until the stream can come  
3312 down in full force, there must often be a heaping up of  
3313 prayer, until God sees that the measure is full, and the  
3314 answer comes. It knows how, just as the ploughman has to  
3315 take his ten thousand steps, and sow his ten thousand seeds,  
3316 each one a part of the preparation for the final harvest, so  
3317 there is a need-be for oft-repeated persevering prayer, all  
3318 working out some desired blessing. It knows for certain that  
3319 not a single believing prayer can fail of its effect in heaven,  
3320 but has its influence, and is treasured up to work out an  
3321 answer in due time to him who persevereth to the end. It  
3322 knows that it has to do not with human thoughts or  
3323 possibilities, but with the word of the living God. And so

3324 even as Abraham through so many years in hope believed  
3325 against hope,' and then through faith and patience inherited  
3326 the promise,' it counts that the long-suffering of the Lord is  
3327 salvation, waiting and hasting unto the coming of its Lord to  
3328 fulfil His promise.

3329

3330 To enable us, when the answer to our prayer does not come  
3331 at once, to combine quiet patience and joyful confidence in  
3332 our persevering prayer, we must specially try to understand  
3333 the two words in which our Lord sets forth the character and  
3334 conduct, not of the unjust judge, but of our God and Father  
3335 towards those whom He allows to cry day and night to Him:  
3336 He is long-suffering over them; He will avenge them  
3337 speedily.'

3338

3339 He will avenge them speedily, the Master says. The blessing  
3340 is all prepared; He is not only willing but most anxious to  
3341 give them what they ask; everlasting love burns with the  
3342 longing desire to reveal itself fully to its beloved, and to  
3343 satisfy their needs. God will not delay one moment longer  
3344 than is absolutely necessary; He will do all in His power to  
3345 hasten and speed the answer.

3346

3347 But why, if this be true and His power be infinite, does it  
3348 often last so long with the answer to prayer? And why must  
3349 God's own elect so often, in the midst of suffering and  
3350 conflict, cry day and night? He is long-suffering over them.'  
3351 Behold! the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of  
3352 the earth, being long-suffering over it, till it receive the  
3353 early and the latter rain.' The husbandman does indeed long  
3354 for his harvest, but knows that it must have its full time of  
3355 sunshine and rain, and has long patience. A child so often  
3356 wants to pick the half-ripe fruit; the husbandman knows to  
3357 wait till the proper time. Man, in his spiritual nature too, is

3358 under the law of gradual growth that reigns in all created  
3359 life. It is only in the path of development that he can reach  
3360 his divine destiny. And it is the Father, in whose hands are  
3361 the times and seasons, who alone knows the moment when  
3362 the soul or the Church is ripened to that fulness of faith in  
3363 which it can really take and keep the blessing. As a father  
3364 who longs to have his only child home from school, and yet  
3365 waits patiently till the time of training is completed, so it is  
3366 with God and His children: He is the long-suffering One,  
3367 and answers speedily.

3368

3369 The insight into this truth leads the believer to cultivate the  
3370 corresponding dispositions: patience and faith, waiting and  
3371 hasting, are the secret of his perseverance. By faith in the  
3372 promise of God, we know that we have the petitions we  
3373 have asked of Him. Faith takes and holds the answer in the  
3374 promise, as an unseen spiritual possession, rejoices in it,  
3375 and praises for it. But there is a difference between the faith  
3376 that thus holds the word and knows that it has the answer,  
3377 and the clearer, fuller, riper faith that obtains the promise as  
3378 a present experience. It is in persevering, not unbelieving,  
3379 but confident and praising prayer, that the soul grows up  
3380 into that full union with its Lord in which it can enter upon  
3381 the possession of the blessing in Him. There may be in  
3382 these around us, there may be in that great system of being  
3383 of which we are part, there may be in God's government,  
3384 things that have to be put right through our prayer, ere the  
3385 answer can fully come: the faith that has, according to the  
3386 command, believed that it has received, can allow God to  
3387 take His time: it knows it has prevailed and must prevail. In  
3388 quiet, persistent, and determined perseverance it continues  
3389 in prayer and thanksgiving until the blessing come. And so  
3390 we see combined what at first sight appears so  
3391 contradictory; the faith that rejoices in the answer of the

3392 unseen God as a present possession, with the patience that  
3393 cries day and night until it be revealed. The speedily of  
3394 God's long-suffering is met by the triumphant but patient  
3395 faith of His waiting child.

3396

3397 Our great danger in this school of the answer delayed, is the  
3398 temptation to think that, after all, it may not be God's will  
3399 to give us what we ask. If our prayer be according to God's  
3400 word, and under the leading of the Spirit, let us not give  
3401 way to these fears. Let us learn to give God time. God needs  
3402 time with us. If we only give Him time, that is, time in the  
3403 daily fellowship with Himself, for Him to exercise the full  
3404 influence of His presence on us, and time, day by day, in the  
3405 course of our being kept waiting, for faith to prove its  
3406 reality and to fill our whole being, He Himself will lead us  
3407 from faith to vision; we shall see the glory of God. Let no  
3408 delay shake our faith. Of faith it holds good: first the blade,  
3409 then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. Each believing  
3410 prayer brings a step nearer the final victory. Each believing  
3411 prayer helps to ripen the fruit and bring us nearer to it; it  
3412 fills up the measure of prayer and faith known to God alone;  
3413 it conquers the hindrances in the unseen world; it hastens  
3414 the end. Child of God! give the Father time. He is long-  
3415 suffering over you. He wants the blessing to be rich, and  
3416 full, and sure; give Him time, while you cry day and night.  
3417 Only remember the word: I say unto you, He will avenge  
3418 them speedily.'

3419

3420 The blessing of such persevering prayer is unspeakable.  
3421 There is nothing so heart-searching as the prayer of faith. It  
3422 teaches you to discover and confess, and give up everything  
3423 that hinders the coming of the blessing; everything there  
3424 may be not in accordance with the Father's will. It leads to  
3425 closer fellowship with Him who alone can teach to pray, to

3426 a more entire surrender to draw nigh under no covering but  
3427 that of the blood, and the Spirit. It calls to a closer and more  
3428 simple abiding in Christ alone. Christian! give God time. He  
3429 will perfect that which concerneth you. Long-suffering—  
3430 speedily,’ this is God’s watchword as you enter the gates of  
3431 prayer: be it yours too.

3432

3433 Let it be thus whether you pray for yourself, or for others.  
3434 All labour, bodily or mental, needs time and effort: we must  
3435 give up ourselves to it. Nature discovers her secrets and  
3436 yields her treasures only to diligent and thoughtful labour.  
3437 However little we can understand it, in the spiritual  
3438 husbandry it is the same: the seed we sow in the soil of  
3439 heaven, the efforts we put forth, and the influence we seek  
3440 to exert in the world above, need our whole being: we must  
3441 give ourselves to prayer. But let us hold fast the great  
3442 confidence, that in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

3443

3444 And let us specially learn the lesson as we pray for the  
3445 Church of Christ. She is indeed as the poor widow, in the  
3446 absence of her Lord, apparently at the mercy of her  
3447 adversary, helpless to obtain redress. Let us, when we pray  
3448 for His Church or any portion of it, under the power of the  
3449 world, asking Him to visit her with the mighty workings of  
3450 His Spirit and to prepare her for His coming, let us pray in  
3451 the assured faith: prayer does help, praying always and not  
3452 fainting will bring the answer. Only give God time. And  
3453 then keep crying day and night. Hear what the unrighteous  
3454 judge saith. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which  
3455 cry to Him day and night, and He is long-suffering over  
3456 them. I say unto you, He will avenge them speedily.’

3457

3458 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

3459

3460

3461

3462 O Lord my God! teach me now to know Thy way, and in  
3463 faith to apprehend what Thy Beloved Son has taught: He  
3464 will avenge them speedily.' Let Thy tender love, and the  
3465 delight Thou hast in hearing and blessing Thy children, lead  
3466 me implicitly to accept Thy promise, that we receive what  
3467 we believe, that we have the petitions we ask, and that the  
3468 answer will in due time be seen. Lord! we understand the  
3469 seasons in nature, and know to wait with patience for the  
3470 fruit we long for—O fill us with the assurance that not one  
3471 moment longer than is needed wilt Thou delay, and that  
3472 faith will hasten the answer.

3473

3474 Blessed Master! Thou hast said that it is a sign of God's  
3475 elect that they cry day and night. O teach us to understand  
3476 this. Thou knowest how speedily we grow faint and weary.  
3477 It is as if the Divine Majesty is so much beyond the need or  
3478 the reach of continued supplication, that it does not become  
3479 us to be too importunate. O Lord! do teach me how real the  
3480 labour of prayer is. I know how here on earth, when I have  
3481 failed in an undertaking, I can often succeed by renewed  
3482 and more continuing effort, by giving more time and  
3483 thought: show me how, by giving myself more entirely to  
3484 prayer, to live in prayer, I shall obtain what I ask. And  
3485 above all, O my blessed Teacher! Author and perfecter of  
3486 faith, let by Thy grace my whole life be one of faith in the  
3487 Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me—in  
3488 whom my prayer gains acceptance, in whom I have the  
3489 assurance of the answer, in whom the answer will be mine.  
3490 Lord Jesus! in this faith I will pray always and not faint.  
3491 Amen.

3492

3493 NOTE

3494

3495 The need of persevering importunate prayer appears to  
3496 some to be at variance with the faith which knows that it  
3497 has received what it asks (Mark xi. 24). One of the  
3498 mysteries of the Divine life is the harmony between the  
3499 gradual and the sudden, immediate full possession, and  
3500 slow imperfect appropriation. And so here persevering  
3501 prayer appears to be the school in which the soul is  
3502 strengthened for the boldness of faith. And with the  
3503 diversity of operations of the Spirit there may be some in  
3504 whom faith takes more the form of persistent waiting; while  
3505 to others, triumphant thanksgiving appears the only proper  
3506 expressions of the assurance of having been heard.

3507

3508 In a remarkable way the need of persevering prayer, and the  
3509 gradual rising into greater ease in obtaining answer, is  
3510 illustrated in the life of Blumhardt. Complaints had been  
3511 lodged against him of neglecting his work as a minister of  
3512 the gospel, and devoting himself to the healing of the sick;  
3513 and especially his unauthorized healing of the sick  
3514 belonging to other congregations. In his defense he writes: I  
3515 simply ventured to do what becomes one who has the  
3516 charge of souls, and to pray according to the command of  
3517 the Lord in James i. 6, 7. In no way did I trust to my own  
3518 power, or imagine that I had any gift that others had not.  
3519 But this is true, I set myself to the work as a minister of the  
3520 gospel, who has a right to pray. But I speedily discovered  
3521 that the gates of heaven were not fully opened to me. Often  
3522 I was inclined to retire in despair. But the sight of the sick  
3523 ones, who could find help nowhere, gave me no rest. I  
3524 thought of the word of the Lord: "Ask, and it shall be given  
3525 you" (Luke xi. 9, 10). And farther, I thought that if the  
3526 Church and her ministers had, through unbelief, sloth, and  
3527 disobedience lost what was needed for overcoming of the



3528 power of Satan, it was just for such times of leanness and  
3529 famine that the Lord had spoken the parable of the friend at  
3530 midnight and his three loaves. I felt that I was not worthy  
3531 thus at midnight, in a time of great darkness, to appear  
3532 before God as His friend and ask for a member of my  
3533 congregation what he needed. And yet, to leave him  
3534 uncared for, I could not either. And so I kept knocking, as  
3535 the parable directs, or, as some have said, with great  
3536 presumption and tempting God. Be this as it may, I could  
3537 not leave my guest unprovided. At this time the parable of  
3538 the widow became very precious to me. I saw that the  
3539 Church was the widow, and I was a minister of the Church.  
3540 I had the right to be her mouthpiece against the adversary;  
3541 but for a long time the Lord would not. I asked nothing  
3542 more than the three loaves; what I needed for my guest. At  
3543 last the Lord listened to the importunate beggar, and helped  
3544 me. Was it wrong of me to pray thus? The two parables  
3545 must surely be applicable somewhere, and where was  
3546 greater need to be conceived?

3547

3548 And what was the fruit of my prayer? The friend who was  
3549 at first unwilling, did not say, Go now; I will myself give to  
3550 your friend what he needs; I do not require you; but gave it  
3551 to me as His friend, to give to my guest. And so I used the  
3552 three loaves, and had to spare. But the supply was small,  
3553 and new guests came; because they saw I had a heart to help  
3554 them, and that I would take the trouble even at midnight to  
3555 go to my friend. When I asked for them, too, I got the  
3556 needful again, and there was again to spare. How could I  
3557 help that the needy continually came to my house? Was I to  
3558 harden myself, and say, Why do you come to me? there are  
3559 large and better homes in the city, go there. Their answer  
3560 was, Dear sir, we cannot go there. We have been there: they  
3561 were very sorry to send us away so hungry, but they could

3562 not undertake to go and ask a friend for what we wanted.  
3563 Do go, and get us bread for we suffer great pain. What  
3564 could I do? They spoke the truth, and their suffering  
3565 touched my heart. However much labour it cost me, I went  
3566 each time again, and got the three loaves. Often I got what I  
3567 asked much quicker than at first, and also much more  
3568 abundantly. But all did not care for this bread, so some left  
3569 my home hungry.’<sup>^1</sup>

3570  
3571 In his first struggles with the evil spirits, it took him more  
3572 than eighteen months of prayer and labour before the final  
3573 victory was gained. Afterwards he had such ease of access  
3574 to the throne, and stood in such close communication with  
3575 the unseen world, that often, with letters came asking prayer  
3576 for sick people, he could, after just looking upward for a  
3577 single moment, obtain the answer as to whether they would  
3578 be healed.

3579  
3580 <sup>^1</sup>From Johann Christophe Blumhardt, Ein Lebenabild von  
3581 F. Etindel.

3582  
3583  
3584

3585 SEVENTEENTH LESSON.

3586  
3587  
3588

I know that Thou hearest me always;’

3589 Or Prayer in Harmony with the Being of God.

3590  
3591  
3592

Father, I thank Thee that Thou heardest me. And I knew  
that Thou hearest me always.’—John xi. 41, 42.

3593  
3594  
3595

Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of me,  
and I shall give Thee.’—Ps. ii. 7, 8.

3596

3597 IN the New Testament we find a distinction made between  
3598 faith and knowledge. To one is given, through the Spirit, the  
3599 word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge,  
3600 according to the same Spirit; to another faith, in the same  
3601 Spirit.’ In a child or a simple-minded Christian there may be  
3602 much faith with little knowledge. Childlike simplicity  
3603 accepts the truth without difficulty, and often cares little to  
3604 give itself or others any reason for its faith but this: God has  
3605 said. But it is the will of God that we should love and serve  
3606 Him, not only with all the heart but also with all the mind;  
3607 that we should grow up into an insight into the Divine  
3608 wisdom and beauty of all His ways and words and works. It  
3609 is only thus that the believer will be able fully to approach  
3610 and rightly to adore the glory of God’s grace; and only thus  
3611 that our heart can intelligently apprehend the treasures of  
3612 wisdom and knowledge there are in redemption, and be  
3613 prepared to enter fully into the highest note of the song that  
3614 rises before the throne: O the depth of the riches both of the  
3615 wisdom and knowledge of God!’

3616

3617 In our prayer life this truth has its full application. While  
3618 prayer and faith are so simple that the new-born convert can  
3619 pray with power, true Christian science finds in the doctrine  
3620 of prayer some of its deepest problems. In how far is the  
3621 power of prayer a reality? If so, how God can grant to  
3622 prayer such mighty power? How can the action of prayer be  
3623 harmonized with the will and the decrees of God? How can  
3624 God’s sovereignty and our will, God’s liberty and ours, be  
3625 reconciled?—these and other like questions are fit subjects  
3626 for Christian meditation and inquiry. The more earnestly  
3627 and reverently we approach such mysteries, the more shall  
3628 we in adoring wonder fall down to praise Him who hath in  
3629 prayer given such power to man.

3630

3631 One of the secret difficulties with regard to prayer,—one  
3632 which, though not expressed, does often really hinder  
3633 prayer,—is derived from the perfection of God, in His  
3634 absolute independence of all that is outside of Himself. Is  
3635 He not the Infinite Being, who owes what He is to Himself  
3636 alone, who determines Himself, and whose wise and holy  
3637 will has determined all that is to be? How can prayer  
3638 influence Him, or He be moved by prayer to do what  
3639 otherwise would not be done? Is not the promise of an  
3640 answer to prayer simply a condescension to our weakness?  
3641 Is what is said of the power—the much-availing power—of  
3642 prayer anything more than an accommodation to our mode  
3643 of thought, because the Deity never can be dependent on  
3644 any action from without for its doings? And is not the  
3645 blessing of prayer simply the influence it exercises upon  
3646 ourselves?

3647

3648 In seeking an answer to such questions, we find the key in  
3649 the very being of God, in the mystery of the Holy Trinity. If  
3650 God was only one Person, shut up within Himself, there  
3651 could be no thought of nearness to Him or influence on  
3652 Him. But in God there are three Persons. In God we have  
3653 Father and Son, who have in the Holy Spirit their living  
3654 bond of unity and fellowship. When eternal Love begat the  
3655 Son, and the Father gave the Son as the Second Person a  
3656 place next Himself as His Equal and His Counsellor, there  
3657 was a way opened for prayer and its influence in the very  
3658 inmost life of Deity itself. Just as on earth, so in heaven the  
3659 whole relation between Father and Son is that of giving and  
3660 taking. And if that taking is to be as voluntary and self-  
3661 determined as the giving, there must be on the part of the  
3662 Son an asking and receiving. In the holy fellowship of the  
3663 Divine Persons, this asking of the Son was one of the great

3664 operations of the Thrice Blessed Life of God. Hence we  
3665 have it in Psalm ii.: This day I have begotten Thee: ask of  
3666 me and I will give Thee.’ The Father gave the Son the place  
3667 and the power to act upon Him. The asking of the Son was  
3668 no mere show or shadow, but one of those life-movements  
3669 in which the love of the Father and the Son met and  
3670 completed each other. The Father had determined that He  
3671 should not be alone in His counsels: there was a Son on  
3672 whose asking and accepting their fulfilment should depend.  
3673 And so there was in the very Being and Life of God an  
3674 asking of which prayer on earth was to be the reflection and  
3675 the outflow. It was not without including this that Jesus  
3676 said, “I knew that Thou always hearest me.’ Just as the  
3677 Sonship of Jesus on earth may not be separated from His  
3678 Sonship in heaven, even so with His prayer on earth, it is  
3679 the continuation and the counterpart of His asking in  
3680 heaven. The prayer of the man Christ Jesus is the link  
3681 between the eternal asking of the only-begotten Son in the  
3682 bosom of the Father and the prayer of men upon earth.  
3683 Prayer has its rise and its deepest source in the very Being  
3684 of God. In the bosom of Deity nothing is ever done without  
3685 prayer—the asking of the Son and the giving of the  
3686 Father.^1

3687  
3688 This may help us somewhat to understand how the prayer of  
3689 man, coming through the Son, can have effect upon God.  
3690 The decrees of God are not decisions made by Him without  
3691 reference to the Son, or His petition, or the petition to be  
3692 sent up through Him. By no means. The Lord Jesus is the  
3693 first-begotten, the Head and Heir of all things: all things  
3694 were created through Him and unto Him, and all things  
3695 consist in Him. In the counsels of the Father, the Son, as  
3696 Representative of all creation, had always a voice; in the  
3697 decrees of the eternal purpose there was always room left

3698 for the liberty of the Son as Mediator and Intercessor, and  
3699 so for the petitions of all who draw nigh to the Father in the  
3700 Son.

3701  
3702 And if the thought come that this liberty and power of the  
3703 Son to act upon the Father is at variance with the  
3704 immutability of the Divine decrees, let us not forget that  
3705 there is not with God as with man, a past by which He is  
3706 irrevocably bound. God does not live in time with its past  
3707 and future; the distinctions of time have no reference to  
3708 Him who inhabits Eternity. And Eternity is an ever-present  
3709 Now, in which the past is never past, and the future always  
3710 present. To meet our human weakness, Scripture must  
3711 speak of past decrees, and a coming future. In reality, the  
3712 immutability of God's counsel is ever still in perfect  
3713 harmony with His liberty to do whatsoever He will. Not so  
3714 were the prayers of the Son and His people taken up into the  
3715 eternal decrees that their effect should only be an apparent  
3716 one; but so, that the Father-heart holds itself open and free  
3717 to listen to every prayer that rises through the Son, and that  
3718 God does indeed allow Himself to be decided by prayer to  
3719 do what He otherwise would not have done.

3720  
3721 This perfect harmony and union of Divine Sovereignty and  
3722 human liberty is to us an unfathomable mystery, because  
3723 God as THE ETERNAL ONE transcends all our thoughts.  
3724 But let it be our comfort and strength to be assured that in  
3725 the eternal fellowship of the Father and the Son, the power  
3726 of prayer has its origin and certainty, and that through our  
3727 union with the Son, our prayer is taken up and can have its  
3728 influence in the inner life of the Blessed Trinity. God's  
3729 decrees are no iron framework against which man's liberty  
3730 would vainly seek to struggle. No. God Himself is the  
3731 Living Love, who in His Son as man has entered into the

3732 tenderest relation with all that is human, who through the  
3733 Holy Spirit takes up all that is human into the Divine life of  
3734 love, and keeps Himself free to give every human prayer its  
3735 place in His government of the world.

3736  
3737 It is in the daybreak light of such thoughts that the doctrine  
3738 of the Blessed Trinity no longer is an abstract speculation,  
3739 but the living manifestation of the way in which it were  
3740 possible for man to be taken up into the fellowship of God,  
3741 and his prayer to become a real factor in God's rule of this  
3742 earth. And we can, as in the distance, catch glimpses of the  
3743 light that from the eternal world shines out on words such as  
3744 these: THROUGH HIM we have access BY ONE SPIRIT  
3745 unto THE FATHER.'

3746  
3747 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

3748  
3749  
3750

3751 Everlasting God! the Three-One and Thrice Holy! in deep  
3752 reverence would I with veiled face worship before the holy  
3753 mystery of Thy Divine Being. And if it please Thee, O most  
3754 glorious God, to unveil aught of that mystery, I would bow  
3755 with fear and trembling, lest I sin against Thee, as I  
3756 meditate on Thy glory.

3757

3758 Father! I thank Thee that Thou bearest this name not only as  
3759 the Father of Thy children here on earth, but as having from  
3760 eternity subsisted as the Father with Thine only-begotten  
3761 Son. I thank Thee that as Father Thou canst hear our prayer,  
3762 because Thou hast from eternity given a place in Thy  
3763 counsels to the asking of Thy Son. I thank Thee that we  
3764 have seen in Him on earth, what the blessed intercourse was  
3765 He had with Thee in heaven; and how from eternity in all

3766 Thy counsels and decrees there had been room left for His  
3767 prayer and their answers. And I thank Thee above all that  
3768 through His true human nature on Thy throne above, and  
3769 through Thy Holy Spirit in our human nature here below, a  
3770 way has been opened up by which every human cry of need  
3771 can be taken up into and touch the Life and the Love of  
3772 God, and receive in answer whatsoever it shall ask.

3773

3774 Blessed Jesus! in whom as the Son the path of prayer has  
3775 been opened up, and who givest us assurance of the answer,  
3776 we beseech Thee, teach Thy people to pray. O let this each  
3777 day be the sign of our sonship, that, like Thee, we know that  
3778 the Father heareth us always. Amen.

3779

3780 NOTE.

3781

3782 “God hears prayer.” This simplest view of prayer is taken  
3783 throughout Scripture. It dwells not on the reflex influence of  
3784 prayer on our heart and life, although it abundantly shows  
3785 the connection between prayer as an act, and prayer as a  
3786 state. It rather fixes with great definiteness the objective or  
3787 real purposes of prayer, to obtain blessing, gifts,  
3788 deliverances from God. Ask and it shall be given,” Jesus  
3789 says.

3790

3791 However true and valuable the reflection may be, that God,  
3792 foreseeing and foreordaining all things, has also foreseen  
3793 and foreordained our prayers as links in the chain of events,  
3794 of cause and effect, as a real power, yet we feel convinced  
3795 that this is not the light in which the mind can find peace in  
3796 this great subject, nor do we think that here is the attractive  
3797 power to draw us in prayer. We feel rather that such a  
3798 reflection diverts the attention from the Object whence  
3799 comes the impulse, life, and strength of prayer. The living



3800 God, cotemporary and not merely eternal,<sup>^1</sup> the living,  
3801 merciful, holy One, God manifesting Himself to the soul,  
3802 God saying, “Seek my face;” this is the magnet that draws  
3803 us, this alone can open heart and lips. . .

3804  
3805 In Jesus Christ the Son of God we have the full solution of  
3806 the difficulty. He prayed on earth, and that not merely as  
3807 man, but as the Son of God incarnate. His prayer on earth is  
3808 only the manifestation of His prayer from all eternity, when  
3809 in the Divine counsel He was set up as the Christ. . . . The  
3810 Son was appointed to be heir of all things. From all eternity  
3811 the Son of God was the Way, the Mediator. He was, to use  
3812 our imperfect language, from eternity speaking unto the  
3813 Father on behalf of the world.’—SAPHIR, *The Hidden*  
3814 *Life*, chap. vi. See also *The Lord’s Prayer*, p. 12.

3815  
3816 <sup>^1</sup>Should it not rather be cotemporary, because eternal, in  
3817 the proper meaning of this latter word?

3818

3819

3820

3821

3822 EIGHTEENTH LESSON

3823

3824 Whose is this image?’

3825

3826 Or, Prayer in Harmony with the Destiny of Man.

3827

3828 He saith unto them, Whose is this image and  
3829 superscription?—Matt. xxi. 20.

3830

3831 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our  
3832 likeness.’—Gen. i. 26.

3833

3834 WHOSE is this image?' It was by this question that Jesus  
3835 foiled His enemies, when they thought to take Him, and  
3836 settled the matter of duty in regard to the tribute. The  
3837 question and the principle it involves are of universal  
3838 application. Nowhere more truly than in man himself. The  
3839 image he bears decides his destiny. Bearing God's image,  
3840 he belongs to God: prayer to God is what he was created  
3841 for. Prayer is part of the wondrous likeness he bears to His  
3842 Divine original; of the deep mystery of the fellowship of  
3843 love in which the Three-One has His blessedness, prayer is  
3844 the earthly image and likeness.

3845

3846 The more we meditate on what prayer is, and the wonderful  
3847 power with God which it has, the more we feel constrained  
3848 to ask who and what man is, that such a place in God's  
3849 counsels should have been allotted to him. Sin has so  
3850 degraded him, that from what he is now we can form no  
3851 conception of what he was meant to be. We must turn back  
3852 to God's own record of man's creation to discover there  
3853 what God's purpose was, and what the capacities with  
3854 which man was endowed for the fulfilment of that purpose.

3855

3856 Man's destiny appears clearly from God's language at  
3857 creation. It was to fill, to subdue, to have dominion over the  
3858 earth and all in it. All the three expressions show us that  
3859 man was meant, as God's representative, to hold rule here  
3860 on earth. As God's viceroy he was to fill God's place:  
3861 himself subject to God, he was to keep all else in subjection  
3862 to Him. It was the will of God that all that was to be done  
3863 on earth should be done through him: the history of the  
3864 earth was to be entirely in his hands.

3865

3866 In accordance with such a destiny was the position he was  
3867 to occupy, and the power at his disposal. When an earthly

3868 sovereign sends a viceroy to a distant province, it is  
3869 understood that he advises as to the policy to be adopted,  
3870 and that that advice is acted on: that he is at liberty to apply  
3871 for troops and the other means needed for carrying out the  
3872 policy or maintaining the dignity of the empire. If his policy  
3873 be not approved of, he is recalled to make way for some one  
3874 who better understands his sovereign's desires' as long as  
3875 he is trusted, his advice is carried out. As God's  
3876 representative man was to have ruled; all was to have been  
3877 done under his will and rule; on his advice and at his  
3878 request heaven was to have bestowed its blessing on earth.  
3879 His prayer was to have been the wonderful, though simple  
3880 and most natural channel, in which the intercourse between  
3881 the King in heaven and His faithful servant man, as lord of  
3882 this world, was to have been maintained. The destinies of  
3883 the world were given into the power of the wishes, the will,  
3884 the prayer of man.

3885  
3886 With sin all this underwent a terrible change—man's fall  
3887 brought all creation under the curse. With redemption the  
3888 beginning was seen of a glorious restoration. No sooner had  
3889 God begun in Abraham to form for Himself a people from  
3890 whom kings, yea the Great King, should come forth, than  
3891 we see what power the prayer of God's faithful servant has  
3892 to decide the destinies of those who come into contact with  
3893 him. In Abraham we see how prayer is not only, or even  
3894 chiefly, the means of obtaining blessing for ourselves, but is  
3895 the exercise of his royal prerogative to influence the  
3896 destinies of men, and the will of God which rules them. We  
3897 do not once find Abraham praying for himself. His prayer  
3898 for Sodom and Lot, for Abimelech, for Ishmael, prove what  
3899 power a man, who is God's friend, has to make the history  
3900 of those around him.  
3901

3902 This had been man's destiny from the first. Scripture not  
3903 only tells us this, but also teaches us how it was that God  
3904 could entrust man with such a high calling. It was because  
3905 He had created him in His own image and likeness. The  
3906 external rule was not committed to him without the inner  
3907 fitness: the bearing God's image in having dominion, in  
3908 being lord of all, had its root in the inner likeness, in his  
3909 nature. There was an inner agreement and harmony between  
3910 God and man, and incipient Godlikeness, which gave man a  
3911 real fitness for being the mediator between God and His  
3912 world, for he was to be prophet, priest, and king, to interpret  
3913 God's will, to represent nature's needs, to receive and  
3914 dispense God's bounty. It was in bearing God's image that  
3915 he could bear God's rule; he was indeed so like God, so  
3916 capable of entering into God's purposes, and carrying out  
3917 His plans, that God could trust him with the wonderful  
3918 privilege of asking and obtaining what the world might  
3919 need. And although sin has for a time frustrated God's  
3920 plans, prayer still remains what it would have been if man  
3921 had never fallen: the proof of man's Godlikeness, the  
3922 vehicle of his intercourse with the Infinite Unseen One, the  
3923 power that is allowed to hold the hand that holds the  
3924 destinies of the universe. Prayer is not merely the cry of the  
3925 suppliant for mercy; it is the highest forth-putting of his will  
3926 by man, knowing himself to be of Divine origin, created for  
3927 and capable of being, in king-like liberty, the executor of  
3928 the counsels of the Eternal.

3929  
3930 What sin destroyed, grace has restored. What the first Adam  
3931 lost, the second has won back. In Christ man regains his  
3932 original position, and the Church, abiding in Christ, inherits  
3933 the promise: Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto  
3934 you.' Such a promise does by no means, in the first place,  
3935 refer to the grace or blessing we need for ourselves. It has

3936 reference to our position as the fruit-bearing branches of the  
3937 Heavenly Vine, who, like Him, only live for the work and  
3938 glory of the Father. It is for those who abide in Him, who  
3939 have forsaken self to take up their abode in Him with His  
3940 life of obedience and self-sacrifice, who have lost their life  
3941 and found it in Him, who are now entirely given up to the  
3942 interests of the Father and His kingdom. These are they who  
3943 understand how their new creation has brought them back to  
3944 their original destiny, has restored God's image and  
3945 likeness, and with it the power to have dominion. Such have  
3946 indeed the power, each in their own circle, to obtain and  
3947 dispense the powers of heaven here on earth. With holy  
3948 boldness they may make known what they will: they live as  
3949 priests in God's presence; as kings the powers of the world  
3950 to come begin to be at their disposal. [1] They enter upon  
3951 the fulfilment of the promise: Ask whatsoever ye will, it  
3952 shall be done unto you.'

3953  
3954 Church of the living God! thy calling is higher and holier  
3955 than thou knowest. Through thy members, as kings, and  
3956 priests unto God, would God rule the world; their prayers  
3957 bestow and withhold the blessing of heaven. In His elect  
3958 who are not just content to be themselves saved, but yield  
3959 themselves wholly, that through them, even as through the  
3960 Son, the Father may fulfil all His glorious counsel, in these  
3961 His elect, who cry day and night unto Him, God would  
3962 prove how wonderful man's original destiny was. As the  
3963 image-bearer of God on earth, the earth was indeed given  
3964 into his hand. When he fell, all fell with him: the whole  
3965 creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together. But now  
3966 he is redeemed; the restoration of the original dignity has  
3967 begun. It is in very deed God's purpose that the fulfilment  
3968 of His eternal purpose, and the coming of His kingdom,  
3969 should depend on those of His people who, abiding in

3970 Christ, are ready to take up their position in Him their Head,  
3971 the great Priest-King, and in their prayers are bold enough  
3972 to say what they will that their God should do. As image-  
3973 bearer and representative of God on earth, redeemed man  
3974 has by his prayers to determine the history of this earth.  
3975 Man was created, and has now again been redeemed, to  
3976 pray, and by his prayer to have dominion.

3977

3978 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY. ’

3979

3980

3981

3982 Lord! what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the  
3983 son of man, that Thou visitest him? for Thou has made him  
3984 a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with  
3985 glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over  
3986 the work of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things under his  
3987 feet. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the  
3988 earth!

3989

3990 Lord God! how low has sin made man to sink. And how  
3991 terribly has it darkened his mind, that he does not even  
3992 know his Divine destiny, to be Thy servant and  
3993 representative. Alas! that even Thy people, when their eyes  
3994 are opened, are so little ready to accept their calling and to  
3995 seek to have power with God, that they may have power  
3996 with men too to bless them.

3997

3998 Lord Jesus! it is in Thee the Father hath again crowned man  
3999 with glory and honour, and opened the way for us to be  
4000 what He would have us. O Lord, have mercy on Thy  
4001 people, and visit Thine heritage! Work mightily in Thy  
4002 Church, and teach Thy believing disciples to go forth in  
4003 their royal priesthood, and in the power of prayer, to which

4004 Thou hast given such wonderful promises, to serve Thy  
4005 kingdom, to have rule over the nations, and make the name  
4006 of God glorious in the earth. Amen.

4007  
4008 [1] God is seeking priests among the sons of men. A human  
4009 priesthood is one of the essential parts of His eternal plan.  
4010 To rule creation by man is His design; to carry on the  
4011 worship of creation by man is no less part of His design.  
4012 Priesthood is the appointed link between heaven and earth,  
4013 the channel of intercourse between the sinner and God.  
4014 Such a priesthood, in so far as expiation is concerned, is in  
4015 the hands of the Son of God alone; in so far as it is to be the  
4016 medium of communication between Creator and creature, is  
4017 also in the hands of redeemed men—of the Church of God.  
4018 God is seeking kings. Not out of the ranks of angels. Fallen  
4019 man must furnish Him with the rulers of His universe.  
4020 Human hands must wield the sceptre, human heads must  
4021 wear the crown.—The Rent Veil, by Dr. H. Bonar.

4022

4023

4024

4025 NINETEENTH LESSON.

4026

4027 I go unto the Father!’

4028

4029 Or, Power for Praying and Working.

4030

4031 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the  
4032 works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than  
4033 these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And  
4034 whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do.’—John  
4035 xiv. 12, 13.

4036

4037 AS the Saviour opened His public ministry with His  
4038 disciples by the Sermon on the Mount, so He closes it by  
4039 the Parting Address preserved to us by John. In both He  
4040 speaks more than once of prayer. But with a difference. In  
4041 the Sermon on the Mount it is as to disciples who have only  
4042 just entered His school, who scarcely know that God is their  
4043 Father, and whose prayer chiefly has reference to their  
4044 personal needs. In His closing address He speaks to  
4045 disciples whose training time is now come to an end, and  
4046 who are ready as His messengers to take His place and His  
4047 work. In the former the chief lesson is: Be childlike, pray  
4048 believingly, and trust the Father that He will give you all  
4049 good gifts. Here He points to something higher: They are  
4050 now His friends to whom He has made known all that He  
4051 has heard of the Father; His messengers, who have entered  
4052 into His plans, and into whose hands the care of His work  
4053 and kingdom on earth is to be entrusted. They are now to go  
4054 out and do His works, and in the power of His approaching  
4055 exaltation, even greater works: prayer is now to be the  
4056 channel through which that power is to be received for their  
4057 work. With Christ's ascension to the Father a new epoch  
4058 commences for their working and praying both.

4059  
4060 See how clearly this connection comes out in our text. As  
4061 His body here on earth, as those who are one with Him in  
4062 heaven, they are now to do greater works than He had done;  
4063 their success and their victories are to be greater than His.  
4064 He mentions two reasons for this. The one, because He was  
4065 to go to the Father, to receive all power; the other, because  
4066 they might now ask and expect all in His Name. Because I  
4067 go to the Father, and—notice this and—and, whatsoever ye  
4068 shall ask, I will do.' His going to the Father would thus  
4069 bring the double blessing: they would ask and receive all in  
4070 His Name, and as a consequence, would do the greater



4071 works. This first mention of prayer in our Saviour's parting  
4072 words thus teaches us two most important lessons. He that  
4073 would do the works of Jesus must pray in His Name. He  
4074 that would pray in His Name must work in His Name.

4075

4076 He who would work must pray: it is in prayer that the  
4077 power for work is obtained. He that in faith would do the  
4078 works that Jesus did, must pray in His Name. As long as  
4079 Jesus was here on earth, He Himself did the greatest works:  
4080 devils the disciples could not cast out, fled at His word.  
4081 When He went to the Father, He was no longer here in the  
4082 body to work directly. The disciples were now His body: all  
4083 His work from the throne in heaven here on earth must and  
4084 could be done through them. One might have thought that  
4085 now He was leaving the scene Himself, and could only  
4086 work through commissioners, the works might be fewer and  
4087 weaker. He assures us of the contrary: Verily, verily, I say  
4088 unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall  
4089 he do also, and he shall do greater works.' His approaching  
4090 death was to be such a real breaking down and making an  
4091 end of the power of sin; with the resurrection the powers of  
4092 the Eternal Life were so truly to take possession of the  
4093 human body and to obtain supremacy over human life; with  
4094 His ascension He was to receive the power to communicate  
4095 the Holy Spirit so fully to His own; the union, the oneness  
4096 between Himself on the throne and them on earth, was to be  
4097 so intensely and divinely perfect, that He meant it as the  
4098 literal truth: Greater works than these shall he do, because I  
4099 go to the Father.' And the issue proved how true it was.  
4100 While Jesus, during three years of personal labour on earth,  
4101 gathered little more than five hundred disciples, and the  
4102 most of them so feeble that they were but little credit to His  
4103 cause, it was given to men like Peter and Paul manifestly to  
4104 do greater things than He had done. From the throne He

4105 could do through them what He Himself in His humiliation  
4106 could not yet do.

4107

4108 But there is one condition: He that believeth on me, he shall  
4109 do greater works, because I go to the Father; and whatsoever  
4110 ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do.' His going to the  
4111 Father would give Him a new power to hear prayer. For the  
4112 doing of the greater works, two things were needed: His  
4113 going to the Father to receive all power, our prayer in His  
4114 Name to receive all power from Him again. As He asks the  
4115 Father, He receives and bestows on us the power of the new  
4116 dispensation for the greater works; as we believe, and ask in  
4117 His Name, the power comes and takes possession of us to  
4118 do the greater works.

4119

4120 Alas! how much working there is in the work of God, in  
4121 which there is little or nothing to be seen of the power to do  
4122 anything like Christ's works, not to speak of greater works.  
4123 There can be but one reason: the believing on Him, the  
4124 believing prayer in His Name, this is so much wanting. O  
4125 that every labourer and leader in church, or school, in the  
4126 work of home philanthropy or foreign missions might learn  
4127 the lesson: Prayer in the Name of Jesus is the way to share  
4128 in the mighty power which Jesus has received of the Father  
4129 for His people, and it is in this power alone that he that  
4130 believeth can do the greater works. To every complaint as to  
4131 weakness or unfitness, as to difficulties or want of success,  
4132 Jesus gives this one answer: He that believeth on me shall  
4133 do greater works, because I go to the Father, and  
4134 whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do.' We  
4135 must understand that the first and chief thing for everyone  
4136 who would do the work of Jesus, is to believe, and so to get  
4137 linked to Him, the Almighty One, and then to pray the  
4138 prayer of faith in His Name. Without this our work is but

4139 human and carnal; it may have some use in restraining sin,  
4140 or preparing the way for blessing, but the real power is  
4141 wanting. Effectual working needs first effectual prayer.  
4142

4143 And now the second lesson: He who would pray must work.  
4144 It is for power to work that prayer has such great promises:  
4145 it is in working that the power for the effectual prayer of  
4146 faith will be gained. In these parting words of our blessed  
4147 Lord we find that He no less than six times (John xiv. 13,  
4148 14, xv. 7, 16, xvi. 23, 24) repeats those unlimited prayer-  
4149 promises which have so often awakened our anxious  
4150 questionings as to their real meaning: whatsoever, '  
4151 anything, ' what ye will, ' ask and ye shall receive. ' How  
4152 many a believer has read these over with joy and hope, and  
4153 in deep earnestness of soul has sought to plead them for his  
4154 own need. And he has come out disappointed. The simple  
4155 reason was this: he had rent away the promise from its  
4156 surrounding. The Lord gave the wonderful promise of the  
4157 free use of His Name with the Father in connection with the  
4158 doing of His works. It is the disciple who gives himself  
4159 wholly to live for Jesus' work and kingdom, for His will  
4160 and honour, to whom the power will come to appropriate  
4161 the promise. He that would fain grasp the promise when he  
4162 wants something very special for himself, will be  
4163 disappointed, because he would make Jesus the servant of  
4164 his own comfort. But to him who seeks to pray the effectual  
4165 prayer of faith, because he needs it for the work of the  
4166 Master, to him it will be given to learn it; because he has  
4167 made himself the servant of his Lord's interests. Prayer not  
4168 only teaches and strengthens to work: work teaches and  
4169 strengthens to pray.

4170

4171 This is in perfect harmony with what holds good both in the  
4172 natural and the spiritual world. Whosoever hath, to him

4173 shall be given; or, He that is faithful in a little, is faithful  
4174 also in much. Let us with the small measure of grace  
4175 already received, give ourselves to the Master for His work:  
4176 work will be to us a real school of prayer. It was when  
4177 Moses had to take full charge of a rebellious people that he  
4178 felt the need, but also the courage, to speak boldly to God  
4179 and to ask great things of Him (Ex. xxxiii. 12, 15, 18). As  
4180 you give yourself entirely to God for His work, you will  
4181 feel that nothing less than these great promises are what you  
4182 need, that nothing less is what you may most confidently  
4183 expect.

4184  
4185 Believer in Jesus! You are called, you are appointed, to do  
4186 the works of Jesus, and even greater works, because He has  
4187 gone to the Father to receive the power to do them in and  
4188 through you.

4189  
4190 Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do. Give  
4191 yourself, and live, to do the works of Christ and you will  
4192 learn to pray so as to obtain wonderful answers to prayer.  
4193 Give yourself, and live, to pray and you will learn to do the  
4194 works He did, and greater works. With disciples full of faith  
4195 in Himself, and bold in prayer to ask great things, Christ can  
4196 conquer the world.

4197  
4198 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY. ’

4199  
4200  
4201

4202 O my Lord! I have this day again heard words from Thee  
4203 which pass my comprehension. And yet I cannot do aught  
4204 but in simple childlike faith take and keep them as Thy gift  
4205 to me too. Thou hast said that in virtue of Thy going to the  
4206 Father, he that believeth on Thee will do the works which

4207 Thou hast done, and greater works. Lord! I worship Thee as  
4208 the Glorified One, and look for the fulfilment of Thy  
4209 promise. May my whole life just be one of continued  
4210 believing in Thee. So purify and sanctify my heart, make it  
4211 so tenderly susceptible of Thyself and Thy love, that  
4212 believing on Thee may be the very life it breathes.

4213

4214 And Thou hast said that in virtue of Thy going to the Father,  
4215 whatsoever we ask, Thou wilt do. From Thy throne of  
4216 power Thou wouldest make Thy people share the power  
4217 given Thee, and work through them as the members of Thy  
4218 body, in response to their believing prayers in Thy Name.  
4219 Power in prayer with Thee, and power in work with men, is  
4220 what Thou has promised Thy people and me too.

4221

4222 Blessed Lord! Forgive us all that we have so little believed  
4223 Thee and Thy promise, and so little proved Thy faithfulness  
4224 in fulfilling it. O forgive us that we have so little honoured  
4225 Thy all-prevailing Name in heaven or upon earth.

4226

4227 Lord! Teach me to pray so that I may prove that Thy Name  
4228 is indeed all-prevailing with God and men and devils. Yea,  
4229 teach me so to work and so to pray that Thou canst glorify  
4230 Thyself in me as the Omnipotent One, and do Thy great  
4231 work through me too. Amen.

4232

4233

4234

4235 TWENTIETH LESSON.

4236

4237 That the Father may be glorified;'

4238

4239 Or, The Chief End of Prayer.

4240

4241 I go unto the Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my  
4242 Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the  
4243 Son.'—John xiv. 13.

4244

4245 THAT the Father may be glorified in the Son: it is to this  
4246 end that Jesus on His throne in glory will do all we ask in  
4247 His Name. Every answer to prayer He gives will have this  
4248 as its object: when there is no prospect of this object being  
4249 obtained, He will not answer. It follows as a matter of  
4250 course that this must be with us, as with Jesus, the essential  
4251 element in our petitions: the glory of the Father must be the  
4252 aim and end, the very soul and life of our prayer.

4253

4254 It was so with Jesus when He was on earth. I seek not mine  
4255 own honour: I seek the honour of Him that sent me;' in such  
4256 words we have the keynote of His life. In the first words of  
4257 the high-priestly prayer He gives utterance to it: Father!  
4258 Glorify Thy son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee. I have  
4259 glorified Thee on earth; glorify me with Thyself.' The  
4260 ground on which He asks to be taken up into the glory He  
4261 had with the Father, is the twofold one: He has glorified  
4262 Him on earth; He will still glorify Him in heaven. What He  
4263 asks is only to enable Him to glorify the Father more. It is  
4264 as we enter into sympathy with Jesus on this point, and  
4265 gratify Him by making the Father's glory our chief object in  
4266 prayer too, that our prayer cannot fail of an answer. There is  
4267 nothing of which the Beloved Son has said more distinctly  
4268 that it will glorify the Father than this, His doing what we  
4269 ask; He will not, therefore, let any opportunity slip of  
4270 securing this object. Let us make His aim ours: let the glory  
4271 of the Father be the link between our asking and His doing:  
4272 such prayer must prevail.^1

4273

4274 This word of Jesus comes indeed as a sharp two-edged  
4275 sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and  
4276 quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. Jesus  
4277 in His prayers on earth, in His intercession in heaven, in His  
4278 promise of an answer to our prayers from there, makes this  
4279 His first object—the glory of His Father. Is it so with us  
4280 too? Or are not, in large measure, self-interest and self-will  
4281 the strongest motives urging us to pray? Or, if we cannot  
4282 see that this is the case, have we not to acknowledge that the  
4283 distinct, conscious longing for the glory of the Father is not  
4284 what animates our prayers? And yet it must be so.

4285

4286 Not as if the believer does not at times desire it. But he has  
4287 to mourn that he has so little attained. And he knows the  
4288 reason of his failure too. It was, because the separation  
4289 between the spirit of daily life and the spirit of the hour of  
4290 prayer was too wide. We begin to see that the desire for the  
4291 glory of the Father is not something that we can awake and  
4292 present to our Lord when we prepare ourselves to pray. No!  
4293 it is only when the whole life, in all its parts, is given up to  
4294 God's glory, that we can really pray to His glory too. Do all  
4295 to the glory of God,' and, Ask all to the glory of God,'—  
4296 these twin commands are inseparable: obedience to the  
4297 former is the secret of grace for the latter. A life to the glory  
4298 of God is the condition of the prayers that Jesus can answer,  
4299 that the Father may be glorified.'

4300

4301 This demand in connection with prevailing prayer—that it  
4302 should be to the glory of God—is no more than right and  
4303 natural. There is none glorious but the Lord: there is no  
4304 glory but His, and what He layeth on His creatures.  
4305 Creation exists to show forth His glory; all that is not for  
4306 His glory is sin, and darkness, and death: it is only in the  
4307 glorifying of God that the creatures can find glory. What the

4308 Son of Man did, to give Himself wholly, His whole life, to  
4309 glorify the Father, is nothing but the simple duty of every  
4310 redeemed one. And Christ's reward will be his too. Because  
4311 He gave Himself so entirely to the glory of the Father, the  
4312 Father crowned Him with glory and honour, giving the  
4313 kingdom into His hands, with the power to ask what He  
4314 will, and, as Intercessor, to answer our prayers. And just as  
4315 we become one with Christ in this, and as our prayer is part  
4316 of a life utterly surrendered to God's glory, will the Saviour  
4317 be able to glorify the Father to us by the fulfilment of the  
4318 promise: Whatsoever ye shall ask, I will do it.'

4319

4320 To such a life, with God's glory our only aim, we cannot  
4321 attain by any effort of our own. It is only in the man Christ  
4322 Jesus that such a life is to be seen: in Him it is to be found  
4323 for us. Yes blessed be God! His life is our life; He gave  
4324 Himself for us; He Himself is now our life. The discovery,  
4325 and the confession, and the denial, of self, as usurping the  
4326 place of God, of self-seeking and self-trusting, is essential,  
4327 and yet is what we cannot accomplish in our own strength.  
4328 It is the incoming and indwelling, the Presence and the Rule  
4329 in the heart, of our Lord Jesus who glorified the Father on  
4330 earth, and is now glorified with Him, that thence He might  
4331 glorify Him in us;—it is Jesus Himself coming in, who can  
4332 cast out all self-glorifying, and give us instead His own  
4333 God-glorifying life and Spirit. It is Jesus, who longs to  
4334 glorify the Father in hearing our prayers, who will teach us  
4335 to live and to pray to the glory of God.

4336

4337 And what motive, what power is there that can urge our  
4338 slothful hearts to yield themselves to our Lord to work this  
4339 in us? Surely nothing more is needed than a sight of how  
4340 glorious, how alone worthy of glory the Father is. Let our  
4341 faith learn in adoring worship to bow before Him, to ascribe



4342 to Him alone the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, to  
4343 yield ourselves to dwell in His light as the ever-blessed,  
4344 ever-loving One. Surely we shall be stirred to say, To Him  
4345 alone be glory.' And we shall look to our Lord Jesus with  
4346 new intensity of desire for a life that refuses to see or seek  
4347 ought but the glory of God. When there is but little prayer  
4348 that can be answered, the Father is not glorified. It is a duty,  
4349 for the glory of God, to live and pray so that our prayer can  
4350 be answered. For the sake of God's glory, let us learn to  
4351 pray well.

4352  
4353 What a humbling thought that so often there is earnest  
4354 prayer for a child or a friend, for a work or a circle, in  
4355 which the thought of our joy or our pleasure was far  
4356 stronger than any yearnings for God's glory. No wonder  
4357 that there are so many unanswered prayers: here we have  
4358 the secret. God would not be glorified when that glory was  
4359 not our object. He that would pray the prayer of faith, will  
4360 have to give himself to live literally so that the Father in all  
4361 things may be glorified in him. This must be his aim:  
4362 without this there cannot be the prayer of faith. How can ye  
4363 believe,' said Jesus, which receive glory of one another, and  
4364 the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?' All  
4365 seeking of our own glory with men makes faith impossible:  
4366 it is the deep, intense self-sacrifice that gives up its own  
4367 glory, and seeks the glory of God alone, that wakens in the  
4368 soul that spiritual susceptibility of the Divine, which is  
4369 faith. The surrender to God to seek His glory, and the  
4370 expectation that He will show His glory in hearing us, are  
4371 one at root: He that seeks God's glory will see it in the  
4372 answer to his prayer, and he alone.

4373  
4374 And how, we ask again, shall we attain to it? Let us begin  
4375 with confession. How little has the glory of God been an

4376 all-absorbing passion; how little our lives and our prayers  
4377 have been full of it. How little have we lived in the likeness  
4378 of the Son, and in sympathy with Him—for God and His  
4379 glory alone. Let us take time, until the Holy Spirit discover  
4380 it to us, and we see how wanting we have been in this. True  
4381 knowledge and confession of sin are the sure path to  
4382 deliverance.

4383

4384 And then let us look to Jesus. In Him we can see by what  
4385 death we can glorify God. In death He glorified Him;  
4386 through death He was glorified with Him. It is by dying,  
4387 being dead to self and living to God, that we can glorify  
4388 Him. And this—this death to self, this life to the glory of  
4389 God—is what Jesus gives and lives in each one who can  
4390 trust Him for it. Let nothing less than these—the desire, the  
4391 decision to live only for the glory of the Father, even as  
4392 Christ did; the acceptance of Him with His life and strength  
4393 working it in us; the joyful assurance that we can live to the  
4394 glory of God, because Christ lives in us;—let this be the  
4395 spirit of our daily life. Jesus stands surety for our living  
4396 thus; the Holy Spirit is given, and waiting to make it our  
4397 experience, if we will only trust and let Him; O let us not  
4398 hold back through unbelief, but confidently take as our  
4399 watchword—All to the glory of God! The Father accepts  
4400 the will, the sacrifice is well-pleasing; the Holy Spirit will  
4401 seal us within with the consciousness, we are living for God  
4402 and His glory.

4403

4404 And then what quiet peace and power there will be in our  
4405 prayers, as we know ourselves through His grace, in perfect  
4406 harmony with Him who says to us, when He promises to do  
4407 what we ask: That the Father may be glorified in the Son.’  
4408 With our whole being consciously yielded to the inspiration  
4409 of the Word and Spirit, our desires will be no longer ours

4410 but His; their chief end the glory of God. With increasing  
4411 liberty we shall be able in prayer to say: Father! Thou  
4412 knowest, we ask it only for Thy glory. And the condition of  
4413 prayer-answers, instead of being as a mountain we cannot  
4414 climb, will only give us the greater confidence that we shall  
4415 be heard, because we have seen that prayer has no higher  
4416 beauty or blessedness than this, that it glorifies the Father.  
4417 And the precious privilege of prayer will become doubly  
4418 precious because it brings us into perfect unison with the  
4419 Beloved Son in the wonderful partnership He proposes:  
4420 You ask, and I do, that the Father may be glorified in the  
4421 Son.'

4422

4423 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

4424

4425

4426

4427 Blessed Lord Jesus! I come again to Thee. Every lesson  
4428 Thou givest me convinces me more deeply how little I  
4429 know to pray aright. But every lesson also inspires me with  
4430 hope that Thou art going to teach me, that Thou art teaching  
4431 me not only to know what prayer should be, but actually to  
4432 pray as I ought. O my Lord! I look with courage to Thee,  
4433 the Great Intercessor, who didst pray and dost hear prayer,  
4434 only that the Father may be glorified, to teach me too to live  
4435 and to pray to the glory of God.

4436

4437 Saviour! To this end I yield myself to Thee again. I would  
4438 be nothing. I have given self, as already crucified with Thee,  
4439 to the death. Through the Spirit its workings are mortified  
4440 and made dead; Thy life and Thy love of the Father are  
4441 taking possession of me. A new longing begins to fill my  
4442 soul, that every day, every hour, that in every prayer the

4443 glory of the Father may be everything to me. O my Lord! I  
4444 am in Thy school to learn this: teach Thou it me.

4445

4446 And do Thou, the God of glory, the Father of glory, my God  
4447 and my Father, accept the desire of a child who has seen  
4448 that Thy glory is indeed alone worth living for. O Lord!  
4449 Show me Thy glory. Let it overshadow me. Let it fill the  
4450 temple of my heart. Let me dwell in it as revealed in Christ.  
4451 And do Thou Thyself fulfil in me Thine own good pleasure,  
4452 that Thy child should find his glory in seeking the glory of  
4453 his Father. Amen.

4454

4455 ^1See in the note on George Muller, at the close of this  
4456 volume, how he was led to make God's glory his first  
4457 object.

4458

4459

4460

4461 TWENTY-FIRST LESSON.

4462

4463 If ye abide in me;'

4464

4465 Or The All-Inclusive Condition.

4466

4467 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask  
4468 whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.'—John  
4469 xv. 7.

4470

4471 IN all God's intercourse with us, the promise and its  
4472 conditions are inseparable. If we fulfil the conditions, He  
4473 fulfils the promise. What He is to be to us depends upon  
4474 what we are willing to be to Him. Draw near to God, and  
4475 He will draw near to you.' And so in prayer the unlimited  
4476 promise, Ask whatsoever ye will, has its one simple and

4477 natural condition, if ye abide in me. It is Christ whom the  
4478 Father always hears; God is in Christ, and can only be  
4479 reached by being in Him; to be IN HIM is the way to have  
4480 our prayer heard; fully and wholly ABIDING IN HIM, we  
4481 have the right to ask whatsoever we will, and the promise  
4482 that it shall be done unto us.

4483

4484 When we compare this promise with the experiences of  
4485 most believers, we are startled by a terrible discrepancy.  
4486 Who can number up the countless prayers that rise and  
4487 bring no answer? The cause must be either that we do not  
4488 fulfil the condition, or God does not fulfil the promise.  
4489 Believers are not willing to admit either, and therefore have  
4490 devised a way of escape from the dilemma. They put into  
4491 the promise the qualifying clause our Saviour did not put  
4492 there—if it be God’s will; and so maintain both God’s  
4493 integrity and their own. O if they did but accept it and hold  
4494 it fast as it stands, trusting to Christ to vindicate His truth,  
4495 how God’s Spirit would lead them to see the Divine  
4496 propriety of such a promise to those who really abide in  
4497 Christ in the sense in which He means it, and to confess that  
4498 the failure in the fulfilling the condition is the one sufficient  
4499 explanation of unanswered prayer. And how the Holy Spirit  
4500 would then make our feebleness in prayer one of the  
4501 mightiest motives to urge us on to discover the secret, and  
4502 obtain the blessing, of full abiding in Christ.

4503

4504 If ye abide in me.’ As a Christian grows in grace and in the  
4505 knowledge of the Lord Jesus, he is often surprised to find  
4506 how the words of God grow too, in the new and deeper  
4507 meaning with which they come to him. He can look back to  
4508 the day when some word of God was opened up to him and  
4509 he rejoiced in the blessing he had found in it. After a time  
4510 some deeper experience gave it a new meaning, and it was

4511 as if he never had seen what it contained. And yet once  
4512 again, as he advanced in the Christian life, the same word  
4513 stood before him again as a great mystery, until anew the  
4514 Holy Spirit led him still deeper into its Divine fulness. One  
4515 of these ever-growing, never-exhausted words, opening up  
4516 to us step by step the fulness of the Divine life, is the  
4517 Master's precious 'Abide in me.' As the union of the branch  
4518 with the vine is one of growth, never-ceasing growth and  
4519 increase, so our abiding in Christ is a life process in which  
4520 the Divine life takes ever fuller and more complete  
4521 possession of us. The young and feeble believer may be  
4522 really abiding in Christ up to the measure of his light; it is  
4523 he who reaches onward to the full abiding in the sense in  
4524 which the Master understood the words, who inherits all the  
4525 promises connected with it.

4526  
4527 In the growing life of abiding in Christ, the first stage is that  
4528 of faith. As the believer sees that, with all his feebleness,  
4529 the command is really meant for him, his great aim is  
4530 simply to believe that, as he knows he is in Christ, so now,  
4531 notwithstanding unfaithfulness and failure, abiding in Christ  
4532 is his immediate duty, and a blessing within his reach. He is  
4533 specially occupied with the love, and power, and  
4534 faithfulness of the Saviour: he feels his one need to be  
4535 believing.

4536  
4537 It is not long before he sees something more is needed.  
4538 Obedience and faith must go together. Not as if to the faith  
4539 he has the obedience must be added, but faith must be made  
4540 manifest in obedience. Faith is obedience at home and  
4541 looking to the Master: obedience is faith going out to do His  
4542 will. He sees how he has been more occupied with the  
4543 privilege and the blessings of this abiding than with its  
4544 duties and its fruit. There has been much of self and of self-

4545 will that has been unnoticed or tolerated: the peace which,  
4546 as a young and feeble disciple, he could enjoy in believing  
4547 goes from him; it is in practical obedience that the abiding  
4548 must be maintained: 'If ye keep my commands, ye shall  
4549 abide in my love.' As before his great aim was through the  
4550 mind, and the truth it took hold of, to let the heart rest on  
4551 Christ and His promises; so now, in this stage, he chief  
4552 effort is to get his will united with the will of his Lord, and  
4553 the heart and the life brought entirely under His rule.  
4554

4555 And yet it is as if there is something wanting. The will and  
4556 the heart are on Christ's side; he obeys and he loves his  
4557 Lord. But still, why is it that the fleshly nature has yet so  
4558 much power, that the spontaneous motions and emotions of  
4559 the inmost being are not what they should be? The will does  
4560 not approve or allow, but here is a region beyond control of  
4561 the will. And why also, even when there is not so much of  
4562 positive commission to condemn, why so much of  
4563 omission, the deficiency of that beauty of holiness, that zeal  
4564 of love, that conformity to Jesus and His death, in which the  
4565 life of self is lost, and which is surely implied in the  
4566 abiding, as the Master meant it? There must surely be  
4567 something in our abiding in Christ and Christ in us, which  
4568 he has not yet experienced.  
4569

4570 It is so. Faith and obedience are but the pathway of blessing.  
4571 Before giving us the parable of the vine and the branches,  
4572 Jesus had very distinctly told what the full blessing is to  
4573 which faith and obedience are to lead. Three times over He  
4574 had said, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments,' and  
4575 spoken of the threefold blessing with which He would  
4576 crown such obedient love. The Holy Spirit would come  
4577 from the Father; the Son would manifest Himself; the  
4578 Father and the Son would come and make their abode. It is

4579 as our faith grows into obedience, and in obedience and  
4580 love our whole being goes out and clings itself to Christ,  
4581 that our inner life becomes opened up, and the capacity is  
4582 formed within of receiving the life, the spirit, of the  
4583 glorified Jesus, as a distinct and conscious union with Christ  
4584 and with the Father. The word is fulfilled in us: In that day  
4585 ye shall know that I am in my Father and ye in me, and I in  
4586 you.' We understand how, just as Christ is in God, and God  
4587 in Christ, one together not only in will and in love, but in  
4588 identity of nature and life, because they exist in each other,  
4589 so we are in Christ and Christ in us, in union not only of  
4590 will and love, but of life and nature too.

4591

4592 It was after Jesus had spoken of our thus through the Holy  
4593 Spirit knowing that He is in the Father, and even so we in  
4594 Him and He in us, that He said, Abide in me, and I in you.  
4595 Accept, consent to receive that Divine life of union with  
4596 myself, in virtue of which, as you abide in me, I also abide  
4597 in you, even as I abide in the Father. So that your life is  
4598 mine and mine is yours.' This is the true abiding, the  
4599 occupying of the position in which Christ can come and  
4600 abide; so abiding in Him that the soul has come away from  
4601 self to find that He has taken the place and become our life.  
4602 It is the becoming as little children who have no care, and  
4603 find their happiness in trusting and obeying the love that has  
4604 done all for them.

4605

4606 To those who thus abide, the promise comes as their rightful  
4607 heritage: Ask whatsoever ye will. It cannot be otherwise.  
4608 Christ has got full possession of them. Christ dwells in their  
4609 love, their will, their life. Not only has their will been given  
4610 up; Christ has entered it, and dwells and breathes in it by  
4611 His Spirit. He whom the Father always hears, prays in them;  
4612 they pray in Him: what they ask shall be done unto them.



4613

4614 Beloved fellow-believer! let us confess that it is because we  
4615 do not abide in Christ as He would have us, that the Church  
4616 is so impotent in presence of the infidelity and worldliness  
4617 and heathendom, in the midst of which the Lord is able to  
4618 make her more than conqueror. Let us believe that He  
4619 means what He promises, and accept the condemnation the  
4620 confession implies.

4621

4622 But let us not be discouraged. The abiding of the branch in  
4623 the Vine is a life of never-ceasing growth. The abiding, as  
4624 the Master meant it, is within our reach, for He lives to give  
4625 it us. Let us but be ready to count all things loss, and to say,  
4626 Not as though I had already attained; I follow after, if that I  
4627 may apprehend that for which I also am apprehended of  
4628 Christ Jesus.’ Let us not be so much occupied with the  
4629 abiding, as with Him to whom the abiding links us, and His  
4630 fulness. Let it be Him, the whole Christ, in His obedience  
4631 and humiliation, in His exaltation and power, in whom our  
4632 soul moves and acts; He Himself will fulfil His promise in  
4633 us.

4634

4635 And then as we abide, and grow evermore into the full  
4636 abiding, let us exercise our right, the will to enter into all  
4637 God’s will. Obeying what that will commands, let us claim  
4638 what it promises. Let us yield to the teaching of the Holy  
4639 Spirit, to show each of us, according to his growth and  
4640 measure, what the will of God is which we may claim in  
4641 prayer. And let us rest content with nothing less than the  
4642 personal experience of what Jesus gave when He said, If ye  
4643 abide in me, ask whatsoever ye will, it shall be done unto  
4644 you.’

4645

4646 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!’

4647

4648

4649

4650 Beloved Lord! do teach me to take this promise anew in all  
4651 its simplicity, and to be sure that the only measure of Thy  
4652 holy giving is our holy willing. Lord! Let each word of this  
4653 Thy promise be anew made quick and powerful in my soul.

4654

4655 Thou sayest: Abide in me! O my Master, my Life, my All, I  
4656 do abide in Thee. Give Thou me to grow up into all Thy  
4657 fulness. It is not the effort of faith, seeking to cling to Thee,  
4658 nor even the rest of faith, trusting Thee to keep me; it is not  
4659 the obedience of the will, nor the keeping the  
4660 commandments; but it is Thyself living in me and in the  
4661 Father, that alone can satisfy me. It is Thy self, my Lord, no  
4662 longer before me and above me, but one with me, and  
4663 abiding in me; it is this I need, it is this I seek. It is this I  
4664 trust Thee for.

4665

4666 Thou sayest: Ask whatsoever ye will! Lord! I know that the  
4667 life of full, deep abiding will so renew and sanctify and  
4668 strengthen the will that I shall have the light and the liberty  
4669 to ask great things. Lord! let my will, dead in Thy death,  
4670 living in Thy life, be bold and large in its petitions.

4671

4672 Thou sayest: It shall be done. O Thou who art the Amen,  
4673 the Faithful and True Witness, give me in Thyself the  
4674 joyous confidence that Thou wilt make this word yet more  
4675 wonderfully true to me than ever, because it hath not  
4676 entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath  
4677 prepared for them that love Him. Amen.

4678

4679 NOTE

4680

4681 On a thoughtful comparison of what we mostly find in  
4682 books or sermons on prayer, and the teaching of the Master,  
4683 we shall find one great difference: the importance assigned  
4684 to the answer to prayer is by no means the same. In the  
4685 former we find a great deal on the blessing of prayer as a  
4686 spiritual exercise even if there be no answer, and on the  
4687 reasons why we should be content without it. God's  
4688 fellowship ought to be more to us than the gift we ask;  
4689 God's wisdom only knows what is best; God may bestow  
4690 something better than what He withholds. Though this  
4691 teaching looks very high and spiritual, it is remarkable that  
4692 we find nothing of it with our Lord. The more carefully we  
4693 gather together all He spoke on prayer, the clearer it  
4694 becomes that He wished us to think of prayer simply as the  
4695 means to an end, and that the answer was to be the proof  
4696 that we and our prayer are acceptable to the Father in  
4697 heaven. It is not that Christ would have us count the gifts of  
4698 higher value than the fellowship and favour of the Father.  
4699 By no means. But the Father means the answer to be the  
4700 token of His favour and of the reality of our fellowship with  
4701 Him. To-day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in  
4702 thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the  
4703 request of his servant.'

4704

4705 A life marked by daily answer to prayer is the proof of our  
4706 spiritual maturity; that we have indeed attained to the true  
4707 abiding in Christ; that our will is truly at one with God's  
4708 will; that our faith has grown strong to see and take what  
4709 God has prepared for us; that the Name of Christ and His  
4710 nature have taken full possession of us; and that we have  
4711 been found fit to take a place among those whom God  
4712 admits to His counsels, and according to whose prayer He  
4713 rules the world. These are they in whom something of  
4714 man's original dignity hath been restored, in whom, as they

4715 abide in Christ, His power as the all-prevailing Intercessor  
4716 can manifest itself, in whom the glory of His Name is  
4717 shown forth. Prayer is very blessed; the answer is more  
4718 blessed still, as the response from the Father that our prayer,  
4719 our faith, our will are indeed as He would wish them to be.

4720

4721 I make these remarks with the one desire of leading my  
4722 readers themselves to put together all that Christ has said on  
4723 prayer, and to yield themselves to the full impression of the  
4724 truth that when prayer is what it should be, or rather when  
4725 we are what we should be, abiding in Christ, the answer  
4726 must be expected. It will bring us out from those refuges  
4727 where we have comforted ourselves with unanswered  
4728 prayer. It will discover to us the place of power to which  
4729 Christ has appointed His Church, and which it so little  
4730 occupies. It will reveal the terrible feebleness of our  
4731 spiritual life as the cause of our not knowing to pray boldly  
4732 in Christ's Name. It will urge us mightily to rise to a life in  
4733 the full union with Christ, and in the fulness of the Spirit, as  
4734 the secret of effectual prayer. And it will so lead us on to  
4735 realize our destiny: At that day: Verily, verily, I say unto  
4736 you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, He will give it  
4737 you in my Name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy  
4738 may be fulfilled.' Prayer that is really, spiritually, in union  
4739 with Jesus, is always answered.

4740

4741

4742

4743 TWENTY-SECOND LESSON.

4744

4745 My words in you.'

4746

4747 Or, The Word and Prayer.

4748

4749 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask  
4750 whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.’—John  
4751 xv. 7.

4752  
4753 THE vital connection between the word and prayer is one of  
4754 the simplest and earliest lessons of the Christian life. As that  
4755 newly-converted heathen put it: I pray—I speak to my  
4756 father; I read—my Father speaks to me. Before prayer, it is  
4757 God’s word that prepares me for it by revealing what the  
4758 Father has bid me ask. In prayer, it is God’s word  
4759 strengthens me by giving my faith its warrant and its plea.  
4760 And after prayer, it is God’s word that brings me the answer  
4761 when I have prayed, for in it the Spirit gives me to hear the  
4762 Father’s voice. Prayer is not monologue but dialogue; God’s  
4763 voice in response to mine in its most essential part.  
4764 Listening to God’s voice is the secret of the assurance that  
4765 He will listen to mine. Incline thine ear, and hear;’ Give ear  
4766 to me;’ Hearken to my voice;’ are words which God speaks  
4767 to man as well as man to God. His hearkening will depend  
4768 on ours; the entrance His words find with me, will be the  
4769 measure of the power of my words with Him. What God’s  
4770 words are to me, is the test of what He Himself is to me,  
4771 and so of the uprightness of my desire after Him in prayer.

4772  
4773 It is this connection between His word and our prayer that  
4774 Jesus points to when He says, If ye abide in me, and my  
4775 words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be  
4776 done unto you.’ The deep importance of this truth becomes  
4777 clear if we notice the other expression of which this one has  
4778 taken the place. More than once Jesus had said, “Abide in  
4779 me and I in you.’ His abiding in us was the complement and  
4780 the crown of our abiding in Him. But here, instead of Ye in  
4781 me and I in you,’ He says, Ye in me and my words in you.’  
4782 His words abiding are the equivalent of Himself abiding.

4783

4784     What a view is here opened up to us of the place the words  
4785     of God in Christ are to have in our spiritual life, and  
4786     especially in our prayer. In a man's words he reveals  
4787     himself. In his promises he gives himself away, he binds  
4788     himself to the one who receives his promise. In his  
4789     commands he sets forth his will, seeks to make himself  
4790     master of him whose obedience he claims, to guide and use  
4791     him as if he were part of himself. It is through our words  
4792     that spirit holds fellowship with spirit, that the spirit of one  
4793     man passes over and transfers itself into another. It is  
4794     through the words of a man, heard and accepted, and held  
4795     fast and obeyed, that he can impart himself to another. But  
4796     all this in a very relative and limited sense.

4797

4798     But when God, the infinite Being, in whom everything is  
4799     life and power, spirit and truth, in the very deepest meaning  
4800     of the words,—when God speaks forth Himself in His  
4801     words, He does indeed give HIMSELF, His Love and His  
4802     Life, His Will and His Power, to those who receive these  
4803     words, in a reality passing comprehension. In every promise  
4804     He puts Himself in our power to lay hold of and possess; in  
4805     every command He puts Himself in our power for us to  
4806     share with Him His Will, His Holiness, His Perfection. In  
4807     God's Word God gives us HIMSELF; His Word is nothing  
4808     less than the Eternal Son, Christ Jesus. And so all Christ's  
4809     words are God's words, full of a Divine quickening life and  
4810     power. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and  
4811     they are life.'

4812

4813     Those who have made the deaf and dumb their study, tell us  
4814     how much the power of speaking depends on that of  
4815     hearing, and how the loss of hearing in children is followed  
4816     by that of speaking too. This is true in a wider sense: as we

4817 hear, so we speak. This is true in the highest sense of our  
4818 intercourse with God. To offer a prayer—to give utterance  
4819 to certain wishes and to appeal to certain promises—is an  
4820 easy thing, and can be learned of man by human wisdom.  
4821 But to pray in the Spirit, to speak words that reach and  
4822 touch God, that affect and influence the powers of the  
4823 unseen world,—such praying, such speaking, depends  
4824 entirely upon our hearing God’s voice. Just as far as we  
4825 listen to the voice and language that God speaks, and in the  
4826 words of God receive His thoughts, His mind, His life, into  
4827 our heart, we shall learn to speak in the voice and the  
4828 language that God hears. It is the ear of the learner,  
4829 wakened morning by morning, that prepares for the tongue  
4830 of the learned, to speak to God as well as men, as should be  
4831 (Isa. l. 4).

4832  
4833 This hearing the voice of God is something more than the  
4834 thoughtful study of the Word. There may be a study and  
4835 knowledge of the Word, in which there is but little real  
4836 fellowship with the living God. But there is also a reading  
4837 of the Word, in the very presence of the Father, and under  
4838 the leading of the Spirit, in which the Word comes to us in  
4839 living power from God Himself; it is to us the very voice of  
4840 the Father, a real personal fellowship with Himself. It is the  
4841 living voice of God that enters the heart, that brings blessing  
4842 and strength, and awakens the response of a living faith that  
4843 reaches the heart of God again.

4844  
4845 It is on this hearing the voice, that the power both to obey  
4846 and believe depends. The chief thing is, not to know what  
4847 God has said we must do, but that God Himself says it to us.  
4848 It is not the law, and not the book, not the knowledge of  
4849 what is right, that works obedience, but the personal  
4850 influence of God and His living fellowship. And even so it

4851 is not the knowledge of what God has promised, but the  
4852 presence of God Himself as the Promiser, that awakens  
4853 faith and trust in prayer. It is only in the full presence of  
4854 God that disobedience and unbelief become impossible.

4855  
4856 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask  
4857 whatsoever ye will, it shall be done unto you.’ We see what  
4858 this means. In the words the Saviour gives Himself. We  
4859 must have the words in us, taken up into our will and life,  
4860 reproduced in our disposition and conduct. We must have  
4861 them abiding in us: our whole life one continued exposition  
4862 of the words that are within, and filling us; the words  
4863 revealing Christ within, and our life revealing Him without.  
4864 It is as the words of Christ enter our very heart, become our  
4865 life and influence it, that our words will enter His heart and  
4866 influence Him. My prayer will depend on my life; what  
4867 God’s words are to me and in me, my words will be to God  
4868 and in God. If I do what God says, God will do what I say.

4869  
4870 How well the Old Testament saints understood this  
4871 connection between God’s words and ours, and how really  
4872 prayer with them was the loving response to what they had  
4873 heard God speak! If the word were a promise, they counted  
4874 on God to do as He had spoken. Do as Thou hast said;’ For  
4875 Thou, Lord, hast spoken it;’ According to Thy promise;’  
4876 According to Thy word;’ in such expressions they showed  
4877 that what God spake in promise was the root and the life of  
4878 what they spake in prayer. If the word was a command, they  
4879 simply did as the Lord had spoken: So Abram departed as  
4880 the Lord had spoken.’ Their life was fellowship with God,  
4881 the interchange of word and thought. What God spoke they  
4882 heard and did; what they spoke God heard and did. In each  
4883 word He speaks to us, the whole Christ gives Himself to  
4884 fulfil it for us. For each word He asks no less that we give



4885 the whole man to keep that word, and to receive its  
4886 fulfilment.

4887

4888 If my words abide in you;’ the condition is simple and clear.  
4889 In His words His will is revealed. As the words abide in me,  
4890 His will rules me; my will becomes the empty vessel which  
4891 His will fills, the willing instrument which His will wields;  
4892 He fills my inner being. In the exercise of obedience and  
4893 faith my will becomes ever stronger, and is brought into  
4894 deeper inner harmony with Him. He can fully trust it to will  
4895 nothing but what He wills; He is not afraid to give the  
4896 promise, If my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will,  
4897 it shall be done unto you.’ To all who believe it, and act  
4898 upon it, He will make it literally true.

4899

4900 Disciples of Christ! is it not becoming more and more clear  
4901 to us that while we have been excusing our unanswered  
4902 prayers, our impotence in prayer, with a fancied submission  
4903 to God’s wisdom and will, the real reason has been that our  
4904 own feeble life has been the cause of our feeble prayers.  
4905 Nothing can make strong men but the word coming to us  
4906 from God’s mouth: by that we must live. It is the word of  
4907 Christ, loved, lived in, abiding in us, becoming through  
4908 obedience and action part of our being, that makes us one  
4909 with Christ, that fits us spiritually for touching, for taking  
4910 hold of God. All that is of the world passeth away; he that  
4911 doeth the will of God abideth for ever. O let us yield heart  
4912 and life to the words of Christ, the words in which He ever  
4913 gives HIMSELF, the personal living Saviour, and His  
4914 promise will be our rich experience: If ye abide in me, and  
4915 my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall  
4916 be done unto you.’

4917

4918

4919 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!’

4920

4921

4922

4923 Blessed Lord! Thy lesson this day has again discovered to  
4924 me my folly. I see how it is that my prayer has not been  
4925 more believing and prevailing. I was more occupied with  
4926 my speaking to Thee than Thy speaking to me. I did not  
4927 understand that the secret of faith is this: there can be only  
4928 so much faith as there is of the Living Word dwelling in the  
4929 soul.

4930

4931 And Thy word had taught me so clearly: Let every man be  
4932 swift to hear, slow to speak; let not thine heart be hasty to  
4933 utter anything before God. Lord, teach me that it is only  
4934 with Thy word taken up into my life that my words can be  
4935 taken into Thy heart; that Thy word, if it be a living power  
4936 within me, will be a living power with Thee; what Thy  
4937 mouth hath spoken Thy hand will perform.

4938

4939 Lord! deliver me from the uncircumcised ear. Give me the  
4940 opened ear of the learner, wakened morning by morning to  
4941 hear the Father’s voice. Even as Thou didst only speak what  
4942 Thou didst hear, may my speaking be the echo of Thy  
4943 speaking to me. When Moses went into the tabernacle to  
4944 speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking unto  
4945 him from off the mercy-seat.’ Lord, may it be so with me  
4946 too. Let a life and character bearing the one mark, that Thy  
4947 words abide and are seen in it, be the preparation for the full  
4948 blessing: Ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto  
4949 you.’ Amen.

4950

4951

4952

4953

4954 TWENTY-THIRD LESSON

4955

4956 Bear fruit, that the Father may give what ye ask;’

4957

4958 Or, Obedience the Path to Power in Prayer.

4959

4960 Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you,

4961 that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should

4962 abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name,

4963 He may give it you.’—John xv. 16.

4964

4965 The fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth

4966 much.’—James. v. 16.

4967

4968 THE promise of the Father’s giving whatsoever we ask is

4969 here once again renewed, in such a connection as to show

4970 us to whom it is that such wonderful influence in the

4971 council chamber of the Most High is to be granted. I chose

4972 you,’ the Master says, and appointed you that ye should go

4973 and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide;’ and then He

4974 adds, to the end that whatsoever ye,’ the fruit-bearing ones,

4975 shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you.’

4976 This is nothing but the fuller expression of what He had

4977 spoken in the words, If ye abide in me.’ He had spoken of

4978 the object of this abiding as the bearing fruit,’ more fruit,’

4979 much fruit;’ in this was God to be glorified, and the mark of

4980 discipleship seen. No wonder that He now adds, that where

4981 the reality of the abiding is seen in fruit abounding and

4982 abiding, this would be the qualification for praying so as to

4983 obtain what we ask. Entire consecration to the fulfilment of

4984 our calling is the condition of effectual prayer, is the key to

4985 the unlimited blessings of Christ’s wonderful prayer-

4986 promises.

4987

4988 There are Christians who fear that such a statement is at  
4989 variance with the doctrine of free grace. But surely not of  
4990 free grace rightly understood, nor with so many express  
4991 statements of God's blessed word. Take the words of St.  
4992 John (1 John iii. 22): Let us love in deed and truth; hereby  
4993 shall we assure our heart before Him. And whatsoever we  
4994 ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His  
4995 commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in His  
4996 sight.' Or take the oft-quoted words of James: The fervent  
4997 effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much;' that is,  
4998 of a man of whom, according to the definition of the Holy  
4999 Spirit, it can be said, He that doeth righteousness, is  
5000 righteous even as He is righteous.' Mark the spirit of so  
5001 many of the Psalms, with their confident appeal to the  
5002 integrity and righteousness of the supplicant. In Ps. xviii,  
5003 David says: The Lord rewarded me according to my  
5004 righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath  
5005 He recompensed me. . . . I was upright before Him, and I  
5006 kept myself from mine iniquity: therefore hath the Lord  
5007 recompensed me according to my righteousness.' (Ps. xviii.  
5008 20-26. See also Ps. vii. 3-5, xv. 1, 2, xviii. 3, 6, xxvi. 1-6,  
5009 cxix. 121, 153.) If we carefully consider such utterances in  
5010 the light of the New Testament, we shall find them in  
5011 perfect harmony with the explicit teaching of the Saviour's  
5012 parting words: If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide  
5013 in my love;' Ye are my friends if ye do what I command  
5014 you.' The word is indeed meant literally: I appointed you  
5015 that ye should go and bear fruit, that,' then, whatsoever ye  
5016 shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you.'

5017

5018 Let us seek to enter into the spirit of what the Saviour here  
5019 teaches us. There is a danger in our evangelical religion of  
5020 looking too much at what it offers from one side, as a

5021 certain experience to be obtained in prayer and faith. There  
5022 is another side which God's word puts very strongly, that of  
5023 obedience as the only path to blessing. What we need is to  
5024 realize that in our relationship to the Infinite Being whom  
5025 we call God who has created and redeemed us, the first  
5026 sentiment that ought to animate us is that of subjection: the  
5027 surrender to His supremacy, His glory, His will, His  
5028 pleasure, ought to be the first and uppermost thought of our  
5029 life. The question is not, how we are to obtain and enjoy His  
5030 favour, for in this the main thing may still be self. But what  
5031 this Being in the very nature of things rightfully claims, and  
5032 is infinitely and unspeakably worthy of, is that His glory  
5033 and pleasure should be my one object. Surrender to His  
5034 perfect and blessed will, a life of service and obedience, is  
5035 the beauty and the charm of heaven. Service and obedience,  
5036 these were the thoughts that were uppermost in the mind of  
5037 the Son, when He dwelt upon earth. Service and obedience,  
5038 these must become with us the chief objects of desire and  
5039 aim, more so than rest or light, or joy or strength: in them  
5040 we shall find the path to all the higher blessedness that  
5041 awaits us.

5042  
5043 Just note what a prominent place the Master gives it, not  
5044 only in the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter, in connection with the abiding,  
5045 but in the 14<sup>th</sup>, where He speaks of the indwelling of the  
5046 Three-One God. In verse 15 we have it: If ye love me, keep  
5047 my commandments, and the Spirit will be given you of the  
5048 Father. Then verse 21: He that hath my commandments and  
5049 keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;' and he shall have the  
5050 special love of my Father resting on him and the special  
5051 manifestation of myself. And then again, verse 23, one of  
5052 the highest of all the exceeding great and precious promises:  
5053 If a man love me he will keep my words, and the Father and  
5054 I will come and take up our abode with him.' Could words

5055 put it more clearly that obedience is the way to the  
5056 indwelling of the Spirit, to His revealing the Son within us,  
5057 and to His again preparing us to be the abode, the home of  
5058 the Father? The indwelling of the Three-One God is the  
5059 heritage of them that obey. Obedience and faith are but two  
5060 aspects of one act,—surrender to God and His will. As faith  
5061 strengthens for obedience, it is in turn strengthened by it:  
5062 faith is made perfect by works. It is to be feared that often  
5063 our efforts to believe have been unavailing because we have  
5064 not taken up the only position in which a large faith is  
5065 legitimate or possible,—that of entire surrender to the  
5066 honour and the will of God. It is the man who is entirely  
5067 consecrated to God and His will who will find the power  
5068 come to claim everything that His God has promised to be  
5069 for him.

5070  
5071 The application of this in the school of prayer is very  
5072 simple, but very solemn. I chose you,' the Master says, and  
5073 appointed you that ye should go and bear fruit,' much fruit  
5074 (verses 5, 8), and that your fruit should abide,' that your life  
5075 might be one of abiding fruit and abiding fruitfulness, that'  
5076 thus, as fruitful branches abiding in me, whatsoever ye shall  
5077 ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you.' O how  
5078 often we have sought to be able to pray the effectual prayer  
5079 for much grace to bear fruit, and have wondered that the  
5080 answer came not. It was because we were reversing the  
5081 Master's order. We wanted to have the comfort and the joy  
5082 and the strength first, that we might do the work easily and  
5083 without any feeling of difficulty or self-sacrifice. And He  
5084 wanted us in faith, without asking whether we felt weak or  
5085 strong, whether the work was hard or easy, in the obedience  
5086 of faith to do what He said: the path of fruit-bearing would  
5087 have led us to the place and the power of prevailing prayer.  
5088 Obedience is the only path that leads to the glory of God.

5089 Not obedience instead of faith, nor obedience to supply the  
5090 shortcomings of faith; no, but faith's obedience gives access  
5091 to all the blessings our God has for us. The baptism of the  
5092 Spirit (xiv. 16), the manifestation of the Son (xiv. 21), the  
5093 indwelling of the Father (xiv. 23), the abiding in Christ's  
5094 love (xv. 10), the privilege of His holy friendship (xv. 14),  
5095 and the power of all-prevailing prayer (xv. 16),—all wait  
5096 for the obedient.

5097

5098 Let us take home the lessons. Now we know the great  
5099 reason why we have not had power in faith to pray  
5100 prevailingly. Our life was not as it should have been: simple  
5101 downright obedience, abiding fruitfulness, was not its chief  
5102 mark. And with our whole heart we approve of the Divine  
5103 appointment: men to whom God is to give such influence in  
5104 the rule of the world, as at their request to do what  
5105 otherwise would not have taken place, men whose will is to  
5106 guide the path in which God's will is to work, must be men  
5107 who have themselves learned obedience, whose loyalty and  
5108 submission to authority must be above all suspicion. Our  
5109 whole soul approves the law: obedience and fruit-bearing,  
5110 the path to prevailing prayer. And with shame we  
5111 acknowledge how little our lives have yet borne this stamp.

5112

5113 Let us yield ourselves to take up the appointment the  
5114 Saviour gives us. Let us study His relation to us as Master.  
5115 Let us seek no more with each new day to think in the first  
5116 place of comfort, or joy, or blessing. Let the first thought  
5117 be: I belong to the Master. Every moment and every  
5118 movement I must act as His property, as a part of Himself,  
5119 as one who only seeks to know and do His will. A servant, a  
5120 slave of Jesus Christ,—let this be the spirit that animates  
5121 me. If He says, No longer do I call you servants, but I have

5122 called you friends,’ let us accept the place of friends: Ye are  
5123 my friends if ye do the things which I command you.’

5124

5125 The one thing He commands us as His branches is to bear  
5126 fruit. Let us live to bless others, to testify of the life and the  
5127 love there is in Jesus. Let us in faith and obedience give our  
5128 whole life to that which Jesus chose us for and appointed us  
5129 to—fruit-bearing. As we think of His electing us to this, and  
5130 take up our appointment as coming from Him who always  
5131 gives all He demands, we shall grow strong in the  
5132 confidence that a life of fruit-bearing, abounding and  
5133 abiding, is within our reach. And we shall understand why  
5134 this fruit-bearing alone can be the path to the place of all  
5135 prevailing prayer. It is the man who, in obedience to the  
5136 Christ of God, is proving that he is doing what his Lord  
5137 wills, for whom the Father will do whatsoever he will:  
5138 Whatsoever we ask we receive, because we keep His  
5139 commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in His  
5140 sight.’

5141

5142 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

5143

5144

5145

5146 Blessed Master! teach me to apprehend fully what I only  
5147 partly realize, that it is only through the will of God,  
5148 accepted and acted out in obedience to His commands, that  
5149 we obtain the power to grasp His will in His promises and  
5150 fully to appropriate them in our prayers. And teach me that  
5151 it is in the path of fruit-bearing that the deeper growth of the  
5152 branch into the Vine can be perfected, and we attain to the  
5153 perfect oneness with Thyself in which we ask whatsoever  
5154 we will.

5155



5156 O Lord! Reveal to us, we pray Thee, how with all the hosts  
5157 of heaven, and with Thyself the Son on earth, and with all  
5158 the men of faith who have glorified Thee on earth,  
5159 obedience to God is our highest privilege, because it gives  
5160 access to oneness with Himself in that which is His highest  
5161 glory—His all perfect will. And reveal to us, we pray Thee,  
5162 how in keeping Thy commandments and bearing fruit  
5163 according to Thy will, our spiritual nature will grow up to  
5164 the full stature of the perfect man, with power to ask and to  
5165 receive whatsoever we will.

5166  
5167 O Lord Jesus! Reveal Thyself to us, and the reality of Thy  
5168 purpose and Thy power to make these Thy wonderful  
5169 promises the daily experience of all who utterly yield  
5170 themselves to Thee and Thy words. Amen.

5171

5172

5173

5174 TWENTY-FOURTH LESSON.

5175

5176 In my Name;’

5177

5178 Or, The All-prevailing Plea.

5179

5180 Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do. If ye  
5181 shall ask me anything in my Name, that will I do. That  
5182 whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, He may  
5183 give it you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall ask  
5184 anything of the Father, He will give it you in my Name.  
5185 Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my Name: ask, and ye  
5186 shall receive. In that day ye shall ask in my Name.’—John  
5187 xiv. 13, 14, xv. 16, xvi. 23, 24, 26.

5188

5189 HITHERTO the disciples had not asked in the Name of  
5190 Christ, nor had He Himself ever used the expression. The  
5191 nearest approach is, met together in my Name.’ Here in His  
5192 parting words, He repeats the word unceasingly in  
5193 connection with those promises of unlimited meaning,  
5194 ‘Whatsoever,’ ‘Anything,’ ‘What ye will,’ to teach them and  
5195 us that His Name is our only, but also our all-sufficient plea.  
5196 The power of prayer and the answer depend on the right use  
5197 of the Name.

5198  
5199 What is a person’s name? That word or expression in which  
5200 the person is called up or represented to us. When I mention  
5201 or hear a name, it calls up before me the whole man, what I  
5202 know of him, and also the impression he has made on me.  
5203 The name of a king includes his honour, his power, his  
5204 kingdom. His name is the symbol of his power. And so each  
5205 name of God embodies and represents some part of the  
5206 glory of the Unseen One. And the Name of Christ is the  
5207 expression of all He has done and all He is and lives to do  
5208 as our Mediator.

5209  
5210 And what is it to do a thing in the name of another? It is to  
5211 come with the power and authority of that other, as his  
5212 representative and substitute. We know how such a use of  
5213 another’s name always supposes a community of interest.  
5214 No one would give another the free use of his name without  
5215 first being assured that his honour and interest were as safe  
5216 with that other as with himself.

5217  
5218 And what is it when Jesus gives us power over His Name,  
5219 the free use of it, with the assurance that whatever we ask in  
5220 it will be given to us? The ordinary comparison of one  
5221 person giving another, on some special occasion, the liberty  
5222 to ask something in his name, comes altogether short

5223 here,—Jesus solemnly gives to all His disciples a general  
5224 and unlimited power of the free use of His Name at all  
5225 times for all they desire. He could not do this if He did not  
5226 know that He could trust us with His interests, that His  
5227 honour would be safe in our hands. The free use of the  
5228 name of another is always the token of great confidence, of  
5229 close union. He who gives his name to another stands aside,  
5230 to let that other act for him; he who takes the name of  
5231 another, gives up his own as of no value. When I go in the  
5232 name of another, I deny myself, I take not only his name,  
5233 but himself and what he is, instead of myself and what I am.

5234

5235 Such a use of the name of a person may be in virtue of a  
5236 legal union. A merchant leaving his home and business,  
5237 gives his chief clerk a general power, by which he can draw  
5238 thousands of pounds in the merchant's name. The clerk  
5239 does this, not for himself, but only in the interests of the  
5240 business. It is because the merchant knows and trusts him as  
5241 wholly devoted to his interests and business, that he dares  
5242 put his name and property at his command. When the Lord  
5243 Jesus went to heaven, He left His work, the management of  
5244 His kingdom on earth, in the hands of His servants. He  
5245 could not do otherwise than also give them His Name to  
5246 draw all the supplies they needed for the due conduct of His  
5247 business. And they have the spiritual power to avail  
5248 themselves of the Name of Jesus just to the extent to which  
5249 they yield themselves to live only for the interests and the  
5250 work of the Master. The use of the Name always supposes  
5251 the surrender of our interests to Him whom we represent.

5252

5253 Or such a use of the name may be in virtue of a life union.  
5254 In the case of the merchant and his clerk, the union is  
5255 temporary. But we know how oneness of life on earth gives  
5256 oneness of name: a child has the father's name because he

5257 has his life. And often the child of a good father has been  
5258 honoured or helped by others for the sake of the name he  
5259 bore. But this would not last long if it were found that it was  
5260 only a name, and that the father's character was wanting.  
5261 The name and the character or spirit must be in harmony.  
5262 When such is the case, the child will have a double claim on  
5263 the father's friends: the character secures and increases the  
5264 love and esteem rendered first for the name's sake. So it is  
5265 with Jesus and the believer: we are one, we have one life,  
5266 one Spirit with Him; for this reason we may come in His  
5267 Name. Our power in using that Name, whether with God, or  
5268 men, or devils depends on the measure of our spiritual life-  
5269 union. The use of the name rests on the unity of life; the  
5270 Name and the Spirit of Jesus are one. [2]

5271  
5272 Or the union that empowers to the use of the Name may be  
5273 the union of love. When a bride whose life has been one of  
5274 poverty, becomes united to the bridegroom, she gives up her  
5275 own name, to be called by his, and has now the full right to  
5276 use it. She purchases in his name, and that name is not  
5277 refused. And this is done because the bridegroom has  
5278 chosen her for himself, counting on her to care for his  
5279 interests: they are now one. And so the Heavenly  
5280 Bridegroom could do nothing less; having loved us and  
5281 made us one with Himself, what could He do but give those  
5282 who bear His Name the right to present it before the Father,  
5283 or to come with it to Himself for all they need. And there is  
5284 no one who gives himself really to live in the Name of  
5285 Jesus, who does not receive in ever-increasing measure the  
5286 spiritual capacity to ask and receive in that Name what he  
5287 will. The bearing of the name of another supposes my  
5288 having given up my own, and with it my own independent  
5289 life; but then, as surely, my possession of all there is in the  
5290 name I have taken instead of my own.

5291

5292 Such illustrations show us how defective the common view  
5293 is of a messenger sent to ask in the name of another, or a  
5294 guilty one appealing to the name of a surety. No Jesus  
5295 Himself is with the Father; it is not an absent one in whose  
5296 name we come. Even when we pray to Jesus Himself, it  
5297 must be in His Name. The name represents the person; to  
5298 ask in the Name is to ask in full union of interest and life  
5299 and love with Himself, as one who lives in and for Him. Let  
5300 the Name of Jesus only have undivided supremacy in my  
5301 heart and life, my faith will grow to the assurance that what  
5302 I ask in that Name cannot be refused. The name and the  
5303 power of asking go together: when the Name of Jesus has  
5304 become the power that rules my life, its power in prayer  
5305 with God will be seen too.

5306

5307 We see thus that everything depends on our own relation to  
5308 the Name: the power it has on my life is the power it will  
5309 have in my prayers. There is more than one expression in  
5310 Scripture which can make this clear to us. When it says, Do  
5311 all in the Name of the Lord Jesus,' we see how this is the  
5312 counterpart of the other, Ask all.' To do all and to ask all in  
5313 His Name, these go together. When we read, We shall walk  
5314 in the Name of our God,' we see how the power of the  
5315 Name must rule in the whole life; only then will it have  
5316 power in prayer. It is not to the lips but to the life God looks  
5317 to see what the Name is to us. When Scripture speaks of  
5318 men who have given their lives for the Name of the Lord  
5319 Jesus,' or of one ready to die for the Name of the Lord  
5320 Jesus,' we see what our relation to the Name must be: when  
5321 it is everything to me, it will obtain everything for me. If I  
5322 let it have all I have, it will let me have all it has.

5323

5324 WHATSOEVER ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do.’  
5325 Jesus means the promise literally. Christians have sought to  
5326 limit it: it looked too free; it was hardly safe to trust man so  
5327 unconditionally. We did not understand that the word in my  
5328 Name’ is its own safeguard. It is a spiritual power which no  
5329 one can use further than he obtains the capacity for, by his  
5330 living and acting in that Name. As we bear that Name  
5331 before men, we have power to use it before God. O let us  
5332 plead for God’s Holy Spirit to show us what the Name  
5333 means, and what the right use of it is. It is through the Spirit  
5334 that the Name, which is above every name in heaven, will  
5335 take the place of supremacy in our heart and life too.

5336

5337 Disciples of Jesus! Let the lessons of this day enter deep  
5338 into your hearts. The Master says: Only pray in my Name;  
5339 whatsoever ye ask will be given. Heaven is set open to you;  
5340 the treasures and powers of the world of spirit are placed at  
5341 your disposal on behalf of men around you. O come, and let  
5342 us learn to pray in the Name of Jesus. As to the disciples,  
5343 He says to us, Hitherto ye have not asked in my Name: ask,  
5344 and ye shall receive.’ Let each disciple of Jesus seek to  
5345 avail himself of the rights of his royal priesthood, and use  
5346 the power placed at his disposal for his circle and his work.  
5347 Let Christians awake and hear the message: your prayer can  
5348 obtain what otherwise will be withheld, can accomplish  
5349 what otherwise remains undone. O awake, and use the name  
5350 of Jesus to open the treasures of heaven for this perishing  
5351 world. Learn as the servants of the King to use His Name:  
5352 WHATSOEVER ye shall ask in my Name, THAT WILL I  
5353 DO.’

5354

5355 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

5356

5357

5358

5359 Blessed Lord! It is as if each lesson Thou givest me has  
5360 such fulness and depths of meaning, that if I can only learn  
5361 that one, I shall know how to pray aright. This day I feel  
5362 again as if I needed but one prayer every day: Lord! Teach  
5363 me what it is to pray in Thy Name. Teach me so to live and  
5364 act, to walk and speak, so to do all in the Name of Jesus,  
5365 that my prayer cannot be anything else but in that blessed  
5366 Name too.

5367

5368 And teach me, Lord! to hold fast the precious promise that  
5369 WHATSOEVER we ask in Thy Name, Thou wilt do, the  
5370 Father will give. Though I do not yet fully understand, and  
5371 still less have fully attained, the wondrous union Thou  
5372 meanest when Thou sayest, IN MY NAME, I would yet  
5373 hold fast the promise until it fills my heart with the  
5374 undoubting assurance: Anything in the Name of Jesus.

5375

5376 O my Lord! let Thy Holy Spirit teach me this. Thou didst  
5377 say of Him, The Comforter, whom the Father shall send IN  
5378 MY NAME.' He knows what it is to be sent from heaven in  
5379 Thy Name, to reveal and to honour the power of that Name  
5380 in Thy servants, to use that Name alone, and so to glorify  
5381 Thee. Lord Jesus! let Thy Spirit dwell in me, and fill me. I  
5382 would, I do yield my whole being to His rule and leading.  
5383 Thy Name and Thy Spirit are one; through Him Thy Name  
5384 will be the strength of my life and my prayer. Then I shall  
5385 be able for Thy Name's sake to forsake all, in Thy Name to  
5386 speak to men and to God, and to prove that this is indeed  
5387 the Name above every name.

5388

5389 Lord Jesus! O teach me by Thy Holy Spirit to pray in Thy  
5390 Name. Amen.

5391

5392 NOTE.

5393

5394 What is meant by praying in Christ's name? It cannot mean  
5395 simply appearing before God with faith in the mediation of  
5396 the Saviour. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them  
5397 to pray, He supplied them with petitions. And afterwards  
5398 Jesus said to them, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my  
5399 Name." Until the Spirit came, the seven petitions of the  
5400 Lord's prayer lay as it were dormant within them. When by  
5401 the Holy Ghost Christ descended into their hearts, they  
5402 desired the very blessings which Christ as our High Priest  
5403 obtains for us by His prayer from the Father. And such  
5404 petitions are always answered. The Father is always willing  
5405 to give what Christ asks. The Spirit of Christ always teaches  
5406 and influences us to offer the petitions which Christ ratifies  
5407 and presents to the Father. To pray in Christ's name is  
5408 therefore to be identified with Christ as to our  
5409 righteousness, and to be identified with Christ in our desires  
5410 by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. To pray in the Spirit,  
5411 to pray according to the will of the Father, to pray in  
5412 Christ's name, are identical expressions. The Father  
5413 Himself loveth us, and is willing to hear us: two  
5414 intercessors, Christ the Advocate above, and the Holy  
5415 Ghost, the Advocate within, are the gifts of His love.

5416

5417 This view may appear at first less consoling than a more  
5418 prevalent one, which refers prayer in Christ's name chiefly  
5419 to our trust in Christ's merit. The defect of this opinion is,  
5420 that it does not combine the intercession of the Saviour with  
5421 the will of the Father, and the indwelling Spirit's aid in  
5422 prayer. Nor does it fully realize the mediation of Christ; for  
5423 the mediation consists not merely in that for Christ's sake  
5424 the Holy Father is able to regard me and my prayer; but  
5425 also, in that Christ Himself presents my petitions as His



5426 petitions, desired by Him for me, even as all blessings are  
5427 purchased for me by His precious blood.

5428

5429 In all prayer, the one essential condition is that we are able  
5430 to offer it in the name of Jesus, as according to His desire  
5431 for us, according to the Father's will, according to the  
5432 Spirit's teaching. And thus praying in Christ's name is  
5433 impossible without self-examination, without reflection,  
5434 without self-denial; in short, without the aid of the Spirit.'—  
5435 Saphiv [Adolph Saphir], *The Lord's Prayer*, pp. 411, 142.

5436

5437

5438 [2] ^Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name,' that is, in my  
5439 nature; for things with God are called according to their  
5440 nature. We ask in Christ's Name, not when at the end of  
5441 some request we say, This I ask in the Name of Jesus  
5442 Christ,' but when we pray according to His nature, which is  
5443 love, which seeketh not its own but only the will of God and  
5444 the good of all creatures. Such asking is the cry of His own  
5445 Spirit in our hearts.—Jukes. *The New Man*.

5446

5447

5448

5449

5450 TWENTY-FIFTH LESSON.

5451

5452 At that day;'

5453

5454 Or, The Holy Spirit and Prayer.

5455

5456 In that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say  
5457 unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name,  
5458 He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my  
5459 Name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

5460 At that day ye shall ask in my Name: and I say not, that I  
5461 will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth  
5462 you.’—John xvi. 23-26.

5463

5464 Praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of  
5465 God.’—JUDE 20, 21.

5466

5467 THE words of John (I John ii. 12-14) to little children, to  
5468 young men, and to fathers suggest the thought that there  
5469 often are in the Christian life three great stages of  
5470 experience. The first, that of the new-born child, with the  
5471 assurance and the joy of forgiveness. The second, the  
5472 transition stage of struggle and growth in knowledge and  
5473 strength: young men growing strong, God’s word doing its  
5474 work in them and giving them victory over the Evil One.  
5475 And then the final stage of maturity and ripeness: the  
5476 Fathers, who have entered deeply into the knowledge and  
5477 fellowship of the Eternal One.

5478

5479 In Christ’s teaching on prayer there appear to be three  
5480 stages in the prayer-life, somewhat analogous. In the  
5481 Sermon on the Mount we have the initial stage: His  
5482 teaching is all comprised in one word, Father. Pray to your  
5483 Father, your Father sees, hears, knows, and will reward:  
5484 how much more than any earthly father! Only be childlike  
5485 and trustful. Then comes later on something like the  
5486 transition stage of conflict and conquest, in words like  
5487 these: This sort goeth not out but by fasting and prayer;’  
5488 Shall not God avenge His own elect who cry day and night  
5489 unto Him?’ And then we have in the parting words, a higher  
5490 stage. The children have become men: they are now the  
5491 Master’s friends, from whom He has no secrets, to whom  
5492 He says, All things that I heard from my Father I made  
5493 known unto you;’ and to whom, in the oft-repeated

5494 whatsoever ye will,' He hands over the keys of the  
5495 kingdom. Now the time has come for the power of prayer in  
5496 His Name to be proved.

5497  
5498 The contrast between this final stage and the previous  
5499 preparatory ones our Saviour marks most distinctly in the  
5500 words we are to meditate on: Hitherto ye have asked  
5501 nothing in my Name;' At that day ye shall ask in my Name.  
5502 We know what at that day' means. It is the day of the  
5503 outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The great work Christ was to  
5504 do on the cross, the mighty power and the complete victory  
5505 to be manifested in His resurrection and ascension, were to  
5506 issue in the coming down from heaven, as never before, of  
5507 the glory of God to dwell in men. The Spirit of the glorified  
5508 Jesus was to come and be the life of His disciples. And one  
5509 of the marks of that wonderful spirit-dispensation was to be  
5510 a power in prayer hitherto unknown—prayer in the Name of  
5511 Jesus, asking and obtaining whatsoever they would, is to be  
5512 the manifestation of the reality of the Spirit's indwelling.

5513  
5514 To understand how the coming of the Holy Spirit was  
5515 indeed to commence a new epoch in the prayer-world, we  
5516 must remember who He is, what His work, and what the  
5517 significance of His not being given until Jesus was glorified.  
5518 It is in the Spirit that God exists, for He is Spirit. It is in the  
5519 Spirit that the Son was begotten of the Father: it is in the  
5520 fellowship of the Spirit that the Father and the Son are one.  
5521 The eternal never-ceasing giving to the Son which is the  
5522 Father's prerogative and the eternal asking and receiving  
5523 which is the Son's right and blessedness—it is through the  
5524 Spirit that this communion of life and love is maintained. It  
5525 has been so from all eternity. It is so specially now, when  
5526 the Son as Mediator ever liveth to pray. The great work  
5527 which Jesus began on earth of reconciling in His own body

5528 God and man, He carries on in heaven. To accomplish this  
5529 He took up into His own person the conflict between God's  
5530 righteousness and our sin. On the cross He once for all  
5531 ended the struggle in His own body. And then He ascended  
5532 to heaven, that thence He might in each member of His  
5533 body carry out the deliverance and manifest the victory He  
5534 had obtained. It is to do this that He ever liveth to pray; in  
5535 His unceasing intercession He places Himself in living  
5536 fellowship with the unceasing prayer of His redeemed ones.  
5537 Or rather, it is His unceasing intercession which shows  
5538 itself in their prayers, and gives them a power they never  
5539 had before.

5540

5541 And He does this through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit,  
5542 the Spirit of the glorified Jesus, was not (John vii. 39), could  
5543 not be, until He had been glorified. This gift of the Father  
5544 was something distinctively new, entirely different from  
5545 what Old Testament saints had known. The work that the  
5546 blood effected in heaven when Christ entered within the  
5547 veil, was something so true and new, the redemption of our  
5548 human nature into fellowship with His resurrection-power  
5549 and His exaltation-glory was so intensely real, the taking up  
5550 of our humanity in Christ into the life of the Three-One God  
5551 was an event of such inconceivable significance, that the  
5552 Holy Spirit, who had to come from Christ's exalted  
5553 humanity to testify in our hearts of what Christ had  
5554 accomplished, was indeed no longer only what He had been  
5555 in the Old Testament. It was literally true the Holy Spirit  
5556 was not yet, for Christ was not yet glorified.' He came now  
5557 first as the Spirit of the glorified Jesus. Even as the Son,  
5558 who was from eternity God, had entered upon a new  
5559 existence as man, and returned to heaven with what He had  
5560 not before, so the Blessed Spirit, whom the Son, on His  
5561 ascension, received from the Father (Acts ii. 33) into His

5562 glorified humanity, came to us with a new life, which He  
5563 had not previously to communicate. Under the Old  
5564 Testament He was invoked as the Spirit of God: at  
5565 Pentecost He descended as the Spirit of the glorified Jesus,  
5566 bringing down and communicating to us the full fruit and  
5567 power of the accomplished redemption.

5568

5569 It is in the intercession of Christ that the continued efficacy  
5570 and application of His redemption is maintained. And it is  
5571 through the Holy Spirit descending from Christ to us that  
5572 we are drawn up into the great stream of His ever-ascending  
5573 prayers. The Spirit prays for us without words: in the depths  
5574 of a heart where even thoughts are at times formless, the  
5575 Spirit takes us up into the wonderful flow of the life of the  
5576 Three-One God. Through the Spirit, Christ's prayers  
5577 become ours, and ours are made His: we ask what we will,  
5578 and it is given to us. We then understand from experience,  
5579 Hitherto ye have not asked in my Name. At that day ye shall  
5580 ask in my Name.'

5581

5582 Brother! what we need to pray in the Name of Christ, to ask  
5583 that we may receive that our joy may be full, is the baptism  
5584 of this Holy Ghost. This is more than the Spirit of God  
5585 under the Old Testament. This is more than the Spirit of  
5586 conversion and regeneration the disciples had before  
5587 Pentecost. This is more than the Spirit with a measure of  
5588 His influence and working. This is the Holy Spirit, the  
5589 Spirit of the glorified Jesus in His exaltation-power, coming  
5590 on us as the Spirit of the indwelling Jesus, revealing the Son  
5591 and the Father within. (John xiv. 16-23.) It is when this  
5592 Spirit is the Spirit not of our hours of prayer, but of our  
5593 whole life and walk, when this Spirit glorifies Jesus in us by  
5594 revealing the completeness of His work, and making us  
5595 wholly one with Him and like Him, that we can pray in His

5596 Name, because we are in very deed one with Him. Then it is  
5597 that we have that immediateness of access to the Father of  
5598 which Jesus says, I say not that I will pray the Father for  
5599 you.’ Oh! we need to understand and believe that to be  
5600 filled with this, the Spirit of the glorified One, is the one  
5601 need of God’s believing people. Then shall we realize what  
5602 it is, with all prayer and supplication to be praying at all  
5603 seasons in the Spirit,’ and what it is, praying in the Holy  
5604 Ghost, to keep ourselves in the love of God.’ At that day ye  
5605 shall ask in my Name.’

5606

5607 And so once again the lesson comes: What our prayer  
5608 avails, depends upon what we are and what our life is. It is  
5609 living in the Name of Christ that is the secret of praying in  
5610 the Name of Christ; living in the Spirit that fits for praying  
5611 in the Spirit. It is abiding in Christ that gives the right and  
5612 power to ask what we will: the extent of the abiding is the  
5613 exact measure of the power in prayer. It is the Spirit  
5614 dwelling within us that prays, not in words and thoughts  
5615 always, but in a breathing and a being deeper than  
5616 utterance. Just so much as there is of Christ’s Spirit in us, is  
5617 there real prayer. Our lives, our lives, O let our lives be full  
5618 of Christ, and full of His Spirit, and the wonderfully  
5619 unlimited promises to our prayer will no longer appear  
5620 strange. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my Name. Ask,  
5621 and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. At that day  
5622 ye shall ask in my Name. Verily, verily, I say unto you,  
5623 Whatsoever ye shall ask the father in my Name, He will  
5624 give it you.’

5625

5626 LORD , TEACH US TO PRAY.’

5627

5628

5629

5630 O my God! in holy awe I bow before Thee, the Three in  
5631 One. Again I have seen how the mystery of prayer is the  
5632 mystery of the Holy Trinity. I adore the Father who ever  
5633 hears, and the Son who ever lives to pray, and the Holy  
5634 Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, to lift us up  
5635 into the fellowship of that ever-blessed, never-ceasing  
5636 asking and receiving. I bow, my God, in adoring worship,  
5637 before the infinite condescension that thus, through the Holy  
5638 Spirit, takes us and our prayers into the Divine Life, and its  
5639 fellowship of love.

5640

5641 O my Blessed Lord Jesus! Teach me to understand Thy  
5642 lesson, that it is the indwelling Spirit, streaming from Thee,  
5643 uniting to Thee, who is the Spirit of prayer. Teach me what  
5644 it is as an empty, wholly consecrated vessel, to yield myself  
5645 to His being my life. Teach me to honour and trust Him, as  
5646 a living Person, to lead my life and my prayer. Teach me  
5647 specially in prayer to wait in holy silence, and give Him  
5648 place to breathe within me His unutterable intercession.  
5649 And teach me that through Him it is possible to pray  
5650 without ceasing, and to pray without failing, because He  
5651 makes me partaker of the never-ceasing and never-failing  
5652 intercession in which Thou, the Son, dost appear before the  
5653 Father. Yea, Lord, fulfil in me Thy promise, At that day ye  
5654 shall ask in my Name. Verily, verily, I say unto you,  
5655 Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, that will  
5656 He give.' Amen.

5657

5658

5659

5660 NOTE.

5661

5662 Prayer has often been compared to breathing: we have only  
5663 to carry out the comparison fully to see how wonderful the

5664 place is which the Holy Spirit occupies. With every breath  
5665 we expel the impure air which would soon cause our death,  
5666 and inhale again the fresh air to which we owe our life. So  
5667 we give out from us, in confession the sins, in prayer the  
5668 needs and the desires of our heart. And in drawing in our  
5669 breath again, we inhale the fresh air of the promises, and the  
5670 love, and the life of God in Christ. We do this through the  
5671 Holy Spirit, who is the breath of our life.

5672

5673 And this He is because He is the breath of God. The Father  
5674 breathes Him into us, to unite Himself with our life. And  
5675 then just as on every expiration there follows again the  
5676 inhaling or drawing in of the breath, so God draws in again  
5677 His breath, and the Spirit returns to Him laden with the  
5678 desires and needs of our hearts. And thus the Holy Spirit is  
5679 the breath of the life of God, and the breath of the new life  
5680 in us. As God breathes Him out, we receive Him in answer  
5681 to prayer; as we breathe Him back again, He rises to God  
5682 laden with our supplications. As the Spirit of God, in whom  
5683 the Father and the Son are one, and the intercession of the  
5684 Son reaches the Father, He is to us the Spirit of prayer. True  
5685 prayer is the living experience of the truth of the Holy  
5686 Trinity. The Spirit's breathing, the Son's intercession, the  
5687 Father's will, these three become one in us.

5688

5689

5690

5691 TWENTY-SIXTH LESSON.

5692

5693 I have prayed for thee;

5694

5695 Or, Christ the Intercessor.

5696



5697 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.'—Luke  
5698 xxii. 32.

5699

5700 I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you.'—  
5701 John xvi. 26.

5702

5703 He ever liveth to make intercession.'—Heb. vii. 25.

5704

5705 ALL growth in the spiritual life is connected with the  
5706 clearer insight into what Jesus is to us. The more I realize  
5707 that Christ must be all to me and in me, that all in Christ is  
5708 indeed for me, the more I learn to live the real life of faith,  
5709 which, dying to self, lives wholly in Christ. The Christian  
5710 life is no longer the vain struggle to live right, but the  
5711 resting in Christ and finding strength in Him as our life, to  
5712 fight the fight and gain the victory of faith. This is specially  
5713 true of the life of prayer. As it too comes under the law of  
5714 faith alone, and is seen in the light of the fulness and  
5715 completeness there is in Jesus, the believer understands that  
5716 it need no longer be a matter of strain or anxious care, but  
5717 an experience of what Christ will do for him and in him—a  
5718 participation in that life of Christ which, as on earth, so in  
5719 heaven, ever ascends to the Father as prayer. And he begins  
5720 to pray, not only trusting in the merits of Jesus, or in the  
5721 intercession by which our unworthy prayers are made  
5722 acceptable, but in that near and close union in virtue of  
5723 which He prays in us and we in Him. [3] ^ The whole of  
5724 salvation is Christ Himself: He has given HIMSELF to us;  
5725 He Himself lives in us. Because He prays, we pray too. As  
5726 the disciples, when they saw Jesus pray, asked Him to make  
5727 them partakers of what He knew of prayer, so we, now we  
5728 see Him as intercessor on the throne, know that He makes  
5729 us participate with Himself in the life of prayer.

5730

5731 How clearly this comes out in the last night of His life. In  
5732 His high-priestly prayer (John xvii.), He shows us how and  
5733 what He has to pray to the Father, and will pray when once  
5734 ascended to heaven. And yet He had in His parting address  
5735 so repeatedly also connected His going to the Father with  
5736 their new life of prayer. The two would be ultimately  
5737 connected: His entrance on the work of His eternal  
5738 intercession would be the commencement and the power of  
5739 their new prayer-life in His Name. It is the sight of Jesus in  
5740 His intercession that gives us power to pray in His Name:  
5741 all right and power of prayer is Christ's; He makes us share  
5742 in His intercession.

5743

5744 To understand this, think first of His intercession: He ever  
5745 liveth to make intercession. The work of Christ on earth as  
5746 Priest was but a beginning. It was as Aaron He shed His  
5747 blood; it is as Melchizedek that He now lives within the veil  
5748 to continue His work, after the power of the eternal life. As  
5749 Melchizedek is more glorious than Aaron, so it is in the  
5750 work of intercession that the atonement has its true power  
5751 and glory. It is Christ that died: yea more, who is even at the  
5752 right hand of God, who maketh intercession for us.' That  
5753 intercession is an intense reality, a work that is absolutely  
5754 necessary, and without which the continued application of  
5755 redemption cannot take place. In the incarnation and  
5756 resurrection of Jesus the wondrous reconciliation took  
5757 place, by which man became partaker of the Divine life and  
5758 blessedness. But the real personal appropriation of this  
5759 reconciliation in each of His members here below cannot  
5760 take place without the unceasing exercise of His Divine  
5761 power by the head in heaven. In all conversion and  
5762 sanctification, in every victory over sin and the world, there  
5763 is a real forth-putting of the power of Him who is mighty to  
5764 save. And this exercise of His power only takes place

5765 through His prayer: He asks of the Father, and receives  
5766 from the Father. He is able to save to the uttermost, because  
5767 He ever liveth to make intercession.’ There is not a need of  
5768 His people but He receives in intercession what the  
5769 Godhead has to give: His mediation on the throne is as real  
5770 and indispensable as on the cross. Nothing takes place  
5771 without His intercession: it engages all His time and  
5772 powers, is His unceasing occupation at the right hand of the  
5773 Father.

5774

5775 And we participate not only in the benefits of this His work,  
5776 but in the work itself. This because we are His body. Body  
5777 and members are one: The head cannot say to the feet, I  
5778 have no need of thee.’ We share with Jesus in all He is and  
5779 has: The glory which Thou gavest me, I have given them.’  
5780 We are partakers of His life, His righteousness, His work:  
5781 we share with Him in His intercession too; it is not a work  
5782 He does without us.

5783

5784 We do this because we are partakers of His life: Christ is  
5785 our life;’ No longer I, but Christ liveth in me.’ The life in  
5786 Him and in us is identical, one and the same. His life in us  
5787 is an ever-praying life. When it descends and takes  
5788 possession of us, it does not lose its character; in us too it is  
5789 the every-praying life—a life that without ceasing asks and  
5790 receives from God. And this not as if there were two  
5791 separate currents of prayer rising upwards, one from Him,  
5792 and one from His people. No, but the substantial life-union  
5793 is also prayer-union: what He prays passes through us, what  
5794 we pray passes through Him. He is the angel with the  
5795 golden censer: UNTO HIM there was given much incense,’  
5796 the secret of acceptable prayer, that He should add it unto  
5797 the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar.’ We live,  
5798 we abide in Him, the Interceding One.

5799

5800 The Only-begotten is the only one who has the right to pray:  
5801 to Him alone it was said, Ask, and it shall be given Thee.’  
5802 As in all other things the fulness dwells in Him, so the true  
5803 prayer-fulness too; He alone has the power of prayer. And  
5804 just as the growth of the spiritual life consists in the clearer  
5805 insight that all the treasures are in Him, and that we too are  
5806 in Him, to receive each moment what we possess in Him,  
5807 grace for grace, so with the prayer-life too. Our faith in the  
5808 intercession of Jesus must not only be that He prays in our  
5809 stead, when we do not or cannot pray, but that, as the  
5810 Author of our life and our faith, He draws us on to pray in  
5811 unison with Himself. Our prayer must be a work of faith in  
5812 this sense too, that as we know that Jesus communicates His  
5813 whole life in us, He also out of that prayerfulness which is  
5814 His alone breathes into us our praying.

5815

5816 To many a believer it was a new epoch in his spiritual life  
5817 when it was revealed to him how truly and entirely Christ  
5818 was his life, standing good as surety for his remaining  
5819 faithful and obedient. It was then first that he really began to  
5820 life a faith-life. No less blessed will be the discovery that  
5821 Christ is surety for our prayer-life too, the centre and  
5822 embodiment of all prayer, to be communicated by Him  
5823 through the Holy Spirit to His people. He ever liveth to  
5824 make intercession’ as the Head of the body, as the Leader in  
5825 that new and living way which He hath opened up, as the  
5826 Author and the Perfecter of our faith. He provides in  
5827 everything for the life of His redeemed ones by giving His  
5828 own life in them: He cares for their life of prayer, by taking  
5829 them up into His heavenly prayer-life, by giving and  
5830 maintaining His prayer-life within them. I have prayed for  
5831 thee,’ not to render thy faith needless, but that thy faith fail  
5832 not.’ our faith and prayer of faith is rooted in His. It is, if ye

5833 abide in me,' the ever-living Intercessor, and pray with me  
5834 and in me: ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto  
5835 you.'

5836  
5837 The thought of our fellowship in the intercession of Jesus  
5838 reminds us of what He has taught us more than once before,  
5839 how all these wonderful prayer-promises have as their aim  
5840 and their justification, the glory of God in the manifestation  
5841 of His kingdom and the salvation of sinners. As long as we  
5842 only or chiefly pray for ourselves, the promises of the last  
5843 night must remain a sealed book to us. It is to the fruit-  
5844 bearing branches of the Vine; it is to disciples sent into the  
5845 world as the Father sent Him, to live for perishing men; it is  
5846 to His faithful servants and intimate friends who take up the  
5847 work He leaves behind, who have like their Lord become as  
5848 the seed-corn, losing its life to multiply it manifold;—it is to  
5849 such that the promises are given. Let us each find out what  
5850 the work is, and who the souls are entrusted to our special  
5851 prayers; let us make our intercession for them our life of  
5852 fellowship with God, and we shall not only find the  
5853 promises of power in prayer made true to us, but we shall  
5854 then first begin to realize how our abiding in Christ and His  
5855 abiding in us makes us share in His own joy of blessing and  
5856 saving men.

5857  
5858 O most wonderful intercession of our Blessed Lord Jesus, to  
5859 which we not only owe everything, but in which we are  
5860 taken up as active partners and fellow-workers! Now we  
5861 understand what it is to pray in the Name of Jesus, and why  
5862 it has such power. In His Name, in His Spirit, in Himself, in  
5863 perfect union with Him. O wondrous, ever active, and most  
5864 efficacious intercession of the man Christ Jesus! When shall  
5865 we be wholly taken up into it and always pray in it?  
5866

5867 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY. ’

5868

5869

5870

5871 Blessed Lord! In lowly adoration I would again bow before  
5872 Thee. Thy whole redemption work has now passed into  
5873 prayer; all that now occupies Thee in maintaining and  
5874 dispensing what Thou didst purchase with Thy blood is only  
5875 prayer. Thou ever livest to pray. And because we are and  
5876 abide in Thee, the direct access to the Father is always open,  
5877 our life can be one of unceasing prayer, and the answer to  
5878 our prayer is sure.

5879

5880 Blessed Lord! Thou hast invited Thy people to be Thy  
5881 fellow-workers in a life of prayer. Thou hast united Thyself  
5882 with Thy people and makest them as Thy body share with  
5883 Thee in that ministry of intercession through which alone  
5884 the world can be filled with the fruit of Thy redemption and  
5885 the glory of the Father. With more liberty than ever I come  
5886 to Thee, my Lord, and beseech Thee: Teach me to pray.  
5887 Thy life is prayer, Thy life is mine. Lord! teach me to pray,  
5888 in Thee, like Thee.

5889

5890 And, O my Lord! Give me specially to know, as Thou didst  
5891 promise Thy disciples, that Thou art in the Father, and I in  
5892 Thee, and Thou in me. Let the uniting power of the Holy  
5893 Spirit make my whole life an abiding in Thee and Thy  
5894 intercession, so that my prayer may be its echo, and the  
5895 Father hear me in Thee and Thee in me. Lord Jesus! let Thy  
5896 mind in everything be in me, and my life in everything by in  
5897 Thee. So shall I be prepared to be the channel through  
5898 which Thy intercession pours its blessing on the world.  
5899 Amen.

5900

5901 NOTE.

5902

5903 The new epoch of prayer in the Name of Jesus is pointed  
5904 out by Christ as the time of the outpouring of the Spirit, in  
5905 which the disciples enter upon a more enlightened  
5906 apprehension of the economy of redemption, and become as  
5907 clearly conscious of their oneness with Jesus as of His  
5908 oneness with the Father. Their prayer in the Name of Jesus  
5909 is now directly to the Father Himself. "I say not that I will  
5910 pray for you, for the Father Himself loveth you," Jesus says;  
5911 while He had previously spoken of the time before the  
5912 Spirit's coming: "I will pray the Father, and He will give  
5913 you the Comforter." This prayer thus has as its central  
5914 thought the insight into our being united to God in Christ as  
5915 on both sides the living bond of union between God and us  
5916 (John xvii. 23: "I in them and Thou in me"), so that in Jesus  
5917 we behold the Father as united to us, and ourselves as  
5918 united to the Father. Jesus Christ must have been revealed  
5919 to us, not only through the truth in the mind, but in our  
5920 inmost personal consciousness as the living personal  
5921 reconciliation, as He in whom God's Fatherhood and  
5922 Father-love have been perfectly united with human nature  
5923 and it with God. Not that with the immediate prayer to the  
5924 Father, the mediatorship of Christ is set aside; but it is no  
5925 longer looked at as something external, existing outside of  
5926 us, but as a real living spiritual existence within us, so that  
5927 the Christ for us, the Mediator, has really become Christ in  
5928 us.

5929

5930 When the consciousness of this oneness between God in  
5931 Christ and us in Christ still is wanting, or has been darkened  
5932 by the sense of guilt, then the prayer of faith looks to our  
5933 Lord as the Advocate, who pays the Father for us.  
5934 (Compare John xvi. 26 with John xiv. 16, 17; ix. 20; Luke

5935 xxi. 32; I John ii. 1.) To take Christ thus in prayer as  
5936 Advocate, is according to John xvi. 26 not perfectly the  
5937 same as the prayer in His Name. Christ's advocacy is meant  
5938 to lead us on to that inner self-standing life-union with Him,  
5939 and with the Father in Him, in virtue of which Christ is He  
5940 in whom God enters into immediate relation and unites  
5941 Himself with us, and in whom we in all circumstances enter  
5942 into immediate relation with God. Even so the prayer in the  
5943 Name of Jesus does not consist in our prayer at His  
5944 command: the disciples had prayed thus ever since the Lord  
5945 had given them His "Our Father," and yet He says,  
5946 "Hitherto ye have not prayed in my Name." Only when the  
5947 mediation of Christ has become, through the indwelling of  
5948 the Holy Spirit, life and power within us, and so His mind,  
5949 as it found expression in His word and work, has taken  
5950 possession of and filled our personal consciousness and  
5951 will, so that in faith and love we have Jesus in us as the  
5952 Reconciler who has actually made us one with God: only  
5953 then His Name, which included His nature and His work, is  
5954 become truth and power in us (not only for us), and we have  
5955 in the Name of Jesus the free, direct access to the Father  
5956 which is sure of being heard. Prayer in the Name of Jesus is  
5957 the liberty of a son with the Father, just as Jesus had this as  
5958 the First-begotten. We pray in the place of Jesus, not as if  
5959 we could put ourselves in His place, but in as far as we are  
5960 in Him and He in us. We go direct to the Father, but only as  
5961 the Father is in Christ, not as if He were separate from  
5962 Christ. Wherever thus the inner man does not live in Christ  
5963 and has Him not present as the Living One, where His word  
5964 is not ruling in the heart in its Spirit-power, where His truth  
5965 and life have not become the life of our soul, it is vain to  
5966 think that a formula like "for the sake of Thy dear Son" will  
5967 avail.'—Christliche Ethik, von Dr. I. T. Beck, Tübingen, iii.  
5968 39.



5969

5970

5971 [3] See on the difference between having Christ as an  
5972 Advocate or Intercessor who stands outside of us, and the  
5973 having Him within us, we abiding in Him and He in us  
5974 through the Holy Spirit perfecting our union with Him, so  
5975 that we ourselves can come directly to the Father in His  
5976 Name,—the note above from Beck of Tübingen.

5977

5978

5979

5980 TWENTY-SEVENTH LESSON.

5981

5982 Father, I will;’

5983

5984 Or, Christ the High Priest

5985

5986 Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me may  
5987 be with me where I am.’—John xvii. 24.

5988

5989 IN His parting address, Jesus gives His disciples the full  
5990 revelation of what the New Life was to be, when once the  
5991 kingdom of God had come in power. In the indwelling of  
5992 the Holy Spirit, in union with Him the heavenly Vine, in  
5993 their going forth to witness and to suffer for Him, they were  
5994 to find their calling and their blessedness. In between His  
5995 setting forth of their future new life, the Lord had repeatedly  
5996 given the most unlimited promises as to the power their  
5997 prayers might have. And now in closing, He Himself  
5998 proceeds to pray. To let His disciples have the joy of  
5999 knowing what His intercession for them in heaven as their  
6000 High Priest will be, He gives this precious legacy of His  
6001 prayer to the Father. He does this at the same time because  
6002 they as priests are to share in His work of intercession, that

6003 they and we might know how to perform this holy work. In  
6004 the teaching of our Lord on this last night, we have learned  
6005 to understand that these astonishing prayer-promises have  
6006 not been given in our own behalf, but in the interest of the  
6007 Lord and His kingdom: it is from the Lord Himself alone  
6008 that we can learn what the prayer in His Name is to be and  
6009 to obtain. We have understood that to pray in His Name is  
6010 to pray in perfect unity with Himself: the high-priestly  
6011 prayer will teach all that the prayer in the Name of Jesus  
6012 may ask and expect.

6013

6014 This prayer is ordinarily divided into three parts. Our Lord  
6015 first prays for Himself (v. 1-5), then for His disciples (6-19),  
6016 and last for all the believing people through all ages (20-  
6017 26). The follower of Jesus, who gives himself to the work of  
6018 intercession, and would fain try how much of blessing he  
6019 can pray down upon his circle in the Name of Jesus, will in  
6020 all humility let himself be led of the Spirit to study this  
6021 wonderful prayer as one of the most important lessons of  
6022 the school of prayer.

6023

6024 First of all, Jesus prays for Himself, for His being glorified,  
6025 that so He may glorify the Father. Father! Glorify Thy Son.  
6026 And now, Father, glorify me.' And He brings forward the  
6027 grounds on which He thus prays. A holy covenant had been  
6028 concluded between the Father and the Son in heaven. The  
6029 Father had promised Him power over all flesh as the reward  
6030 of His work: He had done the work, He had glorified the  
6031 Father, and His one purpose is now still further to glorify  
6032 Him. With the utmost boldness He asks that the Father may  
6033 glorify Him, that He may now be and do for His people all  
6034 He has undertaken.

6035

6036 Disciple of Jesus! here you have the first lesson in your  
6037 work of priestly intercession, to be learned from the  
6038 example of your great High Priest. To pray in the Name of  
6039 Jesus is to pray in unity, in sympathy with Him. As the Son  
6040 began His prayer by making clear His relation to the Father,  
6041 pleading His work and obedience and His desire to see the  
6042 Father glorified, do so too. Draw near and appear before the  
6043 Father in Christ. Plead His finished work. Say that you are  
6044 one with it, that you trust on it, live in it. Say that you too  
6045 have given yourself to finish the work the Father has given  
6046 you to do, and to live alone for His glory. And ask then  
6047 confidently that the Son may be glorified in you. This is  
6048 praying in the Name, in the very words, in the Spirit of  
6049 Jesus, in union with Jesus Himself. Such prayer has power.  
6050 If with Jesus you glorify the Father, the Father will glorify  
6051 Jesus by doing what you ask in His Name. It is only when  
6052 your own personal relation on this point, like Christ's, is  
6053 clear with God, when you are glorifying Him, and seeking  
6054 all for His glory, that like Christ, you will have power to  
6055 intercede for those around you.

6056

6057 Our Lord next prays for the circle of His disciples. He  
6058 speaks of them as those whom the Father has given Him.  
6059 Their chief mark is that they have received Christ's word.  
6060 He says of them that He now sends them into the world in  
6061 His place, just as the Father had sent Himself. And He asks  
6062 two things for them: that the Father keep them from the evil  
6063 one, and sanctify them through His Word, because He  
6064 sanctifies Himself for them.

6065

6066 Just like the Lord, each believing intercessor has his own  
6067 immediate circle for whom he first prays. Parents have their  
6068 children, teachers their pupils, pastors their flocks, all  
6069 workers their special charge, all believers those whose care

6070 lies upon their hearts. It is of great consequence that  
6071 intercession should be personal, pointed, and definite. And  
6072 then our first prayer must always be that they may receive  
6073 the word. But this prayer will not avail unless with our Lord  
6074 we say, I have given them Thy word:’ it is this gives us  
6075 liberty and power in intercession for souls. Not only pray  
6076 for them, but speak to them. And when they have received  
6077 the word, let us pray much for their being kept from the evil  
6078 one, for their being sanctified through that word. Instead of  
6079 being hopeless or judging or giving up those who fall, let us  
6080 pray for our circle, Father! Keep them in Thy Name;’  
6081 Sanctify them through Thy truth.’ Prayer in the Name of  
6082 Jesus availeth much: What ye will shall be done unto you.’  
6083

6084 And then follows our Lord’s prayer for a still wider circle. I  
6085 pray not only for these, but for them who through their  
6086 word shall believe.’ His priestly heart enlarges itself to  
6087 embrace all places and all time, and He prays that all who  
6088 belong to Him may everywhere be one, as God’s proof to  
6089 the world of the divinity of His mission, and then that they  
6090 may ever be with Him in His glory. Until then that the love  
6091 wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in  
6092 them.’  
6093

6094 The disciple of Jesus, who has first in his own circle proved  
6095 the power of prayer, cannot confine himself within its  
6096 limits: he prays for the Church universal and its different  
6097 branches. He prays specially for the unity of the Spirit and  
6098 of love. He prays for its being one in Christ, as a witness to  
6099 the world that Christ, who hath wrought such a wonder as to  
6100 make love triumph over selfishness and separation, is  
6101 indeed the Son of God sent from heaven. Every believer  
6102 ought to pray much that the unity of the Church, not in

6103 external organizations, but in spirit and in truth, may be  
6104 made manifest.

6105

6106 So much for the matter of the prayer. Now for its mode.

6107 Jesus says, FATHER! I WILL.' On the ground of His right

6108 as Son, and the Father's promise to Him, and His finished

6109 work, He might do so. The Father had said to Him, Ask of

6110 me, and I will give Thee.' He simply availed Himself of the

6111 Father's promise. Jesus has given us a like promise:

6112 Whatsoever ye will shall be done unto you.' He asks me in

6113 His Name to say what I will. Abiding in Him, in a living

6114 union with Him in which man is nothing and Christ all, the

6115 believer has the liberty to take up that word of His High

6116 Priest and, in answer to the question What wilt thou?' to

6117 say, FATHER! I WILL all that Thou hast promised.' This is

6118 nothing but true faith; this is honouring God: to be assured

6119 that such confidence in saying what I will is indeed

6120 acceptable to Him. At first sight, our heart shrinks from the

6121 expression; we feel neither the liberty nor the power to

6122 speak thus. It is a word for which alone in the most entire

6123 abnegation of our will grace will be given, but for which

6124 grace will most assuredly be given to each one who loses

6125 his will in his Lord's. He that loseth his will shall find it; he

6126 that gives up his will entirely shall find it again renewed and

6127 strengthened with a Divine Strength. FATHER! I WILL:'

6128 this is the keynote of the everlasting, ever-active, all-

6129 prevailing intercession of our Lord in heaven. It is only in

6130 union with Him that our prayer avails; in union with Him it

6131 avails much. If we but abide in Him, living, and walking,

6132 and doing all things in His Name; if we but come and bring

6133 each separate petition, tested and touched by His Word and

6134 Spirit, and cast it into the mighty stream of intercession that

6135 goes up from Him, to be borne upward and presented before

6136 the Father;—we shall have the full confidence that we

6137 receive the petitions we ask: the Father! I will' will be  
6138 breathed into us by the Spirit Himself. We shall lose  
6139 ourselves in Him, and become nothing, to find that in our  
6140 impotence we have power and prevail.

6141  
6142 Disciples of Jesus! Called to be like your Lord in His  
6143 priestly intercession, when, O when! Shall we awaken to the  
6144 glory, passing all conception, of this our destiny to plead  
6145 and prevail with God for perishing men? O when shall we  
6146 shake off the sloth that clothes itself with the pretence of  
6147 humility, and yield ourselves wholly to God's Spirit, that  
6148 He may fill our wills with light and with power, to know,  
6149 and to take, and to possess all that our God is waiting to  
6150 give to a will that lays hold on Him.

6151  
6152 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

6153  
6154  
6155

6156 O my Blessed High Priest! who am I that Thou shouldest  
6157 thus invite me to share with Thee in Thy power of  
6158 prevailing intercession! And why, O my Lord! am I so slow  
6159 of heart to understand and believe and exercise this  
6160 wonderful privilege to which Thou hast redeemed Thy  
6161 people. O Lord! give Thy grace that this may increasingly  
6162 be my unceasing life-work—in praying without ceasing to  
6163 draw down the blessing of heaven on all my surroundings  
6164 on earth.

6165  
6166 Blessed Lord! I come now to accept this my calling. For  
6167 this I would forsake all and follow Thee. Into Thy hands I  
6168 would believingly yield my whole being: form, train,  
6169 inspire me to be one of Thy prayer-legion, wrestlers who  
6170 watch and strive in prayer, Israels, God's princes, who have

6171 power and prevail. Take possession of my heart, and fill it  
6172 with the one desire for the glory of God in the ingathering,  
6173 and sanctification, and union of those whom the Father hath  
6174 given Thee. Take my mind and let this be my study and my  
6175 wisdom, to know when prayer can bring a blessing. Take  
6176 me wholly and fit me as a priest ever to stand before God  
6177 and to bless in His Name.

6178

6179 Blessed Lord! Be it here, as through all the spiritual life:  
6180 Thou all, I nothing. And be it here my experience too that  
6181 he that has and seeks nothing for himself, receives all, even  
6182 to the wonderful grace of sharing with Thee in Thine  
6183 everlasting ministry of intercession. Amen.

6184

6185

6186

6187 TWENTY-EIGHTH LESSON.

6188

6189 Father! Not what I will;’

6190

6191 Or, Christ the Sacrifice.

6192

6193 And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto  
6194 Thee; remove this cup from me: howbeit not what I will,  
6195 but what Thou wilt.’—Mark xiv. 36.

6196

6197 WHAT a contrast within the space of a few hours! What a  
6198 transition from the quiet elevation of that, He lifted up His  
6199 eyes to heaven, and said, FATHER I WILL,’ to that falling  
6200 on the ground and crying in agony. My Father! Not what I  
6201 will.’ In the one we see the High Priest within the veil in  
6202 His all-prevailing intercession; in the other, the sacrifice on  
6203 the altar opening the way through the rent veil. The high-  
6204 priestly Father! I will,’ in order of time precedes the

6205 sacrificial Father! Not what I will;’ but this was only by  
6206 anticipation, to show what the intercession would be when  
6207 once the sacrifice was brought. In reality it was that prayer  
6208 at the altar, Father! Not what I will,’ in which the prayer  
6209 before the throne, Father! I will,’ had its origin and its  
6210 power. It is from the entire surrender of His will in  
6211 Gethsemane that the High Priest on the throne has the  
6212 power to ask what He will, has the right to make His people  
6213 share in that power too, and ask what they will.

6214

6215 For all who would learn to pray in the school of Jesus, this  
6216 Gethsemane lesson is one of the most sacred and precious.  
6217 To a superficial scholar it may appear to take away the  
6218 courage to pray in faith. If even the earnest supplication of  
6219 the Son was not heard, if even the Beloved had to say, NOT  
6220 WHAT I WILL!’ how much more do we need to speak so.  
6221 And thus it appears impossible that the promises which the  
6222 Lord had given only a few hours previously,  
6223 WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK,’ WHATSOEVER YE  
6224 WILL,’ could have been meant literally. A deeper insight  
6225 into the meaning of Gethsemane would teach us that we  
6226 have just here the sure ground and the open way to the  
6227 assurance of an answer to our prayer. Let us draw nigh in  
6228 reverent and adoring wonder, to gaze on this great sight—  
6229 God’s Son thus offering up prayer and supplications with  
6230 strong crying and tears, and not obtaining what He asks. He  
6231 Himself is our Teacher, and will open up to us the mystery  
6232 of His holy sacrifice, as revealed in this wondrous prayer.

6233

6234 To understand the prayer, let us note the infinite difference  
6235 between what our Lord prayed a little ago as a Royal High  
6236 Priest, and what He here supplicates in His weakness. There  
6237 it was for the glorifying of the Father He prayed, and the  
6238 glorifying of Himself and His people as the fulfilment of



6239 distinct promises that had been given Him. He asked what  
6240 He knew to be according to the word and the will of the  
6241 Father; He might boldly say, FATHER! I WILL.’ Here He  
6242 prays for something in regard to which the Father’s will is  
6243 not yet clear to Him. As far as He knows, it is the Father’s  
6244 will that He should drink the cup. He had told His disciples  
6245 of the cup He must drink: a little later He would again say,  
6246 The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink  
6247 it?’ It was for this He had come to this earth. But when, in  
6248 the unutterable agony of soul that burst upon him as the  
6249 power of darkness came upon Him, and He began to taste  
6250 the first drops of death as the wrath of God against sin, His  
6251 human nature, as it shuddered in presence of the awful  
6252 reality of being made a curse, gave utterance in this cry of  
6253 anguish, to its desire that, if God’s purpose could be  
6254 accomplished without it, He might be spared the awful cup:  
6255 Let this cup pass from me.’ That desire was the evidence of  
6256 the intense reality of His humanity. The Not as I will’ kept  
6257 that desire from being sinful: as He pleadingly cries, All  
6258 things are possible with Thee,’ and returns again to still  
6259 more earnest prayer that the cup may be removed, it is His  
6260 thrice-repeated NOT WHAT I WILL’ that constitutes the  
6261 very essence and worth of His sacrifice. He had asked for  
6262 something of which He could not say: I know it is Thy will.  
6263 He had pleaded God’s power and love, and had then  
6264 withdrawn it in His final, THY WILL BE DONE.’ The  
6265 prayer that the cup should pass away could not be  
6266 answered; the prayer of submission that God’s will be done  
6267 was heard, and gloriously answered in His victory first over  
6268 the fear, and then over the power of death.  
6269  
6270 It is in this denial of His will, this complete surrender of His  
6271 will to the will of the Father, that Christ’s obedience  
6272 reached its highest perfection. It is from the sacrifice of the

6273 will in Gethsemane that the sacrifice of the life on Calvary  
6274 derives its value. It is here, as Scripture saith, that He  
6275 learned obedience, and became the author of everlasting  
6276 salvation to all that obey Him. It was because He there, in  
6277 that prayer, became obedient unto death, even the death of  
6278 the cross, that God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him  
6279 the power to ask what He will. It was in that Father! Not  
6280 what I will,' that He obtained the power for that other  
6281 FATHER! I will.' It was by Christ's submittal in  
6282 Gethsemane to have not His will done, that He secured for  
6283 His people the right to say to them, Ask whatsoever ye  
6284 will.'

6285

6286 Let me look at them again, the deep mysteries that  
6287 Gethsemane offers to my view. There is the first: the Father  
6288 offers His Well-beloved the cup, the cup of wrath. The  
6289 second: the Son, always so obedient, shrinks back, and  
6290 implores that He may not have to drink it. The third: the  
6291 Father does not grant the Son His request, but still gives the  
6292 cup. And then the last: the Son yields His will, is content  
6293 that His will be not done, and goes out to Calvary to drink  
6294 the cup. O Gethsemane! in thee I see how my Lord could  
6295 give me such unlimited assurance of an answer to my  
6296 prayers. As my surety He won it for me, by His consent to  
6297 have His petition unanswered.

6298

6299 This is in harmony with the whole scheme of redemption.  
6300 Our Lord always wins for us the opposite of what He  
6301 suffered. He was bound that we might go free. He was made  
6302 sin that we might become the righteousness of God. He died  
6303 that we might live. He bore God's curse that God's blessing  
6304 might be ours. He endured the not answering of His prayer,  
6305 that our prayers might find an answer. Yea, He spake, Not

6306 as I will,' that He might say to us, If ye abide in me, ask  
6307 what ye will; it shall be done unto you.'

6308

6309 Yes, If ye abide in me;' here in Gethsemane the word  
6310 acquires new force and depth. Christ is our Head, who as  
6311 surety stands in our place, and bears what we must for ever  
6312 have borne. We had deserved that God should turn a deaf  
6313 ear to us, and never listen to our cry. Christ comes, and  
6314 suffers this too for us: He suffers what we had merited; for  
6315 our sins He suffers beneath the burden of that unanswered  
6316 prayer. But now His suffering this avails for me: what He  
6317 has borne is taken away for me; His merit has won for me  
6318 the answer to every prayer, if I abide in Him.

6319

6320 Yes, in Him, as He bows there in Gethsemane, I must abide.  
6321 As my Head, He not only once suffered for me, but ever  
6322 lives in me, breathing and working His own disposition in  
6323 me too. The Eternal Spirit, through which He offered  
6324 Himself unto God, is the Spirit that dwells in me too, and  
6325 makes me partaker of the very same obedience, and the  
6326 sacrifice of the will unto God. That Spirit teaches me to  
6327 yield my will entirely to the will of the Father, to give it up  
6328 even unto the death, in Christ to be dead to it. Whatever is  
6329 my own mind and thought and will, even though it be not  
6330 directly sinful, He teaches me to fear and flee. He opens my  
6331 ear to wait in great gentleness and teachableness of soul for  
6332 what the Father has day by day to speak and to teach. He  
6333 discovers to me how union with God's will in the love of it  
6334 is union with God Himself; how entire surrender to God's  
6335 will is the Father's claim, the Son's example, and the true  
6336 blessedness of the soul. He leads my will into the fellowship  
6337 of Christ's death and resurrection, my will dies in Him, in  
6338 Him to be made alive again. He breathes into it, as a  
6339 renewed and quickened will, a holy insight into God's

6340 perfect will, a holy joy in yielding itself to be an instrument  
6341 of that will, a holy liberty and power to lay hold of God's  
6342 will to answer prayer. With my whole will I learn to live for  
6343 the interests of God and His kingdom, to exercise the power  
6344 of that will—crucified but risen again—in nature and in  
6345 prayer, on earth and in heaven, with men and with God. The  
6346 more deeply I enter into the FATHER! NOT WHAT I  
6347 WILL' of Gethsemane, and into Him who spake it, to abide  
6348 in Him, the fuller is my spiritual access into the power of  
6349 His FATHER! I WILL. And the soul experiences that it is  
6350 the will, which has become nothing that God's will may be  
6351 all, which now becomes inspired with a Divine strength to  
6352 really will what God wills, and to claim what has been  
6353 promised it in the name of Christ.

6354  
6355 O let us listen to Christ in Gethsemane, as He calls, If ye  
6356 abide in me, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done  
6357 unto you.' Being of one mind and spirit with Him in His  
6358 giving up everything to God's will, living like Him in  
6359 obedience and surrender to the Father; this is abiding in  
6360 Him; this is the secret of power in prayer.

6361  
6362 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

6363

6364

6365

6366 Blessed Lord Jesus! Gethsemane was Thy school, where  
6367 Thou didst learn to pray and to obey. It is still Thy school,  
6368 where Thou leadest all Thy disciples who would fain learn  
6369 to obey and to pray even as Thou. Lord! teach me there to  
6370 pray, in the faith that Thou has atoned for and conquered  
6371 our self-will, and canst indeed give us grace to pray like  
6372 Thee.

6373

6374 O Lamb of God! I would follow Thee to Gethsemane, there  
6375 to become one with Thee, and to abide in Thee as Thou dost  
6376 unto the very death yield Thy will unto the Father. With  
6377 Thee, through Thee, in Thee, I do yield my will in absolute  
6378 and entire surrender to the will of the Father. Conscious of  
6379 my own weakness, and the secret power with which self-  
6380 will would assert itself and again take its place on the  
6381 throne, I claim in faith the power of Thy victory. Thou didst  
6382 triumph over it and deliver me from it. In Thy death I would  
6383 daily live; in Thy life I would daily die. Abiding in Thee, let  
6384 my will, through the power of Thine eternal Spirit, only be  
6385 the tuned instrument which yields to every touch of the will  
6386 of my God. With my whole soul do I say with Thee and in  
6387 Thee, Father! Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.’

6388

6389 And then, Blessed Lord! Open my heart and that of all Thy  
6390 people, to take in fully the glory of the truth, that a will  
6391 given up to God is a will accepted of God to be used in his  
6392 service, to desire, and purpose, and determine, and will  
6393 what is according to God’s will. A will which, in the power  
6394 of the Holy Spirit the indwelling God, is to exercise its  
6395 royal prerogative in prayer, to loose and to bind in heaven  
6396 and upon earth, to ask whatsoever it will, and to say it shall  
6397 be done.

6398

6399 O Lord Jesus! teach me to pray. Amen.

6400

6401

6402

6403

6404 TWENTY-NINTH LESSON.

6405

6406 According to His will;

6407

6408 Or, Our Boldness in Prayer.

6409

6410 And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that, if  
6411 we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us. And  
6412 if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know  
6413 that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him.’—I  
6414 John v. 14, 15.

6415

6416 ONE of the greatest hindrances to believing prayer is with  
6417 many undoubtedly this: they know not if what they ask is  
6418 according to the will of God. As long as they are in doubt  
6419 on this point, they cannot have the boldness to ask in the  
6420 assurance that they certainly shall receive. And they soon  
6421 begin to think that, if once they have made known their  
6422 requests, and receive no answer, it is best to leave it to God  
6423 to do according to His good pleasure. The words of John, If  
6424 we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us,’ as  
6425 they understand them, make certainty as to answer to prayer  
6426 impossible, because they cannot be sure of what really may  
6427 be the will of God. They think of God’s will as His hidden  
6428 counsel—how should man be able to fathom what really  
6429 may be the purpose of the all-wise God.

6430

6431 This is the very opposite of what John aimed at in writing  
6432 thus. He wished to rouse us to boldness, to confidence, to  
6433 full assurance of faith in prayer. He says, This is the  
6434 boldness which we have toward Him,’ that we can say:  
6435 Father! Thou knowest and I know that I ask according to  
6436 Thy will: I know Thou hearest me. This is the boldness, that  
6437 if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us.’ On  
6438 this account He adds at once: If we know that He heareth us  
6439 whatsoever we ask, we know,’ through this faith, that we  
6440 have,’ that we now while we pray receive the petition,’ the  
6441 special things, we have asked of Him.’ John supposes that

6442 when we pray, we first find out if our prayers are according  
6443 to the will of God. They may be according to God's will,  
6444 and yet not come at once, or without the persevering prayer  
6445 of faith. It is to give us courage thus to persevere and to be  
6446 strong in faith, that He tells us: This gives us boldness or  
6447 confidence in prayer, if we ask anything according to His  
6448 will, He heareth us. It is evident that if it be a matter of  
6449 uncertainty to us whether our petitions be according to His  
6450 will, we cannot have the comfort of what he says, We know  
6451 that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him.'

6452  
6453 But just this is the difficulty. More than one believer says: I  
6454 do not know if what I desire be according to the will of  
6455 God. God's will is the purpose of His infinite wisdom: it is  
6456 impossible for me to know whether He may not count  
6457 something else better for me than what I desire, or may not  
6458 have some reasons for withholding what I ask.' Every one  
6459 feels how with such thoughts the prayer of faith, of which  
6460 Jesus said, Whosoever shall believe that these things which  
6461 he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he  
6462 saith,' becomes an impossibility. There may be the prayer  
6463 of submission, and of trust in God's wisdom; there cannot  
6464 be the prayer of faith. The great mistake here is that God's  
6465 children do not really believe that it is possible to know  
6466 God's will. Or if they believe this, they do not take the time  
6467 and trouble to find it out. What we need is to see clearly in  
6468 what way it is that the Father leads His waiting, teachable  
6469 child to know that his petition is according to His will.^1 It  
6470 is through God's holy word, taken up and kept in the heart,  
6471 the life, the will; and through God's Holy Spirit, accepted in  
6472 His indwelling and leading, that we shall learn to know that  
6473 our petitions are according to His will.  
6474

6475 Through the word. There is a secret will of God, with which  
6476 we often fear that our prayers may be at variance. It is not  
6477 with this will of God, but His will as revealed in His word,  
6478 that we have to do in prayer. Our notions of what the secret  
6479 will may have decreed, and of how it might render the  
6480 answers to our prayers impossible, are mostly very  
6481 erroneous. Childlike faith as to what He is willing to do for  
6482 His children, simply keeps to the Father's assurance, that it  
6483 is His will to hear prayer and to do what faith in His word  
6484 desires and accepts. In the word the Father has revealed in  
6485 general promises the great principles of His will with His  
6486 people. The child has to take the promise and apply it to the  
6487 special circumstances in His life to which it has reference.  
6488 Whatever he asks within the limits of that revealed will, he  
6489 can know to be according to the will of God, and he may  
6490 confidently expect. In His word, God has given us the  
6491 revelation of His will and plans with us, with His people,  
6492 and with the world, with the most precious promises of the  
6493 grace and power with which through His people He will  
6494 carry out His plans and do His work. As faith becomes  
6495 strong and bold enough to claim the fulfilment of the  
6496 general promise in the special case, we may have the  
6497 assurance that our prayers are heard: they are according to  
6498 God's will. Take the words of John in the verse following  
6499 our text as an illustration: If any man see his brother sinning  
6500 a sin not unto death, he shall ask and God will give him  
6501 life.' Such is the general promise; and the believer who  
6502 pleads on the ground of this promise, prays according to the  
6503 will of God, and John would give him boldness to know  
6504 that he has the petition which he asks.

6505

6506 But this apprehension of God's will is something spiritual,  
6507 and must be spiritually discerned. It is not as a matter of  
6508 logic that we can argue it out: God has said it; I must have



6509 it. Nor has every Christian the same gift or calling. While  
6510 the general will revealed in the promise is the same for all,  
6511 there is for each one a special different will according to  
6512 God's purpose. And herein is the wisdom of the saints, to  
6513 know this special will of God for each of us, according to  
6514 the measure of grace given us, and so to ask in prayer just  
6515 what God has prepared and made possible for each. It is to  
6516 communicate this wisdom that the Holy Ghost dwells in us.  
6517 The personal application of the general promises of the  
6518 word to our special personal needs—it is for this that the  
6519 leading of the Holy Spirit is given us.

6520

6521 It is this union of the teaching of the word and Spirit that  
6522 many do not understand, and so there is a twofold difficulty  
6523 in knowing what God's will may be. Some seek the will of  
6524 God in an inner feeling or conviction, and would have the  
6525 Spirit lead them without the word. Others seek it in the  
6526 word, without the living leading of the Holy Spirit. The two  
6527 must be united: only in the word, only in the Spirit, but in  
6528 these most surely, can we know the will of God, and learn  
6529 to pray according to it. In the heart the word and the Spirit  
6530 must meet: it is only by indwelling that we can experience  
6531 their teaching. The word must dwell, must abide in us: heart  
6532 and life must day by day be under its influence. Not from  
6533 without, but from within, comes the quickening of the word  
6534 by the Spirit. It is only he who yields himself entirely in his  
6535 whole life to the supremacy of the word and the will of  
6536 God, who can expect in special cases to discern what that  
6537 word and will permit him boldly to ask. And even as with  
6538 the word, just so with the Spirit: if I would have the leading  
6539 of the Spirit in prayer to assure me what God's will is, my  
6540 whole life must be yielded to that leading; so only can mind  
6541 and heart become spiritual and capable of knowing God's  
6542 holy will. It is he who, through word and Spirit, lives in the

6543 will of God by doing it, who will know to pray according to  
6544 that will in the confidence that He hears us.

6545

6546 Would that Christians might see what incalculable harm  
6547 they do themselves by the thought that because possibly  
6548 their prayer is not according to God's will, they must be  
6549 content without an answer. God's word tells us that the  
6550 great reason of unanswered prayer is that we do not pray  
6551 aright: 'Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss.' In not  
6552 granting an answer, the Father tells us that there is  
6553 something wrong in our praying. He wants to teach us to  
6554 find it out and confess it, and so to educate us to true  
6555 believing and prevailing prayer. He can only attain His  
6556 object when He brings us to see that we are to blame for the  
6557 withholding of the answer; our aim, or our faith, or our life  
6558 is not what it should be. But this purpose of God is  
6559 frustrated as long as we are content to say: 'It is perhaps  
6560 because my prayer is not according to His will that He does  
6561 not hear me. O let us no longer throw the blame of our  
6562 unanswered prayers on the secret will of God, but on our  
6563 praying amiss. Let that word, 'Ye receive not because ye ask  
6564 amiss,' be as the lantern of the Lord, searching heart and  
6565 life to prove that we are indeed such as those to whom  
6566 Christ gave His promises of certain answers. Let us believe  
6567 that we can know if our prayer be according to God's will.  
6568 Let us yield our heart to have the word of the Father dwell  
6569 richly there, to have Christ's word abiding in us. Let us live  
6570 day by day with the anointing which teacheth us all things.  
6571 Let us yield ourselves unreservedly to the Holy Spirit as He  
6572 teaches us to abide in Christ, to dwell in the Father's  
6573 presence, and we shall soon understand how the Father's  
6574 love longs that the child should know His will, and should,  
6575 in the confidence that that will includes all that His power  
6576 and love have promised to do, know too that He hears the

6577 petitions which we ask of Him. This is the boldness which  
6578 we have, that if we ask anything according to His will, He  
6579 heareth us.’

6580

6581 LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

6582

6583 ———0—————

6584

6585 Blessed Master! With my whole heart I thank Thee for this  
6586 blessed lesson, that the path to a life full of answers to  
6587 prayer is through the will of God. Lord! Teach me to know  
6588 this blessed will by living it, loving it, and always doing it.  
6589 So shall I learn to offer prayers according to that will, and to  
6590 find in their harmony with God’s blessed will, my boldness  
6591 in prayer and my confidence in accepting the answer.

6592

6593 Father! it is Thy will that Thy child should enjoy Thy  
6594 presence and blessing. It is Thy will that everything in the  
6595 life of Thy child should be in accordance with Thy will, and  
6596 that the Holy Spirit should work this in Him. It is Thy will  
6597 that Thy child should live in the daily experience of distinct  
6598 answers to prayer, so as to enjoy living and direct  
6599 fellowship with Thyself. It is Thy will that Thy Name  
6600 should be glorified in and through Thy children, and that it  
6601 will be in those who trust Thee. O my Father! let this Thy  
6602 will be my confidence in all I ask.

6603

6604 Blessed Saviour! Teach me to believe in the glory of this  
6605 will. That will is the eternal love, which with Divine power  
6606 works out its purpose in each human will that yields itself to  
6607 it. Lord! Teach me this. Thou canst make me see how every  
6608 promise and every command of the word is indeed the will  
6609 of God, and that its fulfilment is secured to me by God  
6610 Himself. Let thus the will of God become to me the sure

6611 rock on which my prayer and my assurance of an answer  
6612 ever rest. Amen.

6613

6614 NOTE.

6615

6616 There is often great confusion as to the will of God. People  
6617 think that what God wills must inevitably take place. This is  
6618 by no means the case. God wills a great deal of blessing to  
6619 His people, which never comes to them. He wills it most  
6620 earnestly, but they do not will it, and it cannot come to  
6621 them. This is the great mystery of man's creation with a free  
6622 will, and also of the renewal of his will in redemption, that  
6623 God has made the execution of His will, in many things,  
6624 dependent on the will of man. Of God's will revealed in His  
6625 promises, so much will be fulfilled as our faith accepts.  
6626 Prayer is the power by which that comes to pass which  
6627 otherwise would not take place. And faith, the power by  
6628 which it is decided how much of God's will shall be done in  
6629 us. When once God reveals to a soul what He is willing to  
6630 do for it, the responsibility for the execution of that will  
6631 rests with us.

6632

6633 Some are afraid that this is putting too much power into the  
6634 hands of man. But all power is put into the hands of man in  
6635 Christ Jesus. The key of all prayer and all power is His, and  
6636 when we learn to understand that He is just as much with us  
6637 as with the Father, and that we are also just as much one  
6638 with Him as He with the Father, we shall see how natural  
6639 and right and safe it is that to those who abide in Him as He  
6640 in the Father, such power should be given. It is Christ the  
6641 Son who has the right to ask what He will: it is through the  
6642 abiding in Him and His abiding in us (in a Divine reality of  
6643 which we have too little apprehension) that His Spirit  
6644 breathes in us what He wants to ask and obtain through us.

6645 We pray in His Name: the prayers are really ours and as  
6646 really His.

6647

6648 Others again fear that to believe that prayer has such power  
6649 is limiting the liberty and the love of God. O if we only  
6650 knew how we are limiting His liberty and His love by not  
6651 allowing Him to act in the only way in which He chooses to  
6652 act, now that He has taken us up into fellowship with  
6653 himself—through our prayers and our faith. A brother in the  
6654 ministry once asked, as we were speaking on this subject,  
6655 whether there was not a danger of our thinking that our love  
6656 to souls and our willingness to see them blessed were to  
6657 move God's love and God's willingness to bless them. We  
6658 were just passing some large water-pipes, by which water  
6659 was being carried over hill and dale from a large mountain  
6660 stream to a town at some distance. Just look at these pipes,  
6661 was the answer; they did not make the water willing to flow  
6662 downwards from the hills, nor did they give it its power of  
6663 blessing and refreshment: this is its very nature. All that  
6664 they could do is to decide its direction: by it the inhabitants  
6665 of the town said they want the blessing there. And just so, it  
6666 is the very nature of God to love and to bless. Downward  
6667 and ever downward His love longs to come with its  
6668 quickening and refreshing streams. But He has left it to  
6669 prayer to say where the blessing is to come. He has  
6670 committed it to His believing people to bring the living  
6671 water to the desert places: the will of God to bless is  
6672 dependent upon the will of man to say where the blessing  
6673 must descend. Such honour have His saints.' And this is the  
6674 boldness which we have toward him, that if we ask anything  
6675 according to His will, He heareth us. And if we know that  
6676 He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the  
6677 petitions which we have asked of Him.'

6678

6679 1See this illustrated in the extracts from George Muller at  
6680 the end of this volume.

6681

6682

6683

6684

6685 THIRTIETH LESSON.

6686

6687 An holy priesthood;'

6688

6689 Or, The Ministry of Intercession.

6690

6691 An holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices  
6692 acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.'—I Peter ii. 5.

6693

6694 Ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord.'—Isaiah lxi. 6.

6695

6696 THE Spirit of the Lord God is upon me: because the Lord  
6697 hath anointed me.' These are the words of Jesus in Isaiah.  
6698 As the fruit of His work all redeemed ones are priests,  
6699 fellow-partakers with Him of His anointing with the Spirit  
6700 as High Priest. Like the precious ointment upon the beard of  
6701 Aaron, that went down to the skirts of his garments.' As  
6702 every son of Aaron, so every member of Jesus' body has a  
6703 right to the priesthood. But not every one exercises it: many  
6704 are still entirely ignorant of it. And yet it is the highest  
6705 privilege of a child of God, the mark of greatest nearness  
6706 and likeness to Him, who ever liveth to pray.' Do you doubt  
6707 if this really be so? Think of what constitutes priesthood.  
6708 There is, first, the work of the priesthood. This has two  
6709 sides, one Godward, the other manward. Every priest is  
6710 ordained for men in things pertaining to God' (Heb. v. 1);  
6711 or, as it is said by Moses (Deut. x. 8, see also xxi. 5, xxxiii.  
6712 10; Mal. ii. 6): The Lord separated the tribe of Levi, to stand

6713 before the Lord to minister unto Him, and to bless His  
6714 Name.' On the one hand, the priest had the power to draw  
6715 nigh to God, to dwell with Him in His house, and to present  
6716 before Him the blood of the sacrifice or the burning incense.  
6717 This work he did not do, however, on his own behalf, but  
6718 for the sake of the people whose representative he was. This  
6719 is the other side of his work. He received from the people  
6720 their sacrifices, presented them before God, and then came  
6721 out to bless in His Name, to give the assurance of His  
6722 favour and to teach them His law.

6723

6724 A priest is thus a man who does not at all live for himself.  
6725 He lives with God and for God. His work is as God's  
6726 servant to care for His house, His honour, and His worship,  
6727 to make known to men His love and His will. He lives with  
6728 men and for men (Heb. v. 2). His work is to find out their  
6729 sin and need, and to bring it before God, to offer sacrifice  
6730 and incense in their name, to obtain forgiveness and  
6731 blessing for them, and then to come out and bless them in  
6732 His Name. This is the high calling of every believer. Such  
6733 honour have all His saints.' They have been redeemed with  
6734 the one purpose to be in the midst of the perishing millions  
6735 around them, God's priests, who in conformity to Jesus, the  
6736 Great High Priest, are to be the ministers and stewards of  
6737 the grace of God to all around them.

6738

6739 And then there is the walk of the priesthood, in harmony  
6740 with its work. As God is holy, so the priest was to be  
6741 especially holy. This means not only separated from  
6742 everything unclean, but holy unto God, being set apart and  
6743 given up to God for His disposal. The separation from the  
6744 world and setting apart unto God was indicated in many  
6745 ways.

6746

6747 It was seen in the clothing: the holy garments, made after  
6748 God's own order, marked them as His (Ex. xxviii.). It was  
6749 seen in the command as to their special purity and freedom  
6750 from all contact from death and defilement (Lev. xi. 22).  
6751 Much that was allowed to an ordinary Israelite was  
6752 forbidden to them. It was seen in the injunction that the  
6753 priest must have no bodily defect or blemish; bodily  
6754 perfection was to be the type of wholeness and holiness in  
6755 God's service. And it was seen in the arrangement by which  
6756 the priestly tribes were to have no inheritance with the other  
6757 tribes; God was to be their inheritance. Their life was to be  
6758 one of faith: set apart unto God, they were to live on Him as  
6759 well as for Him.

6760

6761 All this is the emblem of what the character of the New  
6762 Testament priest is to be. Our priestly power with God  
6763 depends on our personal life and walk. We must be of them  
6764 of whose walk on earth Jesus says, 'They have not defiled  
6765 their garments.'

6766

6767 In the surrender of what may appear lawful to others in our  
6768 separation from the world, we must prove that our  
6769 consecration to be holy to the Lord is whole-hearted and  
6770 entire. The bodily perfection of the priest must have its  
6771 counterpart in our too being without spot or blemish; 'the  
6772 man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good  
6773 works,' perfect and entire, wanting nothing' (Lev. xxi. 17-  
6774 21; Eph. v. 27; 2 Tim. ii. 7; Jas. i. 4). And above all, we  
6775 consent to give up all inheritance on earth; to forsake all,  
6776 and like Christ to have only God as our portion: to possess  
6777 as not possessing, and hold all for God alone: it is this  
6778 marks the true priest, the man who only lives for God and  
6779 his fellow-men.

6780



6781 And now the way to the priesthood. In Aaron God had  
6782 chosen all his sons to be priests: each of them was a priest  
6783 by birth. And yet he could not enter upon his work without  
6784 a special act of ordinance—his consecration. Every child of  
6785 God is priest in light of his birth, his blood relationship to  
6786 the Great High Priest; but this is not enough: he will  
6787 exercise his power only as he accepts and realizes his  
6788 consecration.

6789  
6790 With Aaron and his sons it took place thus (Ex. xxix.): After  
6791 being washed and clothed, they were anointed with the holy  
6792 oil. Sacrifices were then offered, and with the blood the  
6793 right ear, the right hand, and the right foot were touched.  
6794 And then they and their garments were once again sprinkled  
6795 with the blood and the oil together. And so it is as the child  
6796 of God enters more fully into what THE BLOOD and THE  
6797 SPIRIT of which he already is partaker, are to him, that the  
6798 power of the Holy Priesthood will work in him. The blood  
6799 will take away all sense of unworthiness; the Spirit, all  
6800 sense of unfitness.

6801  
6802 Let us notice what there was new in the application of the  
6803 blood to the priest. If ever he had as a penitent brought a  
6804 sacrifice for his sin, seeking forgiveness, the blood was  
6805 sprinkled on the altar, but not on his person. But now, for  
6806 priestly consecration, there was to be closer contact with the  
6807 blood; ear and hand and foot were by a special act brought  
6808 under its power, and the whole being taken possession of  
6809 and sanctified for God. And so, when the believer, who had  
6810 been content to think chiefly of the blood sprinkled on the  
6811 mercy-seat as what he needs for pardon, is led to seek full  
6812 priestly access to God, he feels the need of a fuller and more  
6813 abiding experience of the power of the blood, as really  
6814 sprinkling and cleansing the heart from an evil conscience,

6815 so that he has no more conscience of sin' (Heb. x. 2) as  
6816 cleansing from all sin. And it is as he gets to enjoy this, that  
6817 the consciousness is awakened of his wonderful right of  
6818 most intimate access to God, and of the full assurance that  
6819 his intercessions are acceptable.

6820

6821 And as the blood gives the right, the Spirit gives the power,  
6822 and fits for believing intercession. He breathes into us the  
6823 priestly spirit—burning love for God's honour and the  
6824 saving of souls. He makes us so one with Jesus that prayer  
6825 in His Name is a reality. He strengthens us to believing,  
6826 importunate prayer. The more the Christian is truly filled  
6827 with the Spirit of Christ, the more spontaneous will be his  
6828 giving himself up to the life of priestly intercession.  
6829 Beloved fellow-Christians! God needs, greatly needs,  
6830 priests who can draw near to Him, who live in His presence,  
6831 and by their intercession draw down the blessings of His  
6832 grace on others. And the world needs, greatly needs, priests  
6833 who will bear the burden of the perishing ones, and  
6834 intercede on their behalf.

6835

6836 Are you willing to offer yourself for this holy work? You  
6837 know the surrender it demands—nothing less than the  
6838 Christ-like giving up of all, that the saving purposes of  
6839 God's love may be accomplished among men. Oh, be no  
6840 longer of those who are content if they have salvation, and  
6841 just do work enough to keep themselves warm and lively. O  
6842 let nothing keep you back from giving yourselves to be  
6843 wholly and only priests—nothing else, nothing less than the  
6844 priests of the Most High God. The thought of unworthiness,  
6845 of unfitness, need not keep you back. In the Blood, the  
6846 objective power of the perfect redemption works in you: in  
6847 the Spirit its full subjective personal experience as a divine  
6848 life is secured. The Blood provides an infinite worthiness to

6849 make your prayers most acceptable: The Spirit provides a  
6850 Divine fitness, teaching you to pray just according to the  
6851 will of God. Every priest knew that when he presented a  
6852 sacrifice according to the law of the sanctuary, it was  
6853 accepted: under the covering of the Blood and Spirit you  
6854 have the assurance that all the wonderful promises to prayer  
6855 in the Name of Jesus will be fulfilled in you. Abiding in  
6856 union with the Great High Priest, you shall ask what you  
6857 will, and it shall be done unto you.’ You will have power to  
6858 pray the effectual prayer of the righteous man that availeth  
6859 much. You will not only join in the general prayer of the  
6860 Church for the world, but be able in your own sphere to take  
6861 up your special work in prayer—as priests, to transact it  
6862 with God, to receive and know the answer, and so to bless  
6863 in His Name. Come, brother, come, and be a priest, only  
6864 priest, all priest. Seek now to walk before the Lord in the  
6865 full consciousness that you have been set apart for the holy  
6866 Ministry of Intercession. This is the true blessedness of  
6867 conformity to the image of God’s Son.

6868

6869 LORD TEACH US TO PRAY.’

6870

6871

6872

6873 O Thou my blessed High Priest, accept the consecration in  
6874 which my soul now would respond to Thy message.

6875

6876 I believe in the HOLY PRIESTHOOD OF THY SAINTS,  
6877 and that I too am a priest, with power to appear before the  
6878 Father, and in the prayer that avails much bring down  
6879 blessing on the perishing around me.

6880

6881 I believe in the POWER OF THY PRECIOUS BLOOD to  
6882 cleanse from all sin, to give me perfect confidence toward

6883 God, and bring me near in the full assurance of faith that my  
6884 intercession will be heard.

6885

6886 I believe in the ANOINTING OF THE SPIRIT, coming  
6887 down daily from Thee, my Great High Priest, to sanctify  
6888 me, to fill me with the consciousness of my priestly calling,  
6889 and with love to souls, to teach me what is according to  
6890 God's will, and how to pray the prayer of faith.

6891

6892 I believe that, as Thou my Lord Jesus art Thyself in all  
6893 things my life, so Thou, too, art THE SURETY FOR MY  
6894 PRAYER-LIFE, and wilt Thyself draw me up into the  
6895 fellowship of Thy wondrous work of intercession.

6896

6897 In this faith I yield myself this day to my God, as one of His  
6898 anointed priests, to stand before His face to intercede in  
6899 behalf of sinners, and to come out and bless in His Name.

6900

6901 Holy Lord Jesus! accept and seal my consecration. Yea,  
6902 Lord, do Thou lay Thy hands on me, and Thyself consecrate  
6903 me to this Thy holy work. And let me walk among men  
6904 with the consciousness and the character of a priest of the  
6905 Most High God.

6906

6907 Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins IN  
6908 HIS OWN BLOOD, AND HATH MADE US kings and  
6909 priests unto God and His Father; TO HIM be glory and  
6910 dominion forever and ever. Amen

6911

6912

6913

6914 THIRTY-FIRST LESSON.

6915

6916 Pray without ceasing;'

6917

6918 Or, A Life of Prayer.

6919

6920 Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give  
6921 thanks.—I Thess. v. 16, 17, 18.

6922

6923 OUR Lord spake the parable of the widow and the unjust  
6924 judge to teach us that men ought to pray always and not  
6925 faint. As the widow persevered in seeking one definite  
6926 thing, the parable appears to have reference to persevering  
6927 prayer for some one blessing, when God delays or appears  
6928 to refuse. The words in the Epistles, which speak of  
6929 continuing instant in prayer, continuing in prayer and  
6930 watching in the same, of praying always in the Spirit,  
6931 appear more to refer to the whole life being one of prayer.  
6932 As the soul is filling with the longing for the manifestation  
6933 of God's glory to us and in us, through us and around us,  
6934 and with the confidence that He hears the prayers of His  
6935 children; the inmost life of the soul is continually rising  
6936 upward in dependence and faith, in longing desire and  
6937 trustful expectation.

6938

6939 At the close of our meditations it will not be difficult to say  
6940 what is needed to live such a life of prayer. The first thing is  
6941 undoubtedly the entire sacrifice of the life to God's  
6942 kingdom and glory. He who seeks to pray without ceasing  
6943 because he wants to be very pious and good, will never  
6944 attain to it. It is the forgetting of self and yielding ourselves  
6945 to live for God and His honour that enlarges the heart, that  
6946 teaches us to regard everything in the light of God and His  
6947 will, and that instinctively recognises in everything around  
6948 us the need of God's help and blessing, an opportunity for  
6949 His being glorified. Because everything is weighed and  
6950 tested by the one thing that fills the heart—the glory of God,

6951 and because the soul has learnt that only what is of God can  
6952 really be to Him and His glory, the whole life becomes a  
6953 looking up, a crying from the inmost heart, for God to prove  
6954 His power and love and so show forth His glory. The  
6955 believer awakes to the consciousness that he is one of the  
6956 watchmen on Zion's walls, one of the Lord's  
6957 remembrancers, whose call does really touch and move the  
6958 King in heaven to do what would otherwise not be done. He  
6959 understands how real Paul's exhortation was, praying  
6960 always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit for all  
6961 the saints and for me,' and continue in prayer, withal  
6962 praying also for us.' To forget oneself, to live for God and  
6963 His kingdom among men, is the way to learn to pray  
6964 without ceasing.

6965  
6966 This life devoted to God must be accompanied by the deep  
6967 confidence that our prayer is effectual. We have seen how  
6968 our Blessed Lord insisted upon nothing so much in His  
6969 prayer-lessons as faith in the Father as a God who most  
6970 certainly does what we ask. Ask and ye shall receive;' count  
6971 confidently on an answer, is with Him the beginning and the  
6972 end of His teaching (compare Matt. vii. 8 and John xvi. 24).  
6973 In proportion as this assurance masters us, and it becomes a  
6974 settled thing that our prayers do tell and that God does what  
6975 we ask, we dare not neglect the use of this wonderful  
6976 power: the soul turns wholly to God, and our life becomes  
6977 prayer. We see that the Lord needs and takes time, because  
6978 we and all around us are the creatures of time, under the law  
6979 of growth; but knowing that not one single prayer of faith  
6980 can possibly be lost that there is sometimes a needs-be for  
6981 the storing up and accumulating of prayer, that persevering  
6982 pray is irresistible, prayer becomes the quiet, persistent  
6983 living of our life of desire and faith in the presence of our  
6984 God. O do not let us any longer by our reasonings limit and

6985 enfeeble such free and sure promises of the living God,  
6986 robbing them of their power, and ourselves of the wonderful  
6987 confidence they are meant to inspire. Not in God, not in His  
6988 secret will, not in the limitations of His promises, but in us,  
6989 in ourselves is the hindrance; we are not what we should be  
6990 to obtain the promise. Let us open our whole heart to God's  
6991 words of promise in all their simplicity and truth: they will  
6992 search us and humble us; they will lift us up and make us  
6993 glad and strong. And to the faith that knows it gets what it  
6994 asks, prayer is not a work or a burden, but a joy and a  
6995 triumph; it becomes a necessity and a second nature.

6996  
6997 This union of strong desire and firm confidence again is  
6998 nothing but the life of the Holy Spirit within us. The Holy  
6999 Spirit dwells in us, hides Himself in the depths of our being,  
7000 and stirs the desire after the Unseen and the Divine, after  
7001 God Himself. Now in groanings that cannot be uttered, then  
7002 in clear and conscious assurance; now in special distinct  
7003 petitions for the deeper revelation of Christ to ourselves,  
7004 then in pleadings for a soul, a work, the Church or the  
7005 world, it is always and alone the Holy Spirit who draws out  
7006 the heart to thirst for God, to long for His being made  
7007 known and glorified. Where the child of God really lives  
7008 and walks in the Spirit, where he is not content to remain  
7009 carnal, but seeks to be spiritual, in everything a fit organ for  
7010 the Divine Spirit to reveal the life of Christ and Christ  
7011 Himself, there the never-ceasing intercession-life of the  
7012 Blessed Son cannot but reveal and repeat itself in our  
7013 experience. Because it is the Spirit of Christ who prays in  
7014 us, our prayer must be heard; because it is we who pray in  
7015 the Spirit, there is need of time, and patience, and continual  
7016 renewing of the prayer, until every obstacle be conquered,  
7017 and the harmony between God's Spirit and ours is perfect.  
7018

7019 But the chief thing we need for such a life of unceasing  
7020 prayer is, to know that Jesus teaches us to pray. We have  
7021 begun to understand a little what His teaching is. Not the  
7022 communication of new thoughts or views, not the discovery  
7023 of failure or error, not the stirring up of desire and faith, of  
7024 however much importance all this be, but the taking us up  
7025 into the fellowship of His own prayer-life before the  
7026 Father—this it is by which Jesus really teaches. It was the  
7027 sight of the praying Jesus that made the disciples long and  
7028 ask to be taught to pray. It is the faith of the ever-praying  
7029 Jesus, whose alone is the power to pray, that teaches us  
7030 truly to pray. We know why: He who prays is our Head and  
7031 our Life. All He has is ours and is given to us when we give  
7032 ourselves all to Him. By His blood He leads us into the  
7033 immediate presence of God. The inner sanctuary is our  
7034 home, we dwell there. And He that lives so near God, and  
7035 knows that He has been brought near to bless those who are  
7036 far, cannot but pray. Christ makes us partakers with Himself  
7037 of His prayer-power and prayer-life. We understand then  
7038 that our true aim must not be to work much and have prayer  
7039 enough to keep the work right, but to pray much and then to  
7040 work enough for the power and blessing obtained in prayer  
7041 to find its way through us to men. It is Christ who ever lives  
7042 to pray, who saves and reigns. He communicates His  
7043 prayer-life to us: He maintains it in us if we trust Him. He is  
7044 surety for our praying without ceasing. Yes, Christ teaches  
7045 to pray by showing how He does it, by doing it in us, by  
7046 leading us to do it in Him and like Him. Christ is all, the life  
7047 and the strength too for a never-ceasing prayer-life.

7048  
7049 It is the sight of this, the sight of the ever-praying Christ as  
7050 our life, that enables us to pray without ceasing. Because  
7051 His priesthood is the power of an endless life, that  
7052 resurrection-life that never fades and never fails, and



7053 because His life is our life, praying without ceasing can  
7054 become to us nothing less than the life-joy of heaven. So the  
7055 Apostle says: Rejoice evermore; pray without ceasing; in  
7056 everything give thanks.' Borne up between the never-  
7057 ceasing joy and the never-ceasing praise, never-ceasing  
7058 prayer is the manifestation of the power of the eternal life,  
7059 where Jesus always prays. The union between the Vine and  
7060 the branch is in very deed a prayer-union. The highest  
7061 conformity to Christ, the most blessed participation in the  
7062 glory of His heavenly life, is that we take part in His work  
7063 of intercession: He and we live ever to pray. In the  
7064 experience of our union with Him, praying without ceasing  
7065 becomes a possibility, a reality, the holiest and most blessed  
7066 part of our holy and blessed fellowship with God. We have  
7067 our abode within the veil, in the presence of the Father.  
7068 What the Father says, we do; what the Son says, the Father  
7069 does. Praying without ceasing is the earthly manifestation of  
7070 heaven come down to us, the foretaste of the life where they  
7071 rest not day or night in the song of worship and adoration.

7072

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

7074

7075

7076

7077 O my Father, with my whole heart do I praise Thee for this  
7078 wondrous life of never-ceasing prayer, never-ceasing  
7079 fellowship, never-ceasing answers, and never-ceasing  
7080 experience of my oneness with Him who ever lives to pray.  
7081 O my God! keep me ever so dwelling and walking in the  
7082 presence of Thy glory, that prayer may be the spontaneous  
7083 expression of my life with Thee.

7084

7085 Blessed Saviour! with my whole heart I praise Thee that  
7086 Thou didst come from heaven to share with me in my needs

7087 and cries, that I might share with Thee in Thy all-prevailing  
7088 intercession. And I thank Thee that Thou hast taken me into  
7089 the school of prayer, to teach the blessedness and the power  
7090 of a life that is all prayer. And most of all, that Thou hast  
7091 taken me up into the fellowship of Thy life of intercession,  
7092 that through me too Thy blessings may be dispensed to  
7093 those around me.

7094

7095 Holy Spirit! with deep reverence I thank Thee for Thy work  
7096 in me. It is through Thee I am lifted up into a share in the  
7097 intercourse between the Son and the Father, and enter so  
7098 into the fellowship of the life and love of the Holy Trinity  
7099 Spirit of God! perfect Thy work in me; bring me into  
7100 perfect union with Christ my Intercessor. Let Thine  
7101 unceasing indwelling make my life one of unceasing  
7102 intercession. And let so my life become one that is  
7103 unceasingly to the glory of the Father and to the blessing of  
7104 those around me. Amen.

7105

7106

7107

7108 GEORGE MULLER, AND THE SECRET OF HIS

7109

7110 POWER IN PRAYER

7111

7112 WHEN God wishes anew to teach His Church a truth that is  
7113 not being understood or practised, He mostly does so by  
7114 raising some man to be in word and deed a living witness to  
7115 its blessedness. And so God has raised up in this nineteenth  
7116 century, among others, George Muller to be His witness that  
7117 He is indeed the Hearer of prayer. I know of no way in  
7118 which the principal truths of God's word in regard to prayer  
7119 can be more effectually illustrated and established than a

7120 short review of his life and of what he tells of his prayer-  
7121 experiences.

7122

7123 He was born in Prussia on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1805, and is  
7124 thus now eighty years of age. His early life, even after  
7125 having entered the University of Halle as a theological  
7126 student, was wicked in the extreme. Led by a friend one  
7127 evening, when just twenty years of age, to a prayer meeting,  
7128 he was deeply impressed, and soon after brought to know  
7129 the Saviour. Not long after he began reading missionary  
7130 papers, and in course of time offered himself to the London  
7131 Society for promoting Christianity to the Jews. He was  
7132 accepted as a student, but soon found that he could not in all  
7133 things submit to the rules of the Society, as leaving too little  
7134 liberty for the leading of the Holy Spirit. The connection  
7135 was dissolved in 1830 by mutual consent, and he became  
7136 the pastor of a small congregation at Teignmouth. In 1832  
7137 he was led to Bristol, and it was as pastor of Bethesda  
7138 Chapel that he was led to the Orphan Home and other work,  
7139 in connection with which God has so remarkably led him to  
7140 trust His word and to experience how God fulfils that word.

7141

7142 A few extracts in regard to his spiritual life will prepare the  
7143 way for what we specially wish to quote of his experiences  
7144 in reference to prayer.

7145

7146 In connection with this I would mention, that the Lord very  
7147 graciously gave me, from the very commencement of my  
7148 divine life, a measure of simplicity and of childlike  
7149 disposition in spiritual things, so that whilst I was  
7150 exceedingly ignorant of the Scriptures, and was still from  
7151 time to time overcome even by outward sins, yet I was  
7152 enabled to carry most minute matters to the Lord in prayer.  
7153 And I have found “godliness profitable unto all things,

7154 having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is  
7155 to come.” Though very weak and ignorant, yet I had now,  
7156 by the grace of God, some desire to benefit others, and he  
7157 who so faithfully had once served Satan, sought now to win  
7158 souls for Christ.’

7159

7160 It was at Teignmouth that he was led to know how to use  
7161 God’s word , and to trust the Holy Spirit as the Teacher  
7162 given by God to make that word clear. He writes:—

7163

7164 God then began to show me that the word of God alone is  
7165 our standard of judgment in spiritual things; that it can be  
7166 explained only by the Holy Spirit; and that in our day, as  
7167 well as in former times. He is the Teacher of His people.  
7168 The office of the Holy Spirit I had not experimentally  
7169 understood before that time.

7170

7171 It was my beginning to understand this latter point in  
7172 particular, which had a great effect on me; for the Lord  
7173 enabled me to put it to the test of experience, by laying  
7174 aside commentaries, and almost every other book and  
7175 simply reading the word of God and studying it.

7176

7177 The result of this was, that the first evening that I shut  
7178 myself into my room, to give myself to prayer and  
7179 meditation over the Scriptures, I learned more in a few  
7180 hours than I had done during a period of several months  
7181 previously.

7182

7183 But the particular difference was that I received real  
7184 strength for my soul in so doing. I now began to try by the  
7185 test of the Scriptures the things which I had learned and  
7186 seen, and found that only those principles which stood the  
7187 test were of real value.’

7188

7189 Of obedience to the word of God, he writes as follows, in  
7190 connection with his being baptized:—

7191

7192 It had pleased God, in His abundant mercy, to bring my  
7193 mind into such a state, that I was willing to carry out into  
7194 my life whatever I should find in the Scriptures. I could say,  
7195 “I will do His will,” and it was on that account, I believe,  
7196 that I saw which “doctrine is of God.”—And I would  
7197 observe here, by the way, that the passage to which I have  
7198 just alluded (John vii. 17) has been a most remarkable  
7199 comment to me on many doctrines and precepts of our most  
7200 holy faith. For instance: “Resist not evil; but whosoever  
7201 shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other  
7202 also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away  
7203 thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall  
7204 compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him  
7205 that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee,  
7206 turn not thou away. Love your enemies, bless them that  
7207 curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them  
7208 which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matt. v.  
7209 39-44). “Sell that ye have, and give alms” (Luke xii. 33).  
7210 “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another” (Rom. xii.  
7211 8). It may be said, “Surely these passages cannot be taken  
7212 literally, for how then would the people of God be able to  
7213 pass through the world?” The state of mind enjoined in John  
7214 vii. 17 will cause such objections to vanish. **WHOSOEVER**  
7215 **IS WILLING TO ACT OUT** these commandments of the  
7216 Lord **LITERALLY**, will, I believe, be led with me to see  
7217 that to take them **LITERALLY** is the will of God.—Those  
7218 who do so take them will doubtless often be brought into  
7219 difficulties, hard to the flesh to bear, but these will have a  
7220 tendency to make them constantly feel that they are  
7221 strangers and pilgrims here, that this world is not their

7222 home, and thus to throw them more upon God, who will  
7223 assuredly help us through any difficulty into which we may  
7224 be brought by seeking to act in obedience to His word.’

7225  
7226 This implicit surrender to God’s word led him to certain  
7227 views and conduct in regard to money, which mightily  
7228 influenced his future life. They had their root in the  
7229 conviction that money was a Divine stewardship, and that  
7230 all money had therefore to be received and dispensed in  
7231 direct fellowship with God Himself. This led him to the  
7232 adoption of the following four great rules: 1. Not to receive  
7233 any fixed salary, both because in the collecting of it there  
7234 was often much that was at variance with the freewill  
7235 offering with which God’s service is to be maintained, and  
7236 in the receiving of it a danger of placing more dependence  
7237 on human sources of income than in the living God  
7238 Himself. 2. Never to ask any human being for help,  
7239 however great the need might be, but to make his wants  
7240 known to the God who has promised to care for His  
7241 servants and to hear their prayer. 3. To take this command  
7242 (Luke xii. 33) literally, ‘Sell that thou hast and give alms,’  
7243 and never to save up money, but to spend all God entrusted  
7244 to him on God’s poor, on the work of His kingdom. 4. Also  
7245 to take Rom. xiii. 8, ‘Owe no man anything,’ literally, and  
7246 never to buy on credit, or be in debt for anything, but to  
7247 trust God to provide.

7248  
7249 This mode of living was not easy at first. But Muller  
7250 testifies it was most blessed in bringing the soul to rest in  
7251 God, and drawing it into closer union with Himself when  
7252 inclined to backslide. For it will not do, it is not possible, to  
7253 live in sin, and at the same time, by communion with God,  
7254 to draw down from heaven everything one needs for the life  
7255 that now is.’

7256

7257 Not long after his settlement at Bristol, THE SCRIPTURAL  
7258 KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTION FOR HOME AND  
7259 ABROAD' was established for aiding in Day, Sunday  
7260 School, Mission and Bible work. Of this Institution the  
7261 Orphan Home work, by which Mr. Muller is best known,  
7262 became a branch. It was in 1834 that his heart was touched  
7263 by the case of an orphan brought to Christ in one of the  
7264 schools, but who had to go to a poorhouse where its  
7265 spiritual wants would not be cared for. Meeting shortly after  
7266 with a life of Franke, he writes (Nov, 20, 1835): Today I  
7267 have had it very much laid on my heart no longer merely to  
7268 think about the establishment of an Orphan Home, but  
7269 actually to set about it, and I have been very much in prayer  
7270 respecting it, in order to ascertain the Lord's mind. May  
7271 God make it plain.' And again, Nov. 25: I have been again  
7272 much in prayer yesterday and today about the Orphan  
7273 Home, and am more and more convinced that it is of God.  
7274 May He in mercy guide me. The three chief reasons are—1.  
7275 That God may be glorified, should He be pleased to furnish  
7276 me with the means, in its being seen that it is not a vain  
7277 thing to trust Him; and that thus the faith of His children  
7278 may be strengthened. 2. The spiritual welfare of fatherless  
7279 and motherless children. 3. Their temporal welfare.'

7280

7281 After some months of prayer and waiting on God, a house  
7282 was rented, with room for thirty children , and in course of  
7283 time three more, containing in all 120 children. The work  
7284 was carried on it this way for ten years, the supplies for the  
7285 needs of the orphans being asked and received of God  
7286 alone. It was often a time of sore need and much prayer, but  
7287 a trial of faith more precious than of gold was found unto  
7288 praise and honour and glory of God. The Lord was  
7289 preparing His servant for greater things. By His providence

7290 and His Holy Spirit, Mr. Muller was led to desire, and to  
7291 wait upon God till he received from Him, the sure promise  
7292 of 15,000 for a Home to contain 300 children. This first  
7293 Home was opened in 1849. In 1858, a second and third  
7294 Home, for 950 more orphans, was opened, costing 35,000.  
7295 And in 1869 and 1870, a fourth and a fifth Home, for 850  
7296 more, at an expense of 50,000, making the total number of  
7297 the orphans 2100.

7298

7299 In addition to this work, God has given him almost as much  
7300 as for the building of the Orphan Homes, and the  
7301 maintenance of the orphans, for other work, the support of  
7302 schools and missions, Bible and tract circulation. In all he  
7303 has received from God, to be spent in His work, during  
7304 these fifty years, more than one million pounds sterling.  
7305 How little he knew, let us carefully notice, that when he  
7306 gave up his little salary of 35 a year in obedience to the  
7307 leading of God's word and the Holy Spirit, what God was  
7308 preparing to give him as the reward of obedience and faith;  
7309 and how wonderfully the word was to be fulfilled to him:  
7310 Thou hast been faithful over few things; I will set thee over  
7311 many things.'

7312

7313 And these things have happened for an ensample to us. God  
7314 calls us to be followers of George Muller, even as he is of  
7315 Christ. His God is our God; the same promises are for us;  
7316 the same service of love and faith in which he laboured is  
7317 calling for us on every side. Let us in connection with our  
7318 lessons in the school of prayer study the way in which God  
7319 gave George Muller such power as a man of prayer: we  
7320 shall find in it the most remarkable illustration of some of  
7321 the lessons which we have been studying with the blessed  
7322 Master in the word. We shall specially have impressed upon  
7323 us His first great lesson, that if we will come to Him in the



7324 way He has pointed out, with definite petitions, made  
7325 known to us by the Spirit through the word as being  
7326 according to the will of God, we may most confidently  
7327 believe that whatsoever we ask it shall be done.

7328

7329 PRAYER AND THE WORD OF GOD.

7330

7331 We have more than once seen that God's listening to our  
7332 voice depends upon our listening to His voice. (See Lessons  
7333 22 and 23.) We must not only have a special promise to  
7334 plead, when we make a special request, but our whole life  
7335 must be under the supremacy of the word: the word must be  
7336 dwelling in us. The testimony of George Muller on this  
7337 point is most instructive. He tells us how the discovery of  
7338 the true place of the word of God, and the teaching of the  
7339 Spirit with it, was the commencement of a new era in his  
7340 spiritual life. Of it he writes:—

7341

7342 Now the scriptural way of reasoning would have been: God  
7343 Himself has condescended to become an author, and I am  
7344 ignorant about that precious book which His Holy Spirit has  
7345 caused to be written through the instrumentality of His  
7346 servants, and it contains that which I ought to know, and the  
7347 knowledge of which will lead me to true happiness;  
7348 therefore I ought to read again and again this most precious  
7349 book, this book of books, most earnestly, most prayerfully,  
7350 and with much meditation; and in this practice I ought to  
7351 continue all the days of my life. For I was aware, though I  
7352 read it but little, that I knew scarcely anything of it. But  
7353 instead of acting thus and being led by my ignorance of the  
7354 word of God to study it more, my difficulty in  
7355 understanding it, and the little enjoyment I had in it, made  
7356 me careless of reading it (for much prayerful reading of the  
7357 word gives not merely more knowledge, but increases the

7358 delight we have in reading it); and thus, like many  
7359 believers, I practically preferred, for the first four years of  
7360 my divine life, the works of uninspired men to the oracles  
7361 of the living God. The consequence was that I remained a  
7362 babe, both in knowledge and grace. In knowledge, I say; for  
7363 all true knowledge must be derived, by the Spirit, from the  
7364 word. And as I neglected the word, I was for nearly four  
7365 years so ignorant, that I did not clearly know even the  
7366 fundamental points of our holy faith. And this lack of  
7367 knowledge most sadly kept me back from walking steadily  
7368 in the ways of God. For when it pleased the Lord in August  
7369 1829 to bring me really to the Scriptures, my life and walk  
7370 became very different. And though ever since that I have  
7371 very much fallen short of what I might and ought to be, yet  
7372 by the grace of God I have been enabled to live much nearer  
7373 to Him than before. If any believers read this who  
7374 practically prefer other books to the Holy Scriptures, and  
7375 who enjoy the writings of men much more than the word of  
7376 God, may they be warned by my loss. I shall consider this  
7377 book to have been the means of doing much good, should it  
7378 please the Lord, through its instrumentality, to lead some of  
7379 His people no longer to neglect the Holy Scriptures, but to  
7380 give them that preference which they have hitherto  
7381 bestowed on the writings of men.

7382

7383 Before I leave this subject, I would only add: If the reader  
7384 understands very little of the word of God, he ought to read  
7385 it very much; for the Spirit explains the word by the word.  
7386 And if he enjoys the reading of the word little, that is just  
7387 the reason why he should read it much; for the frequent  
7388 reading of the Scriptures creates a delight in them, so that  
7389 the more we read them, the more we desire to do so.

7390

7391 Above all, he should seek to have it settled in his own mind  
7392 that God alone by His Spirit can teach him, and that  
7393 therefore, as God will be inquired of for blessings, it  
7394 becomes him to seek God's blessing previous to reading,  
7395 and also whilst reading.

7396

7397 He should have it, moreover, settled in his mind that  
7398 although the Holy Spirit is the best and sufficient Teacher,  
7399 yet that this Teacher does not always teach immediately  
7400 when we desire it, and that therefore we may have to entreat  
7401 Him again and again for the explanation of certain passages;  
7402 but that He will surely teach us at last, if indeed we are  
7403 seeking for light prayerfully, patiently, and with a view to  
7404 the glory of God.' [4]

7405

7406 We find in his journal frequent mention made of his  
7407 spending two and three hours in prayer over the word for  
7408 the feeding of his spiritual life. As the fruit of this, when he  
7409 had need of strength and encouragement in prayer, the  
7410 individual promises were not to him so many arguments  
7411 from a book to be used with God, but living words which he  
7412 had heard the Father's living voice speak to him, and which  
7413 he could now bring to the Father in living faith.

7414

7415 PRAYER AND THE WILL OF GOD.

7416

7417 One of the greatest difficulties with young believers is to  
7418 know how they can find out whether what they desire is  
7419 according to God's will. I count it one of the most precious  
7420 lessons God wants to teach through the experience of  
7421 George Muller, that He is willing to make known, of things  
7422 of which His word says nothing directly, that they are His  
7423 will for us, and that we may ask them. The teaching of the  
7424 Spirit, not without or against the word, but as something

7425 above and beyond it, in addition to it, without which we  
7426 cannot see God's will, is the heritage of every believer. It is  
7427 through THE WORD, AND THE WORD ALONE, that the  
7428 Spirit teaches, applying the general principles or promises  
7429 to our special need. And it is THE SPIRIT, AND THE  
7430 SPIRIT ALONE, who can really make the word a light on  
7431 our path, whether the path of duty in our daily walk, or the  
7432 path of faith in our approach to God. Let us try and notice in  
7433 what childlike simplicity and teachableness it was that the  
7434 discovery of God's will was so surely and so clearly made  
7435 known to His servant.

7436  
7437 With regard to the building of the first Home and the  
7438 assurance he had of its being God's will, he writes in May  
7439 1850, just after it had been opened, speaking of the great  
7440 difficulties there were, and how little likely it appeared to  
7441 nature that they would be removed: But while the prospect  
7442 before me would have been overwhelming had I looked at it  
7443 naturally, I was never even for once permitted to question  
7444 how it would end. For as from the beginning I was sure it  
7445 was the will of God that I should go to the work of building  
7446 for Him this large Orphan Home, so also from the  
7447 beginning I was as certain that the whole would be finished  
7448 as if the Home had been already filled.'

7449  
7450 The way in which he found out what was God's will, comes  
7451 out with special clearness in his account of the building of  
7452 the second Home; and I ask the reader to study with care the  
7453 lesson the narrative conveys:—

7454  
7455 Dec. 5, 1850.—Under these circumstances I can only pray  
7456 that the Lord in His tender mercy would not allow Satan to  
7457 gain an advantage over me. By the grace of God my heart  
7458 says: Lord, if I could be sure that it is Thy will that I should

7459 go forward in this matter, I would do so cheerfully; and, on  
7460 the other hand, if I could be sure that these are vain, foolish,  
7461 proud thoughts, that they are not from Thee, I would, by  
7462 Thy grace, hate them, and entirely put them aside.

7463

7464 My hope is in God: He will help and teach me. Judging,  
7465 however, from His former dealings with me, it would not be  
7466 a strange thing to me, nor surprising, if He called me to  
7467 labour yet still more largely in this way.

7468

7469 The thoughts about enlarging the Orphan work have not yet  
7470 arisen on account of an abundance of money having lately  
7471 come in; for I have had of late to wait for about seven  
7472 weeks upon God, whilst little, very little comparatively,  
7473 came in, i.e. about four times as much was going out as  
7474 came in; and, had not the Lord previously sent me large  
7475 sums, we should have been distressed indeed.

7476

7477 Lord! how can Thy servant know Thy will in this matter?  
7478 Wilt Thou be pleased to teach him!

7479

7480 December 11.—During the last six days, since writing the  
7481 above, I have been, day after day, waiting upon God  
7482 concerning this matter. It has generally been more or less all  
7483 the day on my heart. When I have been awake at night, it  
7484 has not been far from my thoughts. Yet all this without the  
7485 least excitement. I am perfectly calm and quiet respecting it.  
7486 My soul would be rejoiced to go forward in this service,  
7487 could I be sure that the Lord would have me to do so; for  
7488 then, notwithstanding the numberless difficulties, all would  
7489 be well; and His Name would be magnified.

7490

7491 On the other hand, were I assured that the Lord would have  
7492 me to be satisfied with my present sphere of service, and

7493 that I should not pray about enlarging the work, by His  
7494 grace I could, without an effort, cheerfully yield to it; for He  
7495 has brought me into such a state of heart, that I only desire  
7496 to please Him in this matter. Moreover, hitherto I have not  
7497 spoken about this thing even to my beloved wife, the sharer  
7498 of my joys, sorrows, and labours for more than twenty  
7499 years; nor is it likely that I shall do so for some time to  
7500 come: for I prefer quietly to wait on the Lord, without  
7501 conversing on this subject, in order that thus I may be kept  
7502 the more easily, by His blessing, from being influenced by  
7503 things from without. The burden of my prayer concerning  
7504 this matter is, that the Lord would not allow me to make a  
7505 mistake, and that He would teach me to do His will.

7506

7507 December 26.—Fifteen days have elapsed since I wrote the  
7508 preceding paragraph. Every day since then I have continued  
7509 to pray about this matter, and that with a goodly measure of  
7510 earnestness, by the help of God. There has passed scarcely  
7511 an hour during these days, in which, whilst awake, this  
7512 matter has not been more or less before me. But all without  
7513 even a shadow of excitement. I converse with no one about  
7514 it. Hitherto have I not even done so with my dear wife. For  
7515 this I refrain still, and deal with God alone about the matter,  
7516 in order that no outward influence and no outward  
7517 excitement may keep me from attaining unto a clear  
7518 discovery of His will. I have the fullest and most peaceful  
7519 assurance that He will clearly show me His will. This  
7520 evening I have had again an especial solemn season for  
7521 prayer, to seek to know the will of God. But whilst I  
7522 continue to entreat and beseech the Lord, that He would not  
7523 allow me to be deluded in this business, I may say I have  
7524 scarcely any doubt remaining on my mind as to what will be  
7525 the issue, even that I should go forward in this matter. As  
7526 this, however, is one of the most momentous steps that I

7527 have ever taken, I judge that I cannot go about this matter  
7528 with too much caution, prayerfulness, and deliberation. I am  
7529 in no hurry about it. I could wait for years, by God's grace,  
7530 were this His will, before even taking one single step  
7531 toward this thing, or even speaking to anyone about it; and,  
7532 on the other hand, I would set to work tomorrow, were the  
7533 Lord to bid me do so. This calmness of mind, this having no  
7534 will of my own in the matter, this only wishing to please my  
7535 Heavenly Father in it, this only seeking His and not my  
7536 honour in it; this state of heart, I say, is the fullest assurance  
7537 to me that my heart is not under a fleshly excitement, and  
7538 that, if I am helped thus to go on, I shall know the will of  
7539 God to the full. But, while I write this, I cannot but add at  
7540 the same time, that I do crave the honour and the glorious  
7541 privilege to be more and more used by the Lord.

7542  
7543 I desire to be allowed to provide scriptural instruction for a  
7544 thousand orphans, instead of doing so for 300. I desire to  
7545 expound the Holy Scriptures regularly to a thousand  
7546 orphans, instead of doing so to 300. I desire that it may be  
7547 yet more abundantly manifest that God is still the Hearer  
7548 and Answerer of prayer, and that He is the living God now  
7549 as He ever was and ever will be, when He shall simply, in  
7550 answer to prayer, have condescended to provide me with a  
7551 house for 700 orphans and with means to support them.  
7552 This last consideration is the most important point in my  
7553 mind. The Lord's honour is the principal point with me in  
7554 this whole matter; and just because this is the case, if He  
7555 would be more glorified by not going forward in this  
7556 business, I should by His grace be perfectly content to give  
7557 up all thoughts about another Orphan House. Surely in such  
7558 a state of mind, obtained by the Holy Spirit, Thou, O my  
7559 Heavenly Father, wilt not suffer Thy child to be mistaken,  
7560 much less deluded. By the help of God I shall continue

7561 further day by day to wait upon Him in prayer, concerning  
7562 this thing, till He shall bid me act.

7563

7564 Jan. 2, 1851.—A week ago I wrote the preceding paragraph.  
7565 During this week I have still been helped day by day, and  
7566 more than once every day, to seek the guidance of the Lord  
7567 about another Orphan House. The burden of my prayer has  
7568 still been, that He in His great mercy would keep me from  
7569 making a mistake. During the last week the book of  
7570 Proverbs has come in the course of my Scripture reading,  
7571 and my heart has been refreshed in reference to this subject  
7572 by the following passages: “Trust in the Lord with all thine  
7573 heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy  
7574 ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths”  
7575 (Prov. iii. 5, 6). By the grace of God I do acknowledge the  
7576 Lord in all my ways, and in this thing in particular; I have  
7577 therefore the comfortable assurance that He will direct my  
7578 paths concerning this part of my service, as to whether I  
7579 shall be occupied in it or not. Further: “The integrity of the  
7580 upright shall preserve them” (Prov. xi. 3). By the grace of  
7581 God I am upright in this business. My honest purpose is to  
7582 get glory to God. Therefore I expect to be guided aright.  
7583 Further: “Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy  
7584 thoughts shall be established” (Prov. xvi. 3). I do commit  
7585 my works unto the Lord, and therefore expect that my  
7586 thoughts will be established. My heart is more and more  
7587 coming to a calm, quiet, and settled assurance, that the Lord  
7588 will condescend to use me still further in the orphan work.  
7589 Here Lord is Thy servant.’

7590

7591 When later he decided to build two additional houses, Nos.  
7592 4 and 5, he writes thus again:—

7593



7594 Twelve days have passed away since I wrote the last  
7595 paragraph. I have still day by day been enabled to wait upon  
7596 the Lord with reference to enlarging the Orphan work, and  
7597 have been during the whole of this period also in perfect  
7598 peace, which is the result of seeking in this thing only the  
7599 Lord's honour and the temporal and spiritual benefit of my  
7600 fellow-men. Without an effort could I by His grace put  
7601 aside all thoughts about this whole affair, if only assured  
7602 that it is the will of God that I should do so; and, on the  
7603 other hand, would at once go forward, if He would have it  
7604 be so. I have still kept this matter entirely to myself. Though  
7605 it be now about seven weeks, since day by day, more or  
7606 less, my mind has been exercised about it, and since I have  
7607 been daily praying about it, yet not one human being knows  
7608 of it. As yet I have not even mentioned it to my dear wife in  
7609 order that thus, by quietly waiting upon God, I might not be  
7610 influenced by what might be said to me on the subject. This  
7611 evening has been particularly set apart for prayer,  
7612 beseeching the Lord once more not to allow me to be  
7613 mistaken in this thing, and much less to be deluded by the  
7614 devil. I have also sought to let all the reasons against  
7615 building another Orphan House, and all the reasons for  
7616 doing so pass before my mind: and now for the clearness  
7617 and definiteness, write them down. . . .

7618

7619 Much, however, as the nine previous reasons weigh with  
7620 me, yet they would not decide me were there not one more.  
7621 It is this. After having for months pondered the matter, and  
7622 having looked at it in all its bearings and with all its  
7623 difficulties, and then having been finally led, after much  
7624 prayer, to decide on this enlargement, my mind is at peace.  
7625 The child who has again and again besought His Heavenly  
7626 Father not to allow him to be deluded, nor even to make a  
7627 mistake, is at peace, perfectly at peace concerning this

7628 decision; and has thus the assurance that the decision come  
7629 to, after much prayer during weeks and months, is the  
7630 leading of the Holy Spirit; and therefore purposes to go  
7631 forward, assuredly believing that he will not be confounded,  
7632 for he trusts in God. Many and great may be his difficulties;  
7633 thousands and ten thousands of prayers may have ascended  
7634 to God, before the full answer may be obtained; much  
7635 exercise of faith and patience may be required; but in the  
7636 end it will again be seen, that His servant, who trusts in  
7637 Him, has not been confounded.’

7638

7639 PRAYER AND THE GLORY OF GOD.

7640

7641 We have sought more than once to enforce the truth, that  
7642 while we ordinarily seek the reasons of our prayers not  
7643 being heard in the thing we ask not being according to the  
7644 will of God, Scripture warns us to find the cause in  
7645 ourselves, in our not being in the right state or not asking in  
7646 the right spirit. The thing may be in full accordance with  
7647 His will, but the asking, the spirit of the supplicant, not;  
7648 then we are not heard. As the great root of all sin is self and  
7649 self-seeking, so there is nothing that even in our more  
7650 spiritual desires so effectually hinders God in answering as  
7651 this: we pray for our own pleasure or glory. Prayer to have  
7652 power and prevail must ask for the glory of God; and he can  
7653 only do this as he is living for God’s glory.

7654

7655 In George Muller we have one of the most remarkable  
7656 instances on record of God’s Holy Spirit leading a man  
7657 deliberately and systematically, at the outset of a course of  
7658 prayer, to make the glorifying of God his first and only  
7659 object. Let us ponder well what he says, and learn the lesson  
7660 God would teach us through him:—

7661

7662 I had constantly cases brought before me, which proved that  
7663 one of the especial things which the children of God needed  
7664 in our day, was to have their faith strengthened.

7665  
7666 I longed, therefore, to have something to point my brethren  
7667 to, as a visible proof that our God and Father is the same  
7668 faithful God as ever He was; as willing as ever to PROVE  
7669 Himself to be the LIVING GOD in our day as formerly, to  
7670 all who put their trust in Him.

7671  
7672 My spirit longed to be instrumental in strengthening their  
7673 faith, by giving them not only instances from the word of  
7674 God, of His willingness and ability to help all who rely  
7675 upon Him, but to show them by proofs that He is the same  
7676 in our day. I knew that the word of God ought to be enough,  
7677 and it was by grace enough for me; but still I considered I  
7678 ought to lend a helping hand to my brethren.

7679  
7680 I therefore judged myself bound to be the servant of the  
7681 Church of Christ, in the particular point in which I had  
7682 obtained mercy; namely, in being able to take God at His  
7683 word and rely upon it. The first object of the work was, and  
7684 is still: that God might be magnified by the fact that the  
7685 orphans under my care are provided with all they need, only  
7686 by prayer and faith, without any one being asked; thereby it  
7687 may be seen that God is FAITHFUL STILL, AND HEARS  
7688 PRAYER STILL.

7689  
7690 I have again these last days prayed much about the Orphan  
7691 House, and have frequently examined my heart; that if it  
7692 were at all my desire to establish it for the sake of gratifying  
7693 myself, I might find it out. For as I desire only the Lord's  
7694 glory, I shall be glad to be instructed by the instrumentality  
7695 of my brother, if the matter be not of Him.

7696

7697 When I began the Orphan work in 1835, my chief object  
7698 was the glory of God, by giving a practical demonstration as  
7699 to what could be accomplished simply through the  
7700 instrumentality of prayer and faith, in order thus to benefit  
7701 the Church at large, and to lead a careless world to see the  
7702 reality of the things of God, by showing them in this work,  
7703 that the living God is still, as 4000 years ago, the living  
7704 God. This my aim has been abundantly honoured.  
7705 Multitudes of sinners have been thus converted, multitudes  
7706 of the children of God in all parts of the world have been  
7707 benefited by this work, even as I had anticipated. But the  
7708 larger the work as grown, the greater has been the blessing,  
7709 bestowed in the very way in which I looked for blessing: for  
7710 the attention of hundreds of thousands has been drawn to  
7711 the work; and many tens of thousands have come to see it.  
7712 All this leads me to desire further and further to labour on in  
7713 this way, in order to bring yet greater glory to the Name of  
7714 the Lord. That He may be looked at, magnified, admired,  
7715 trusted in, relied on at all times, is my aim in this service;  
7716 and so particularly in this intended enlargement. That it may  
7717 be seen how much one poor man, simply by trusting in God,  
7718 can bring about by prayer; and that thus other children of  
7719 God may be led to carry on the work of God in dependence  
7720 upon Him; and that children of God may be led increasingly  
7721 to trust in Him in their individual positions and  
7722 circumstances, therefore I am led to this further  
7723 enlargement.'

7724

7725 PRAYER AND TRUST IN GOD.

7726

7727 There are other points on which I would be glad to point out  
7728 what is to be found in Mr. Muller's narrative, but one more  
7729 must suffice. It is the lesson of firm and unwavering trust in

7730 God's promise as the secret of persevering prayer. If once  
7731 we have, in submission to the teaching of the Spirit in the  
7732 word, taken hold of God's promise, and believed that the  
7733 Father has heard us, we must not allow ourselves by any  
7734 delay or unfavourable appearances be shaken in our faith.  
7735

7736 The full answer to my daily prayers was far from being  
7737 realized; yet there was abundant encouragement granted by  
7738 the Lord, to continue in prayer. But suppose, even, that far  
7739 less had come in than was received, still, after having come  
7740 to the conclusion, upon scriptural grounds, after much  
7741 prayer and self-examination, I ought to have gone on  
7742 without wavering, in the exercise of faith and patience  
7743 concerning this object; and thus all the children of God,  
7744 when once satisfied that anything which they bring before  
7745 God in prayer, is according to His will, ought to continue in  
7746 believing, expecting, persevering prayer until the blessing is  
7747 granted. Thus am I myself now waiting upon God for  
7748 certain blessings, for which I have daily besought Him for  
7749 ten years and six months without one day's intermission.  
7750 Still the full answer is not yet given concerning the  
7751 conversion of certain individuals, though in the meantime I  
7752 have received many thousands of answers to prayer. I have  
7753 also prayed daily without intermission for the conversion of  
7754 other individuals about ten years, for others six or seven  
7755 years, for others from three or two years; and still the  
7756 answer is not yet granted concerning those persons, while in  
7757 the meantime many thousands of my prayers have been  
7758 answered, and also souls converted, for whom I had been  
7759 praying. I lay particular stress on this for the benefit of those  
7760 who may suppose that I need only to ask of God, and  
7761 receive at once; or that I might pray concerning anything,  
7762 and the answer would surely come. One can only expect to  
7763 obtain answers to prayers which are according to the mind

7764 of God; and even then, patience and faith may be exercised  
7765 for many years, even as mine are exercised, in the matter to  
7766 which I have referred; and yet am I daily continuing in  
7767 prayer, and expecting the answer, and so surely expecting  
7768 the answer, that I have often thanked God that He will  
7769 surely give it, though now for nineteen years faith and  
7770 patience have thus been exercised. Be encouraged, dear  
7771 Christians, with fresh earnestness to give yourselves to  
7772 prayer, if you can only be sure that you ask things which are  
7773 for the glory of God.

7774

7775 But the most remarkable point is this, that 6, 6s. 6d. from  
7776 Scotland supplied me, as far as can be known now, with all  
7777 the means necessary for fitting up and promoting the New  
7778 Orphan Houses. Six years and eight months I have been day  
7779 by day, and generally several times daily, asking the Lord to  
7780 give me the needed means for this enlargement of the  
7781 Orphan work, which, according to calculations made in the  
7782 spring of 1861, appeared to be about fifty thousand pounds:  
7783 the total of this amount I had now received. I praise and  
7784 magnify the Lord for putting this enlargement of the work  
7785 into my heart, and for giving me courage and faith for it;  
7786 and above all, for sustaining my faith day by day without  
7787 wavering. When the last portion of the money was received,  
7788 I was no more assured concerning the whole, that I was at  
7789 the time I had not received one single donation towards this  
7790 large sum. I was at the beginning, after once having  
7791 ascertained His mind, through most patient and heart-  
7792 searching waiting upon God, as fully assured that He would  
7793 bring it about, as if the two houses, with their hundreds of  
7794 orphans occupying them, had been already before me. I  
7795 make a few remarks here for the sake of young believers in  
7796 connection with this subject: 1. Be slow to take new steps in  
7797 the Lord's service, or in your business, or in your families:

7798 weigh everything well; weigh all in the light of the Holy  
7799 Scriptures and in the fear of God. 2. Seek to have no will of  
7800 your own, in order to ascertain the mind of God, regarding  
7801 any steps you propose taking, so that you can honestly say  
7802 you are willing to do the will of God, if He will only please  
7803 to instruct you. 3. But when you have found out what the  
7804 will of God is, seek for His help, and seek it earnestly,  
7805 perseveringly, patiently, believingly, expectantly; and you  
7806 will surely in His own time and way obtain it.

7807

7808 To suppose that we have difficulty about money only would  
7809 be a mistake: there occur hundreds of other wants and of  
7810 other difficulties. It is a rare thing that a day occurs without  
7811 some difficulty or some want; but often there are many  
7812 difficulties and many wants to be met and overcome the  
7813 same day. All these are met by prayer and faith, our  
7814 universal remedy; and we have never been confounded.  
7815 Patient, persevering, believing prayer, offered up to God, in  
7816 the Name of the Lord Jesus, has always, sooner or later,  
7817 brought the blessing. I do not despair, by God's grace, of  
7818 obtaining any blessing, provided I can be sure it would be  
7819 for any real good, and for the glory of God.

7820

7821 [4] The extracts are from a work in four volumes, The  
7822 Lord's Dealings with George Muller. J. Nisbet & Co.,  
7823 London.